BETWEEN MARKS AND SURFACES:
INDISCERNIBILITY, SUBJECTIVITY, AND OTHERNESS

WRITTEN PART

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ABSTRACT

This practice-based research examines the notion of the in-between of mark and surface within visual art. Drawing on Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial theory, I approach the in-between as a non-oppositional state that has the potential to redefine relationships between self and other in art practice. The questions I focus on are: How can the relationship between the artist's marks and the surface move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state may be accessed? How can the relationship between work and space shift in a similar manner? How does accessing this in-between change the relationships between subject and object and self and other (understood, initially, in terms of mark and surface and artist and materials)? What are the implications for the artist when her marks become nearly indiscernible from the surface (as a result of approaching an in-between state)? Finally, what are some implications for the audience when they cannot immediately see or identify a work of art?

The methodological framework, which emerged through the research, involves the interweaving of three spaces: my own practice, other artists' practices, and theory. Through my practice, I looked for marks that *approached* each surface I worked with. This *approaching* occurred on several levels: visual, material, and conceptual. The marking methods I developed are juxtaposed with theoretical concepts, mainly from Bracha L. Ettinger, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, and C. S. Peirce, and with works by artists Susan Collis, Louise Hopkins, and Bracha L. Ettinger. Through these juxtapositions, I investigate the operations of the resulting marks, their relationships with the surface, and how those relationships tend towards an in-between.

I argue that the destabilisation of a clear distinction between mark and surface and work and space may lead to visual and conceptual indiscernibility. This, in turn, leads to a rethinking of the relationship between subject and object and self and other on several levels. The contribution of the research lies in adding to the discussion surrounding the relationship between mark and surface by specifically focusing on the in-between and indiscernibility. This addition occurs through practice as well as through this text, which attempts to activate concepts that enable the conceptualisation of an in-between state/space.

For my family

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INTRODUCTION

> One never commences; one never has a *tabula rasa*; one slips in, enters in the middle; one takes up or lays down rhythms.
>
> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*

As an artist trained in and working with painting and drawing, I was for many years preoccupied, obsessed even, with marks: how to make marks on paper or canvas, how and what those marks might mean, and how to conceptualise them. Throughout, I was focusing on *my* marks, the artist's marks. It was with this approach that I began working on this project. I was interested in exploring processes of marking, predominantly in relation to the materiality of paint.[1] During the first two years of the research, between 2006 and 2008, I experimented extensively with different ways of applying paint on canvas and considered the potential meanings of those applications. A gradual shift occurred, however, that led me towards a rethinking of both this research and my practice. This shift was the result of two long and sustained encounters that were initiated almost in parallel towards the end of my second year. The threads that emerged from these encounters crossed and interweaved, guiding me to a different path from the one I had initially taken.

One of these encounters was with my practice and with the subtle shifts that had been occurring within it over time. While working in the studio, I gradually began moving away from the notion that materiality only related to my marks and to paint. Instead, I began exploring "different materialities," including that of the surface being marked.[2] This led to experimentations with different types of surfaces, such as various kinds of paper. My interest in the materiality of the surface and my new experiments

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[1] I viewed the PhD as a continuation of the work I did as part of my MA. My MA thesis consisted of an exhibition of paintings on canvas based on images of magnifications of human tissue. I utilised a range of materials, including oil paints, enamel, vinyl and gloss paint, and a range of painting techniques, such as pouring paint, using paint rollers, icing tubes and so on. While making this work, I was studying Luce Irigaray's writings and was particularly influenced by her discussion on morphology. As such, when I began the PhD, I was specifically interested in the notion of the feminine, as addressed by Irigaray, and in how a non-phallic syntax might be rethought through painting.

[2] This shift also resulted from my interaction with my supervisors at the time, Jeffrey Dennis, Bernice Donszelmann, and David Ryan, who encouraged me to consider what other meanings materiality might have.

necessitated extensive reflection. I spent hours in the studio looking at my work up to that point and thinking and writing about it—observing how my marks operated in each work, what their relationships with the specific surface were, and how those relationships might offer something to the viewer or allow meaning to emerge. Through this sustained looking and writing, I eventually discerned a shift in my practice and realised that the potentially interesting aspects of the work had to do precisely with the relationship *between* mark and surface.

While this rethinking of my practice was taking place, a second encounter was underway, with theory this time. This was the encounter with Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial theory and her re-conceptualisation of subjectivity-as-encounter. Admittedly, it took a long time to familiarise myself with her psychoanalytic concepts. Even so, approaching her work as an artist, I could discern early on that her theorisation, with its emphasis not on the self but on an encounter with several others, offered a different way of conceptualising the relationship between mark and surface as well as my relationship with the materials I used and the marks I left behind. My engagement with Ettinger's theorisation contributed to the shift in my approach towards making art. I went from focusing solely on paint and on the quality of my marks to looking closely at the relationship between my marks and the surface.

It was at this stage in the research that I came upon a large piece of used and no longer needed vinyl flooring removed from my grandparents' house. I found the printed wood pattern on this surface to be quite interesting so I took it to the studio and began considering what to do with it. The pre-existing image raised several questions: How could I work with it? What marks could I use? Would my marks cover the image or would they somehow mingle with it? After several experiments, I ended up with a group of marks that looked like stains on the vinyl. Through making and considering this work, as well as other works on a variety of surfaces, more general questions gradually formed: Could I make work that responded to the surface, that came from the surface so to speak, such that mark and surface were not seen as oppositional or clearly differentiated? Could an in-between state be accessed? How might that occur and what might it look like? And what meanings might it give rise to?
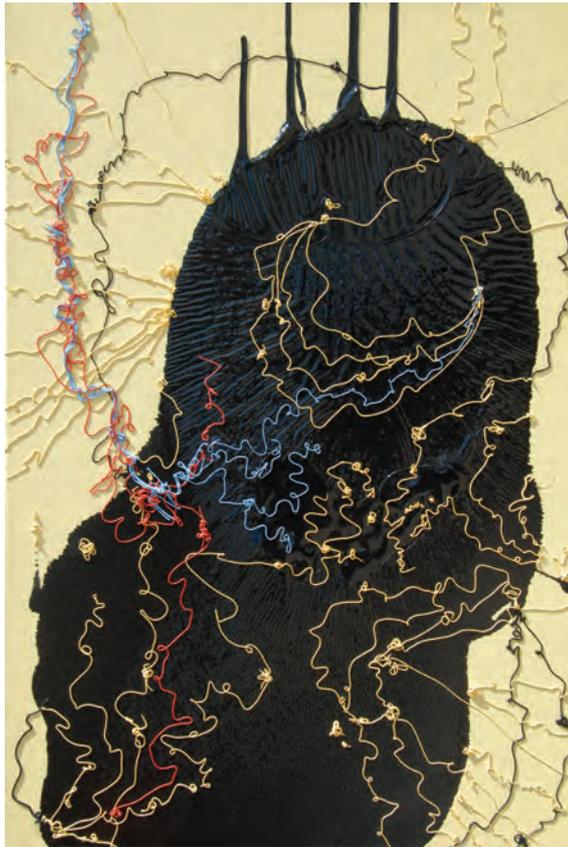
Image 0.1:   Selection of works from 2006–2008. (*Shadow Land*, 2006, acrylic, oil and gloss paint on canvas, 75 x 110 cm; *Once or Twice*, 2007, acrylic, oil, and gloss paint on canvas, 40 x 40 cm; *Flaky*, 2008, acrylic and oil on canvas, 35 x 35 cm)

It is here that the current text commences. Through my encounters with materials and concepts and through the, unlikely perhaps, combination of vinyl flooring, stains, and Matrixial theory, the issue of the in-between arose, leading me to a journey through the hazy zone between marks and surfaces.

Although the relationship between mark and surface is a basic feature of many drawing and painting practices, in the sense that marks are placed on a surface/object that often remains visible in the completed work, the issue of the *in-between* of mark and surface does not appear to have been extensively explored. Through my research, I found few artists who have made work that specifically deals with the in-between of mark and surface. Examples of such works are discussed in chapter 1. Moreover, the majority of texts that deal with painting, drawing, and marking in general, tend to focus on the artist's marks and their qualities. The surface is either "absent" or placed in opposition to the marks, forming the ground against which they stand.[3] The in-between, as a different, non-oppositional relationship between mark and surface, is not often broached.

The wider implications and significance of considering the relationship between mark and surface become clear when looking at psychoanalytic accounts that address the activity of marking in relation to psychic considerations and processes of subjectivisation and meaning production. Specifically, the psychoanalyst Serge Tisseron relates marking to the game of fort/da, viewing it as a way of symbolising the child's separation from the mother—a necessary step in the formation of subjectivity within the phallic sphere. As I discuss in chapter 1, this ties marking with a structure of separation between self and other that becomes manifested through the visual and conceptual differentiation between mark and surface. Viewed this way, processes of marking and the resulting relationships between mark and surface have implications for thinking about relationships between subject and object and self and other. If a clear differentiation between mark and surface can be associated with a phallic stratum of subjectivisation, where subjects are separate and the main forms of

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[3] Such analyses of course depend on the types of works being discussed. This is why I have pointed out that I am referring to texts that discuss painting, drawing, and marking *in general*.

relationships involve rejection or assimilation of the other, then when the mark/surface differentiation is problematized it might be possible to glimpse different kinds of relationships. I believe it is here that the value of research into the mark/surface relationship lies.

The aim of this research is to shift attention to the in-between of mark and surface and to consider the artist's marks *in relation* to the specific surface with which they exist. Moreover, the practical research aims to develop specific methods of marking that foreground the in-between of mark and surface within the works themselves. That is, the research revolves around the notion of an in-between state/space, how that can be accessed through practice, and how it may shift the relationships between self and other, understood in terms of mark and surface, work and space, artist and materials, and viewer and artwork.

To summarise, in this text I discuss a group of methods that, I argue, allow access to the in-between of mark and surface. By working with theoretical concepts, mainly from Bracha L. Ettinger, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, and C. S. Peirce, I attempt to think through these methods, the resulting marks, and the relationships between mark and surface. I also look at the relationship between works and space, treating it as an extension of the relationship between mark and surface within each work. Finally, I investigate some of the implications of accessing this in-between for the artist and, briefly, for the viewer. I argue that the destabilisation of a clear opposition or distinction between mark and surface and work and space—as enacted through my works and through selected works by the artists Susan Collis, Louise Hopkins, and Bracha L. Ettinger—leads to both visual and conceptual indiscernibility. The notion of indiscernibility, which is particularly foregrounded in my practice, allows me to rethink the relationship between the "disappearing" artist and her materials.

As I have explained, the research topic and research questions emerged through engaging in practical and theoretical research. That is, the work I produced, in conjunction with theoretical concepts I was drawn to, generated issues and questions that I then focused on. These issues and questions fuelled the making of more works which sometimes altered the pre-existing questions and gave rise to further questions.

Something similar occurred with my methodological approach—I observed it developing gradually over the first three years of the research and becoming refined over the following two years. It was only then that I was able to articulate it more clearly and follow it in a more focused and consistent manner. While the model of an emergent methodology may sound unorthodox within the context of conventional academic research, it is, I believe, appropriate for fine art studio practice, which is itself very often emergent. It is definitely appropriate for my research which involved extensive experimentation precisely in order to develop *methods* of marking in response to specific surfaces. In other words, developing a methodology in the studio formed part of the actual research project. The fact that both research questions and methodology emerged from my practice, forms an aspect of the practice-based nature of this research. That is, to a large extent, the research proceeded through making artworks. These acted both as ways through which to investigate the emerging questions and as outputs of the research, embodying the issues explored.

The methodology in the studio, which is addressed in detail in chapter 2, came to involve *approaching* a specific surface on multiple levels. Through this approaching, an in-between state/space was accessed, as I argue in part II. Of course the making of work did not occur in a vacuum. As I have already suggested, my encounters with specific theoretical concepts affected my work in the studio. To this, I add encounters with specific works by other artists which suggested possibilities for further exploration and acted as companions during the research. These encounters are discussed in detail throughout this text.

The contribution of the research lies in adding to the discussion surrounding the perceptual and conceptual destabilisation between mark and surface by specifically focusing on the in-between and its relationship to indiscernibility. This addition occurs through practice—through the works completed—as well as through this text which attempts to activate concepts that allow a rethinking of the relationship between mark and surface.

The submission itself consists of two volumes. The volume "Artworks 2008–2014" contains documentation of the works completed as part of the research as well as short texts describing the process of making these works. It focuses on completed

works and not on studio experimentations. Images of such experimentations are included in this volume. This volume, the writing, is separated into three parts. Part I lays down the groundwork for the research. It consists of chapter 1, which situates the research theoretically and in relation to other practices, and chapter 2, which discusses the methodological framework of the research and explains the decisions made along the way. Part II focuses on the making of the work. Compared to part I, which provides a conceptual, practical, and methodological overview, part II acts like a magnifying lens, zooming into the specifics of the practice and considering the works in detail and slowly. Each of chapters 3, 4 and 5 focuses on a method of marking developed during the research, attending to the mode of marking, the operations of the resulting marks, and the relationships between mark and surface. Chapter 6 focuses on the installation of the work and the relationships between work and space. In all these chapters, I juxtapose the works with specific theoretical concepts and discuss how the methods I have developed access an in-between state/space and how the relationship between mark and surface shifts beyond a clear differentiation or overlay. Having addressed the practical work completed as part of the research, I then step back again to consider the implications of the work in part III. Chapter 7 focuses on the artist and her relationship with her "others," in the first place the surface and its pre-existing marks. It also addresses the issue of the "disappearance" of the artist, a result of the indiscernibility of the marks. Chapter 8 focuses on the viewers, providing a provisional discussion of the implications of indiscernibility for the viewers' relationship to the artwork and artist. Both of these chapters draw on Matrixial theory, as well as on other theories of subjectivity, to discuss the relationship between self and other.

The actual thesis consists of both the text and the artistic work completed as part of the research, as well as their interconnections. I chose to present the artworks and text in two volumes so as to enable the reader/viewer to experience them separately as well as simultaneously through a physical juxtaposition. Images are also included throughout this volume, accompanying the writing. The practice itself, however, offers its own form of "narrative" that can be viewed while reading the text or independently. In this sense, I am acknowledging—and, in fact, take delight in—the

work's potential to exceed the textual construct of the PhD and to journey elsewhere

on its own.

PART I

GROUNDWORK

INTRODUCTION

Thus we can ask, what might Matrixial aesthetic processes contribute to a different understanding of hand, gesture, space, line and mark?

Griselda Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*

Part I of the text provides a detailed account of the contextual, theoretical, and methodological framework of the project.

Chapter 1 situates my project within a specific artistic and theoretical context that revolves around the relationship between mark and surface. It initiates a theoretical and practice review, focusing on different ways of conceptualising the relationship between mark and surface and on their implications for considering subjectivity and the self's relationship to an other. I specifically address psychoanalytic accounts that link marking to the game of fort/da. I also discuss Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial theory, presenting my understanding of key concepts that enable me, in the following chapters, to re-conceptualise the relationship between mark and surface in specific artworks. This chapter also poses the questions the research deals with: questions revolving around the in-between of mark and surface, how it might be accessed, and what meanings it might give rise to, especially when considered alongside Matrixial theory.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the methodological framework that emerged through the research. It discusses the main characteristics of my approach, the spaces of the research, and their connections and interweaves. It also addresses the relationship between the works completed as part of the research and this text and revisits the structure of this text in light of the methodology.

Both chapters act as entryways into the research, initially situating my project and opening the way to the rest of the text. The engagement with specific artists, texts, concepts, and methods introduced in these chapters continues in subsequent chapters.

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SITUATING MARKS AND SURFACES:
CONTEXTS, ISSUES, AND IMPLICATIONS

One of the most basic ways in which we can think of the activity of marking within visual art, and specifically in the fields of painting and drawing, is as the repeated depositing of matter on a surface. The deposition of matter results in the creation of what is commonly called a mark: a paint mark, a pencil mark, an ink mark and so on. This research starts with this apparently basic scenario of making artworks: creating marks on a surface through the repeated depositing of material.[1] As a visual artist involved with painting and drawing, this is one of the main activities I perform in the studio daily while making a work. For this project, I focus on the relationship *between* mark and surface, approached from the point of view of feminist theory. In this chapter, I situate my project within a specific artistic and theoretical context.[2] The issues I attend to include different ways of conceptualising the relationship between mark and surface, both through making artworks and through theoretical writing, and their implications for considering subjectivity and the self's relationship to an other. I believe these implications make the continual exploration of the mark/surface relationship within visual art an important and valuable pursuit. The chapter acts as a springboard, initially locating and positioning the project and leading into the following chapters.

MARKING TOOL MEETS SURFACE

Between April and June 2008, my studio activities consisted of making marks on various pieces of paper and loose canvas. I worked with whatever paper I had in the

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[1] There are other ways of understanding marking since marks can be created using several different methods. For example, scratching a surface can also create marks due to the removal of material. In this research, I am focusing on the depositing of material.

[2] In general, my investigation remains focused on the 20th and 21st centuries. Given my current context of working, mostly Europe and North America, I have also focused on western theory and on art that is being exhibited and discussed within a western context. This is not an unproblematic or straightforward positioning since, as a Cypriot, I can situate myself as both European and Middle Eastern. For the purposes of this project, I look towards the west as that is where I have been educated and where I primarily work.

studio, which was mostly white watercolour paper and pieces of cardboard. Using a range of materials, I spent hours drawing and painting marks: continuous acrylic lines that spread all over the surface, short ink lines placed side by side forming what looked like figures, dots made out of thick paint, wide chalk marks, and fine pencil lines running across the surface. My goal was to experiment and see how my marks interacted with each surface.

In his book *Drawing*, Philip Rawson identifies the components of "straightforward drawing" as the ground on which marks are made and the materials and implements through which marks are made; that is, a surface and a marking tool.[3] Like Rawson, the surface I refer to throughout this text is quite literally the surface/object I encounter before I begin marking: a sheet of paper, a piece of canvas, a found cardboard box, a dirty wall, and so on. This surface/object may come with its own marks, pre-existing those of the artist.[4] Where the marking tool of the artist touches the surface a mark is formed. The mark, thereby, "represents an encounter between the shaping hand and a given surface."[5]

Before looking at the relationship between mark and surface, it is useful to consider the word "mark" in more detail, beginning with a dictionary definition:

Mark

Noun

– A small area on a surface having a different colour from its surroundings, typically one caused by damage or dirt

  • A spot, area, or feature on a person's or animal's body by which they may be identified or recognised

– A line, figure or symbol made as an indication or record of something

  • A level or stage that is considered significant

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[3] Rawson, *Drawing*, 38, 59.

[4] In art historical texts, the term "surface" is very often used to discuss the surface of a finished work, which is made up of the accumulated marks of the artist. For example, discussions of brushstrokes in a painting refer to those marks as the surface of the work. This conceptually "erases" the actual surface (canvas, paper, and so on), which is replaced by the marks that cover it. (I am taking the notion of the "erasure" of the surface from Norman Bryson who argues that the surface of the picture plane in Western representational painting is visually "erased." That is, "stroke conceals canvas." Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, 92.) My use of the term "surface" throughout this text does not include the artist's marks but rather the surface/object before it is marked by the artist.

[5] Rawson, *Drawing*, 59.
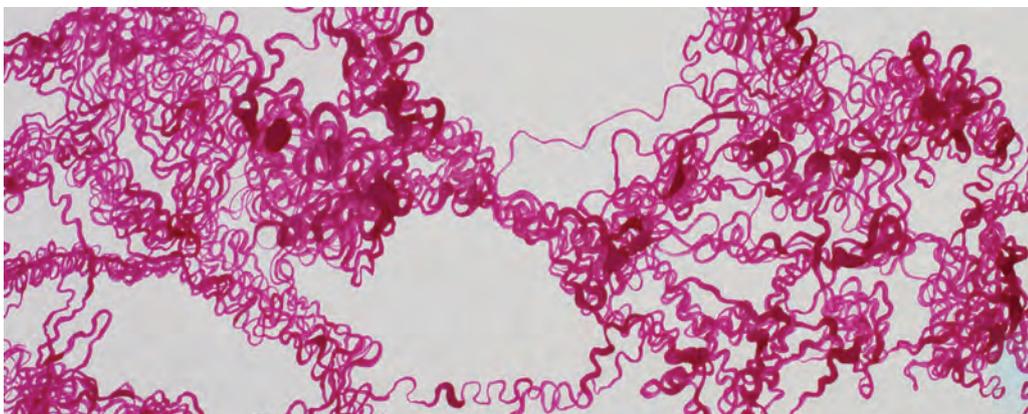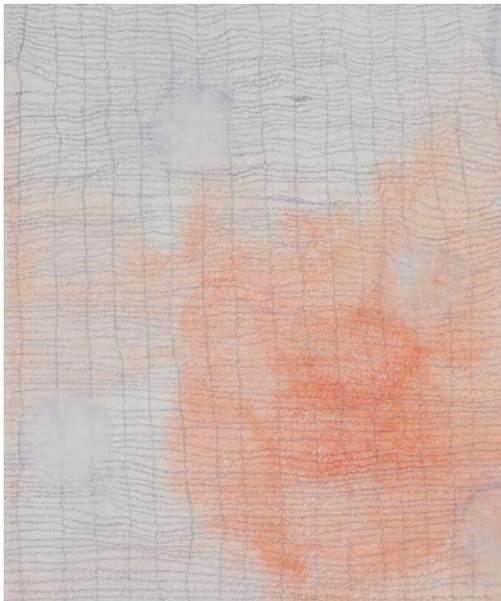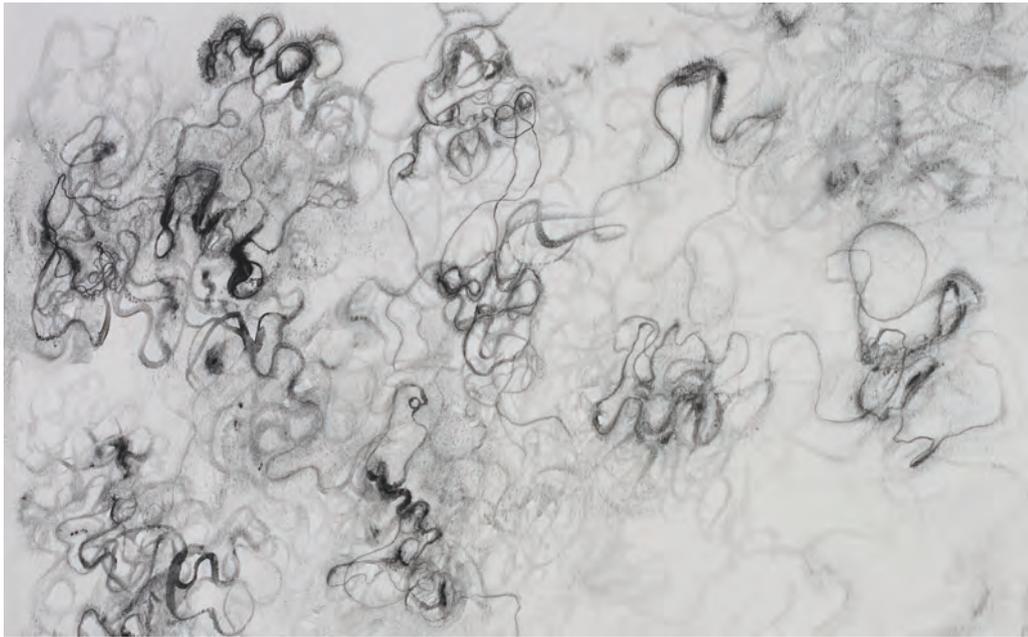
Image 1.1:   Selection of works from 2008. (*Untitled*, 2008, acrylic on paper, 40 x 28 cm; *Untitled* (detail), 2008, acrylic and watercolour pencils on paper, 24 x 28 cm; *Untitled* (detail), 2008, ink on paper, 15 x 18 cm; *Untitled* (detail), 2008, ink on paper, 40 x 28 cm)

Mark

Verb

- To make a visible impression or stain on something
- To write or draw (a word, symbol, line etc.) on an object
- To show the position of something
- To separate or delineate (a particular section or area of something)
- To distinguish something from other things[6]

This is a partial dictionary definition, containing only entries that may be relevant to the activity of marking within visual art. Even this partial definition, however, includes a range of meanings. This diversity is also evident in the various words that are used as synonyms for the word "mark," depending on the characteristics of the specific mark: blemish, blot, blotch, dent, incision, index, impression, imprint, line, scar, scratch, smudge, splotch, spot, stain, sign, symbol, trace, track, trail.[7]

I begin with a dictionary definition because it retains several possible meanings. It also demonstrates why I have chosen to call the activity I perform in the studio marking and the results of that activity marks. Other terms, such as "line," are more specific, referring to particular kinds of marks, and that makes them more restrictive. Since this is a practice-based research project involving studio work, I am retaining the word "mark" precisely because it encompasses more activities. Moreover, terms such as "line," can be seen as involving marks and marking activities. They are, thus, still included in my discussion.[8]

In activities involving marking, the mark is the trace of an encounter between the marking hand and the surface. As the definitions given earlier suggest, the mark

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[6] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed., s. v. "mark."

[7] *Collins Shorter English Thesaurus*, s. v. "mark."

[8] Marks are usually considered to be the primitives of drawing and painting. That is, many marks together will form a line which will form a contour which will form a figure which will form a drawing or painting. Damisch, *Traité du Trait*, 67, 76; Newman "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 93–97, 106n4; Newman, "Marking Time," 276. In fact, according to James Elkins and Michael Newman, many discussions of artworks tend to overlook marks and to jump straight to what is made out of marks: line, contour, figure, and, finally, image. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 3–6; Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 96. My aim is not to set up a hierarchy between terms but simply to point out that the terms "mark" and "practices of marking" are more appropriate for this research since the practical component does not deal exclusively with lines or drawing or painting. The attempt is to find marks that respond to each surface, as I discuss later in this chapter and in the next chapter.

differentiates itself from the surrounding surface to varying degrees and, thus, becomes visible as a mark. Therefore, it depends on some form of differentiation from the surface. What I am interested in here is precisely the relationship between the artist's mark and the surface. This relationship, in turn, depends on the encounter between the artist's hand and the surface. My aim is to slow down the consideration of marks and surfaces, focusing on the nuances of their relationship.[9]

Logically, I see three broad possibilities for the relationship between mark and surface: a clear separation or distinction between the two, the minimising or even elimination of one of the two, and, relating to that, the potential for an in-between state, located anywhere between the two. On one level, these are formal considerations, relating to the visual outcome of the marking process, but on another level, they have crucial conceptual implications for understanding the self's relation to an other. In the following sections, I discuss these possibilities and their implications.

THE EARLIEST MARKINGS

I first turn to a psychoanalytical account on marking. The texts I discuss bring together several aspects that concern me as an artist: the activity of marking, embodiment, psychic considerations, conceptual considerations, and processes of subjectivisation and meaning production. As I discussed earlier, marking a surface involves an encounter with an other, which, initially, is that surface. In this section, I discuss the implications of the activity of marking for thinking about subjectivity and the relation to an other.

In the essay "All Writing is Drawing," the psychoanalyst Serge Tisseron discusses the connections between the first markings of a child, which he conceptualises as a spatial play staged by the hand, and the game of fort/da.[10] Fort/da

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[9] I am taking the notion of slowing down from Michael Newman. While discussing graphic marks, Newman suggests "slowing" "the consideration of the mark, so that it does not move too quickly toward line, contour, figure or image, to allow it to hesitate on the edge." Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 96.

[10] Tisseron had discussed some of this material in an earlier essay entitled "Questions Préalables À Une Recherche Psychanalytique Sur Le Trait." In "All Writing is Drawing," he provides a more detailed discussion and he also links this material to adult writers' manuscripts. The fact that in both essays Tisseron focuses on the gestures of the hand and on the process of marking, as opposed to what the marks result in, makes much of

is based on a series of observations Sigmund Freud made when watching his eighteen-month grandson Ernst playing with a wooden reel attached to a string:

> What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive "o-o-o-o." He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful "*da*" ["there"]. This, then, was the complete game—disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act.[11]

Freud and Sophie Halberstadt-Freud, the child's mother, agreed that the sound "o-o-o-o" represented the German word "fort," which means "gone."[12] Thus, fort/da is a game of "gone" and "there." The object is present, then absent, then present again and so on. Crucially, the absence depends on not seeing the object, which does not literally disappear but is temporarily hidden from view. Presence then is associated with the seen and absence with what cannot be seen.

Freud provided three different interpretations for the game. One interpretation is that the game was related to some kind of "cultural achievement" that had to do with the child allowing his mother to go away without protesting. According to Freud, the child compensated by staging the disappearance and reappearance of objects within his reach, thus, experiencing repeatedly their "joyful return."[13] A second interpretation relates to the instinct for mastery. By repeating the unpleasurable experience of temporarily losing something, specifically his mother, the child takes an active role in the scenario and controls the situation.[14] Yet a third interpretation

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his discussion applicable to any kind of marking activity. Tisseron himself states that both writing and drawing "follow the same creative logic at the time of tracing" and that *all* "inscriptive processes are always of a sensory, emotional and motional sort." Tisseron, "All Writing Is Drawing," 37.

[11] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 9.

[12] Ibid., 8–9.

[13] Ibid., 9.

[14] Ibid., 10. Jay Greenberg and Stephen Mitchell point out that the shift from passivity to activity, and its connection with the shift from dependence to autonomy, holds an important place in Freud's work. That is, the repetition of passive experiences as an active form of play enables a movement from dependence to autonomy. Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, 48–49. Freud discusses this

involves the child avenging the mother for going away. The throwing away of objects could be interpreted as sending the mother away, declaring, in a sense, his lack of need for her.[15]

Drawing on the works of Freud, Pierre Fédida, Martha Harris, Liliane Lurçat, Marion Milner, and Donald Winnicott, Tisseron presents a discussion of the first markings of children in terms of the fort/da game. The first markings a child makes appear alongside other activities that demonstrate active control over separation anxiety and pave the way towards independence from the mother or caring adult, such as walking and talking.[16] Because of this, the markings have a "privileged relation with the psychic process involved in the first separation, the separation of any human being from the mother or surrogate adult."[17] As such, the earliest markings can be explained through the fort/da game.

Tisseron sets up an apparently clear parallel between marking and fort/da. Both involve a muscular action, whether it be throwing an object or making a mark.[18] Both involve two phases: a "giving out"—throwing an object or depositing a mark— followed by a retrieving—pulling back the object or seeing the deposited mark. In both cases, according to Tisseron, who follows Freud, the greatest pleasure is found in the

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shift, in more general terms, in "Female Sexuality." He writes: "It can easily be observed that in every field of mental experience, not merely that of sexuality, when a child receives a passive impression it has a tendency to produce an active reaction. It tries to do itself what has just been done to it." Freud, "Female Sexuality," 236. Playing turns a passive experience into an active one, thus, "mastering the external world" or "annulling" the passive experience. Since, according to Freud, the first experiences in relation to the mother are passive, the child repeats these experiences in an active form of play or turns the mother "into the object and behaves as the active subject towards her." Ibid.

[15] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 10.

[16] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 33.

[17] Ibid., 34.

[18] Tisseron notes that the gestures of making a mark at such a young age, between six and twelve months, involve movements away from the body. As such, these gestures approximate the throwing movement involved in fort/da. Ibid., 33. Moreover, at this age, and up to about eighteen months, the child has no full control over the traces made. The eye does not guide the hand. Thus, the emphasis is on the actual movement of the hand and not on the form of the specific trace. Ibid. Additionally, as Catherine de Zegher observes, the extending of the arm and hand away from the bodily axis during marking may correspond to the child's reaching out to the departing mother. Thus, rather than throwing, the gesture may involve reaching out to touch the other. de Zegher, "The Inside is the Outside," 215.

second phase, the retrieval of the thrown object or the discovery of the drawn mark.[19]

Thus, the "gone" is the actual making of a mark on a surface while the "there" is the

seeing of that mark.

The parallel between marking and fort/da continues in the interpretation of

the two activities and the psychic processes involved in them. Marking, just like

fort/da, can be seen as a way of dealing with the separation from the mother. It is a

form of symbolisation that enables the child to deal with her frequent absences.[20]

While marking, the child may identify with the mother who leaves the child behind

(leaving a trace on the page). After the activity of marking is done and the child looks

at the page, he or she may identify with the trace that is left behind.[21] At the same time,

the child may associate the leftover trace with the mother who is being rejected or sent

away by the child. Thus, the process of marking stages the separation between mother

and child from both sides: the mother pushing the child away and/or the child pushing

the mother away.[22] The crucial aspect in both cases, as Tisseron points out, is the

structural relationship between the various elements. This is "a structure which is

organised around *separation*."[23] The drawn mark "stages the symmetrical separation

process from beginning to end."[24] According to Tisseron, this staging accompanies and

is paralleled by the mental separation that the child experiences at this time.

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[19] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 34.

[20] Ibid., 33. Symbolisation is a "psychic process in which one mental representation stands for another, denoting its meaning not by exact resemblance but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation." Moore and Fine, *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 191. The early markings are a form of kinetic symbolisation that also results in visual representation. Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 33.

[21] This recalls Jacques Lacan's interpretation of the game of fort/da. He sees the object that is thrown and retrieved as "a small part of the subject that detaches itself from him while still remaining his, still retained." Lacan, "Tuché and Automaton," 62. Maria Walsh clarifies that this "signifies the beginning of the subject's submission to the object cause of desire" as well as a hanging on "to a scrap of the real" that we have lost and that resists symbolisation. Walsh, *Art and Psychoanalysis*, 99.

[22] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 34.

[23] Ibid. Italics added.

[24] Ibid.

Tisseron also turns his attention to the space of the page.[25] He associates the process of marking with appropriating space, both the psychic and physical space between the child and the mother and the space of the surface of the body.[26] The drawn trace enacts a simultaneous binding and separation. That is, the "distance opened by the tracing gesture," which is seen as a pushing away, is "simultaneously opened and closed by the trace."[27] Tisseron writes: "A trace simultaneously separates and binds the pieces of space which it delimits, much like the leaden line which separates and binds the stained-glass pieces on a latticed window."[28] The drawn trace is "the reified symbol of separation" and is, thus, "particularly suited to the visual and mental exploration of the space which *simultaneously separates and binds* the mother to the child."[29] In addition, marking converts the physical three-dimensional separation from the mother into a "bridging space" across the continuous area of the two-dimensional page.[30] Thus, marking, because of its ability to separate and join and because it results in a visible outcome "controlled by the eye," enables the gradual acceptance and symbolisation of the separation between child and mother.[31] When associating the page with the surface of the inscriber's body, Tisseron sees the process of marking as one of gathering and organising the "scattered sensory centres" of the body.[32] This gathering parallels the child's need to assign function and meaning to

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[25] It seems to me that the page does not quite fit into the fort/da scenario, as given by Freud. The fort/da game involves the child and an object or the child and a mirror in the "baby-o-o-o!" variation of the game. Marking involves the child, the trace, and the page that documents the gestures and holds the traces for future viewing. In my view, the page brings additional layers, thus, forming an excess, a beyond-the-fort/da dimension. Of course, the fort/da game also involves the cot into which the reel is thrown but its role is not quite the same as the role of the page, which Tisseron discusses in detail.

[26] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 32.

[27] Ibid., 37.

[28] Ibid., 34.

[29] Ibid., 34–35.

[30] Ibid., 35.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 38.

each part of its body and to various sensations.[33] The assembled marks on the page

correspond to this progressive movement towards coherence.[34]

Moreover, Tisseron discusses "the deep and original relationship" of the child

with the actual page.[35] Whenever the child makes a gesture, the page "answers back" in

the form of a mark.[36] This answering back is an echo that returns to the child's eyes

"his" hand movements. The page answers in a "religiously exact manner," like an

"ideal mother" that *always* answers back to the child in a satisfying and reassuring

way.[37] By containing the trace and allowing its subsequent retrieval, the page/mother

mirrors the child back to itself.[38] The relationship with the mother—apparently

imagined as blissful fusion—is, thus, somehow retained through the relationship with

the page.[39]

According to Tisseron, a similar process of binding and separation recurs in

the adult mark-maker.[40] Arm and hand lead to a movement of "casting and retrieving,

of separating and binding," that "gives new life to the processes symbolising the

separation of mother and child and contributes to the constitution [of] a mental

framework capable of containing thoughts."[41] The page, which is associated with both

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 39. When discussing the page as relating to the inscriber's body, Tisseron focuses on writing and on the writer's gestures. Outlines, notes, scribbles, and so on, are interpreted as necessary stepping-stones towards the final text, which gathers scattered thoughts into a meaningful whole. Avis Newman relates this discussion to a state of incompleteness and fragmentation in drawing, where there is usually no total unification between drawn marks. That is, drawn marks may retain their autonomy. Thus, drawing/marking may not lead towards wholeness but may remain suspended in a state of fragmentation. Newman and de Zegher, "Conversation: Avis Newman/Catherine de Zegher," 79.

[35] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 35.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Tisseron, "Questions Préalables À Une Recherche Psychanalytique Sur Le Trait," 335.

[39] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 35.

[40] Tisseron focuses on writers. In my opinion, much of his discussion on the processes of working on a manuscript, such as doodling in the margins or making outlines of key ideas, cannot easily be applied to visual art in general. I, thus, only discuss aspects that I consider to be relevant to art.

[41] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 36. Since Tisseron is focusing on writing, he probably means thoughts that can be expressed in linguistic form. I see no reason, however, why these "thoughts" cannot be interpreted in a more open and flexible manner. As Bracha L. Ettinger argues, "works of art are symbologenic," generating

the mother's body and the inscriber's body, metaphorically has the ability to "take in" thoughts and contain their traces.[42] Marking-as-thinking then "corresponds to processes of appropriating space," which involve the exploration and organisation of the space of the page through marks.[43] Moreover, meaning production revolves around the structure of separation that Tisseron has been articulating. It is "the early symbolisation of 'casting-out' and 'pulling-up'" in the inscriptive gesture that enables "the process of instilling meaning in the trace."[44] This meaning is supported by the "more archaic production of meaning which is represented by the investment of the page as a metaphoric container of one's own body and the mother's body," ultimately dependent on the mother's absence.[45]

Tisseron's account is related to a very specific model of subjectivity, a model he implicitly takes to be the only one. As Griselda Pollock notes, his whole interpretation of marking rests on "classical psychoanalytical conceptions of the founding gesture of subjectivity and indeed even humanity as that of *separation from the mother*."[46] According to both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theories, beginning from birth, the subject is gradually constituted through a series of physical and psychic separations that allow a move away from the maternal and towards the paternal sphere. The pre-birth and early post-birth phases are conceptualised as symbiosis or fusion, with the foetus/newborn and mother being seen as one. According to this view, the child does not initially distinguish itself from the mother and the world.[47] It is only when the child recognises the concepts of absence and lack

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signifiers that, in turn, engender new thinking. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 196. Griselda Pollock expounds on the relationship between art and thought in "Does Art Think?"

[42] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 40. Tisseron clarifies that it is not the blank page that is the container but rather the page already inscribed by something, "be it by a trace, a word, or a drawing." Ibid., 41.

[43] Ibid., 41.

[44] Ibid., 37.

[45] Ibid., 41.

[46] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 158.

[47] Moore and Fine, *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 190–191; Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, 5. Freud refers to the state of "being indissolubly bound up with and belonging to the whole of the world outside oneself" as oceanic. Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, 4. According to Teresa Brennan, object-relations theories also assume that the mother and the child are a unit from which the child has

that it begins to realise that it is not one with the world and the mother. This leads to

an eventual separation between inside and outside, subject and object, and self and

other.[48] Subjectivisation, thus, involves a separation of the child from the assumed

symbiosis with the mother through a series of splits: birth, weaning, learning to walk

and talk (and make marks), becoming independent. These splits are retroactively

subsumed into the castration complex.[49]

Since the child's subjectivity is constituted as a splitting from the mother, the

maternal-feminine is reduced to "just ground for the emergence of a figure/subject cut

out from her amorphous cloth."[50] The mother/maternal-feminine is placed in the

position of the object or other against whom the subject is defined.[51] Moreover, the

m/Other (a term proposed by Bracha L. Ettinger) must be rejected as part of

subjectivisation.[52] The inability to completely separate from the m/Other, within this

model of subjectivity, may result in psychosis.[53] As such, fusion and repulsion, and,

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to separate itself. Brennan, *The Interpretation of the Flesh*, 67–70. Greenberg and Mitchell provide several examples of this. Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, 95, 107–108, 160–161, 191–192.

[48] Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 34–35; Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, 5–6. Freud writes: "The new-born child does not at first separate his ego from an outside world that is the source of the feelings flowing towards him. He gradually learns to do this, prompted by various stimuli. It must make the strongest impression on him that some sources of stimulation, which he will later recognise as his own physical organs, can convey sensations to him at any time, while other things—including what he most craves, his mother's breast—are temporarily removed from him . . . the ego is for the first time confronted with an 'object,' something that exists 'out there' and can be forced to manifest itself only through a particular action." Ibid., 5.

[49] In Freudian theory, the threat of castration leads the boy to eventually abandon his desire for his mother (Oedipus complex) and to identify with the father. Girls, on the other hand, see themselves as already castrated and, blaming the mother for this, turn towards the father seeking recompense. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 40–45; Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 60–64; Freud, "Femininity"; Brennan, *The Interpretation of the Flesh*, 10–13; Moore and Fine, *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 35–36, 133–135. As Brennan explains, the fear of castration depends on previous experiences of birth and weaning but these are experienced as castrating only retroactively. Brennan, *The Interpretation of the Flesh*, 172.

[50] Pollock, "Mother Trouble," 15.

[51] The term "other" refers to "a radical alterity with which identification is not really possible." Akhtar, *Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, 200.

[52] Ettinger uses the term "m/Other" to describe the archaic mother who is also the primordial Other. Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "Supplementary Jouissance," 165.

[53] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 54; Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma," 142. In fact, as Ettinger points out, the assumed pre-natal undifferentiation usually represents extreme positions: "It is both a total paradise and a state of annihilation." Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 132. As a "state of annihilation," it is linked to psychosis and death.

related to that, sameness and opposition, are taken to be the first and primary psychic

activities and possible attitudes towards the other. According to Bracha L. Ettinger,

this model of subjectivity and self/other relationship is phallic. She writes,

> We can qualify classic definitions of the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal phases as
> phallic because the object—or the Other (to begin with, the oral object and the
> mother)—is approached through fusion, and the lack of the object—even the
> departure from the maternal breast—is always the result of rejection.[54]

The other/m/Other/not-self must be rejected and this loss/castration points the way

to the subject's *only* path towards the Symbolic.[55]

This model of subjectivity is based on and perpetuates a phallic logic of

hierarchical binary oppositions—a logic of being/not-being which privileges the

positive term over the negative one. As Pollock explains, phallic logic "is premised on

absence/presence, on/off, self/other and cannot but cast its representations of sexual

difference in its own terms, privileging the one/man/on/presence over its

distinguished and consolidating other/woman/off/absence or, relegating the feminine

to the unsignifiable beyond," turning it into the "necessary otherness of no specific

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[54] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 127.

[55] Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 190–191. In Lacanian theory, subjectivisation involves a passage to the Symbolic, one of three levels of human reality, along with the Imaginary and the Real. The Symbolic corresponds to pre-existing structures of symbolic representation into which a subject is inserted, language being the primary example. Ettinger sees the Symbolic as "linguistic chains of signifiers which correspond to forms or to acoustic images of words." The Imaginary consists of images one has of the self, "the realm of conscious contents and of Ego-identifications." As Ettinger clarifies, "words are divided into signifiers which belong to the Symbolic and the signified which belongs to the Imaginary." Finally, the Real is what remains outside of language, what cannot be represented directly or entirely by language, such as instincts and impulses linked to corporeality and "archaic psychic and psychosomatic events which cannot or have not been symbolised." Ibid., 181. Subjectivisation involves the passage from the Real to the Symbolic through castration. For Lacan, this is a symbolic process that involves the "loss" of elements of the Real and their replacement with symbols/signifiers. Ibid., 190–191. As Ettinger argues, in this process the maternal-feminine is what escapes the Symbolic, hence, it does not signify anything within phallic logic. Ibid., 182. The passage to the Symbolic also involves acceptance of the Law, the Name-of-the-Father. Ibid., 182, 184, 189–191; Lacan, *Écrits*, 73–74, 220–221; Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 47, 67–69. As Ettinger explains, the metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father is connected to the phallus, which she describes as a symbolic structure, the object of desire, and the first signifier signifying the lost unity between mother and child. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 188–191.

shape or meaning" against which phallic meaning emerges.[56] This is a logic of absolute

binarism that can only distinguish between distinct subjects and objects.[57] It is also

related, more generally, to Western thought's tendency to divide up the world into

oppositional and gendered pairs.[58]

Tisseron's discussion of marking is based on this structure of separation.

There are two clear separations in the text: the separation between the child and the

mark (which is thrown away from the body) and the separation between the mark and

the surface of the page. Tisseron does not really discuss this second separation since

he focuses on the act of marking and not on the result. His whole thesis, however,

depends on it since the second phase of marking involves *seeing* the drawn mark. For

this to happen, the mark has to differentiate itself from the surface. If there is no

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[56] Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 39–40. Within the phallic stratum of subjectivisation, sexual difference depends on having/not having the penis. The male subject is, thus, set up as the norm and the female subject is presented as lacking. She forms the negative other against whom the one (male subject) is constituted. Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman;* Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 95–97. In Lacanian theory, the phallus is the sole signifier of the difference between the sexes, something both Luce Irigaray and Bracha L. Ettinger severely criticise. Irigaray, "Psychoanalytic Theory," 60–62; Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis." The phallus, according to Lacan, is a signifier and not an organ and yet, as Elizabeth Grosz points out, it is on the basis of not having a penis that women are seen as castrated. Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 116–117. As such, Grosz argues that the phallus and the positioning of the sexes in relation to it are "motivated by the already existing structure of patriarchal power" and guarantee that structure's continuation. Ibid., 124.

[57] As Richard Kearney explains, the logic of binary opposition functions according to three main principles: the principle of identity (A is A), the principle of non-contradiction (A cannot be non-A), and the principle of the excluded middle (something can be either A or non-A but not both at once). Kearney, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*, 125. As Grosz argues, following Nancy Jay and Anthony Wilden, this logic creates dichotomous distinctions or dichotomous oppositions rather than differences. Difference can allow for continuous and non-hierarchical relations between terms whereas dichotomous distinction or opposition relies on discontinuity and on one privileged term that defines the other as its negative. Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 124, 202n5; Jay, "Gender and Dichotomy"; Wilden, *System and Structure*, 168–170.

[58] Western philosophy has a long tradition of dualism, starting with Plato and Pythagoras all the way to Cartesian dualism and Descartes' division between mind and body. Nancy Jay and Genevieve Lloyd discuss dualism in relation to gender. In "Gender and Dichotomy," Jay discusses the characteristics and dangers of "A/not-A" binary thinking and of the tendency to place women in the "not-A" position. In *The Man of Reason,* Lloyd provides an analysis of the male/female distinction in Western philosophical texts alongside other binaries associated with the male/female dualism, especially those relating to rationality, knowledge, and progress. Lloyd argues that the male/female distinction is an expression of values, with maleness being equated with superior values and femaleness with inferior values. Lloyd, *The Man of Reason,* 103–104. Thus, femininity is formed in relation to and in opposition to a male norm and, as such, occupies the "not-A" position.

mark/surface differentiation then there is no "there" and, thus, no pleasure. At the simplest level, this is a visual differentiation. At the psychic level, the mark signifies and performs the separation of the self from the mother. If the mark comes from the self, then the page is the space of the other against whom the self is constituted. As soon as the mark hits the page, the surface is turned to the other against whom the mark stands. Thus, the differentiation between mark and surface comes to symbolise a differentiation between self and other.

Moreover, because Tisseron works with a model that takes assimilation and rejection to be the only possible attitudes towards the other, he interprets the mark as simultaneously joining and separating the self from the other. In actuality, these simultaneous actions seem to place the mark in an ambiguous position, where it is trying to do two opposing things at once, and may suggest different relationships between mark and surface, an issue I take up later in the chapter.[59] The two endpoints, however, joining and separating, suggest absolute positions—assimilation and rejection, fusion and division.

Finally, Tisseron presents the page as a passive object to be appropriated. When stating that the gesture of marking is a "process of appropriating space," he implicitly sets up an active/passive differentiation between the gesture of marking, and, thus, the marking body, and the surface to be marked.[60] The surface is presented as passive and obedient, always answering back to the child "in a religiously exact manner."[61] It does not contribute but rather echoes or mirrors the child's actions. Furthermore, the page is taken to be part of the container of the inscriber's thoughts. As container, again it is implicitly assumed to be passive and empty, filled in by the inscriber. The fact that the page is only described as "blank" or "white" reinforces its assumed emptiness.[62] Of course the page may in fact be a white sheet of paper,

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[59] In his earlier essay, Tisseron points out explicitly the ambiguity of the trace, which allows both separation and continuation/fusion. The inscription both confirms and annihilates the separation from the mother. Tisseron, "Questions Préalables À Une Recherche Psychanalytique Sur Le Trait," 336–337.

[60] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 32.

[61] Ibid., 35.

[62] Ibid., 37, 40, 41. It is useful to draw here on Irigaray's critique of Aristotle's concept of place or topos, a concept closely linked to the function of a container, which, in turn,

although that is not necessary. Characterising the page as blank, however, suggests

viewing the page as an empty space passively waiting to be filled.[63] The differentiation

between active hand and passive surface accedes to phallic logic and reinforces the

separation between self and other.

There are both practical and theoretical problems with taking Tisseron's

interpretation of marking as the *only* possible interpretation. As I discuss in the

following sections, there are examples of artworks that work against a clear

mark/surface differentiation, thus, challenging Tisseron's account. In fact, Tisseron

seems to assume that marks are stable and that there will always be a clear

mark/surface separation. In this respect, his account ignores actual marks, which can

be anything but stable.[64] There are also examples of artworks in which the surface is

not treated as if it is blank. Again, this complicates the situation and questions

Tisseron's treatment of the page. Finally, Bracha L. Ettinger's intervention in

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is associated with the female body. In "Place, Interval," Irigaray criticises Aristotle's theorisation, which posits the female body as topos—the implicitly passive container or vessel that surrounds the body of a (male) subject.

[63] José Rabasa draws attention to the fact that the "fiction of the 'blank page',", which may refer to anything from an actual page to the surface of the earth, allows the inscriber (writer, mariner, conqueror and so on) to claim ownership of both marks and territory. Rabasa, *Inventing America*, 56. Rabasa draws on Michel de Certeau's discussion of the role of the "blank page" as an essential component of writing. The "blank page" "delimits a place of production for the subject" since it provides an autonomous space freed from the "ambiguities of the world." According to de Certeau, this separation is a Cartesian move which involves "making a distinction that initiates, along with a *place* of writing, the mastery (and isolation) of a subject confronted by an *object*." The page forms a distinct space that is the subject's own and "in which he can exercise his own will." de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 134. In many ways, Tisseron's account conforms with what de Certeau describes as the "conquering" character of the scriptural enterprise. Ibid., 135.

[64] According to Tisseron, the result of the marking process—the marks—do not play a role in his discussion. It is only the marking gestures that matter and the resulting drawing can be anything. As I have suggested, this cannot really be the case as his account depends on clearly seeing the drawn mark. As such, he either assumes that the mark/surface relationship is always the same—always a clear separation—or he assumes that whatever marks are produced will be legible through his account. But what if, as the child draws, her hand moves over the page smudging the lines? Would the smudges, that might distribute themselves according to the potentially rough texture of the page, register as separation? What if the child inadvertently draws lines that are barely visible, barely there? And what if the child, like my godson, is given a small blackboard and a thick white chalk with which to draw so not to poke out his eye? Phil moves his arm over the board, simultaneously drawing and erasing with his sleeves. Tisseron's account overlooks such marks. They are subsumed in the logic of separation and binaries even though they may suggest something different.

psychoanalytic theory challenges the assumption that the phallic model of subjectivity is the only possibility. I return to these issues later in the chapter.

Despite the fact that Tisseron's interpretation is linked with one specific stratum of subjectivisation, it demonstrates what might be at stake when thinking about marking. Marking, from the very beginning, is a gesture towards an other and a way of negotiating a relationship with that other. Within the psychoanalytic scenario, it is the child's relationship with the mother that inaugurates the act of marking, which, in turn, becomes a way of negotiating that relationship. Tisseron's account shows that this negotiation is not only a perceptual or formal consideration, having to do with the visual relationship between mark and surface, but rather a process of understanding and structuring subjectivity and the self's relation to an other. Marking then is presented as both structured *by* a process of subjectivisation and as structuring *of* that process. It is not an illustration of the process but participates in the process. Granted, Tisseron's account offers limited ways of relating to an other—fusion and separation—but by presenting marking's potential as a process through which relations are structured, performed, and understood, it opens the way to working with processes of marking in order to explore *different* relationships to the other.

A "CLEAN" MARK/SURFACE DISTINCTION

Before discussing these possibilities for different ways of relating to an other, I turn to the most basic relationship suggested between mark and surface—that of clear distinction. This is quite possibly the relationship that most closely resonates with Tisseron's text and the game of fort/da. Bracha L. Ettinger, Griselda Pollock and Alison Rowley have discussed the structure of fort/da in relation to painting. In Ettinger's, Pollock's and Rowley's critical discussions, painting is seen as the displaced site of the game of fort/da, although it is not *only* that as I discuss in the next section.[65]

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[65] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze"; Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 261; Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 44. The connection between playing and art making is actually enabled by Freud himself when he describes artistic activity as a continuation of and substitute for childhood play. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 11; Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," 437, 442. Ettinger looks to the fort/da game as a crucial aspect of "the 'aesthetic' scene of psychoanalysis." Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 73. In fact, the fort/da game has been widely discussed in connection with art.

Rowley, in a similar manner to Tisseron, associates the gestures involved in painting with the gestures of fort/da. The painter's "motor action of moving to make marks/holding back from making them with her brush" resonates with the throwing/retrieving actions.[66] Rowley goes beyond Tisseron to consider more closely the actual result of the marking gesture. She links the artistic game of fort/da with what she calls the "simplest and clearest" structure of painting: "the binary mark/unmarked-ground relation."[67] Rowley, thus, draws attention to the fact that usually the artist's marks cover the surface. If seen through the lens of fort/da, this covering of the surface sets up a structure of "presence as absence of unmarked ground."[68] The fort/da game and the early markings of children depend on the absence of the mother. Marking/covering a surface, which psychoanalytically is associated with the space/body of the mother as discussed earlier, performs an absenting of parts of that surface and, thus, an absenting of the m/Other. The creation of the mark necessitates the absenting of the ground, which acts as the support for the mark. Rowley sees this as a repression of the maternal body, the ground against which subjectivity is formed and maintained in the phallic sphere.[69]

Griselda Pollock discusses this structure of presence/absence in relation to Jackson Pollock's drip paintings. Her analysis resonates with Tisseron's but develops

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For my purposes here, I am focusing on texts that relate fort/da to the relationship between mark and surface. Pollock and Rowley focus specifically on the relationship between paint mark and surface. Within the context of their critique of modernism, this is important as painting was modernism's "privileged" art form. Pollock, "Painting, Feminism, History," 77.

[66] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 37.

[67] Ibid. In this specific case, Rowley is referring to the painting of Lily Briscoe in Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*. Elsewhere, Rowley uses this analysis to refer to painting more generally. Rowley, "An Introduction to Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger's 'Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing'," 86; Rowley and Pollock, "Painting in a 'Hybrid' Moment," 55.

[68] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 44. The covering of the surface by the marks is not something Tisseron addresses.

[69] Ibid., 40. The covering of the surface can be related to Tisseron's discussion of marking as appropriating space. Both covering and appropriation can also be linked to the relatively common conceptualisation of marking as the destruction of the surface. Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*, 157; Newman, "Marking Time," 273; Bataille, "Primitive Art," 40–41; Krauss, "Olympia," 150–151; Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, 259–260.

the relationship between mark and surface much further. She suggests that the unmarked canvas

> functions as a kind of mirror which, as yet, contains no reflection, signalling either the absence, or the immense self-sufficiency, of the Other in relation to which the subject is always being constituted. This Other is not a person, but culture, language, yet the complex and evolving relation with the mother is both the mediator of this necessary relation to a non-personified Other, whose purely symbolic place the (Name-of-the-)Father will later support.[70]

When the canvas is seen as the field of the m/Other, the marks can be seen as covering the m/Other, mastering her absence, and separating the self from her "engulfing presence."[71] The relationship between mark and surface negotiates this differentiation between self and m/Other. At the same time, Pollock suggests that the unmarked canvas threatens the emerging subject, "its unmarked perfection signifying the absence, even the death of that would-be-subject."[72] This opens the possibility "that what the painter threw from his stick, was also part of himself, and that, what he covered, was his own absence/non-sense."[73] This again depends on a differentiation between mark and surface that leads to the covering of the latter.[74]

Rowley and Pollock, thus, agree that painting is linked with the structure of fort/da.[75] Rowley asserts that

> the technical procedures and processes of painting are inextricably caught up in the binary logic of fort/da. That is to say, painting can only proceed as a

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[70] Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 257.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Pollock states that this psychic investment in marking may be implicit in all painting. It is foregrounded, however, in modernist painting, which, as Clement Greenberg argued in "Modernist Painting," had to confine itself to its own methods and conditions and get rid of everything else. The focus on flatness brought attention to the structural basis of painting: the relationship between mark and surface. Moreover, it brought attention to the painters' gestures, as Harold Rosenberg's analysis in "The American Action Painters" made clear. As Pollock explains, "the passage of both self and (m)Other into object—the painting—and their negotiated differentiation is the product of this psychic formation when, for art historical reasons, the process of painting is made the exclusive preoccupation of the practice." Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 257.

[75] Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 260; Rowley and Pollock, "Painting in a 'Hybrid' Moment," 55.

> temporal/spatial play of the material there/not thereness, mark/no mark,
> form/no form, of the figure/ground relation.[76]

The figure/ground relation refers to the resulting image produced on the marked surface. Originating from Gestalt psychology, the figure/ground distinction attempts to explain how the brain sees and makes sense of what it sees. This happens by being able to differentiate between a figure, the main subject, and ground, the surroundings.[77] In fact, the figure/ground distinction relates to an entire way of understanding the world and assigning meaning. This meaning depends on being able to clearly differentiate between things as well as being able to create categories and hierarchies.[78] In terms of marking, at its most basic, a single brushstroke or pencil line on an otherwise unmarked piece of paper registers as figure while the unmarked paper becomes the ground.[79] Looking at the figure/ground relationship through the game of fort/da, figure is what is seen, what is present, and ground is what supposedly withdraws, what is absent.[80] Both activities, marking and fort/da, perceptually, depend on the play between presence and absence. In the case of fort/da, the object is made to disappear and then reappear repeatedly. In the case of painting, according to

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[76] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 70.

[77] According to Jan C. Bouman's discussion of the figure/ground phenomenon from the point of view of psychology and phenomenology, the figure is what one observes or focuses on while everything else fades to ground. Bouman, *The Figure-Ground Phenomenon*, 78–79, 82, 86–87. Bouman further explains that "the function of the figure is to show itself as noticeably as possible, while the function of the ground is to remain as 'unnoticeable' as possible." Ibid. 88. Drawing on Gestalt psychology, Eviatar Zerubavel takes the "invisibility" of ground further when he points out that ground, in everyday viewing, is usually perceived as empty, a void. Zerubavel, *The Fine Line*, 97.

[78] In *The Fine Line*, Zerubavel provides an account of how making distinctions, that is isolating discrete figures from their surroundings, allows us to attribute meaning. He also shows how this ability to draw distinctions is manifested in how we experience ourselves, that is as distinct from others and from the world. He associates the need to make distinctions with the rigid mind, which is committed to an either/or logic.

[79] James Elkins makes the point that the figure/ground relationship is analogous to "the more elementary notion of central mark and surrounding surface." Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, xiv. Of course the mark and surface pair cannot be mapped exactly onto the figure and ground pair. In a painting where the canvas is painted everywhere, it is variations in colour or perhaps material that determine the figure/ground differentiation. It may not be possible to discuss such paintings in terms of mark and surface because the surface is concealed. My focus here is on works that retain the mark/surface relationship.

[80] This is clearly a very simplistic way of looking at things. As Elkins has effectively argued, the figure/ground relationship is anything but stable in art. Ibid., 99–125. I return to this in the next section.

Rowley and Pollock, the play of presence/absence is enacted within the figure/ground relationship itself. Meaning is constructed through absence and through the differentiation between absence and presence.[81] In terms of marking, the mark/figure signifies presence—the artist has touched that area—and no mark signifies absence. When the surface is added to this equation, and following the current logic of either/or, it can only fall on the side of ground/absence since it becomes equivalent to no mark.[82] In fields such as painting and drawing, it is precisely the artist's mark that has traditionally and historically commanded attention and that is the privileged/present element.[83] As Ettinger points out, there is another relationship involved here—that of original and readymade. The mark is assumed to come from "inside," and may, thus, be valued as original, while the surface exists "outside."[84]

As these accounts show, a clear differentiation between mark and surface can be associated with a phallic model of subjectivity and a way of structuring the world that depends on binaries: mark/surface, figure/ground, presence/absence, activity/passivity, original/readymade, subject/object, self/other. Moreover, when it comes to painting, these binaries are historically (or culturally) hierarchical and gendered, with the first word in each pair associated with masculinity and the second

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[81] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 71. Ettinger offers a detailed analysis of phallic meaning as a repetitive alternation of presence and absence. She draws particularly on Pierre Fédida's analysis of the game of fort/da as "the discovery of meaning as absence and as repetition of absence/presence." Ibid., 87.

[82] Bryson writes, for example, that the surface in drawing is "technically part of the image (since we certainly see it), but in a neutral sense—an area without qualities, perceptually present but conceptually absent." Bryson, "A Walk for a Walk's Sake," 151. In some ways, this absence relates to Tisseron's analysis of the page as empty. Moreover, absence can be linked to non-signification. Lynda Nead discusses this issue in relation to painting and the sexual metaphorics surrounding the painting act. Within these sexualised metaphorical structures, the canvas is a surface "empty of meaning," a site of "absolute non-signification." Nead, *The Female Nude*, 56, 57. The conceptual absence or assumed non-signification of the surface is sometimes manifested in literal ways. Mark Wigley, for example, criticises the tendency to ignore paper when discussing or exhibiting works on paper. He argues that presentations of work that treat the surface as neutral effectively sacrifice the surface which then disappears. Wigley, "Paper, Scissors, Blur," 28–29, 40–41.

[83] As Mary Kelly argues, modernist criticism treated the "authenticating" mark/gesture as signifying the artistic subject. The privileged mark/gesture is imagined as a celebration of unmediated expression and self-affirming presence, or "presentified absence." Kelly, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism," 44–45. Pollock also discusses this issue in "Painting, Feminism, History," 76–78 and in "Killing Men and Dying Women," 252, 256–257.

[84] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 72–73.

with femininity.[85] Specifically, the (masculine) body-making-a-mark is opposed to the

surface, which, like in the psychoanalytic scenario, is "feminised."[86]

TOWARDS AN IN-BETWEEN:
UNSTABLE MARKS AND NON-BLANK SURFACES

Even if we accept that the activity of marking proceeds following the logic of

fort/da, the process does not necessarily have to result in a clear differentiation

between mark and surface. As entities, neither mark nor surface are fixed. There is no

"one" mark, nor "one" surface, as Tisseron's account seems to assume. Marks can be

applied using several different materials and tools, in any number of ways, and can

result in a variety of outcomes.[87] Moreover, any surface can be used for marking—

[85] Several authors have revealed and criticised painting's male dominated history and its masculine discourse, notably: Rosemary Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*; Marcia Brennan, *Painting Gender, Constructing Theory* and *Modernism's Masculine Subjects*; Carol Duncan, "Virility and Male Domination in Early Twentieth Century Vanguard Painting"; Shirley Kaneda, "Painting and its Others"; Mary Kelly, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism"; Rosa Lee, "Resisting Amnesia"; Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude*; Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses*; Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* "Killing Men and Dying Women," "Painting, Feminism, History," and *Vision and Difference*; Lisa Saltzman, "Reconsidering the Stain"; Mira Schor, *Wet*; Anne Wagner, "Pollock's Nature, Frankenthaler's Culture."

[86] I am thinking of the crude complementary metaphors of "paintbrush as penis" and "canvas as virgin." Nead, *The Female Nude*, 56; Gubar, "'The Blank Page' and Female Creativity," 295; Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, 53, 55, 90. In her analysis of modernist painting, Pollock suggests that the canvas is linked to the female nude. This linkage is not a straightforward correspondence, where canvas is equal to the female body, but a complex structure of relationships. Pollock suggests that the relationship artist–world–art involves a mediating term. In early modernist painting, the nude female model stood for that term. The female body was the other "that had been structural to the self-conception of the virility of modernist art." Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 242. Pollock argues that the "body of the painter" and the "feminine body" are, thus, placed in contradictory placements and significations. Pollock, "Painting, Feminism, History," 75. The painter's body "stands for the very act of creation" while its other, the feminine body, is "a mass in a chain that moves from materiality or nature to art without subjective contribution." Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 241. In the transition to abstract painting, in 1950s America, the traces of the "necessary feminine other" were transferred to the space of inscription. As Pollock writes, "the canvas becomes the support for marks that immediately make it the other to that marking, involving it both formally and psychically in a dialectic with the painted trace. The canvas as the field of action, the support of paint, the surface for inscription as much as for the inevitable projection of fantasy, can thus play a variety of roles in this art of worldly renunciation." Ibid., 242. The masculine body is "now directly mastering the canvas, that has subsumed into its uncharted space the once necessary feminine object, the sign of painting's referent to that from which art is made because art is other to it." Ibid.

[87] There are several texts that discuss different modes of marking as well as different types of marks. Some of the texts I have consulted include: Cornelia Butler, "Ends and Means"; Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*; Margaret Iversen, "Index,

coloured, textured, patterned, natural, fabricated and so on.[88] If both marks and surfaces are unfixed, it follows that so are their relationships. In addition, marks and surface can mutually affect each other. Very often, the making of a mark is affected by the surface, that is, by how the material used to make the mark interacts with the specific surface.[89] Simultaneously, once a mark touches a surface, it changes that surface. Rawson describes the process as follows:

> At bottom the drawn line represents an encounter between the shaping hand and a given surface. And in the encounter the special qualities of the substance which the hand applies to it play as important a role as the surface itself. For the hand learns to incorporate into the image offered by its drawing all those irregularities and accidents which the substance promotes and which the surface brings out.[90]

Mark and surface affect each other and together lead to the final outcome of a work.

Taking advantage of the "unfixity" of marks and surfaces can lead to a shifting of the rules of the game, thus, making marking an activity open to a non-phallic logic. As Ettinger asserts, art can escape the reproduction of existing values and can create differences "through special use of language."[91] Even if language is phallic, there is still "room for shaping different relationships towards it." She continues:

> We might try to change it from within, to destroy it here and there, to damage its signifiers, to discover and explore empty spaces, holes in the discourse. We

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Diagram, Graphic Trace"; Pamela Lee, "Some Kinds of Duration"; Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing" and "Marking Time"; Newman and de Zegher, "Conversation: Avis Newman/Catherine de Zegher"; Deanna Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*; Rawson, *Drawing*; David Rosand, *Drawing Acts*, *The Invention of Painting in America*, and *The Meaning of the Mark*; Saltzman, "Reconsidering the Stain"; de Zegher, "A Century Under the Sign of Line."

[88] Rawson provides a detailed account of various surfaces that can be used for drawing. Rawson, *Drawing*, 38–58.

[89] For example, Rosand describes how canvas weave affects brushstrokes of paint laid on it, Elkins discusses how brightly coloured paper can affect the viewing of pencil lines made on it, and Petherbridge points out how paper affects brushstrokes and ink marks. Rosand, *The Meaning of the Mark*, 82; Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 114–115; Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*, 122–123.

[90] Rawson, *Drawing*, 59.

[91] Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 182–183.

might discover a language of margins, or a marginal language—is that not what poetry and art are about?[92]

Several artists have made works that move beyond the strict mark/surface structure and explore other relationships. I would broadly summarise the two main approaches as removing or minimising one of the terms of the mark/surface pair and exploring an in-between state.[93]

Many works have proceeded by removing the physical surface on which marks are placed. Catherine de Zegher calls this the "freeing of the line from its support."[94] Several examples of such work featured in the exhibition *On Line* in 2010, including Alexander Calder's *A Universe* (1934), Eva Hesse's *Hang Up* (1956), and Joëlle Tuerlinckx's *Room of Volume of Art–13 Elements* (1993–2004). All of these works contain lines that have been "freed" from a physical surface and exist as three-dimensional objects in space. The binary mark/surface may be rendered irrelevant, as the marks are no longer on a surface, but the relationship figure/ground still stands— the lines form the figure against the surrounding space/ground, thus, becoming visible. There are exceptions to this, such as Lygia Pape's *Ttéia 1, C (Web)* (2011) where the use of golden threads, along with careful manipulation of lighting, makes sections of the threads partially invisible.

Other works have proceeded by minimising or completely removing the mark.[95] A literal removal of marks was carried out by Robert Rauschenberg for the work *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953). Rauschenberg spent a month painstakingly removing the marks of the drawing with a rubber.[96] The resulting faint traces give a

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[92] Ibid., 194.

[93] The group of artists and works I discuss in this section is by no means exhaustive. My selections are meant to roughly demarcate the area within which this research moves. To find the specific works, I looked at catalogues of major painting and drawing exhibitions, approximately since the 1960s. I also looked at catalogues of exhibitions that specifically aimed at challenging traditional norms, such as exhibitions focusing on invisible art and exhibitions informed by feminist theory. A list of catalogues I consulted is given in the next chapter.

[94] de Zegher, "A Century Under the Sign of Line," 54.

[95] I am focusing on works that still retain an interest in marking, even if the marking action results in barely-there or invisible marks.

[96] Rugoff, "How to Look at Invisible Art," 7. Rauschenberg discusses the specifics of how he came to do this work, as well as how he convinced Willem de Kooning to give

slight indication of what might have been there. Bruno Jakob's water paintings, such

as *Unseen (Portraits, Somebodies)* (1998) and *Happy Nothing: Still Collecting*

(1990–1998), display the traces of marks made using water. The actual mark is a

wrinkle indicating where water was placed before evaporating. The surface becomes

"the scene of a vanishing" and the viewers are left to reconstruct the vanished image

through its traces.[97] These vanishing traces or marks are unstable, existing somewhere

between presence and absence. They do not clearly differentiate themselves from the

surface nor do they declare their presence.[98] In other works, the marks completely

disappear or are invisible to begin with. Gianni Motti's *Magic Ink* (1989) drawings, for

example, are made using invisible ink, which remains visible only for a few seconds

before disappearing. In addition to using water, Bruno Jakob has been making

"invisible paintings" by placing a primed canvas in the presence of a person, animal or

environment. In this case, the canvas is treated as a kind of photographic paper that is

"meant to record an invisible index—of 'energy' or 'atmosphere'—of the subject it is

aimed at."[99] The "marks" are, thus, invisible since they are "made" using invisible

means. With the marks in these works minimised or gone, the binary mark/surface

can no longer stand.[100]

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him a drawing, in an online interview. "Robert Rauschenberg Discusses Erased de Kooning Drawing at SFMOMA," SFMOMA website.

[97] Rugoff, "How to Look at Invisible Art," 21.

[98] Elkins has argued that marks in general are unstable and do not always conform to a clear mark/surface or figure/ground distinction. They can be at the limits of vision, they can fade into each other, and they can accumulate into masses from which they cannot be disentangled. In fact, they can challenge other distinctions as well, such as intentional/unintentional and legible/illegible. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 3–46. Newman agrees with this approach and emphasises the fact that marks always already carry an uncertainty within them—the uncertainty of distinctions between human and non-human marks and between marks and non-marks. Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 102. He also focuses on the notion of the trace and its connection to the non-visible. The trace is left after something/someone departs—it is "the trace of the other" brought about through effacement. Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 221, 226. Newman draws on Jacques Derrida's discussion of the trace structure which involves neither full presence nor full absence, thus, challenging the presence/absence binary. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 61. I return to Derrida in chapter 4.

[99] Rugoff, "A Brief History of Invisible Art," 14.

[100] It could be argued, however, that the elimination of the mark still falls within a phallic logic. Elimination can be seen as assimilation or fusion. Thus, instead of the separation mark/surface, the mark is now completely fused with the surface. As discussed earlier, separation and fusion are the two dominant ways of relating to an other within the phallic stratum of subjectivisation. I return to this issue in chapter 7.

Between the works discussed in the previous section, with their clear mark/surface differentiation, and the works discussed in the previous paragraph, with their near or complete elimination of the mark, another space of possibilities opens: an in-between space/state that does not involve oppositional differentiation between mark and surface nor elimination of one of the two. The possibility for an in-between emerges when looking at specific works.

Helen Frankenthaler's paintings demonstrate a significant assertion of this in-between space/state by beginning to break down the strict mark/surface binary. Both Rowley and Pollock analyse Frankenthaler's paintings in terms that move beyond the phallic logic of fort/da. As discussed in the previous section, Rowley and Pollock present the structure of painting as inextricably linked with a phallic structure of binary oppositions. At the same time, they argue that painting has the potential to transgress this structure. One way of doing this is by disturbing the distinction figure/ground.[101] Frankenthaler's soak-stain technique lets the diluted paint seep into the fabric, allowing the surface's texture to remain visible. This blurs the distinction between mark and surface as the two appear to partially merge.[102] Another way of disturbing the distinction between mark and surface, and presence and absence, is through the extensive use of unpainted areas of canvas. As these areas are not quite delimited by the painted stains, which hover between material presence and absence, they are allowed to "float free" and are not necessarily defined against the stains.[103] Yet

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[101] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 44.

[102] Ibid., 19, 53; Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 251, 258. Frankenthaler's painting, thus, approaches what Michael Newman calls "the condition of drawing," where the mark "touches" the surface, emphasising its texture rather than covering it. Newman points out that watercolour paintings and some of Paul Cézanne's paintings that make use of diluted oil paint attain this condition of drawing. Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 95. Indeed, Cézanne's late watercolour studies form an important precedent to Frankenthaler's work as Rowley demonstrates in *Helen Frankenthaler*, especially in chapter 1.

[103] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 20; Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 258. Pollock reads Frankenthaler's use of unpainted areas of canvas through Irigaray's description of girls' play. According to Irigaray "girls describe a space around themselves rather than displacing a substitute object from one place to another or into various places." Irigaray, "Gesture in Psychoanalysis," 99. Pollock suggests that Frankenthaler's use of paint, the ambiguous relationship she sets up between paint and canvas, and her use of large unmarked areas of canvas through which figures emerge, enable a play between absence and presence that is comparable to the making of a symbolic space in which the mother is not completely lost. Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 258–260.

another way of transgressing phallic logic is by emphasising painting's potential instability. Paint and canvas can exist as both material presences and as parts of a depicted narrative.[104] Colour itself is ambiguous as it is relational and mutable and can create a range of spatial effects.[105] For example, in Frankenthaler's *Mountains and Sea*, blue stains are at once diluted paint, sea, and receding space.[106] It, thus, becomes difficult to define them as one specific thing that is somehow opposed to the surface.[107]

IMAGE CANNOT BE REPRODUCED

Image 1.2:   Helen Frankenthaler, *Mountains and Sea*, 1952
              Oil and charcoal on unprimed canvas, 220 x 297.8 cm
              Collection Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc. © Helen Frankenthaler / Artists
              Rights Society (ARS), New York

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[104] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 70. This is effectively described by Joan Key who writes that in painting "the surface of the depicted bodies is always the body of the painted surface." Key, "Models of Painting Practice," 157.

[105] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 50, 70, 79. Jean-François Lyotard also argues for the instability of colour by making specific reference to the fort/da game. In the fort/da game, as I have discussed, the object is present, then absent, and so on. Lyotard argues that colour in a visual artwork, contains within it both presence and absence at once; it is a simultaneous appearance and disappearance. Thus, it contracts the two movements of fort/da into one, making itself unstable and causing a spasm. Lyotard, "Anamnesis," 115.

[106] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 85.

[107] The instability of colour appears in a somewhat different fashion in Elkins' discussion of drawing. He discusses drawings done on brilliantly coloured grounds such that "the paper surface comes forward, and weakens and disperses the drawing." Thus, colour is not only an attribute of the marking material but also of the surface. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 115.

Some of Agnes Martin's works suggest a different direction towards the in-between. Several of her grid drawings on canvas, such as *Leaf* (1965), involve fine pencil lines drawn close to each other, forming a weave. The drawn lines suggest an approximate repetition of the weave of the canvas.[108] The repetition is not exact as Martin usually drew more horizontal than vertical lines.[109] By partially repeating aspects of the surface, her marks cannot be seen as being completely separate from it. Rather they partially coincide with the surface, suggesting a relationship that cannot only be viewed through the mark/surface opposition.[110]

A similar situation occurs in Dorothea Rockburne's *Drawing Which Makes Itself* series. Some of these works involved folding a sheet of paper, drawing lines along the folded sides, unfolding it, and then, sometimes, drawing lines along the resulting creases. The artist's marks in this case become almost inseparable from the folds of the surface. Moreover, the making of the work, as Rosalind Krauss writes, depends on the "qualities inherent in the materials used: the dimensions of the edges of the paper and its diagonal folds; the double-sidedness natural to paper that makes flipping or reversing it possible; etc."[111] In a sense, decisions are deferred to the surface.[112]

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[108] Jaleh Mansoor argues that Martin's lines repetitively remake the rectangular borders of the surface. Mansoor also sees the instruments against which Martin drew her lines, that is, a ruler or a piece of string, as surrogates for the binding frame. Mansoor, "Self-Effacement, Self-Inscription," 155–156.

[109] Ibid., 156.

[110] I am not suggesting that this was Martin's aim. As far as I know, she did not discuss her works in terms of the relationship between her drawn lines and the weave of the canvas. Her statements and writings reveal an interest in an inner psychic realm, spirituality, beauty, creativity, and inspiration. Anastas, "Individual and Unreal," 135. Moreover, the fact that she made several grid drawings on paper suggests that she may have been more interested in the structure of the grid as such rather than in the relationship between mark and surface. However, as Christina Rosenberger argues, Martin paid attention to her materials, including the canvas fabric and its interaction with her drawn marks. Rosenberger, "A Sophisticated Economy of Means," 104–107.

[111] Krauss, "Sense and Sensibility," 48.

[112] Rockburne wrote in her diary about the work: ". . . a white sheet of paper which has an axis drawn on it: the paper then is folded in relation to this axis. The paper by copying the edge of where it has been leaves the traces of its own decision." Quoted in Stoops, *More than Minimal*, 73. In another note to herself, she wrote: "Construct an investigation of drawing which is based on information contained within the paper and not on any other information." Quoted in ibid., 72.

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Image 1.3:   Agnes Martin, *Leaf*, 1965
              Acrylic and graphite on canvas, 182.9 x 182.9 cm
              Photograph courtesy Pace Gallery, Modern Art Museum of
              Fort Worth
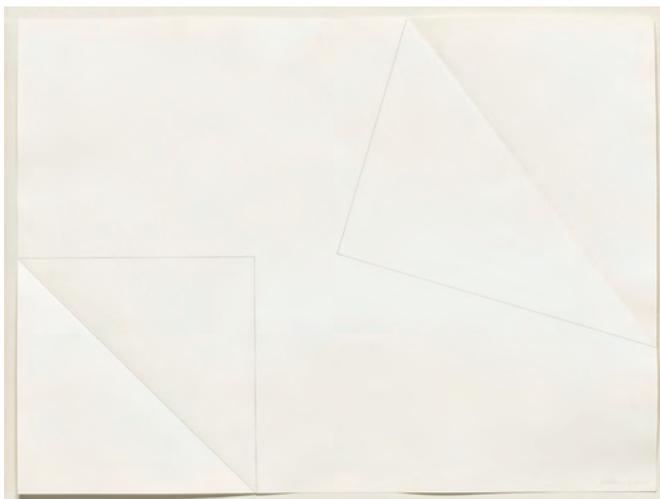
Image   Dorothea Rockburne, *Drawing Which Makes*
1.4:   *Itself (FPI 16)*, 1973
          Folded paper and ink, 76.2 x 101.5 cm
          New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).
          Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund. Acc.
          n.:303.1974. Digital image © 2015 The
          Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala,
          Florence

IMAGE CANNOT BE REPRODUCED

Image 1.5:   Dorothea Rockburne, *Drawing Which Makes Itself (RP #3)*, 1973
               Charcoal on paper, 76.2 x 101.6 cm
               Image courtesy Van Doren Waxter
               © 2015 Dorothea Rockburne / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Image 1.6:   Lai Chih-Sheng, *Life-Size Drawing*, 2012
              Pencil, marker and talc chalk drawing on walls, ceiling, tile grouting,
              concrete pillars, glass and brass balustrade, Hayward Gallery, London
              Images courtesy of the artist. © Lai Chih-Sheng

Lai Chih-Sheng has recently taken this logic of remaking folds in a surface further with his site-specific *Life-Size Drawing*.[113] This drawing involved tracing over all the lines within the exhibition space: the outer edges of walls, floor tiles, electric equipment, switches, signs, and so on. Lai Chih-Seng stated that "the work completely conforms to the real physical space that viewers are occupying, and is naturally placed in the areas of the space where surfaces meet and transition."[114] Given the marks' dependence on the surface/space, they almost disappear into it. In the first version of the drawing, all the lines were drawn using a thick black marker. After noticing some lines, it became possible to see all of them as they stood out against the space. In the second version, the artist used pencil, black marker, and white chalk. The pencil marks were the ones more likely to go unnoticed as they receded into the light-coloured background.

The dependence on features of the surface can be extended when the surface is already marked.[115] In 1966, Eva Hesse began to make a series of drawings on graph paper that involved drawing circles that fit within the printed squares.[116] While her ink marks partially stand out, differentiating themselves from the fainter blue-green printed lines, it is clear that their location and size depend on those lines. The pre-existing marks on the surface determine, in some ways, her marks. The surface is, thus, not treated as a "blank page" but rather contributes to the making of the artist's mark.[117] This shifts the relationship between them since we can no longer align the surface with passivity and absence and the artist's mark with activity and presence. Benjamin Buchloh argues that the graph paper "assumes the perplexing status of a printed diagrammatic order, simultaneously readable as ground and as figure,

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[113] To the best of my knowledge, this work was completed twice: in 2011 at Eslite Gallery in Taipei and in 2012 at the Hayward Gallery in London as part of the exhibition *Invisible: Art About the Unseen 1957–2012*.

[114] Quoted in *Invisible: Art About the Unseen 1957–2012*, 83.

[115] This, in a way, extends the mutual alteration between mark and surface that I referred to earlier. A surface may affect the making and viewing of marks placed on it. In the works discussed here, the surface and its pre-existing marks determine more aspects of the artist's marks.

[116] Hesse had tried out a number of marks that would fit within the square of the graph paper, such as crosses, diagonals and circles. Tuma, "Eva Hesse's Turn," 217.

[117] "Blankness" has little to do with whether a surface is completely flat and white or has pre-existing images on it. It has to do with how that surface is approached.

relegating if not dominating whatever 'figural' insertion it might receive."[118] Hesse's

marks appear "contingent, subordinate, if not submerged to the constraints the

pattern imposes."[119] I would say that her marks are not exactly subordinate to the

grid—they visually stand out—but neither do they dominate it—they fall within its

structure. Hesse's approach, thus, indicates another direction for accessing an in-

between since her marks partially "obey" a pre-existing printed structure.
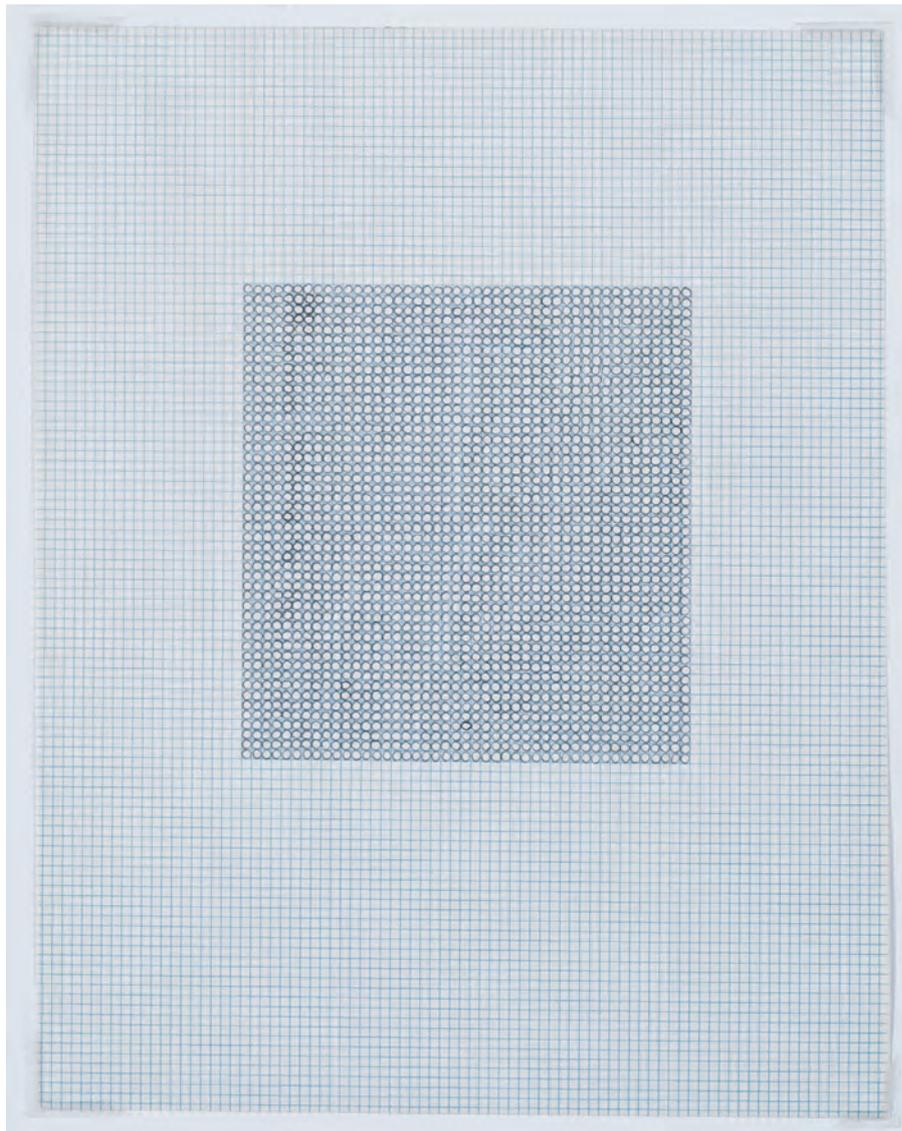
Image 1.7:   Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, 1967
               Ink on paper, 21.6 x 27.8 cm
               Tate Modern, London. © The Estate of Eva Hesse. Courtesy
               Hauser & Wirth. © Tate, London 2015.

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[118] Buchloh, "Hesse's Endgame," 148.

[119] Ibid.

Recent works by Louise Hopkins and Bracha L. Ettinger resonate with this approach that aims towards an interaction between pre-existing and painted or drawn marks. Hopkins traces over marks printed on mass-produced surfaces, such as fabrics. Ettinger paints over photocopied photographs, following the method of production of the image. In both cases, there is partial erasure and partial repetition of the pre-existing marks.[120]

Image 1.8:   Louise Hopkins, *Retaliator*, 2010
               Oil on reverse of furnishing fabric, diptych 61 x 25 cm
               Image courtesy of the artist. © Louise Hopkins

Image 1.9:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Eurydice*, No. 15, 1994–1998
               Oil, xerography with photocopic dust, pigment and ashes on paper mounted
               on canvas, 36.8 x 27 cm
               Image published in Lichtenberg Ettinger, *Artworking 1985–1999*, 108
               Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

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[120] Hopkins' and Ettinger's works are discussed in depth in the following chapters.

Works such as these demonstrate that a clear differentiation between mark and surface is only one option. In practice, the mark/surface relationship is one that covers a continuum and is not necessarily confined within an either/or mould. This continuum or in-between space/state can be accessed in various ways, as the works discussed in this section show. Because of this diversity in approaches, I refrain from defining precisely the in-between of mark and surface beyond saying that, as a structure, it does not fall within phallic logic. The next step is to try to further articulate this by turning to texts once again.

"A DIFFERENT KIND OF RELATIONS TO THE OTHER"

A possibility for conceptualising a non-phallic in-between emerges through Bracha L. Ettinger's theorisation of the Matrix.[121] According to Griselda Pollock, Ettinger's work is ground-breaking as it enables the theorisation of a sexual difference *from* the feminine as opposed to the feminine being the negative other.[122] My interest in her theory lies primarily in the structure of relationships made possible from a matrixial perspective. Ettinger's work makes it possible to consider relationships that are not based on rejection or assimilation of the other, who, in the phallic model, becomes the ground against which the subject constitutes him/herself. Her propositions enable the thinking of relations between several partial-others, all of whom participate in subjectivity-as-encounter, co-transforming each other.

Ettinger's theorisation is a critique of classical Freudian and early Lacanian theory. She argues that the phallus as symbol does not cover the entire symbolic network and neither does it include all possible approaches towards the Other and the object.[123] The problem with the Lacanian paradigm, according to Ettinger, is that "the

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[121] Ettinger developed this theory through several texts, beginning from the early 1990s to the present. As she explains, she was using the terms "matrix" and "metramorphosis" as "a private language" in her notebooks since 1985. She began combining these concepts with psychoanalytic theory in 1989–1990. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 197.

[122] Pollock, "To Inscribe in the Feminine," 86. Several other theorists, including Brian Massumi and Judith Butler, have also addressed the importance of Ettinger's work as a feminist intervention in psychoanalysis, ethics, and subjectivity studies.

[123] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 43, 48.

phallic is defined as the *symbolic* and the *symbolic* is defined as the phallic."[124] As a result, sexual difference ends up with only one signifier and becomes a matter of having that signifier or not.[125] Even though the phallus is presented as neutral, Ettinger sees it as masculine.[126] This further suggests that the concept of man is equal to the concept of subject and the concept of woman is its impossibility.[127] Moreover, pregnancy, the womb, pre-natality, and the archaic ground of the feminine maternal body are foreclosed, effectively excluded from the subjectivising process and the Symbolic.[128]

Ettinger uses Freud's theory of the uncanny and Lacan's late theories to conceptualise a beyond-the-phallus feminine dimension.[129] According to Ettinger, intra-uterine fantasies, as identified by Freud, "point to a primary recognition of an outside to the *me*, which is composed of the inside of an-other (the womb—the *matrix*)."[130] She sees these as "traces of *joint* recordings of experience relating to feminine invisible bodily specificity and to late prenatal conditions, emanating from

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[124] Ibid., 49.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid., 47.

[127] Ibid., 57. As Ettinger writes, woman in Lacanian theory is associated with the Real—which is seen as lack—or with radical otherness. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 187. Ettinger argues that for Lacan, woman occupies paradoxical positions. She is an *objet a*—a lack in the realm of the Real—the radical Other, and a hole in the Other (when Other is taken to be the symbolic Other, language and culture). Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 15–17. As *objet a* she becomes that which has to be lost for subjectivity to emerge. Thus, "one may be either in the place of the subject or in the place of the objet a but not in both simultaneously." Ibid., 17. The *objet a* can be understood as the residue of the split from the Real, a trace that does not form part of the Symbolic. Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "Supplementary Jouissance," 164–165.

[128] Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 176, 184–185, 187, 190, 193–194, 197–198.

[129] Extensive discussions of Lacanian theory and its relation to Matrixial theory are found in Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," "The Matrixial Gaze," and Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Feminine/Prenatal Weaving in Matrixial Subjectivity-as-Encounter." For my purposes here, I am focusing on the structure and processes Ettinger proposes for relating to an other. The specifics of how her theorisation relates to Lacan as well as to other psychoanalytic theorists is beyond the scope of this text.

[130] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 40–41. Ettinger discusses the uncanny and Freud's identification of "womb-fantasies" in "The Matrixial Gaze," 47–48. She argues that womb fantasies have been "*excluded by inclusion*" within castration phantasies. Ibid., 47. She proposes that womb fantasies must be seen as different from and coexisting with castration fantasies. This leads her to propose a different path towards subjectivity that does not pass through castration. Ibid., 48.

joint bodily contacts and joint psychic *borderspace.*"[131] The traces inscribed through the late intra-uterine prenatal events are sub-symbolic yet discernible and "can filter into the ulterior developmental phases, potentially creating symbolic traces in the *après-coup.*"[132] She proposes that "a certain awareness of a borderspace shared with an intimate stranger and of a joint *co-emergence in difference* is a feminine dimension in subjectivity" and it alternates with the phallic dimension "of being *one*, either separate or fused."[133] She calls this feminine dimension of subjectivity "matrix" and she models it on the structure and processes of the late prenatal stages of pregnancy.[134] The potentiality of this matrixial sphere "is at work all throughout life," "in-forming the Self, the Other and the Cosmos."[135]

Ettinger conceptualises the late prenatal stages of pregnancy as "a highly structured stratum" rather than one that is undifferentiated, as in classical accounts of psychoanalysis.[136] Mother and foetus coexist in a situation where one is the *I* and the other the *non-I*.[137] They relate to each other in a non-threatening manner and develop together yet differently—the foetus as a future baby and the pregnant woman as a mother-to-be. Within this conceptualisation, pregnancy is not understood as containing but as resonating together.[138] The intra-uterine encounter "represents, reflects, and can serve as a model for the *matrixial stratum of subjectivisation*, a shared multiple subjectivity in which elements which discern one another without knowing each other co-emerge and co-habit a shared space, with neither fusion nor

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[131] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 41.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ettinger always points out that she is dealing with the very late stages of pregnancy, when the foetus is at a post-mature stage. As such, Matrixial theory does not interfere with women's rights to make decisions about their bodies. Ibid., 61n3.

[135] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 15.

[136] Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 176.

[137] Pollock points out that the choice of the word "non" rather than "not" is important. The word "not" suggests "an adamant Otherness" whereas "non" suggests "a minimal, constantly mobile, and shaping differentiation between subjects who are in a constant play of mutual affecting that can be as solacing as it may be traumatising." Pollock, "Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference?" 11.

[138] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 28.

rejection."[139] The Matrix is then proposed as a supplementary signifier in the Symbolic.[140] In Western culture and throughout history, Ettinger explains, the Matrix is repressed and the phallus is idealised, thus, giving the Oedipal stage/structure cultural priority over other structures. Consequently, "an ideal masculine development has become the norm by which all individuals are measured."[141] Ettinger presents the Matrix as a feminine signifier—with feminine being understood as *originary difference* and not as the opposite of masculine.[142] Feminine sexual difference connected to bodily specificity allows women a double access to the Matrix.[143] Even so, the Matrix belongs to the general human symbolic network, available to everyone.[144]

In order to approximate and give a sense of the particular nature of the matrixial borderspace, the structure of which is primarily what interests me here, Ettinger proposes several terms that hover at the limits of language and common sense. She writes:

> The Matrix is an unconscious space of the simultaneous co-emergence and co-fading of the *I* and the uncognised *non-I* which is neither fused, nor rejected. It is based on feminine/pre-natal interrelations and exhibits a shared borderspace in which what I call *differentiation-in-co-emergence* and

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[139] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "Matrix: Beyond the Phallus," 13–14.

[140] The Matrix is not meant to be seen as a physical organ, even though one of its meanings is womb, but as "a concept and symbol that points towards the Real and invokes imaginary 'feminine' structures" as well as "recognisable traces of sub-symbolic operations." Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 42.

[141] Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 177.

[142] Griselda Pollock clarifies: "This feminine is not to be understood as 'of women' (a gendering term signifying a negative difference within the phallic semantic universe). Nor is it in any sense derived from our currently gendered ascriptions of qualities to such 'women' (positively or negatively). It is a logical proposition of a dimension of psychic structuring by which all subjects, irrespective of later, Oedipal sex/gendering as boy or girl, and later sexual orientations, are potentially subjectivised: thus it is feminine in a non-phallic, non-Oedipal, non-gendering redefinition of a dimension of the subjectivising processes that is, none the less, sexuate and sexuating because it is 'born' in relation both to feminine sexual specificity and desire." Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 26.

[143] According to Ettinger, women experience the Matrix in a double manner: as infants with-in the mother's body and as persons that have the potential to carry an-other with-in their bodies. Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 45–46, 47.

[144] Ibid., 41. Ettinger explains: "The matrix . . . designates a non-phallic *real* and evokes an imaginary dimension that is supplementary to the *phallus* as well as non-phallic desire and sublimation. At the symbolic level, the *matrix* is no more feminine than the *phallus* is masculine: it is a mark of difference." Ibid.

> *distance-in-proximity* are continuously re-honed and re-organised by
> metramorphosis (accompanied by matrixial affects) created by—and further
> creating—*relations-without-relating* on the borders of presence and absence,
> object and subject, me and the stranger.[145]

This stratum involves modes of relating that are substantially different from the
absence/presence and fusion/separation binaries discussed earlier. It requires a
radical shift in perspective, a conceptual leap to a parallel universe.[146]

The Matrix is a web of "alliances between *I* and *non-I* in the midst of becoming
and emerging, or eclipsing and fading away."[147] These are reciprocal yet non-
symmetrical operations—*I* and *non-I* co-emerge and co-fade in difference. The *non-I* is
not seen as an intruder but as a partner in difference.[148] *I* and *non-I* are not
completely separated—they are "separated-in-jointness"—and neither are they
completely fused—they are "joined-in-difference."[149] The "relative separation" between
them "co-emerges at the same moment as the *I* and the *non-I*" and leads to distance-
in-proximity.[150] Distance-in-proximity is not a combination of or compromise between
total fusion and total separation. Instead, "it is a basic position in which a relative
distance is not opened by loss, but is there from the start."[151] This distance is

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[145] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 125.

[146] In what follows, I try to give an account of the matrixial relationships as I
understand them. My sense is that these relationships cannot be defined exactly. Their
names are not capitalised terms with fixed definitions and they tend to shift from text
to text. For example, absence-with-presence, presence-in-absence, absence-in-
presence, and presabsence are all terms Ettinger has used to describe the re-attuning
between presence and absence in the matrixial stratum. When discussing the
translation of Ettinger's work in French, Dimitra Douskos, pointed out that the word
"borderlinking" in a specific text was translated in several different ways and that
Ettinger decided where to use each translation, depending on the context. Douskos,
"Translating into French, Translating into Language." This further suggests to me that
her terms are not to be treated as unique and capitalised. As Ettinger herself notes,
choosing one name or concept, and, thus, separating and categorising, can be
considered as a phallic process. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 196. The
slight changes between terms from text to text may be seen as a matrixial operation.
This aspect of Ettinger's work is beyond the scope of this project. A very useful
discussion of Ettinger's terms is given by Anna Johnson in "Nomad-Words."

[147] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 45.

[148] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "Matrix: Beyond the Phallus," 13.

[149] Ettinger, "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine," 192, 204.

[150] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 13.

[151] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 133. As Anna
Johnson points out, the term involves "the synchronic 'reconciliation' of markedly

continually re-adjusted, re-attuned, and negotiated "within togetherness or proximity."[152] Co-emergence involves "relative approaching," which "is not a loving incorporation," while co-fading involves "relative separating," which "is not a hating expulsion."[153] Rather, "the effect of pleasure is connected with regulation of mid-tones of closeness and remoteness linked to a certain awareness of separateness or to difference in intimacy, proximity or togetherness."[154] Differentiation, or minimal difference, arises "through oscillations of distance-in-proximity."[155] The matrixial web vibrates. Ettinger suggests two more terms to describe these trembling and volatile relationships: borderspacing and borderlinking. Borderspacing participates in co-fading. It is the "transforming and differentiating of the *I* and *non-I* by opening the space" along a connective string between them right up to the edge of dissolution of their links.[156] Borderlinking participates in co-emergence. It is the "transforming and differentiating of the *I* and *non-I* by bounding" through "reattuning in jointness" along a connective string between them.[157] Borderlinking and borderspacing happen in parallel.[158]

In addition to the changes they undergo, *I* and *non-I* exchange traces. Ettinger calls the various "processes of change and exchange" that occur in the Matrix metramorphosis.[159] While the phallus is associated with metaphor and metonymy, as two processes of the unconscious, the Matrix, as a supplementary signifier in the Symbolic, is associated with metramorphosis.[160] The insertion of the letter "r" in

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heterogeneous or opposed terms, and the figuration of diachronic heterogeneity within movement." Johnson, "Nomad-Words," 231.

[152] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 12.

[153] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 132.

[154] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 14.

[155] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 132. Ettinger discusses an archaic minimal difference in "The Matrixial Gaze," 56.

[156] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 13.

[157] Ibid., 13–14.

[158] Ettinger, "From Proto-Ethical Compassion to Responsibility," 104.

[159] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines, 44.

[160] Freud associated the unconscious with the processes of condensation and displacement. Condensation involves condensing related elements into new unities while displacement involves displacing qualities of an element onto another element. Freud, "Revision of the Theory of Dreams," 49–50. According to Lacan, these correspond to the linguistic processes of metaphor and metonymy which become the

"metamorphosis" changes the word from after-form/following-form (passage to a new changed form, transformation) to womb-form/matrix-form.[161] According to Rosi Huhn, "in contrast to metamorphosis, each of the new forms and shapes of the metramorphosis does not send the nature of each of the preceding ones into oblivion or even eliminate it, but lets it shine through the transparency, disarranges and leads an existence of multitude rather than unity."[162] Instead of transforming one entity into another, metramorphosis allows several entities to transgress their borderlines and transform each other asymmetrically, without replacing or eliminating each other and without one dominating over the others. The co-emerging and co-fading *I* and *non-I* are both transforming and transformed, active and passive.[163] This is also different to how metaphor and metonymy operate. They involve displacement, substitution and condensation. Metramorphosis, writes Carolyn Ducker, accounts "for processes which do not involve single unities acting through condensation or displacement, but which instead provide changes and transformations, not supplanting or deferring the signifier, but mutually altering the meaning which they create."[164]

Metramorphosis is creative, multidirectional and transgressive. It is created by relations-without-relating and, in turn, creates relations-without-relating "on the

two main processes of meaning formation. Lacan, *Écrits*, 172–189. As Grosz explains, metonymy is "the relation between two terms linked by contiguity, where one takes the place of or represents the other" while "metaphor is the relation between two terms linked by similarity where one takes the place of the other." Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 99. Both cases involve substitution—one thing taking the place of other things—and, according to Ettinger, this makes them phallic processes. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 188.

[161] Γ. Μπαμπινιώτης [G. Mbambiniotis], *Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* [Dictionary of Modern Greek], 2nd ed., s. vv. "μετά," "μεταμορφώνω," "μεταμόρφωση."

[162] Huhn, "Moving Omissions and Hollow Spots into the Field of Vision," 8.

[163] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 83. Ettinger has also referred to this state as "active passivity." Ettinger, "Uncanny Awe," 7.

[164] Ducker, *Translating the Matrix*, 5. Huhn offers an additional understanding of the term "metramorphosis." According to Huhn, metramorphosis is composed of the prefix metra (uterus) and Morpheus, the Greek god of sleep and dreams. The combination of womb and dream in the term "metramorphosis," suggests for Huhn that a "birth-giving principle" and a "dream-creating principle" are involved in the Matrix. Thus, the feminine is not eliminated during the creative process and the mother is not substituted by an art piece, turning the male artist into a creator (or into a "male mother" that is "spiritually pregnant" as Battersby writes, quoting Nietzsche). The Matrix does not allow the substitution of the feminine during artistic creation but preserves it "as a constitutive element" and "a legitimate creative principle." Huhn, "Moving Omissions and Hollow Spots into the Field of Vision," 8–9; Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, 176.

borders of presence and absence, in the in-between sphere of matrixial pres-

absence."[165] Relations-without-relating escape the structure of relating/not relating

which is associated with fusion/rejection.[166] Ettinger writes,

> Metramorphosis is the becoming-threshold of a borderline which allows for
> relations-without-relating between co-emerging *I(s)* and unknown Other(s). It
> is the transgression of a borderlink, its transmissibility, its conductability. It is
> also the becoming-borderline of a threshold, without its freezing into a
> frontier. Metramorphosis allows for the creation of new borderlinks,
> thresholds and margins.[167]

Metramorphosis has no focus and it does not create centres within the Matrix. It may

have a momentary centre but that "always slides away towards the peripheries."[168]

This continual shifting prevents hierarchies from setting up. Moreover,

metramorphosis does not emphasise or reinforce each element participating in the

process, "nor their first and last positions," but rather highlights "the borderspaces

and the passageways connecting the elements, transforming and creating its network

by the same gesture."[169] It focuses on the in-betweens and on the transformations or

re-tunings of in-between moments/states, "in-between not-yet appearance and

almost-disappearance."[170] It is "the shared borderlines and borderlinks—more than

each element," that "are sources of creation and transformation."[171]

Metramorphosis also "allows for the redistribution of traces of affects,

sensations, emotions, libidinal energies and phantasies, and for exchanges of with-in-

formation between co-emerging *I(s)* and *non-I(s).*"[172] The emergence of the *I* in the

phallic sphere entails loss and, according to Ettinger, so does the co-emergence of *I*

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[165] Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 181.

[166] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 85.

[167] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 129–130.

[168] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 45.

[169] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "Matrix: Beyond the Phallus," 15. Ettinger also calls
metramorphosis borderswerving. Borderswerving involves spacing, deviation,
digression and deflection and leads to differentiation through borderspacing and
borderlinking. Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 182; Ettinger, "Trans-Subjective
Transferential Borderspace," 222.

[170] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 83.

[171] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 128.

[172] Ibid., 129–130.

and *non-I* in the matrixial sphere.[173] In the Matrix, however, "what is lost to the one can be inscribed as traces in the other, and *metramorphosis* can allow the passage of these traces from the *non-I* to *I*."[174] This results in less extreme and more positive effects than those produced within a phallic stratum. In the matrixial sphere, it makes no sense distinguishing between having and not having. Relative separation in intimacy, difference in co-emergence and co-fading, and non-knowing can be pleasurable since the *I* does not feel hate or use aggression towards the other or try to own the other.[175]

In my view, Matrix and metramorphosis convey a state of in-betweeness, severality, and rapport. The in-between that is excluded from binary phallic logic here returns and manages to rise to borderline appearance and meaning.[176] Terms such as distance-in-proximity and relations-without-relating bring apparent opposites together in a different, more open, and ambiguous relationship where the two terms continuously negotiate and re-negotiate their differences. They signify "impossible positions"—impossible, that is, within a phallic sphere of either/or oppositions.[177] In the matrixial sphere, these terms are "between-instants," "conjoint instants of and-and or neither/nor, ever so paradoxical in terms of the phallic dimension."[178] The matrixial parallel universe does not fall under phallic law but instead hovers "in the im-pure zone of *neither* day *nor* night, of *both* light *and* darkness."[179]

The implications of the matrixial stratum for rethinking subjectivity and the relation to the other are enormous. In the Matrix, there is no *I* without an unknown *non-I* and the *I* and the *non-I* cannot be seen as whole, unitary and separate subjects

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[173] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 60.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 13.

[176] The Matrix is not pre-Symbolic but rather sub-Symbolic, even if it accounts for the pre-Oedipal. It enlarges the Symbolic while still being within its scope. Ducker, *Translating the Matrix*, 9. Thus, the feminine-matrixial is no longer the unintelligible and unperceivable but a subjacent sub-symbolic network. Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 64. Unlike elementary phallic operations, the emphasis moves "from symbols and representations to sub-symbolic transformations reaching borderline awareness of relations-without-relating." Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 128.

[177] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 112.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid., 109.

or as one another's objects, even if that is how they are seen from a phallic angle.[180] As Ettinger writes, "relations-without-relating transform the uncognised other and me and turn both of us into partial-subjects."[181] In the matrixial sphere, partial-subjects discern each other as unknown *non-I* without abolishing differences to make the other a same in order to accept him/her, and without attacking and expelling so that only one of them can occupy the physical/mental territory.[182] Instead, the other is recognised "in his/her otherness, difference, and unknown-ness."[183] Subjectivity becomes an encounter "in which partial subjects co-emerge and co-fade through continual retunings and transformations."[184] In subjectivity-as-encounter the subject/object and self/other binaries cannot be sustained since "no other is an absolute separate Other."[185] As Ettinger writes, "relations-without-relating and distance-in-proximity preserve the co-emerging Other as both subject and object without turning the Other into an object only; and they preserve the matrixial woman as both subject and object, not as object or Other only."[186] The m/Other, the feminine, and woman are no longer the inaccessible Other or the lost object but a partial-object, partial-subject, partial-Other.[187] In the Matrix, the *I* and *non-I* are "partial-subjects

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[180] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 41.

[181] Ettinger, "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine," 194. The terms "partial-subject" and "partial-object" emphasise partialisation and not separation. That is, partial-subjects and partial-objects, as Ettinger states, "do not come about as a result of separation from organs" or from others. Quoted in Massumi, "Painting: The Voice of the Grain," 225n15. They are not fragments defined negatively in relation to a whole from which they have been separated but an expression of "creative aggregation" and linkage. Massumi, "Painting: The Voice of the Grain," 225n15. Other terms Ettinger has used to describe this partialisation include "grain" and "crumb." These are not the result of fragmentation but are "not-one from the beginning." Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 28.

[182] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 44.

[183] Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 200.

[184] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 41.

[185] Ettinger, "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine," 194.

[186] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 72.

[187] Ibid., 41. Ettinger clarifies that "as a consequence of this sexual difference stemming from the feminine, the 'woman-not-All' is not the Other but the co-emerging partial self and Other, or a different kind of relations to the Other." Ibid., 72. She also calls a partial alterity that infiltrates the I "Otherity." Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 190. Another term she uses is "border-Other." Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Feminine Pre-Natal Weaving," 390.

and partial-objects for each other."[188] They coexist in an "intermediary state of presence-in-absence and absence-in-presence" and are constituted along with the matrixial web—borderspace, borderlinks, and process of subjectivisation are created together.[189] Ettinger also describes the coexistence of *I* and *non-I* as "besidedness," which suggests "an unconditional side-by-side-ness."[190] Instead of assimilation, rejection or substitution, we have besidedness of partial-others.

This model extends beyond psychoanalysis and "implies a special connection between the *I* and the stranger/Other on the cultural or sociological level."[191] Ettinger's hypothesis "is that such relations occur between internal psychic partial subjects and part-objects, and also between the subject, other subjects and external objects: in parallel to phallic relations, on an alternative track."[192] These relations can also encompass both human and non-human participants.[193] At any stage in life, and in a variety of contexts, several *I(s)* and *non-I(s)* can co-emerge and co-fade while creating a web through "sufficiently intense borderlinking" and "sufficiently intense borderspacing."[194] This web contracts when appropriation, manipulation, or rejection take over.[195]

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[188] Ettinger, "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine," 196.

[189] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 128, 133.

[190] Ettinger, "From Proto-Ethical Compassion to Responsibility," 109.

[191] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 43–44. For example, she refers to attitudes towards minority groups and the possibility of seeing them as unknown others. Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 207n11.

[192] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 127. In Object Relations theory, part objects are images of body parts with which the infant relates due to their mechanisms or functions, such as the breast. Greenberg and Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, 124–125, 130–136.

[193] Ettinger, "The Art-and-Healing Oeuvre," 201. In addition, Ettinger has clarified that when she refers to encounters these do not have to be between two people. An encounter can be "between a painting hand and the ashes of a photocopy machine." Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 40. That is, even elements without consciousness, like photocopic grains, can be part of the Matrix. Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 51. It is precisely this aspect of the theorisation I draw on to think about the encounter between mark and surface. More recently, Ettinger has stated that when she refers to subject she is not only referring to individuals. The term can also be understood as "form, content, space, matter." Ettinger, in discussion with Subrealism Postgraduate Symposium participants, Boston College, Dublin, October 11, 2014.

[194] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 16.

[195] Ibid.

The partialisation, plurality and shareability that permeate the matrixial sphere suggest that subjectivity cannot be counted in ones. "An assemblage of partial-subjects," Ettinger writes, "is less than a subject and more than a subject."[196] Each partial-subject is less than one since it is partialised. At the same time, it is always connected with several partial-others in a shared borderspace and its borderlines are in constant negotiation with these others. It is, thus, more than one. The matrixial borderspace, as Ettinger effectively puts it, is both trans-subjective and sub-subjective.[197] In fact, Ettinger insists on severality:

> By severality (and not multiplicity) I intend an ensemble of subjective instances arising in different individuals by way of traces spread in a web composed of several participants that are transformed and transforming one another in a shareable eventing, whose traces are inscribed both directly and in a crossed manner in the one and in the other and over to other webs. Thus, the matrixial psychic space concerns shareability yet evades collective community and organised society. The several is a specific configuration. Not 'one.' Not 'two' in symbiosis or intersubjective relations, not Oedipalising 'three' and not 'collective unconscious.'[198]

Consequently, the Matrix avoids utopian calls for endless multiplicity and remains situated in specific encounters between several partial elements. Moreover, by refusing infinite multiplicity, it avoids becoming the opposite of the phallic "One." As Griselda Pollock writes, the relationship "one/infinite is part of a phallic binary and to move from one to the infinite is not, in fact, a shifting of its logic."[199]

The matrixial structure presents a different mechanism for meaning production than the phallic structure. Instead of alternations between presence and absence, in the matrixial encounter we have "continual attuning and readjustment of distance-in-proximity," as described earlier. Ettinger suggests that,

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[196] Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 196.

[197] Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," 218. In more recent texts, Ettinger introduces the concepts of transubject and transject. She writes, "when we are actualised as coemerging *I* and *non-I*—no more only partial-objects and partial-subjects but also transubjects and transjects, between presence and absence—by way of affective sharing in/by fascinance, awe and compassion-before-empathy, virtual psychic trajectories open and reopen, and what was once a missed encounter conceives new passage-lanes." Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 10.

[198] Ettinger, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," 219.

[199] Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 25.

this creates primary meanings as borderlinks, as becoming-with, as shareability in trauma, and differentiation in its tracing in co-emergence, and not as absence related to an invisible figure of difference. There is not even a scansion of the in/out or the on/off (or any other variation of the presence/absence). Such scansion is always linked to the subject as One versus the Other or the world, and to transformation as castration.[200]

Instead, meaning arises "in the slight movements in-between closeness and remoteness or proximity and distance, alongside or before alternations of presence/absence."[201] This suggests "a borderline way of 'making sense' for 'feeling' and 'thought' elements."[202] Ettinger draws on Francisco Varela's work which argues that it is connectivity, the dynamic network of interactions within a system, that creates transformation and meaning. "Meaning is not carried inside symbols" but "is inseparable from the history of their transformation and the transformation itself is inseparable from this making sense."[203] As such, within the Matrix, meaning is the "transgression of a borderlink, a being transformed by and transforming each other's phantasies, after their passage through a shared borderspace."[204] Ettinger's phrase "*co-meaning* of co-emergence" encapsulates this mutual transformation and transgression, this meaning that can only arise *with* an other.[205]

Even though the Matrix is proposed as a symbolic signifier, it does not replace the phallic sphere but coexists with it, in-forming a *beside*.[206] Sometimes the *I* is phallic, alone and separate from the other phallic *non-I* or fused with it, and sometimes the *I* is matrixial, a partial-subject in a matrix of *I–non-I*. The matrixial and phallic strata alternate constantly in relation to the same objects or events and the

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[200] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 87.

[201] Ibid., 82. Earlier I briefly referred to Lyotard's discussion of appearance and disappearance being bound up in the same movement, in a spasm. Compared to this spasm, the Matrix involves co-spasming since it is an encounter between several partial-others. Ettinger, "Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing," 90–93.

[202] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 134.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 66.

[205] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 103.

[206] Ibid., 105. Thus, the "before"—the "inscriptions of/from and in relationship to a female corporeal specificity"—becomes a "beside." Ibid. 106–107.

same object can be phallic at one moment and matrixial in the next.[207] Moreover, the Matrix is not the opposite of the phallus—if it were, then it would be structured by it as not-phallus and would fall under phallic logic. Instead, the Matrix, as a signifier, is outside the system of binaries—it is more-than-one and less-than-one. Whereas the phallus deals with reality from the perspective of whole subjects, unity, sameness, oneness, Oedipal castration, symmetry, metaphor, and metonymy, the Matrix offers alternate views from the perspective of partialisation, severality, partial alterity, difference, in-betweeness, asymmetry, metramorphosis, and the unknown. It, thus, offers a supplementary symbolic perspective, "a shift aside the *phallus*, a shift inside the *symbolic.*"[208]

As Ettinger has stated, she developed this Matrixial theory through insights gained during the act of painting.[209] I agree with Rowley that this is not surprising.[210] The instability and unpredictability of the painting process exposed "impossible positions of the *and-and* and the *in-ter-with* the Other."[211] Ettinger was then able to develop and further conceptualise these "seeds" of thought through psychoanalytic theory, leading to a challenging of psychoanalytic norms.[212] Returning to marking, Ettinger's Matrixial theory enables the conceptualisation of different kinds of relationships between mark and surface and the articulation of dimensions that are non-Oedipal. Pollock expounds:

> The painting is always a substitution, an already displaced site of play that itself is already a metaphor for the process of negotiating meaning through absence. Yet, it can also be the place for an interference from another level or stratum of matrixial subjectivity that co-exists with the phallic organisation, even though phallic culture and its theories of both meaning and the subject have repressed its recognition. It is a matrixial insight that allows the co-existence of both the proposition that painting as an activity is ruled by the

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[207] Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 41.

[208] Ibid., 49.

[209] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 94; Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 37.

[210] Rowley, "An Introduction to Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger's 'Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing'," 86.

[211] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 112.

[212] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 11.

logic of *fort-da* and one open to this transgression of the borderlines which intimates this other management of difference through the joint borderspace where several partial-subjects almost encounter each other at the spot of the painter's touch at the limits of the visible—even though that gesture, in a phallic prism, enacts the mark/no mark, on/off logic of the phallic order of signification and subjectivity.[213]

If a clear mark/surface differentiation can be associated with a phallic stratum of subjectivity and the assimilation or rejection of the other, then other kinds of mark/surface relationships can point towards different attitudes towards the other, as the case of Ettinger makes clear. Moreover, Matrixial theory can be placed alongside artworks to enable different conceptualisations of mark/surface relationships. Both Pollock and Rowley have drawn on Ettinger's theory when analysing Helen Frankenthaler's technique of staining as blurring the difference between mark and surface, such that they are no longer "others."[214] Rowley suggests that the stain technique functions with every other element in Frankenthaler's painting in a partial way and this eventually leads Rowley to a matrixial reading of the paintings.

MOVING FORWARD (OR, RATHER, SIDEWAYS)

In October 2008, I came across a used sheet of vinyl flooring. With Ettinger's theorisation in mind, a theorisation I had encountered about five months earlier, I decided to use that surface to make work. I embarked on a series of experiments, trying to come up with marks that somehow responded to the surface. Instead of focusing solely on my marks, I focused on the encounter *with* the surface—the other to my marks—right from the beginning. My experiments led to marks that resembled stains and that partially disappeared into the printed pattern of the surface. I spent a great deal of time looking at the work, trying to understand it. My encounters with this work, with Matrixial theory, and with works by some of the artists discussed earlier, as well as the potential interactions of these encounters, shifted my interest from a

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[213] Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 261.

[214] Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women"; Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*. In the following chapters, I use quotes for the word "other" when I want to point out its phallic implications, that is, when I want to emphasise the possibility of viewing otherness as radical and oppositional alterity within the phallic sphere of meaning creation.

general exploration of the relationship between mark and surface to a specific

exploration of the *in-between state/space* of mark and surface.

The more general question of the relationship between mark and surface has

been asked before. It is a basic issue for anyone involved in fields such as painting and

drawing, even if it may not be consciously considered.[215] It is surprising then that the

specific issue of the *in-between* does not appear to have been extensively explored.

Even though I have not provided an exhaustive list of artists and works, there were few

artists I encountered through my research whose work deals with the in-between of

mark and surface in a focused and sustained way.[216] Likewise, even though many texts

exist that deal with marks in detail, there are far fewer dealing with marks *in relation*

to the specific surfaces they are placed on or that attempt to theorise an in-between—

that is, a different, non-oppositional relationship between mark and surface.[217]

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[215] As Jodi Hauptman points out, the questions "how to make a mark?" and "on what ground?" are the basic questions in drawing. Hauptman, "Drawing from the Modern," 15.

[216] I am referring to the artists already discussed in the chapter. I am not claiming that the aims of these artists specifically revolved around the relationship between mark and surface, although in some cases, as with Louise Hopkins for instance, that is true. Several of these artists' works, however, do involve an exploration of a non-oppositional relationship between mark and surface. It is of course very likely that there are others whose work deals with this issue. If there were many more, however, I believe I would have come across some of them while searching through catalogues. Thus, while I am sure there are others, I do not think there are a lot of others. In addition to the artists already mentioned in the chapter, the other artists and works I have come across that deal in some way with a non-oppositional relationship between mark and surface include: some of Hanne Darboven's *Construction* drawings (1960s), Josef Albers' *Structural Constellation* drawings (1950s), some of Carl Andre's, Lawrence Weiner's, Agnes Denes', and Rachel Whiteread's drawings on graph paper, some of Yoshitomo Nara's drawings on ukiyo-e prints (1999), some of Arnulf Rainer's, Rudolf Fila's and Dr Lakra's works on printed images, Ellen Gallagher's works on lined paper and magazine advertisements, and Rivane Neuenschwander's works on comic book pages. All of these works involve marks that follow some aspect of the surface or pre-existing image such that a different relationship may be suggested between mark and surface. Moreover, some historical precedents that involve interventions on found images and, thus, a more ambiguous relationship between mark and surface include Marcel Duchamp's *Apolinère Enameled* (1916–1917) and *L. H. O. O. Q.* (1919), several of Max Ernst's overpaintings, and Johannes Theodor Baargeld's *The Red King* (1920).

[217] I have already referred to several texts that point out the importance of the surface or that attend to the relationship between mark and surface in terms that are not oppositional. Some other texts include: Schwarz, "'Not a Drawing'," in which he discusses works that foreground the materiality of the surface; Schapiro, "On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art," in which he discusses irregular or unprepared surfaces and their properties; Hauptman, "Drawing from the Modern," in which she acknowledges the importance of any surface to a work.

The artists I have discussed whose work explores the in-between—Martin, Rockburne, Lai, Hesse, Hopkins and Ettinger—focus on the structure of the surface or on pre-existing images. Martin's marks depend on the structure of the canvas weave. Rockburne's depend on the folds she has made on the paper. Lai Chih-Sheng's lines follow the structure of the space while Eva Hesse's drawn circles are arranged according to the existing grid. Finally, Hopkins' and Ettinger's marks follow a pre-existing image that is both partially covered or erased and partially remade.[218] Martin's, Rockburne's and Lai's approach results in marks that visually recede into the surface. This is emphasised in Lai's work, which is not presented as a stretched painting or framed drawing as in the case of Martin's and Rockburne's works. As such, his marks recede into space.

It seems to me that there are more ways of accessing an in-between state/space through marking a surface, beyond these. For example, what if the use of a specific surface is taken into account whilst marking, something implied by Hesse's and Rockburne's drawings?[219] What if different surfaces are used? How will that affect the marks made? What if the surface is repositioned such that mark and surface coincide in significant visual and conceptual ways from the start of the encounter between artist and materials? And, what if considerations of an in-between extend into the installation of work in space, as suggested by the work of Lai Chih-Sheng?

Since a mark is a trace of the encounter between an artist and a surface (or materials more generally), any consideration of the relationship between mark and surface leads to a consideration of the relationship between artist and materials. Moreover, as I have been arguing throughout, the relationships between mark and surface and artist and materials have implications for thinking about relationships between subject and object and self and other. As such, in addition to making work that explores an in-between state/space, I use the written component of the thesis to think through my actions, drawing specifically on Matrixial theory.

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[218] As noted earlier, Hopkins' and Ettinger's works are discussed in much more detail elsewhere, hence, the brevity of my remarks here.

[219] Hesse draws circles, which are geometric shapes, on graph paper, which can be used for accurately drawing graphs and shapes. Rockburne's *Drawing Which Makes Itself* is based on the quality of paper as something that can be folded, a quality connected to certain uses of paper, such as folding letters and envelopes for example.

My research then aims to explore relationships *between* mark and surface in visual art and their implications for conceptualising potential relationships between self and other. The questions I am starting with are: How can the relationship between the artist's marks and the surface move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state can be accessed? As an extension of that, how can the relationship between work and space be shifted in a similar manner? How does accessing this in-between change the relationship between subject and object and self and other (understood in the first place in terms of mark and surface and artist and materials)? The research, thus, begins by attempting to destabilise the relationship between mark and surface before looking at a series of other relationships and at how those might be affected: artist and materials, subject and object, self and other.

The research, being based in practice, does not have a clear linear trajectory that moves forward, as might be expected in other forms of research, but rather spreads sideways, developing a matrixial relationship with the work of other artists and thinkers and requiring a reflective and reflexive approach to the work as it emerges. In other words, I do not attempt to somehow "improve" upon works by artists I have discussed in this chapter. That does not seem to be an appropriate model for fine art research.[220] Rather, following Ettinger's matrixial insights, I aim to exist beside them in a shared conversation and to add to that conversation. This addition is twofold: on the one hand, I aim to develop a specific practice and mode of making in conversation with a specific theoretical framework—Matrixial theory—and, on the other hand, I aim to consider that practice, as well as the practices of particular artists, in relation to that framework.[221] In a sense, I attempt a linking between theorisation and practice by reframing questions concerning the in-between of mark and surface in

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[220] Stephen Scrivener has argued that practice-based research projects produce work that "might be original in the sense of not being derivative or imitative, but not necessarily in the sense of new-to-the-world or an improvement on existing works, or of resolving an externally defined problem." Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," 31. Such projects deal with a topic of interest and creative objectives that "resist . . . reduction to a single problem and its solution." Ibid.

[221] Important precedents here include Griselda Pollock's and Alison Rowley's use of Matrixial theory when analysing Frankenthaler's works as well as Pollock's analysis of Ettinger's paintings and installations, which again draws on Matrixial theory. I refer to Pollock's analysis of Ettinger's paintings extensively in chapter 4.

terms of Matrixial theory, which is, in turn, considered alongside a particular mode of

practice that focuses on the mark's relation with specific surfaces.

2

**APPROACHING THE MARK/SURFACE QUESTION:
METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS**

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological framework constructed through the research. Unlike other disciplines, methodologies in practice-based research can be emergent, arising through the practice and altering as the research progresses.[1] This has proven to be my experience as well. In brief, the research developed through a succession of cycles: periods working in various studio contexts and then presenting the outcomes in a range of ways and contexts. Each presentation offered an opportunity to gain external feedback and to reflectively analyse both the successes and failures of the work alongside relevant theoretical concepts and other artists' works. This process allowed me to gradually develop a general methodological framework which further shifted and became more refined over time.

A quick revisiting of the questions posed at the end of chapter 1 points to the general aspects of this framework. Examining the relationship between mark and surface necessitated extensive studio experimentation, the development of various marking methods, and the use of a range of surfaces. Similarly, investigating the relationship between work and space meant the development of installation methods and the use of several spaces. Determining how these relationships changed required a close consideration of the works, alongside particular theoretical concepts and works by other artists. Finally, considering these altered relationships in terms of relationships between subject and object and self and other involved returning to theories of subjectivity. My focus on relationships, on multiple levels, has led to the development of a matrixially inflected methodology that precisely revolves around specific encounters and connections. This chapter—which, along with chapter 1,

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[1] The emergent nature of practice-based methodologies is discussed in a number of texts. Carole Gray and Julian Malins, for example, describe emergent methodologies as developing and unfolding "from the practitioner's interaction with the research question and context." Gray and Malins, *Visualising Research*, 72. Moreover, Estelle Barrett argues that "methodologies in artistic research are *necessarily* emergent and subject to repeated adjustment" because of the reflexive process of practice-based research. Barrett, Introduction to *Practice as Research*, 6.

functions as an entryway into the research—touches on the main characteristics of this

approach. Specific issues are then revisited in later chapters.

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"IN TRANSIT," GOING IN BETWEEN, PASSING THROUGH:
THE SPACES OF THE RESEARCH

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In order to fulfil the objectives of the research, I moved within and between

three "spaces": my own artistic practice, other artists' practices, and theoretical texts.[2]

Questions regarding the in-between of mark and surface in visual art practice

are, to a great extent, questions relating to making. As such, a significant part of the

research was carried out *through* making artworks, that is, "thinking about art

through the experience of making art."[3] In this sense, both the *process* of making

artworks and the artworks themselves were central to my "process of apprehension."[4]

The artworks made as part of the research are also presented as an output of the

research. In this sense, the artworks are a response to the issues researched and also

embody, manifest, or perform those issues.[5] They are, thereby, central to the research

audience's "process of apprehension." Discussing the work of other artists situates my

practical research within an art historical and contemporary context and enables me to

demonstrate how my research contributes to existing discussions surrounding marks

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[2] I hesitate to group theoretical research and research on other artists together as the processes involved are different. For instance, I looked at other artists' work and reflected on it, in addition to reading texts on these artists and actually meeting some of them. Likewise, I am treating my own practice and other artists' practices as two different yet interrelated spaces since they involve different processes. While I studied others' work, I made my work.

[3] Pollock, "An Engaged Contribution to Thinking About Interpretation in Research in/into Practice," 11.

[4] Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," 34.

[5] Ibid. The importance of actual artworks in practice-based research is discussed by Katy MacLeod who views artistic practice as theorising. The "theory" produced by artworks is not necessarily written but made or realised through the works. It is "the result of ideas worked through matter." Interestingly enough, MacLeod calls this "a matrixial theory"—a complex of ideas, matter, form and existing theory. This type of theory demonstrates the intellectuality of making. MacLeod, "The Functions of the Written Text in Practice-Based PhD Submissions," 5. The issue of the performativity of artworks has been discussed extensively by Barbara Bolt. In *Art Beyond Representation*, Bolt argues that art is a performative rather than only a representational or signifying practice. Drawing upon the relationship between artist, materials, and processes, she argues that works of art produce ontological effects and that art and reality mutually affect each other.

and surfaces within art practice. Finally, questions concerning the wider implications of the issues raised by the practical research necessitated looking towards pre-existing theorisations through which to try to comprehend, interpret and, admittedly, in some cases, speculate on those issues.

Therefore, I found myself moving within and between these spaces. Whilst each space deals with different processes and activities, a form of thinking occurred through all of them, initiating a conversation where developments within one space led to developments within the others. For example, while working in the studio, I would engage in reflective writing, which might reveal new issues or refine existing ones. These might lead to new experiments in the studio, new theoretical research or to specific artists' work. Insights gained from these activities would feed back into the studio, possibly leading to new work.[6] I do not mean to suggest a one-way sequential movement from one space to the next but rather a continual movement that allowed a shared borderspace to emerge between the three spaces. Through this borderspace, encounters could materialise and connections could be drawn. In a sense, the three spaces of the research participated in a process of triangulation that provided potential "answers" to the research questions.

This movement within and between spaces resonates with Rosi Braidotti's feminist approach to thinking and research. This approach focuses on the in-betweens and accounts for processes rather than fixed points or concepts.

> This means going in between different discursive fields, passing through
> diverse spheres of intellectual discourse. Theory today happens "in transit,"
> moving on, passing through, creating connections where things were

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[6] I am here drawing on Stephen Scrivener's discussion of the structure of practice-based research. Scrivener suggests that once issues or questions for investigation have been identified, a cycle begins involving the production of work, reflection on that work and connection back to the issues under investigation. The reflection and juxtaposition of work with the initial issues or questions may lead to the reconsideration and revision of the issues under investigation and to the need for further theoretical research. This revision then leads to a new cycle of work. The cycle is repeated until the goals of the specific research have been met. Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," 38–41. I am utilising Scrivener's model as a way of thinking, after the fact, about how my research developed.

previously disconnected or seemed unrelated, where there seemed to be "nothing to see."[7]

Braidotti also stresses the need "to move on to the invention of new ways of relating, of building footridges between notions."[8] This epistemic nomadism "can only work, in fact, if it is properly situated, securely anchored in the 'in-between' zones."[9] Nina Lykke describes this process as "a nomadic and rhizomatic course of events."[10] Braidotti and Lykke are referring to the feminist theoretician but I would also add the feminist artist-researcher. As I moved within each space and as I passed from one space to the other, connections were drawn between them and encounters were enabled.

This framework that focuses on processes, connections, and encounters, resonates with the concept of metramorphosis: the borderlinking and borderspacing that occurs between partial-others allowing them to change asymmetrically. Informed by Ettinger's theoretical texts, I have treated this research as a series of encounters between others on several levels: encounters between marks and surfaces, works and spaces, artist and materials, my practice and other artists' practices, artistic practice (both processes of making and artworks) and theoretical concepts, and making and writing. In all these cases, I have tried to access an in-between borderspace through which to initiate a shared conversation. In the case of the different spaces of the research, I have tried to initiate conversations between them without necessarily expecting an exact match and without treating them as "opposites" or as discrete, isolated, and absolute others. Rather, they can be seen as partial-others that can coexist beside each other, forming a borderspace between them through which connections are made possible. It is these encounters and connections that are

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[7] Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 173.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 174. Braidotti states that the term "epistemic nomadism" comes from Isabelle Stengers.

[10] Lykke, *Feminist Studies*, 150. In her discussion in *Metamorphoses*, Braidotti is adopting, and adapting, the figure of the rhizome from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Unlike arborescent structures, which are linear and hierarchical, rhizomatic structures move horizontally and grow in all directions in an open-ended manner. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5–28.

discussed in detail in the following chapters. In other words, when researching in-between spaces, it was necessary to research through in-between spaces.

Having said that, I should clarify that, in so far as this research aspires to make a "new contribution to knowledge," this contribution is located within the field of art practice. Even though I have made use of psychoanalytic and philosophical texts, for instance, this is not a research into these fields. It remains a practice-based project, with practice seen as the base from where certain connecting lines begin and depart, to which lines arrive or return, and through which lines are transformed and redirected.[11] In a sense, all connections pass through the space of practice.

Finally, given that the research involved making work and critically thinking about and with that work, I briefly address my position as artist-researcher. In some ways, I have ended up being both the subject and object of this research and the way to deal with this has been to adopt Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges." According to Haraway, even science, the discipline of objectivity par excellence, is historically specific and constructed. She defines feminist objectivity as meaning "situated knowledges."[12] This is an objectivity involving "particular and specific embodiment" and "partial perspective."[13] It involves the researcher locating herself in a specific position and learning how to look from that position, in detail and actively.[14] My position, throughout my movements within and between the spaces of the research, has been that of an artist-researcher. Adopting this position means acknowledging my presence within the research.[15] My aim has not been to think practice from *without*, by adopting the role of an outsider. I am thinking practice from

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[11] Another term often used is "practice-led research," which suggests that practice leads and everything else, including theory, follows somehow. This term does not seem to me to capture the complex interplay and back-and-forth movement between practical and theoretical research that I experienced while working on the PhD. Linda Candy distinguishes between practice-led and practice-based research in a different way: "If a creative artefact is the *basis* of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-*based*" and "if the research *leads* primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-*led*." Candy, *Practice Based Research*, 1. For my purposes here, I use the terms practice-based and artistic research.

[12] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 188.

[13] Ibid., 190.

[14] Ibid.

[15] This is akin to what social scientists call the participant-observer position. This term has been adopted by several artists working on PhDs to describe their role in the research. Gray and Malins, *Visualising Research*, 23, 30.

within, as a fine arts practitioner, and setting up productive encounters with existing theory and artworks.

THE SPACE OF PRACTICE

Admittedly, the practical research, which includes the processes and activities directly involved with the making of artworks, began in a very experimental way with several experiments to try out in the studio. These experiments were guided by the search for an in-between state accessible through marking. They involved ideas, techniques and approaches I had identified through previous work and through subsequent reflection, reading of theoretical texts, studying of others' artworks, and discussions with the supervision team.[16] A specific approach to marking emerged over the first three years of this research, between 2006 and 2009.

This approach to marking depended on my understanding of the word "mark." In the previous chapter, I began with a dictionary definition of that word. When it comes to dictionaries, Georges Bataille presents an intriguing challenge: "A dictionary begins when it no longer gives the meaning of words, but their tasks."[17] Taking on Bataille's challenge, instead of trying to define the word "mark" through the practical research, I ended up giving it a task: respond to the surface. Thus, when deciding how to mark each surface, I tried to find ways to respond to it, taking into account its specific materiality (actual material and texture), its visual appearance (colours and pre-existing marks and patterns), its intended function, and, in the case of a found or used surface, its history and how that history changed it. In other words, the emphasis shifted from my actions to the relation between my actions—what I did as the artist—and the pre-existing surface. The process of making, thus, actively sought to create a more substantial conversation between mark and surface by focusing on the relationship between the two rather than on each one separately. The surfaces to be

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[16] It follows that by "studio" I do not mean the privileged site of the self-possessing artist-hero or artist-genius, freely expressing *himself* and creating in solitude in *his* space—a site whose ideological conditions Griselda Pollock addresses in "Painting, Feminism, History," 73–78. Rather, I consider the studio to be a working place where a process unfolds, a nexus linking together the making of art with a complex network of theory and practice.

[17] Bataille, "Formless," 31.

marked and the mode of marking were not predetermined but rather surfaced after spending time and experimenting with multiple surfaces.

This approach to marking intersects with the approaches of artists discussed in chapter 1. Dorothea Rockburne, for example, responded to the material of paper by folding and unfolding it and by drawing lines based on the folds. Lai Chih-Sheng responded to a space by drawing lines around its features. Louise Hopkins responds to the visual information printed on a surface in a variety of ways: recreating images, covering images, and so on. Following from these artists, I adopted a similar approach but with the specific aim of destabilising the relationship between my mark and the surface so as to take it beyond an overlay or opposition and towards an in-between state.

This approach to marking was important because it enabled me to access more complex relationships between mark and surface. In fact, the destabilisation of the mark/surface binary eventually led to my marks visually intertwining with or partially receding into the surface. I realised over time that by having my marks respond to the surface, another area of investigation opened up: that of indiscernibility between mark and surface. This allowed me to refine the task I had set the word "mark": instead of responding to the surface, now attempt to *approach* the surface. This involves the task of drawing near the surface and of attaining proximity, which implies physical and visual nearness as well as intimacy, an affinity or rapport that resonates with the rapport between partial-others in the matrixial borderspace. According to Ettinger, a shared meaning may emerge through the borderspace, through the in-between. This meaning depends on forming relations. Having my marks approach the surface in multiple ways might enable relations and shared meanings to emerge. It is important that the approaching would happen on multiple levels. That is, I was not interested in using white paint on white paper, for example, such that my marks would blend with the paper. Even though this mark/surface blending was something I was interested in, I was also looking for more specific ways to achieve it—ways that depended on various aspects of the surface. This is what the approaching, affinity, and rapport refer to.

The shift from responding to approaching occurred gradually through my studio work between 2009 and 2010 but I did not acknowledge it till 2011. Moreover, I was gradually able to discern three specific methods of marking that developed through the research. These are discussed in detail in part II.

Just as my approach to marking changed over time, the surfaces I used also shifted, from surfaces associated mostly with art, such as canvas and watercolour paper, to everyday surfaces, including vinyl flooring, lined paper, fabric samples, and so on. This shift related to my focus on the relationship between mark and surface. The use of surfaces that are already marked in some way further problematizes the relationship between the artist's mark and the surface, as seen in works by Hesse, Hopkins, and Ettinger. I specifically turned to surfaces whose particular uses could result in additional types of markings. Moreover, the shift in the surfaces I worked with also related to my interest in the relationship between work and space. Many of the surfaces I turned to are associated with the spaces within which I made and exhibited work. I eventually realised that by shifting my attention to such surfaces I could begin to investigate the in-between of work and space.[18]

The engagement with space became increasingly important as the research progressed. This was partly the result of my extensive travelling, something that formed part of this research from the beginning since I lived in Limassol and studied in London.[19] In addition to working in my studio, it was necessary to work in several spaces within the colleges of the University of the Arts London so as to present actual work to the supervision team.[20] Given the increasing importance of the relationship between work and space, I extended my travelling further by undertaking a number of

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[18] Other more practical reasons for shifting towards everyday common surfaces included their availability and the flexibility they provided in terms of what I could use to make work. Given that I did a lot of work during residencies, oftentimes in small towns or isolated areas overseas, it became important to use materials that I could easily find almost anywhere as well as to be able to use materials and leftovers that I might happen to come upon in the studios.

[19] When I began this project, moving to London permanently was financially very difficult. I, thus, decided to incorporate travelling within the research project by living in Limassol and studying in London.

[20] This became a way of ensuring that supervisory discussions focused on the art practice and writing equally. Moreover, given the nature of the work, it was important to present the actual work rather than documentation. This necessarily informed the nature of the work: it needed to be able to travel with me.

residencies. This allowed me to engage with a variety of spaces. In a sense, my geographical movement throughout this project parallels my movement through the three spaces of the research.[21] Gradually, my process came to involve moving into a space for a period of time, bringing some works and materials with me, making work in response to the material and/or the space, and setting up temporary interventions and installations within the space. The works and materials I would bring depended on the materials already present in the space as well as on the functionality of the space. My approach to installation parallels my approach to marking: it began as a general response to a space and evolved into specific ways of *approaching* a space on multiple levels so as to access a state between work and space.

The process of working in the studio was supported and supplemented by other activities. I briefly address the following key activities: observation and collection of marks and surfaces, recording of the making process, sustained and layered reflection on the work, presentation of research, and obtainment of feedback.[22]

Since my approach in the studio came to involve everyday surfaces, it became necessary to engage in research on those surfaces, as part of deciding how to work with them. Many observations were made in chance encounters, where I would come across a surface that I already happened to be working with or that I could potentially work with. For instance, I photographed cardboard boxes found in streets and pieces of carpet in dumpsters. I also carried out more "targeted" observations by visiting places where surfaces I worked with would be found. For example, when I began working with fabric samples, I visited home furnishing stores to look at their samples, how they were displayed, and how visitors could interact with them. Such observations provided ideas on how to mark the surfaces and on how to install works in space.

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[21] In addition to Cyprus and the UK, the geographical locations I moved through as part of this research include the USA (for residencies, exhibitions and research), Israel (for exhibitions and to meet Bracha L. Ettinger), Italy (for exhibitions), Greece (for exhibitions) and Spain (for a residency and exhibition).

[22] These activities are not specific to my practice. Several artists and artists-researchers employ similar methods. Gray and Malins, in fact, provide a detailed discussion of methods used in practice-based PhDs and many of these are common among artists. Gray and Malins, *Visualising Research*, 104–121.

Image 2.1:   Observations of marks and materials (Pieces of wood on Vauxhall Bridge, London, UK; Store display of laminate flooring, Limassol, Cyprus; Cardboard recycling bins, Limassol, Cyprus; Room under renovation, Limassol, Cyprus; Damaged and repaired wooden floor, Berlin, Germany; Shed made out of old wood, Miramonte, California, USA)

Image 2.2:   Observations of marks and materials (Broken marble tiles, Alhambra, Granada, Spain; Peeling paint and dirt, Limassol, Cyprus; Stains on cement, Limassol, Cyprus; Marks on wood, Miramonte, California, USA; Marks on floor, London, UK; Chipped wooden furniture, Nicosia, Cyprus)

Through such observations, I collected, in photographic form, a large selection of found marks and surfaces. I also accumulated actual materials. For example, I acquired surfaces from houses undergoing renovation in Cyprus. These included curtains, old vinyl and laminate flooring, and old carpets. I found leftover materials and old merchandise in dumpsters outside home furnishing stores, acquired past-season merchandise, such as fabric and carpet samples, from store warehouses, and "salvaged" pieces of almost unmarked paper from the recycling bins at the schools where I taught. The accretion of surfaces, in addition to turning my studio into a "junk shop," allowed me to spend time with the material, observing it. Through this sustained observation, I was eventually able to incorporate many of these surfaces into my work.

To critically evaluate the research along the way, I adopted a reflective and reflexive approach, engaging in reflection in layers: reflection while making work (reflective writing in action/practice), reflection when the work was completed (reflective writing on action/practice), reflection after some time had passed (putting some distance between myself and the work), and reflection through theoretical texts and through other artists' work (putting even more distance or looking at the work from different angles).[23] This last layer often overlapped with the others.

Reflective writing in action/practice during and at the end of studio sessions involved detailed descriptions of the making process, reflection on decisions made along the way, recording of unexpected or interesting outcomes (as relating to the relationships between mark and surface and work and space), and detailed descriptions of the actual experience of making the work. The making process was also recorded through photographs of work in progress. These texts and photographs

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[23] According to Donald Schön, reflection-in-action, or in practice, takes place during the making process and involves the practitioner reflecting on knowledge and ways of working that may have become automated over time. That is, thinking about what one is doing while doing it. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, 50. Reflection on action, as Scrivener clarifies, takes place at the end of a cycle of work or project and involves the practitioner reflecting on the completed work, the approach taken, and the project's relationship with past projects. Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," 37–38.

Image 2.3:   Collection of materials in studio (cardboard, vinyl flooring, wood, fabrics, adhesive
              vinyl, carpets, wallpapers, papers), Limassol, Cyprus

Image 2.4:   Works in progress and studio photographs, Limassol, Cyprus

documented the process of making and the decisions made whilst making.[24] Moreover,

they helped me clarify my decisions and determine if specific experiments were

effective in terms of accessing an in-between space.

Reflective writing on action/practice at the completion of a work, group of

works, or exhibition, involved considering the experience of viewing the works,

focusing on the relationships between mark and surface and work and space. This

enabled me to identify potential areas for further investigation and to evaluate

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[24] Other artists-researchers have used audio and video recording during the process of making in order to record everything that happens. I deemed this unnecessary in my case. My process of working did not involve elaborate making processes that needed to be recorded in detail so as to be repeatable. Rather, given my slow working process and the gradual development of the practice, it was possible to record everything in a journal. Moreover, with the use of a journal I was able to keep going back to my notes to add thoughts and I was able to carry it with me and record thoughts as they occurred to me, something not always feasible with audio recording. In addition, as Jeffrey Dennis has pointed out, video might not be "sufficiently sensitive" to pick up my marks or the slow growth of the work. Finally, there were practical considerations. My studio in Limassol is shared with a musician. At residencies, I often made work in shared studios. "Talking to myself" would be disruptive for others and for me.

completed works, taking into consideration my specific aim of accessing an in-between space/state. Since my practice is not always project-based but rather involves a continual process of making, I also adopted reflection on action/practice before meetings with the supervision team, which took place approximately every three months.

The texts and photographs accrued through reflection in and on action/practice, formed the basis for further reflection undertaken throughout the course of the research—a form of reflection on the reflection.[25] I spent considerable amounts of time revisiting my notes and looking at old photographs of works in progress, site-specific works, installations and exhibitions, reflecting on them from a distance. This was both a temporal distance and a spatial/geographical distance since I worked at various spaces in several countries. Specifically, the continued and sustained observation of photographs enabled me to start seeing relationships between pieces that might have been lying around the studio. For example, while trying out installations of pieces on the wall, I often placed paintings on the floor leaning against the wall as a way of taking them out of the installation. Looking at these accidental placements in photos afterwards, gave me more time to consider them and start seeing their potential.[26]

At each stage of reflection, additional theoretical research, as well as research on other artists, were sometimes necessary, depending on the issues that emerged from the new work and the critical reflection. Theoretical concepts and other artists' works became another way through which to critically reflect on my work. The critical reflection involved negotiating relationships between my work and theoretical concepts, with the potential of leading to a recasting of those concepts through their encounter with the practice. Moreover, considering my work and process in relation to other artists' works and processes, allowed me to identify and evaluate different ways of approaching the notion of the in-between in regards to marking a surface. These

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[25] This resonates with Scrivener's suggestion that critical reflection be applied on the reflection on action/practice that took place during the research project. Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," 39.

[26] In fact, photography eventually revealed possibilities for extending the work. That is, photographs of works suggested themselves as actual works. I do not discuss this development in this text but I have identified it as a future area of investigation.

issues seep into the space of other artists and the space of theory, both of which are discussed in the following sections.

Overall, through this reflective and reflexive approach to making, I was able to articulate and communicate the making process as well as developments in the practice. Thus, my research, as a whole, was made more accessible to the readers/viewers/audience.[27] Also, systematic critical reflection helped me, as the artist-researcher, to record, clarify and think through developments in the work and identify fruitful directions that I could then pursue. Given the practice-based nature of this project, as the studio work developed and moved in different directions, my initial aims and process had to be rethought.[28] A reflective and reflexive approach enabled this rethinking to occur.

Finally, the practical work was presented through exhibitions, open studio events, and pop-up installations. These presentations provided opportunities for setting up temporary installations, both as a way to further my research and to obtain feedback.[29] Since one of the relationships I was looking at was that between work and space, exhibiting the work provided opportunities for thinking through and presenting completed installations. Installation depended, to a large extent, on the space in which the work was shown, thus, the more opportunities I had to try out various installations and to get feedback, the more developed my ideas became. In addition to formal exhibitions, I presented my work in pop-up installations, one-day events to which I invited specific people—artists, researchers, and theorists—to offer feedback.[30]

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[27] Scrivener specifically emphasises the value of reflective writing in communicating the research. Scrivener, "Characterising Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," 37.

[28] Again, as Scrivener argues, this mutability and instability is a characteristic shared by many practice-based research projects. Ibid., 31, 40.

[29] A complete list of exhibitions, pop-up installations, and open studio events is given in Appendix B. Specific presentations of work are discussed in the following chapters. Contributions made by artists and researchers that offered feedback on my research are indicated in the following chapters in the footnotes. The names of viewers I discussed my work with are also given in appropriate footnotes, except in cases where viewers did not provide names or did not give me permission to use their names.

[30] These pop-up installations originated through meetings with the supervision team. The meetings involved setting up temporary installations within the college so as to show work to the team, as discussed earlier.

THE SPACE OF OTHER ARTISTS

Since this is a practice-based research project, its immediate context is formed by other practices.[31] As such, the second space of the research involved other artists' work. Studying others' works situates my practical research within an art historical and contemporary context by revealing common concerns and approaches with other artists. It also enables me to demonstrate how my research contributes to existing discussions surrounding the relationship between mark and surface within art practice. Finally, studying and analysing other artists' works provides another way of assessing the ideas explored through my practical and theoretical research.

I began by taking a broad look at relevant artists and exhibitions.[32] Given the importance attributed to encounters as ways of relating to others within Matrixial

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[31] The importance of presenting other artists' work as the context of a practice-based research project was brought up by Rebecca Fortnum during our meetings.

[32] I mostly organised this research around key group exhibitions on painting and drawing from the 1960s to the present. These include: *Line as Language: Six Artists Draw* (Art Museum, Princeton University, 1974), *Drawing Now 1955–1975* (MOMA, New York, 1976), *New Work on Paper 1* (MOMA, New York, 1981), *New Work on Paper 2* (MOMA, New York, 1982), *New Work on Paper 3* (MOMA, New York, 1985), *Unbound: Possibilities in Painting* (Hayward Gallery, London, 1994), *Drawing the Line: Reappraising Drawing Past and Present* (The South Bank Centre, London, 1995), *Traité Du Trait: Tractatus Tractus* (Louvre, Paris, 1995), *Drawing Is Another Language: Recent American Drawings from a New York Private Collection* (Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, 1997), *Slow Burn: Meaning and Vision in Contemporary British Abstract Painting* (Mead Gallery, Coventry, 1998), *Afterimage: Drawing through Process* (The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1999), *Painting at the Edge of the World* (Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, 2001), *Urgent Painting* (Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2002), *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* (MOMA, New York, 2002), *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act* (The Drawing Centre, New York, 2003), *Hybrids: International Contemporary Painting* (Tate Liverpool, 2001), *Drawing from the Modern 1848–1920* (MOMA, New York, 2004), *Drawing from the Modern 1920–1975* (MOMA, New York, 2005), *Drawing from the Modern 1975–2005* (MOMA, New York, 2005), *3 x Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing* (The Drawing Centre, New York, 2005), *On Line: Drawing through the Twentieth Century* (MOMA, New York, 2010), *A Bigger Splash: Painting After Performance* (Tate Modern, London, 2012), *Focus: Slow Looking: Contemporary Drawing* (Tate Britain, London, 2012), *Wall Works* (Nationalgalerie Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2013). As my practical research developed, I also turned to exhibitions that included collage and installation, such as *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century* (New Museum, New York, 2007), and *Collage: The Unmonumental Picture* (New Museum, New York, 2008). I also looked at exhibitions that explicitly attempted to challenge binaries or that drew on feminist theory: *Sense and Sensibility: Women Artists and Minimalism in the Ninenties* (MOMA, New York, 1994), *More Than Minimal: Feminism and Abstraction in the 70s* (Rose Art Museum, Boston, 1996), *Inside the Visible* (Kanaal Art Foundation, Kortrijk, 1994; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1996), *L'Informe: Mode d'Emploi* (Pompidou Centre, Paris, 1996), *Gorge(l) Oppression and Relief in Art* (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, 2006), *Global Feminisms* (Brooklyn Museum, New York, 2007), *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007). Given the

theory, I decided to focus on particular encounters between my work-in-progress and specific artists' works. That is, I aimed to extend the encounter between self and other explored through my practice to the level of artworks.[33] The choice of artists emerged through engaging with my research questions. Over the years, I identified artists whose works, or some aspect of their process, resonated with what was occurring in my studio and with what I was encountering in theoretical texts. As my studio work shifted and my theoretical interests became more focused, my choice of artists altered.[34] It was not finalised till four years into the research, when both my practical and theoretical research became more developed.

The artists I focus on are Susan Collis, Bracha L. Ettinger, and Louise Hopkins.[35] These artists use ways of working that intersect with mine. Hopkins was a relatively straightforward choice. Her use of found surfaces and her focus on the relationship between mark and surface strongly resonate with this research. Ettinger emerged as a choice after I encountered her theoretical work. I became particularly interested in the relationship between her painted marks and the photocopic

increasing importance of the concept of indiscernibility for my work in the course of the research, I also looked at exhibitions dealing with invisible art: *Invisible Painting and Sculpture* (Richmond Art Centre, Richmond, 1969), *At the Threshold of the Visible: Miniscule and Small-Scale Art 1964–1996* (Independent Curators Incorporated, New York, 1997), *A Brief History of Invisible Art* (CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2005), *Apparently Invisible* (The Drawing Centre, New York, 2009), *Voids: A Retrospective* (Pompidou Centre, Paris, 2009), *Invisible: Art About the Unseen 1957–2012* (Hayward Gallery, London, 2012).

[33] Focusing on specific artists and works and discussing these in depth meant foregoing looking at other artists. Given my focus on encounters, this was a compromise I had to make.

[34] As discussed in the introduction, initially I was looking at the materiality of the mark. In the first two years of the research, I met and interviewed the artists Maria Chevska and Katie Pratt. I also studied works by Laura Godfrey-Isaacs, Mira Schor, Laura Owens, Michelle Fierro, Omar Chacon, Pia Fries, Marianna Uutinen, Alexis Harding, Rosa Lee, and Frances Richardson. As my emphasis shifted to the relationship between mark and surface, I had to rethink my choice of artists.

[35] These artists belong to different generations and contexts. Bracha L. Ettinger was born in 1948 and has lived in England, France and Israel, where she currently resides. She has been exhibiting work since the mid 1980s. Susan Collis was born in 1956 and lives in England. She has been exhibiting work since the early 2000s. Louise Hopkins was born in 1965 and lives in Scotland. She has been exhibiting work since the early 1990s. The aim of this project is not to carry out historical research into the practices of these artists. While I realise that discussion and interpretation of these artists' works would be enriched by considering the specific historical and geographical contexts in which each artist has worked, that kind of analysis is beyond the scope of this research. Instead, I am focusing on specific works that provide insights into the main themes of this research.

traces/images of others on the surfaces she works with. Collis emerged as a choice rather late in the research, when I found myself gravitating towards similar types of marks as her.

Even though I was familiar with Hopkins' and Collis' works before embarking on this research and despite the fact that I encountered Ettinger's work within the first year of the research, I am not presenting them as straightforward influences or as artists I depart from, although they can be seen as that as well. Given that my research focused on ways of accessing the in-between of mark and surface and of destabilising their relationship—that is, of not treating them as "one" versus the "other"—then could I come up with an approach towards these artists that did not treat them as the "other" against whom I define my artistic self? Could I construct a space akin to what Ettinger theorises as a matrixial borderspace through which my practice and the other artists' practices coexist and converse as companions? Clearly, within an academic research context I cannot escape the reference, deference, difference structure that Griselda Pollock identifies and analyses.[36] Moreover, I cannot deny that I probably have been influenced by these artists' works, in both conscious and non-conscious ways. In that sense, I occupy the "daughter" position and cannot, strictly speaking, escape the reference, deference, difference structure. Attempting, however, to construct a space that *perhaps* could suggest or lead to something different, had certain implications on how I initially approached these artists and their works.

Returning to my choice of artists to focus on, I intentionally chose artists who are not my "opposites." There are differences between our works relating to both motivation and methods of making, but there are also similarities. Our practices sometimes share modes of marking, choice of surfaces, types of marks, and, in certain cases, theoretical interests. There exists, thus, a shared space through which the

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[36] Pollock, *Avant-Garde Gambits*, 14. Pollock proposes the reference, deference and difference structure as a way of understanding avant-gardism: "To make your mark in the avant-garde community, you had to relate your work to what was going on: *reference*. Then you had to defer to the existing leader, to the work or project which represented the latest move, the last word, or what was considered the definitive statement of shared concerns: *deference*. Finally your own move involved establishing a *difference* which had to be both legible in terms of current aesthetics and criticism, and also a definitive advance on that current position." Ibid. Pollock associates this structure with academic research in "An Engaged Contribution to Thinking About Interpretation in Research in/into Practice," 3.

practices and works can converse even though they may approach similar issues from different positions.[37]

While looking at these artists, I engaged in close study of selected works, studied interviews the artists gave, and read texts written about them as well as texts they wrote themselves, as in the case of Ettinger.[38] These activities were complemented by studio visits and conversations with the artists themselves. I decided on these conversations because I had questions relating to each artist's process of working that were not adequately addressed in existing literature.[39] The visits and conversations were modified to accommodate each artist. I visited Hopkins and Collis in their studios and carried out informal interviews that were recorded.[40] Follow-up questions were discussed via email. This extended dialogue with the artists sometimes highlighted aspects of their practice that had not been previously discussed. In the case of Ettinger, there was no "interview" in the traditional sense. Instead, she gave me access to her notebooks in which she has been recording her thoughts. I focused on notebooks that have not been published, looking for notes that, to some extent, addressed my questions.[41] Working with Ettinger's notes meant that I had to interpret,

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[37] All of these issues are explored in detail in part II.

[38] I have tried, whenever possible, to actually see the works I wanted to study and discuss. The experience of viewing work, of being in the same space as the work, is an essential part of my research, both methodologically and conceptually.

[39] As Rosemary Betterton points out, "talking with artists enables a different kind of understanding of practice than one that is gained solely from looking at art works or reading about them. Of course, it does not guarantee the 'truth' of their work, but it can give access to the working processes through which decisions are taken and marks made," a process which may not always be conscious during the making and "may only be recognised in retrospect." Betterton, "Unframing Women's Painting," 3.

[40] The interviews were semi-structured. For each interview, I prepared in advance a list of topics to be covered. During each interview, the artists could discuss additional topics as well as ask me questions. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcript was sent to the artists to give them the opportunity to make modifications if they so wished. The transcripts of the interviews are included in Appendix A. My conversations with Hopkins and Collis focused on processes of making work, to the extent that the artists were able to discuss, and felt comfortable sharing. I draw on their words while discussing their works in this text.

[41] I spent seven days working in Ettinger's studio, from July 8 to 13, 2013, and May 26, 2014. I looked at a total of forty-three notebooks dated from 1996 to 2012. Thus, the information I gathered consists of a number of excerpts that are made public for the first time. After reading through the notebooks, I had the chance to discuss a few points with Ettinger, although, again as per the artist's wishes, nothing was recorded. I took written notes as we were talking. The excerpts I collected, along with scans of the corresponding pages from the notebooks, are included in Appendix A.

in some ways, her written fragments. These fragments are suggestive, providing openings through which to approach her paintings within the context of this research.[42]

       This close study of the artists' works resulted in texts, many of which are included in the following chapters, focusing on encounters—instances of besidedness where works are placed next to each other and considered together. Moreover, my conversations with all the artists brought up issues that gradually seeped into my way of thinking about my own work and this research.[43] This was something I was open to. Thus, these artists, and their works and words, are not, or, at least, not only, my "objects" of investigation but co-companions in a sustained conversation—an actual conversation, a conversation through writing, where their words and actions are juxtaposed with mine, and a conversation through art. This conversation has helped shape the research.[44]

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[42] Ettinger herself has stated that the written "fragment is what is most suggestive, because in it there is allusion." It is not dogmatic but rather provides openings. Levinas and Lichtenberg-Ettinger, *What Would Eurydice Say?* 25–26. As Carolyn Ducker argues, Ettinger's notebooks can "act as a springboard back into art" and can provide "keys to re-attain the state in which the paintings are made." Ducker, *Translating the Matrix*, 15. For my purposes here, this is how I have read the notebooks—as links to the artist's painting process.

[43] As Ettinger states, a conversation is "a unique encounter in deployment," an attuning to the other capable of producing change. Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 38.

[44] The final point to address briefly is the fact that all artists are women. I should clarify that this was not an explicit goal from the beginning, that is, I did not explicitly plan to focus on artists who are women. The choice of artists had to do with the type of work they make rather than anything else. Out of all the artists I looked at, these three appeared to be the most relevant as their works seemed to participate in a shared conversation on marking. At the same time, each artist's work brought something different to that conversation. Another artist I seriously considered was Lai Chih-Sheng. I decided against this for a specific reason. He has engaged in works that deal with the relationship between mark and surface twice: in *Life-Size Drawing*, which was realised twice, and in *Drawing Paper* (2012), a series of drawings that involve tracing around pieces of paper (around their edges, holes, and watermarks). The practices of Collis, Ettinger, and Hopkins are more committed to investigating this issue, thus, they provide much more material with which to work. I do want to clarify, however, that I am definitely not advocating that only women deal with the themes of this research or that this is "feminine" work, with "feminine" being understood in its stereotypical sense as the lesser opposite of "masculine." Through this research, I am bringing these artists' works into proximity with the matrixial, which is related to the feminine as re-conceptualised by Ettinger—not as the opposite of "masculine" but as a *different* originary difference. This dimension is open to both women and men. I am of course not overlooking the fact that these artists are women nor am I dismissing research that focuses on artists who are women. The construct "woman artist" traditionally signifies a position of otherness, as Carol Armstrong points out, and several researchers have set out to address that position. Armstrong, Preface to

THE SPACE OF THEORY

I have worked with theory in several ways. On one level, theoretical research, particularly in the fields of psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalytically inflected art theory and history, has enabled me to contextualise and position my research. It has allowed me to discuss what might be at stake when considering the relationships between mark and surface in relation to those between self and other and in relation to subjectivisation, something I began to do in chapter 1. Matrixial theory, in particular, has allowed me to think about the possible structure of an in-between space and its implications for subjectivity, meaning production, and possible attitudes towards an other.

On another level, theoretical research has allowed me to consider my practice in depth. My research centres around the relationship between mark and surface in visual art and on how this can move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state can be accessed. As such, I engaged in focused and detailed consideration of my processes of making work and of the marks produced. At the same time as I was working in the studio, I turned to theoretical texts to search for concepts that approximated or resonated with aspects of the works I was making.[45] With the exception of Ettinger's Matrixial theory, which has accompanied this project almost from the beginning and which helps position my research theoretically, my engagement with other theoretical texts when thinking about particular works focused on specific concepts. To find these concepts, I adopted a nomadic approach, like that advocated by Braidotti. A nomad travels from place to place in search of pasture. I travelled from text to text in search of concepts that might productively encounter my

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Women Artists at the Millennium, xii. Likewise, Christine Battersby argues that it is *women* that have been excluded from culture, on the basis of how their body is perceived, and it is this that needs addressing. Battersby, *Gender and Genius*, 198–210. Moreover, it may be the case that being a woman (along with being of a certain nationality, or of belonging to a certain social class, or having a certain educational background, and so on) does affect the type of work an artist makes. This question does not form part of the current research.

[45] The search for some kind of resonance rather than correspondence or coherence comes from my reading of Matrixial theory and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy.

own and other artists' practices. That is, I attempted to bring particular concepts into the proximity of practice such that a shared space might emerge.[46]

This search was initially guided by what I observed occurring within each work. Specifically, the forays into theory-land when thinking about my works were guided by three aspects: the mode of marking utilised for each work (the actual process of making), the operations or functions of my marks within each work, and the relationships between mark and surface within each work. When thinking about installation, these aspects were rephrased in terms of work and space. My aim was to find ways through which to understand, analyse, and articulate each of these aspects. That is, I searched for concepts that when placed next to the works would allow me to think them through.[47] The questions I asked were: Does this concept approximate, in words, what may be emerging within a work? Does it allow me to think more deeply about the work or to think alongside the work, in relation to the three aspects given earlier?[48] Can this concept productively coexist with the work as a companion in a conversation around marking, subjectivity, and otherness? These concepts were then rethought and reworked through their encounter with the practice. That is, I tried to understand (and articulate through writing) how the encounter affected both the practice and the concepts. As Ettinger writes, when theory and visual art collide, they may "transform the borderline between the two domains so that art is momentarily

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[46] Another description that might be appropriate here is concept travelling, although not quite in the sense of studying how a concept changes as it travels from one discipline to the next or of basing methodologies on concepts rather than methods (as Mieke Bal, for example, describes in *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*). By concept travelling, I am referring to what happens when a theoretical concept is brought into the proximity of artistic practice, how it links up with that practice, and what meanings that linking gives rise to. This resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of meandering concepts that slip into areas other than their own, leading to the emergence of complex meanings. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*

[47] I searched for concepts that, as Mieke Bal writes, helped me understand the works better on the works' own terms. Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, 8. I refrain from using the word "explain" because I do not think that artworks can be definitively explained through the use of theoretical concepts. Treating encounters between art and theory as explanations reduces both art and theory. As Ettinger writes, "the work of art doesn't illustrate or establish theory; theory can only partly cover—uncover—the work of art." Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 11.

[48] The "thinking alongside" draws on Gilles Deleuze's discussion of speaking *with* and writing *with* rather than *for*. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 39. I understand this as a refusal to reduce something to an object that can be subjected to an external concept.

touched by theory while theory takes on a new meaning."[49] When placed in adjacency, art and theory "illuminate each other asymmetrically."[50] It was this potential that I strove towards by focusing on specific encounters between works and concepts.[51]

When considering my marks, I mostly looked towards texts on art that specifically discuss marks, drawing or painting. As my practice developed, it became necessary to also look at texts that discuss collage. All these texts are mostly art historical, art theoretical, or philosophical. When it came to the relationships between mark and surface, I found it more useful for my purposes to look towards theories that deal specifically with an in-between state. Ettinger's Matrixial theory was particularly helpful in this respect as it articulates in detail a borderspace of encounters.[52] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's thought also offers concepts that can be used when thinking about the relationship between mark and surface. I was particularly drawn to the concepts of zones of indiscernibility and becoming. In fact, I first turned to Deleuze and Guattari when the issue of indiscernibility arose in my work. Their theorisation of zones of indiscernibility resonates with how my marks function. The concept of becoming theorises a movement towards an other that resonates strongly

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[49] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 11.

[50] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 94.

[51] I should point out again that even though the research draws on several theoretical concepts from a number of disciplines, it is a practice-based project. As such, I have not attempted to exhaustively analyse each concept I have worked with. Instead, the discussion of concepts is performed alongside the practice. I address the specifics of each concept to the extent that it allows me to understand or articulate an aspect of the practice. Following Braidotti's nomadic methodologies, my focus is on building connections rather than on fully analysing specific concepts.

[52] Another possibility I looked towards was Luce Irigaray's theorisation of the interval as an in-between space. As Rebecca Hill writes, the interval emerged out of Irigaray's critique of Aristotle's concept of place or topos, a concept linked to the function of a container, which, in turn, is associated with the female body. Hill, *The Interval*, 42. Irigaray is critical of Aristotle's theorisation because it does not address the spatial and temporal interval between two entities. Instead, she proposes a different way of thinking the relation between two, a way that does not suppress "an interval that is both entrance and space between." Irigaray, "Sexual Difference," 13. Moreover, the interval is not something that simply exists between two entities but rather emerges as an open threshold in space and time. Hill, *The Interval*, 45–46. This threshold allows the two entities to relate to each other while, at the same time, retaining their difference. Even though this concept is relevant to my project, its structure, as given by Irigaray, does not offer the same nuances as the structure of the matrixial borderspace, as theorised by Ettinger. Ettinger provides a much more detailed account of potential relationships within a shared borderspace and offers more concepts through which to think those relationships. Moreover, Ettinger's emphasis on partialisation and subjectivity-as-encounter, makes her theorisation more appropriate for the works I am discussing, as will become clear in part II.

with my process of making work, which involved approaching the surface. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari's work resonates with Ettinger's theorisations. This is not surprising since Ettinger has adopted and adapted some of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, including that of becoming.

My decision to engage closely with all the main marking methods developed during this research has certain implications for how the theoretical research proceeded and for how this text is constructed. Practice, at least the kind of practice I am engaged in, involves extensive experimentation. This experimentation often leads to diverse outcomes and can open pathways to several different directions at once. Moreover, each work produced during this research may point towards something slightly different—the works do not cohere in an absolute manner. Eventually I was able to discern three marking methods that I kept returning to. Not all works fit within these methods and some draw on several methods.[53] Rather than focusing on one method for this text, I decided to discuss all three so as to retain a sense of the experimental nature of the practice. In order to articulate the nuances of each of these methods, it then became necessary to draw on several concepts. An alternative would have been to only focus on one concept and consider all works and methods through that concept. This might potentially allow me to research that concept in more depth. It would not, however, allow me to uncover the subtle differences between marking methods. Thus, I opted to retain the practice-based character of the research within this text by discussing all three methods and by attempting to understand and articulate their nuances through the use of several concepts. Working through the nuances of the relationships between mark and surface within the various works is precisely the core of the research.

The final use of theory pertains to the third question I initially posed, which focuses on the wider implications of the changed relationships between mark and

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[53] One of the challenges, and, simultaneously, potentials of practice-based research is trying to formalise practice into methodology. This creates several problems, as seen here, with works that refuse to be clearly categorised into methods. I do not consider this to be a failure but rather a characteristic of practice-based research—that is, bringing artistic processes and research methods and methodologies in proximity can lead to unexpected outcomes, potentially transforming how both artistic practice and research methodology can be understood.

surface: How does accessing an in-between change the relationship between subject and object and self and other (understood in the first place in terms of mark and surface and artist and materials)? To tackle this necessitated looking again at theories of subjectivity discussed in chapter 1, that is, the Oedipal model of classical psychoanalysis and Ettinger's non-Oedipal Matrixial theory. In addition, I turned to the anti-Oedipal thought of Deleuze and Guattari, focusing again on the concept of becoming. Using aspects of these three approaches to subjectivity, I tried to understand and interpret specific issues raised by the research. These implications are discussed in part III of this text.

THE THESIS:
MAKING MEETS WRITING

The final encounter I address is that between the artworks and this text and between making and writing. The thesis, understood as both proposition and dissertation, consists of both the artworks and the written text, as well as their relationships.[54] The two forms, visual and textual, are integral to my project and the activities of making and writing have proceeded in parallel almost from the beginning.

In fact, writing has played a role in each of the spaces of the research, as discussed earlier. Writing was initiated in the form of layered critical reflection on my practice. This reflection, which revealed issues and questions generated through and within the artworks, was then combined with texts on artists and discussions of theoretical concepts to produce more developed texts. Some of these were further developed over time through the incorporation of additional reflective writing on new work and further theoretical research and research on other artists. These earlier texts formed the basis of chapters in this text. Thus, the process of writing developed in layers. My reflections in the studio as I worked are to be found "underneath" this text—they form the support or ground. They reveal my position within the research as artist-researcher.

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[54] In a sense, both the visual and written works are "texts" that constitute the final submission. MacLeod and Holdridge, "The Doctorate in Fine Art," 157.

Just as making acted as a form of inquiry, so did writing.[55] Both allowed me to think through the research questions in different ways and both allowed me to draw connections between the spaces of the research. While the processes of making work in the studio attempted to access a state between mark and surface and work and space, the process of writing attempted to articulate that in-between state through language. It also attempted to work through the encounters between my works and others' works and between practice and theory. The writing did not simply describe these encounters but rather allowed them to emerge and develop. My thinking, thus, took place *through* making as well as *through* writing.

The structure of the current text is directly related to my research and methodology. It can be explained in three different ways. To begin with, the text is structured around the research questions. After discussing the conceptual and methodological frameworks of my project in chapters 1 and 2, in chapters 3, 4 and 5 I focus on the relationship between mark and surface while in chapter 6 I focus on that between work and space. These chapters, which form part II of the text, extend the discussion of methodology by presenting the methods developed in order to access the in-between of mark and surface and work and space. Part III deals with the third research question, looking at the relationships between artist and materials, subject and object, and self and other.

Moreover, the text is structured around specific encounters. The encounters between mark and surface are taken up in chapters 3, 4 and 5. Chapter 6 deals with the encounter between work and space and chapter 7 with that between artist and materials.[56] Encounters between my work and other artists' works as well as between practice and theoretical concepts, occur throughout the text.

Finally, the text is structured around the notions of distancing and approaching. As discussed earlier, the notion of approaching is an important aspect of my methodology. Distancing and approaching are also ways of negotiating the

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[55] Nina Lykke draws on Laurel Richardson's work to argue that writing itself can act as a method of inquiry, actively constructing the results of the research. As such, it should be considered closely. Lykke, *Feminist Studies*, 163–185.

[56] Finally, chapter 8 deals with the encounter between viewer and work. As the issue of viewing emerged through the research and did not form part of my initial research questions, I have not included a description of that chapter here.

relationships and encounters discussed in the text. Furthermore, when viewing the works I produced, as well as works by the other artists, the distance between viewer and work transforms the viewer's understanding of the work. I have tried to capture this coupling of distance and change in understanding in the structure of the text. Part I scopes a wider view of the field and lays the groundwork for the research. Part II enacts a close-up, delving into the making of the work and looking at the marks made in a focused and attentive way. The detail of the actual marks is hopefully reflected in the detailed discussion that takes place around and with those marks. Part III steps back again and attempts to discuss the implications of the work in a wider context.

The current text acts in a number of ways. It adds greater depth, perception and dimension to the research process by presenting the context of the project and the reflective process that went into it. As the actual process of making is important to my research, I wanted to devote part of the text to articulating and thinking through that process, with its false starts, experiments, changes, and periods of confusion. This reveals or illuminates the making process and allows the contribution of the practice to shaping the research to emerge. In fact, the actual making forms the central part of this text (part II), surrounded by the groundwork (part I) and a discussion of possible implications (part III). Throughout, the text enacts and articulates the encounters between the three spaces of the research. That is, it interweaves together my process and works, other artists' practices, and theoretical concepts.

Parts of the text are tightly linked to the artworks but they cannot contain nor exhaust those artworks. They can only tackle some aspects of them, those most relevant to the research questions. After all, this text is a construction, an enactment and articulation of a specific group of encounters, situated within a wider narrative of academic research that attempts to deal with specific questions and arrive at some kind of a conclusion. The artworks can exist outside this text. In fact, artworks tend to be unruly creatures. They are difficult, if not impossible, to definitively pin down.[57] They take off in all sorts of directions (not infinite but several) and they cannot be

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[57] I am taking the notion of difficult artworks from James Elkins, who discusses the difficulty of pictures, as objects that are both meaningful and meaningless, in *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*.

easily contained within conceptual or methodological frameworks. It may be possible that parts of this text also try to take off, especially when discussing other artists' work or specific concepts. I have tried to always have them return back to the practice.

Finally, I address my position as artist-researcher within the text. The detailed discussion of the making process and the fact that the text is written from my point of view, situates me, as the artist-researcher, *within* the research and text. As discussed earlier, in some ways I am positioned as both subject and object with respect to the research. I have embraced my particular positioning and partial perspective—both part of Haraway's "situated knowledges"—and have written the text from that position. This position, however, is not entirely fixed. My reflections, thoughts, and writings surrounding the practical work developed in layers, as discussed earlier: while making the work, after the work was completed, after more time had passed, and through theoretical concepts and others' artworks. Thus, a process of distancing was involved between making the works and thinking and writing about them. This process of distancing is reflected in the text that follows: the use of "I" acknowledges my role as the artist while the use of "the artist" places some distance between myself and my work, turning me perhaps into the researcher. Of course the use of "the artist" at no point negates the fact that that artist is the same as the author of this text. I can never be a complete outsider and pretending to be so would refute the notion of "situated knowledges" and jeopardise this research. The constant interplay between "I" and "the artist" constructs my position as artist-researcher by allowing an ever so small distance between the moment of making work in the studio and the subsequent moment(s) of looking at it, thinking about it, and writing this text. It enacts a borderspacing that is always and already paralleled by a borderlinking where "I" and "the artist" partially approach and partially withdraw, constructing the position of the subject as artist-researcher.

Constructing my position in this way has implications for my relationship with the three artists I am discussing. I explained earlier that I did not want to treat them solely as an "other" or as an "object." The fact that this text is written from my point of view, using an "I" and "she/they" structure, places limitations on what kinds of

relationships I can suggest.[58] I have tried to move beyond this I/they structure in two ways. Since my own work sometimes approaches the position of "object" of research, I can occasionally place myself within the "they" or "the artists" position, as discussed above. In these cases, we—myself and the other artists—partially share a space. Moreover, I am hoping that the nuanced relationships between the artists' works will emerge through the specific encounters the text focuses on.

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[58] When it comes to the academic context, Alison Rowley acknowledges and addresses the Oedipal structure in an unusual way. About halfway through her book on Helen Frankenthaler, she acknowledges the Oedipal dimension of her project, that is, her work's relation to the work of Griselda Pollock, and begins addressing Pollock in the second person. Through this rhetorical strategy she attempts "to register certain trans-subjectivising events from which knowledge co-emerged during the course of researching and writing" the book. Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 73.

PART II

MARKING AS APPROACHING THE SURFACE:
TOWARDS THE IN-BETWEEN, TOWARDS INDISCERNIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

> The problem is to "slow" the consideration of the mark, so that it does not
> move too quickly toward line, contour, figure or image, to allow it to hesitate
> on the edge.
>
> Michael Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing"

This part presents and discusses the three main methods of marking developed through the research. My response to the surfaces has taken several forms over the past seven years. I have identified the following approaches that became more prominent as the research developed: creating marks on a surface that might be found there, along with duplicating or miming some aspect of the surface such that the mark visually approaches the surface; tracing over a mark or feature that is already on the surface; and using smaller parts of the actual surface as marks. While working in the studio, I did not in general divide my process into three distinct approaches. Rather, I dealt with each surface on its own, attempting to find ways to mark it. In fact, the practical work is not neatly divided into these approaches. Some works could be discussed in terms of two or all three approaches while some other works seem to inhabit an in-between state, not clearly belonging to any of these general approaches. These moments of "miscategorisation" are indicated in the text. To avoid repetition, works appear in the chapter that suits them best, even if they could be seen within the context of another chapter. I consider these moments to be a side effect of attempting to "fit" an artistic practice within a text that works towards an argument which interweaves practice and theory.

Chapter 3 discusses works that involve the "transferring" of marks that could have been found on a surface. Chapter 4 discusses works that involve the recreation of pre-existing marks on a surface by tracing over them. Chapter 5 discusses works that involve the use of smaller parts of the surface as marks. Each of these chapters focuses on the following aspects: the mode of marking employed, the operation or function of the artist's mark, and the relationship between mark and surface. The order of presentation of the three methods partly depends on chronology and partly on what I perceive to be a move from more general to more specific approaches and ways of

thinking. In a sense, chapter 5 is contained within and departs from chapter 4, which, in turn, is contained within and departs from chapter 3. Chapter 6, the concluding chapter of part II, focuses on the relationships between work and space, going one step further from the mark/surface relationships discussed in the previous chapters.

All the chapters enact a slowing down, as per Michael Newman's suggestion, and a zooming in, considering processes and works attentively and in detail. The actions performed when making work in the studio, that is, marking a surface and installing work in space, are treated as a matter of "difficulty."[1] That is, they are treated as complex processes, not always rational, stable or coherent, and in need of careful consideration. This consideration includes encounters with theory and other artists. In fact, each chapter enacts several encounters between processes and works and theoretical concepts as well as between my process and works and other artists'.

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[1] I am following James Elkins' line of thought that the difficulty of pictures, as objects that are both meaningful and meaningless, should be retained whenever we think or write about them. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*, xi–xviii.

3

TRANSFERRING AND TRANSFORMING MARKS

While trying to find ways of responding to a surface through marking, one of the first methods I adopted was the making of marks that related to the appearance of the surface and its common use. These marks were based on other, pre-existing marks found on similar types of surfaces, such as stains or cracks on a floor and dirt or discolouration on old wood. Thus, the process of making involved a "transferring" of marks from surfaces I observed to surfaces I directly worked with.[1] This transferring was not exact as only some aspects of the found marks were utilised. Moreover, the marks were transformed to reflect aspects of the appearance of the specific surface they would inhabit.

IN THE MAKING

One of the first found surfaces I worked with was a sheet of vinyl flooring which was removed from my grandparents' house in the village of Moniatis, in the summer of 2008, and transferred to my parents' house to be reused around the yard.[2] This material displayed an image of a wooden floor pattern: a zigzag design made up of rectangular pieces of wood, six by eighteen centimetres each.[3] The orange-brown imaged wood resembled red oak. I experimented with various ways of marking this fabricated surface, such as drawing lines to disrupt the zigzag pattern and using clear paint to modify the texture. The marks that appealed to me the most were a group of short lines painted close to each other. To make these, I had chosen acrylic paint in a dark-brown colour that was very similar to one of the existing colours on the surface.

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[1] Throughout the chapter, the term "transfer" does not refer to image transfer techniques that involve transferring an image from one surface to another via direct contact. Instead, I am referring to the action of finding a mark on a surface, recording it in some way (tracing, photographing or drawing), and then remaking it on another surface.

[2] Vinyl flooring is impermeable and can be used as protective covering for outdoor tiles.

[3] Wood-patterned vinyl flooring has a digitally manipulated image of wood printed on it. The printed image, called décor print, may be based on a photograph or scan of an actual surface or texture. The image is changed so as to repeat seamlessly on the vinyl. World Floor Covering Association web site, "How Vinyl/Resilient Flooring is Made"; Discovery Channel, "How It's Made: Vinyl."

Image 3.1:   Used vinyl flooring in the house yard
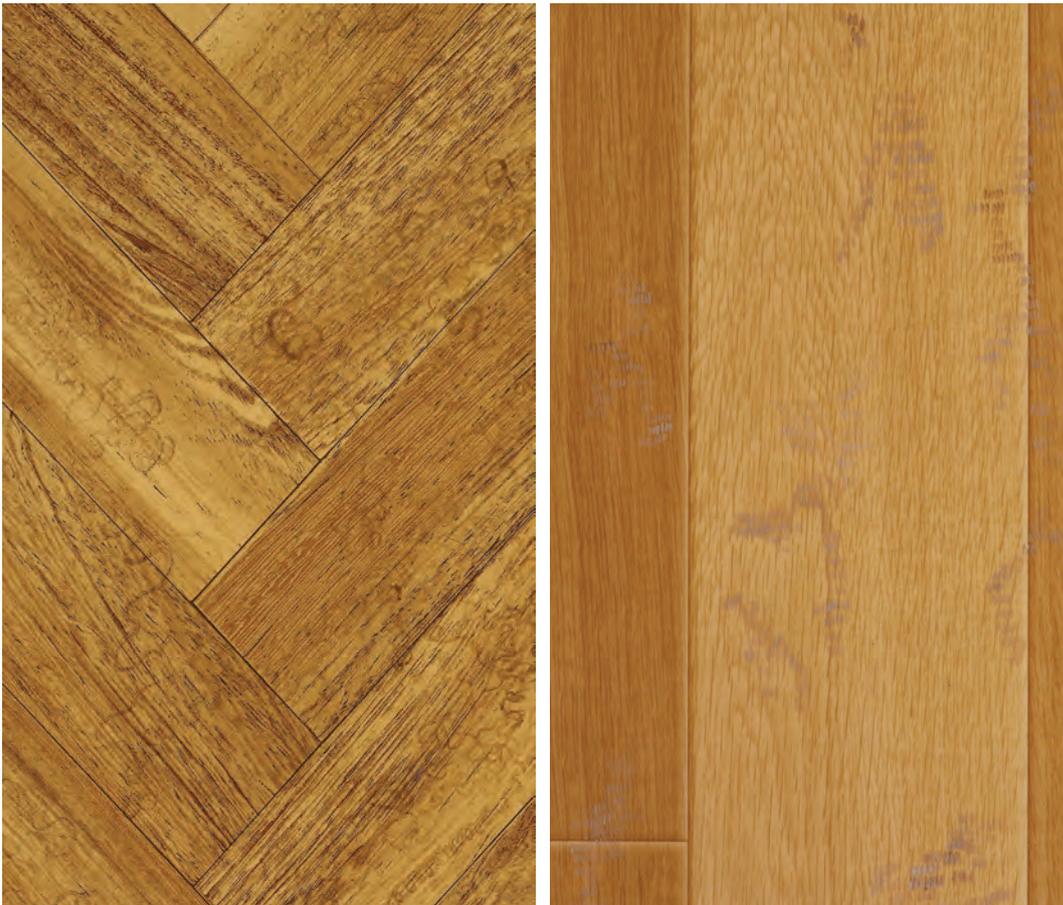
Image 3.2:   Selection of works and marking experiments on vinyl flooring. (*Untitled* (detail), 2008, acrylic on vinyl flooring, 50 x 36 cm; *Untitled* (detail), 2008, acrylic on vinyl flooring, 48 x 40 cm)

Image 3.3:   *Stain Painting*, 2008–2009
                Acrylic on found vinyl flooring, 62 x 48 cm

Using diluted paint, I had then painted small irregular marks that approximated existing marks in the imaged wood pattern. These existing marks consisted of short lines that formed part of the wood's grain and that also resembled small cracks in the wood. My painted marks ended up being somewhat curlier than the printed lines. Whilst I was, in a sense, mimicking the printed marks on the vinyl, I was also transforming them.

Looking closely at and thinking about this piece, led to a series of realisations. The small organic marks were almost visually absorbed into the surface, becoming partially confused with the printed pattern. Some of them were almost impossible to view from a distance of approximately two metres. They became more discernible as I moved closer to the surface. Moreover, they differentiated themselves more from the surface if seen at an angle, when light was reflected from the semi-glossy vinyl. Even when discernible, however, they tended to look more like coffee stains or residual dirt or part of the printed pattern on the vinyl rather than painted marks. It was only upon very close inspection, with my face centimetres from the surface, that they would register as small carefully painted marks. The partial disappearance of my marks and their commingling with other marks, indicated ways in which a basic relationship between mark and surface, involving visual overlay, could be challenged.

Given the similarity between these marks and actual stains, as well as the use of vinyl flooring as a floor cover, in subsequent works I began basing the shapes and placement of my marks on pre-existing floor stains. Several works were based on parts of my studio's wooden floor. I traced stains and scratches found on specific areas of the floor and then recreated these on pieces of vinyl flooring, again using small marks that approximated printed marks found on the vinyl. Works made for specific spaces, such as the works shown at Tenderpixel Gallery for the exhibition *Re-Surface* in 2009, came to depend on the floors in those spaces. That is, I chose vinyl floorings that approximated each specific floor and then painted marks on the vinyl that recreated stains found on that floor. For *Re-Surface*, I took several photographs of the floor at Tenderpixel and used these while working on the stain paintings which were made on pieces of dark-brown vinyl flooring similar to the floor of the gallery. Each stain painting recreated a specific area of the floor. In subsequent stain paintings, I

Image 3.4:   *Stain Painting*, 2009
               Acrylic on vinyl flooring, 100 x 100 cm

modified the painted marks so that they matched more closely the printed marks on the vinyl. My marks eventually came to depend on the use of vinyl as flooring, on existing stains found on floors in various spaces, as well as on the specific colours and printed marks on the vinyl. The painted marks mingled with the pre-existing image on the surface and sometimes also appeared to be floor stains, something that might potentially be found on that type of surface in everyday life. When showing these works in exhibitions, I realised that it was usually challenging for viewers who were not familiar with the work to differentiate between the painted marks and the surface. The status of the marks sometimes remained unclear, even when the viewers stood close to the work.[4]

For subsequent series of works, which began in 2011, I used adhesive vinyl to recreate pre-existing floor stains on pieces of vinyl flooring. The shift from painted to collaged marks related to my aim to approach the surface: as both an image and material, the collaged vinyl resembled the vinyl flooring.[5] In each case, I chose an adhesive vinyl design that approximated the colours and wood grain on the vinyl flooring. I then cut pieces of the adhesive vinyl, based on the shapes of actual floor stains, and adhered them to the vinyl flooring. The collaged stains no longer looked like the actual stains from which they had derived their shape but appeared to be part of the design of the flooring or part of the wood's naturally distorted figure.[6] Smaller pieces of adhesive vinyl became almost completely absorbed by the wood pattern printed on the vinyl flooring. Bigger pieces appeared to partially disrupt the pattern by interrupting the continuous wood grain. Again, in these works the marks—which I interpret as my interventions on the surface, that is, the added pieces of adhesive

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[4] Sara Wilson, Eric Stevens, and other visitors to exhibition *Re-Surface*, in conversation with author, August 13, 2009. The installation and viewing of these works are discussed in chapters 6 and 8.

[5] Like vinyl flooring, adhesive vinyl has a digitally manipulated scan or photograph of a texture printed on it. The image is changed so as to repeat seamlessly on each vinyl roll. The use of collage as a mode of marking is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

[6] The term "grain" is usually applied to the growth rings of a tree and the pores along those rings whereas the term "figure" is usually applied to the overall appearance of wood, which may not only depend on rings and pores but on other factors, such as stains and fungi.

vinyl—depend on the surface's appearance, on its use as flooring, and on pre-existing floor stains.

Image 3.5:   *Stain Collage*, 2012
              Adhesive vinyl on found vinyl flooring, 43 x 37 cm

Image 3.6:   *Stain Collage*, 2012
              Adhesive vinyl on found vinyl flooring, 51 x 30 cm

While working on the stain paintings, I was also working on a series of pieces utilising plain canvas and cardboard. In these early works, I was interested in the relationship between mark and surface when the marks formed an image that was somehow dissolving. The disintegrating image might provide another way through which to challenge the basic mark/surface relationship. I used found embroidery and crochet patterns to create images of flowers made up of groups of small "x" marks, which is often how these patterns are represented in magazines. The drawings of embroidery and crochet patterns on unprimed canvas related, to some extent, to the nature of this surface as fabric and its relationship to other patterned fabrics. I was essentially trying to create a pattern on the fabric. The marks on the cardboard were a response to the texture of corrugated cardboard. The structured appearance of embroidery and crochet patterns in magazines, in which the "x" marks are ordered in horizontal and vertical lines using a grid, reflected the cardboard's structure, which forms an irregular grid. The colours used when making these drawings were based on each surface.[7]

An "x" is a very clear image and represents a traditional method of marking space. In some of these works, however, the marks were so faint or so close to the colour of the surface that they partially disappeared. In some drawings, I tried repeating the patterns in layers, one on top of another. As the marks accumulated, they became more visible but the actual images, that is, the shapes of flowers, became partly lost amidst all the marks. The accumulated marks registered more as smudges rather than "x" marks or flowers.

This series of works touched on several of the issues I was researching, such as ways of responding to the surface and the partial confusion between mark and surface. The choice of marks and images, however, remained rather arbitrary, especially compared to the stain paintings in which the relationship between mark and surface

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[7] Raw unbleached canvas has several small dark-brown and grey spots all over its surface. Likewise, the darker canvas I used displays a range of colours, from very light beige to dark grey. It was these pre-existing colours that guided my choice of colours to use while marking. For the works on cardboard, I mostly used brown and red tones.

Image 3.7:   *Untitled*, 2009
              Graphite and acrylic on cotton,
              28.5 x 28.5 cm

Image 3.8:   *Untitled*, 2009
              Graphite and coloured pencils
              on canvas, 21.5 x 21.5 cm

Image 3.9:   *Untitled* (detail), 2008–2009
              Graphite and coloured pencils on cardboard, 35 x 29 cm

Image 3.10:   *Leftovers II*, 2010
Acrylic on wallpaper, acrylic on found furnishing fabrics, adhesive vinyl collages on
board, acrylic on laminate flooring, graphite on cotton, 127 x 135 x 145 cm

was quite precise. The series of works utilising patterns culminated in the installation

Leftovers II (2010), made for the group exhibition *Chypre 2010, L'Art au Présent*,

which explored issues relating to Cypriot culture. Using acrylic, I painted traditional

Cypriot decorative patterns on a variety of modern surfaces used in the home, such as

vinyl flooring, laminate flooring, wallpaper, and furnishing fabrics. I also made

adhesive vinyl collages based on these patterns.[8] I found these surfaces in houses, furnishing stores, and factories in Cyprus.[9] The specific pattern I chose, which resembles a flower, was repeatedly hand drawn on all the surfaces, sometimes becoming more discernible and at other times fading into the surface.[10] The use of patterns in combination with domestic surfaces worked well within the context of this exhibition, which focused on Cypriot culture.[11] In terms of this research, however, I did not make more works utilising pattern representations but rather looked for quite specific ways to approach each surface.

In the work *Vice Versa* (2010), which was completed during a residency at the Stonehouse Centre for the Contemporary Arts, the wood rings on the back side of the base of a found wooden box were drawn, using graphite, on the inner side and vice versa.[12] Parts of the old box, which was found in the studio I was working in, had been partially decolourised by the sun. In fact, the studio—a converted chicken coop located in the mountains of Miramonte in California—was surrounded by trees, some of which had fallen and had aged in the sun.[13] Several fallen branches were virtually greyscale— not a hint of colour in them. They formed a rather strange part of the landscape since they did not completely fit in with the colourful view. The partially bleached parts of the box as well as the old tree trunks and branches I came across, led to my decision to use graphite, whose grey colour alludes to the greying colour of aged wood. Rather than coming up with my own marks, I recreated marks that were already present on

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[8] The specific mode of marking used in these collages is discussed in chapter 5, which focuses on the use of surface as mark.

[9] I obtained furnishing fabrics, in the form of old curtains and tablecloths, as well as old carpets from houses in Cyprus. I also acquired leftover pieces of vinyl flooring and carpets from stores. Many of these surfaces were subsequently used for other works.

[10] This pattern is widely used in Lefkaritika, a specific type of traditional Cypriot embroidery. Embroidered works and objects utilising this motif could be found in many houses in Cyprus up until the 1970s but today are more likely to be found in old village houses. Hadjiyiasemi, *Lefkara Lace Embroidery*.

[11] The work was proposed as a rather problematic encounter between traditional and modern domestic spaces, juxtaposing very different materials, images, times, and production techniques.

[12] This work is one of several drawings on found wood. The works involve duplicating growth rings found on the surface by drawing them on other parts of the surface.

[13] The location of the residency was quite remote. Apart from the studios and artist residence, there were no other buildings within reasonable walking distance.

Image 3.11:   Old trunks and branches at Stonehouse, Miramonte, California

Image 3.12:   *Vice Versa*, 2010
Graphite on found wooden box, 46 x 30.5 x 14 cm

Image 3.13:   *Vice Versa*, 2010
Graphite on found wooden box, 46 x 30.5 x 14 cm

the box, thus, acquiring everything from the surface. I took photographs of the two
sides of the base of the box and drew the marks found on the outer side on the inner
side and vice versa. The faint graphite marks are partially lost in the existing pattern of
the old wood and register as a subtle disturbance to the surface. At times the drawn
lines and the existing patterns meet and, at other times, they follow different paths.

A work that resulted in a very specific form of marking, specific to both the
surface and its context, is the floor collage *Years Later* (2013). This collage was created
at Museo Memoria de Andalucía in Granada, Spain, and involved "aging" parts of the
museum's marble floor. During a residency at the University of Granada, I became

interested in the ubiquitous use of marble in buildings.[14] One of the first places I visited was the museum in which the resident artists' work would be shown. During the visit, I was quite taken by the expansive and lustrous marble floor. In the following days, I kept coming across marble floors: at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Granada, at the apartment building where I was staying, at the palaces of Alhambra, at public buildings, and so on. The marble used was local Macael marble, extracted from quarries in the neighbouring city of Almería in Andalucía. As the local artists confirmed, Macael marble is widely used as flooring all over Granada.[15] During my residency, I photographed all the damaged marble tiles I came across. I bought adhesive vinyl rolls with a marble image printed on them from a local store. The design I selected closely resembled the museum's floor.[16] I traced the areas where the marble tiles had been broken, cracked or scratched in the photographs I had taken and then hand cut the vinyl based on these tracings. At the museum, I recreated all the damaged tiles by affixing the cut pieces of vinyl on a section of the floor measuring approximately twenty-five square metres or one hundred tiles. The floor of the museum is relatively new, as the building was constructed between 2006 and 2009, and the marble tiles are quite shiny. Nevertheless, a few tiles have been scratched and the corners and rims of several other tiles have been broken.[17] My collage intermingled with these scratches and cracks and aged the floor even more.

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[14] The residency at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Granada was part of the Paradox Fabric programme, organised by the Fine Art European Forum to coincide with the forum's biennial conference in September 2013 in Granada. Paradox Fabric was open to research students from participating European universities. Rebecca Fortnum nominated me for this programme and the University of the Arts London provided travel funds.

[15] Cecilia Garcia Giralda, Isidro Lopez Aparicio, Juan Lopez, in conversation with author, September 4–6, 2013; Navarro, Cruz, Arriaga, and Baltuille, "White Macael Marble." Even local buses displayed vinyl with printed marble patterns that looked like Macael marble. The vinyl lined the inside of the buses, between windows and floor.

[16] La Fabrica, a small to medium size home décor store, sold four different adhesive vinyl designs, all simulating marble. They also sold vinyl flooring with marble patterns. As I went through their vinyl flooring samples, I came across fourteen different designs.

[17] The exhibition hall we were using measures four hundred and fifty square metres. I counted eleven damaged tiles in the hall.

Image 3.14:   Macael marble around Granada (Floor at Museo Memoria de Andalucía; Floor at Alhambra palaces; Floor at University of Granada; Fake marble lining on bus 28)

This work involved a quite literal transferring of marks. Broken tiles all over Granada were recreated, one alongside the other, within the exhibition hall of the museum. My marks consisted of pieces of adhesive vinyl whose colours resembled the colours of the museum floor and whose shapes matched pre-existing scratches or pieces of broken marble tiles. From afar, as museum visitors entered the space, the

floor collage was indiscernible. On approaching, some pieces of vinyl slowly emerged but it was still quite difficult, even when standing right on top of them, to differentiate them from actual damage to the floor. Visitors almost had to lean down and touch them to be convinced of the fact that they were actually added to the floor.[18]

Image 3.15:   *Years Later* (details), 2013
                Adhesive vinyl on floor, 500 x 500 cm

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[18] Rebecca Fortnum, Suzy Robinson, Cecilia Garcia Giralda, and other visitors to the exhibition, in conversation with author, September 12, 2013.

A MIMETIC APPROACH

The making of marks that resemble found marks and pre-existing features of a surface reveals a mimetic tendency.[19] The painted marks on vinyl flooring mimic the shapes of floor stains as well as the colours and printed marks on the vinyl. The graphite marks on wood mimic old wood as well as dirt. The pieces of adhesive vinyl on the floor of Museo Memoria de Andalucía, mimic the shapes of pre-existing scratches on tiles all over Granada. The chosen vinyl itself mimics actual marble by essentially being a processed image of marble printed endlessly in rolls.

Mimesis is a problematic term, partly because it can refer to a variety of actions, processes and characteristics. As Stephen Halliwell notes, mimesis is not "a clearly unified idea" that has a single meaning but rather a "nodal point of a rich locus of aesthetic issues."[20] Moreover, as Halliwell and Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf show, the meaning of the term has changed over time.[21] Halliwell's account, which focuses on aesthetics, emphasises the double nature of mimesis throughout its history, that is, mimesis "has always been marked by a contrast between world-reflecting and world-creating principles of representation."[22] He identifies five categories of phenomena relating to mimesis: visual resemblance, behavioural emulation, impersonation, vocal or musical production, and metaphysical conformity.[23] The

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[19] While I had used mimesis to discuss my marks in previous texts, it was the conversations with Louise Hopkins and Susan Collis and our discussion of mimesis that eventually led me to use it as a lens through which to discuss these works.

[20] Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Re-Evaluated," 488. Another useful way of thinking about mimesis is suggested by Timo Maran who, after giving an account of various meanings of mimesis, concludes that mimesis is "a constantly changing, transforming and as it were 'living' family of concepts." Maran, "Mimesis as a Phenomenon of Semiotic Communication," 197.

[21] In his book *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, Halliwell revisits the concept of mimesis in the works of Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists, and clarifies and reassesses the foundations of mimetic theories of art. He also identifies and briefly discusses mimeticist modes of thinking from the Renaissance to the twentieth century as they pertain to representational art. He argues against the notion that mimesis is simply imitation and attempts to demonstrate its complexity and diversity. In their book *Mimesis: Culture, Art, Society*, Gebauer and Wulf give a much more general overview of the shifting meanings, understandings and uses of the term mimesis from Plato to twentieth century theorists.

[22] Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 377.

[23] These phenomena pertain to the earliest uses of the term mimesis in pre-Platonic works. Metaphysical conformity refers to the mimesis of ideal or immaterial domains. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 15.

common thread he identifies in all these is that of correspondence between the mimetic work and its real-world equivalent (which may or may not actually exist).[24] Gebauer and Wulf suggest that mimesis can only be described through its various and varied dimensions, which include practical knowledge (use of the body), repetition and transformation of something pre-existing, interpretation of a prior world and the creation of new perceptions, and linkage between a symbolically produced world and another world.[25]

A complete analysis of the meanings of the term mimesis is beyond the scope of this project, which does not focus on mimesis itself but on ways of approaching certain surfaces. My turn to mimetic modes of marking related to the actual surfaces I worked with. The initial motivation for making these specific marks related to my decision to approach the surfaces on multiple levels. Mimesis turned out to be an effective method of approaching, as I argue in the rest of this chapter.[26]

My use of the term mimesis focuses, for now, on mimesis as the production of visual resemblance or likeness.[27] Mimesis as likeness involves the sharing of common or similar attributes or qualities.[28] My marks attempt to closely match things I have

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 315–320.

[26] As Paul Patton argues, it is not the use of perceptual similarity in art that should be the question but the objectives and goals of art when using similarity. Patton, "Anti-Platonism and Art," 142–143. Here, my goals in using mimesis relate to my attempt to approach the surface.

[27] Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Re-Evaluated," 491–492. Halliwell clarifies that likeness does not involve a mirroring of the world since it does not exclude the imaginary. Moreover, in order to be mimetic, likeness must be intentional. Finally, likeness is achieved through art by taking into consideration the specific artistic media and their properties. In other words, mimetic works depend both on the artist's manipulation of materials as well as on the "object" they signify. Ibid., 491–493, 504–505. This dimension of mimesis, that is, mimesis as likeness or resemblance, associates it with representation, an equally problematic term. In representation what is depicted is thought of as "standing for" or "taking the place of" something else. Mitchell, "Representation," 11. Within representation, mimesis ensures that an image matches what we see in the world. Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation*, 16. The underlying suggestion is that the world exists "out there" as an object to be represented through art, a viewpoint that has come under attack by several theorists. Ibid., 11–51. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for example, argue that art participates directly in the creation of reality and does not solely represent a pre-existing reality. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 336. A discussion of the complex relationship between mimesis and representation is well beyond the scope of this text. My use of the term mimesis diverges from the topic of representation—mimesis here becomes a way for my marks to initiate an approach towards the surface.

[28] Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Re-Evaluated," 491–492.

observed: floor stains and the printed marks on vinyl flooring, bleached or dirty wood, and damaged marble tiles. In terms of the dimensions discussed by Gebauer and Wulf, the dimensions that most closely relate to the notion of likeness in visual art are those of reference and of repetition and transformation. Something that mimics is, in effect, establishing a reference to that which it mimics. This mimetic reference generates correspondences and similarities between what is mimicked and the mimesis.[29] The correspondences, however, are not necessarily exact. Rather, mimesis involves a repetition and a "process of transformation of the elements of a prior into a symbolically produced world."[30] The prior world is "a world of Others" while the symbolically produced world is that of an "I" acting mimetically.[31]

The likeness between my marks and pre-existing marks or features also means that my marks can be understood as iconic signs. In Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of signs, an icon is a sign whose relationship to its object or referent is established precisely through likeness.[32] Again, the likeness is not assumed to be exact. After all, according to Peirce, a sign stands for something only in some and not in all respects.[33]

In addition to visual resemblance, another aspect of mimesis I draw on is its relational character. As Halliwell suggests, mimesis can be thought of as a relational practice since it involves following, in some ways, something other.[34] This relational quality is something Gebauer and Wulf emphasise as well. One of the dimensions they

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[29] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 317.

[30] Ibid., 315.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 102. The close relationship between Peirce's concept of iconicity and the principle of likeness inherent in mimesis is discussed by Halliwell and Maran. Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Re-Evaluated," 496; Maran, "Mimesis as a Phenomenon of Semiotic Communication," 206, 209. Mimesis has also been associated with indexicality, another type of sign (or rather another quality a sign may exhibit) theorised by Peirce. Authors such as Laura Marks and Michael Taussig, link mimesis with indexicality because, as they argue, mimesis requires some form of contact between two things such that one can mime the other. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 138–139, 142; Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 52–57, 220. I address the indexical quality of my marks in the next chapter.

[33] Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 99. Peirce refers to icons in terms of likeness and resemblance and not identification. He also considers diagrams to be icons, suggesting that iconicity is not meant to be exact visual likeness. Ibid., 105.

[34] Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Re-Evaluated," 491. This is by no means the only way of understanding mimesis and Halliwell quickly adds that the other that is mimed may not be actual or may even be something internal.

attribute to mimesis is that it is intermediary, taking place between two worlds, between I and Other.[35] In the case of the works discussed in this chapter, mimetic marking enables relationships between different kinds of marks and between marks and surfaces, relationships that involve, on an initial level, visual approaching.

BESIDE AN(OTHER) ARTIST:
SUSAN COLLIS

Susan Collis' early work, from 2002 to 2009, involved, to a large extent, the acquisition of everyday objects and the marking of those objects.[36] The artist's marks were based on pre-existing found marks. While a graduate student at the Royal College of Art, between 2000 and 2002, she had found an old boiler suit that a sculpture student had thrown away in a skip. Collis bought a new suit, similar to the first one, and then recreated on this new suit the paint marks and other stains found on the first suit. Instead of recreating the marks using paint, she used thread and embroidered the marks on the new suit. Her choice of thread, as she has stated, related to the idea of "truth to the material"—both the thread and the suit were made out of cotton.[37] Moreover, embroidery involves a process of making that is more akin to the process of making of the fabric itself. That is, the making of marks utilising embroidered thread, which passes through and between the threads of the fabric, resembles the making of fabric, which involves weaving long threads together. As Collis has stated, the process of working on this piece almost became a way of trying "to understand how something is made."[38] The technique she used while embroidering did not always match known embroidery stitches. Rather, she used the thread and needle as tools, in whatever way worked best, to recreate each original stain as closely

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[35] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 317, 309.

[36] Despite becoming well known for making these types of works, Collis' practice, from 2002 to the present, involves a variety of other works, such as sculptural objects cast in precious metals and pencil and pen drawings on paper. I am focusing on works that involve the addition of marks on pre-existing objects and spaces because these are the works that most productively engage with the relationship between mark and surface, within the context of this research.

[37] Quoted in Milliard, "The Hyperreal World of Susan Collis," 32.

[38] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

as possible.[39] The work involved a lot of unpicking and redoing but the final result, *100% cotton* (2002), which was first presented to the other graduate students at the Royal College of Art, managed to fool everyone's eyes. Everyone thought she had hung an old dirty boiler suit on the wall.[40]

Image 3.16:   Susan Collis, *100% cotton*, 2002
Boiler suit, embroidery threads,
160 x 45.7 cm
Image published in *Susan Collis:
Don't Get Your Hopes Up*.
Reproduced with the artist's
permission.
© Susan Collis

Image 3.17:   Susan Collis, *Our Appetite for Lies*, 2008
Oak stepladder, diamond, topaz, picture agate, white opal, Brazilian opal, fossil coral, freshwater pearl, cultured pearl, white mother of pearl, gold mother of pearl, white howlite, 64 x 52 x 36 cm
Image published in *Susan Collis: Since I Fell for You*, 29. Reproduced with the artist's permission. © Susan Collis

Collis worked in a similar way for subsequent pieces. After finding an old wooden stepladder full of paint drips, she bought a similar stepladder and, using wood stains and waxes, "aged" the wood to make it resemble that of the found stepladder. She then recreated the paint drips using a range of semiprecious stones, such as mother of pearl, corals, opals and diamonds, and a technique that approximated marquetry or intarsia.[41] For Collis, the choice of semiprecious stones depended on just

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Marquetry involves the application of pieces of veneer to a supporting structure to form decorative patterns. The veneers, made of wood, metals or other materials such as mother of pearl and ivory, are overlaid and glued on the support. Intarsia involves removing parts of a material support and then inlaying another material in the cavity in order to form the pattern. Campkin, *The Technique of Marquetry*, 6; Hawkins, *The Technique of Wood Surface Decoration*, 7–8, 22.

Image   Susan Collis, *100% cotton* (detail), 2002
3.18:   Boiler suit, embroidery threads, 160 x 45.7 cm
          Image published in *Susan Collis: Since I Fell for You*, 18. Reproduced with the
          artist's permission. © Susan Collis

Image 3.19:   Susan Collis, *Our Appetite for Lies* (detail), 2008
              Oak stepladder, diamond, topaz, picture agate, white opal, Brazilian opal, fossil
              coral, freshwater pearl, cultured pearl, white mother of pearl, gold mother of pearl,
              white howlite, 64 x 52 x 36 cm

how different these materials were from old and used objects in terms of value. That is, semiprecious stones have a literal value whereas old stained furniture may be considered to be worthless.[42]

For the piece *Work On It* (2002), Collis marked a table using adhesive vinyl. The marks were based on various marks she had found around the Royal College of Art. She traced found stains and then cut the vinyl accordingly. She used a range of vinyl pieces, in different colours and patterns, to suggest a variety of marks: water stains, paint stains, scratches, chipped wood and hot cup rings. The location of the fabricated stains on each table—the composition—depended on a narrative of use. As Collis commented during a conversation, "there's a logic there and it's about usage, it's about the use . . . I'd imagine people putting paint brushes and pots down, and think, if someone were to put a pot down here and then painted from it would there be drips next to that?"[43]

Image 3.20:   Susan Collis, *Work on It*, 2002
New wooden table, adhesive vinyl,
73.5 x 114 x 76 cm
Image published in *Susan Collis:
Since I Fell for You*, 30. Reproduced
with the artist's permission.
© Susan Collis

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[42] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[43] Ibid.

Image 3.21:   Susan Collis, *Work on It* (detail), 2002
New wooden table, adhesive vinyl, 73.5
x 114 x 76 cm
Image published in *Susan Collis: Since I
Fell for You*, 31. Reproduced with the
artist's permission. © Susan Collis

Collis' process in these early works, which also included brooms inlayed with semiprecious stones and embroidered dustsheets, involves a transfer of marks from one object or place to another. She focuses on old and worn objects, thus, the marks involved are mostly marks of usage and time. They reference the specific uses an object might have been put to. These uses have to do with the specific spaces Collis makes and shows work in: the studio (including the art college studio) and the gallery. Thus, the objects and marks mostly have to do with activities such as painting in the studio, preparing a gallery space for an exhibition, and installing work—activities Collis refers to as the behind-the-scenes labour of art.[44] In the process of transfer from their initial location to the objects Collis has acquired, the marks are transformed in terms of material. Paint splashes become embroidery, drips become cut pieces of

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[44] Ibid.

mother of pearl or diamond inlaid into the surface of an object, and stains become pieces of meticulously cut vinyl.

The surface Collis marks is important as it determines, to a different extent in each work, the materials and techniques used to make the marks. This is most obvious in the boiler suit and dustsheet pieces where the material of the mark (cotton thread) is essentially the same as the material of the surface (cotton fabric). The process of making the mark (embroidery) alludes to the process of making of the surface (weaving). Both mark and surface are made out of the same material and using similar methods of making. The choice of semiprecious stones and a modified intarsia technique for marking wooden objects alludes to the tradition of decorating furniture with various materials using intarsia and marquetry. Inlaying semiprecious stones onto a wooden stepladder recalls old furniture decorated in these ways.[45] Therefore, there is a connection between the material of the marks, the inlay technique used, and the wooden surface of the chosen object, a connection that depends on cultural and historical reasons this time. The choice of adhesive vinyl to mark wooden tables references the use of vinyl as furniture lining, most commonly shelf lining. The fact that adhesive vinyl comes in a range of wood patterns also means that it can be used to simulate wood stains. Again, the connection between the marking material and technique and the surface marked is a cultural one and, in the case of the wood patterned vinyl, a visual one.

The marks Collis makes can be described as mimetic, a term she herself uses, since they are mostly based on pre-existing marks that she draws, traces or photographs.[46] Collis works to get her constructed marks to resemble the marks she has observed. For the works involving semiprecious stones, she carefully chooses what stones to use to recreate each found mark in order to achieve as close a visual

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[45] There is something culturally subversive about Collis' combination of stains and drips—the leftover marks of someone's labour—semiprecious stones, and craft-based decorative techniques. This topic, as interesting as it is, is beyond the scope of my project. It is briefly discussed in the essay "Tell Me What You See" by Nigel Prince.

[46] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A. Mimesis works on several levels in Collis' work. New objects mimic old and aged objects while Collis herself mimics, in a sense, craft techniques. As she says, the techniques she uses have been modified to allow her to get her marks to look like other marks. Ibid.

resemblance as possible. The stones are then carefully cut and shaped to match the initial marks. Thus, for example, mother of pearl is cut and inlayed into a surface in such a way so as to mimic white paint drips. Likewise, for the works involving vinyl, Collis chose colours and patterns that simulated the stains she previously traced. These were then cut to match the shapes of the stains. For *100% cotton*, she describes how she tried to get her embroidered marks to look like paint drips. In addition to using satin stitch, she improvised various ways of getting threads through the satin stitches to simulate the paint drips she had observed on the boiler suit.[47] Each mark involves a time-consuming process of making, both in terms of getting it to look like the original or found mark, a process Collis describes as "observational drawing," and in terms of putting it on the surface.[48] Collis' modified intarsia technique involves using a scalpel to carve the surface and then inlaying a stone or multiple layers of a material. The found accidental marks, each of which probably occurred within seconds—although their accumulation on a surface might have required a long time— are converted into time-consuming "observational drawings" that involve slow and potentially demanding craft-based techniques.

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN THERE: CONFUSION BETWEEN MARKS

The works discussed so far, both my own and Collis', involve a simultaneous transfer and transformation of found marks. The transfer of the marks begins in a careful way with the observation, photographing, and tracing of found marks. These marks are then recreated on other surfaces. Crucially, the marks are related to those surfaces—they are marks that could have been found on those surfaces under everyday conditions, or within a specific context, or they are marks that are already found on those surfaces.

Susan Collis focuses on a specific context—the studio and gallery—and on the work that takes place within that context. Her work revolves around the traces of the behind-the-scenes human labour that precedes the opening of an art exhibition. Thus,

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

her choice of marks depends on the use of specific objects within the context of an art studio or gallery. She spends a considerable amount of time trying to replicate the found marks in an accurate way, albeit with different materials and processes.[49] She chooses materials that match the colours of the found marks and she manipulates and applies that material in a way that will make it look like the original mark, whether that is a paint drip or a scratch. The accurate mimetic marking that Collis utilises and her careful selection of objects and marking materials, lead to the creation of trompe l'oeil works, works that effectively manage to look like something other than what they are. As Rosemary Shirley has pointed out, Collis' works follow the first two rules of trompe l'oeil as set out by Miriam Milman: they are life-size and they fit perfectly in the space and situation in which they are presented.[50] Dirt on a dustsheet and paint stains on a stepladder fit within a narrative of regular usage of such objects within a gallery. Likewise, an embroidered white boiler suit hanging on a nail on the wall of a gallery looks as if it was just worn by someone painting the walls. The objects and marks fit in with the scenario of preparing a gallery space for a show.[51] Collis' marks are, thus, camouflaged within each work and within the overall setting.

When making my works, I was not necessarily focusing on marks that related to human work but on any marks—human, natural or mechanical—that could potentially be found on a specific surface. In most cases, these were marks already found on the surfaces. The floor at Museo Memoria de Andalucía already had some damaged tiles. Given that I encountered scratched and broken tiles all over Granada, I decided to use those kinds of marks—marks that related to use and wear but not

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[49] Collis' works appear to be more preoccupied with remaking found objects, utilising marks that are already on those objects or that could have been found on them based on a specific narrative of use. This tendency is apparent in her recent work, which involves remaking old pieces of scrap wood and metal from scratch. I do not discuss any of the works that involve a complete remaking of a found object because I am more interested in the relationship between the artist's mark and a pre-existing surface.

[50] Shirley, "Don't Get Your Hopes Up." The remaining four rules Milman describes are directly related to painting and are, thus, inapplicable for Collis' work. They include the realistic rendering of relief and volume, the depiction of whole objects that are not cut off at the edge of the painting, the use of an appropriate perspective system, and the avoidance of the depiction of live figures. Milman, *Trompe L'Oeil Painting*, 36.

[51] The installation of Collis' works and their relationship with the surrounding space is, thus, extremely important. I return to this issue in chapter 6.

Image 3.22:   *Arches* (details), 2014
                Graphite on wall
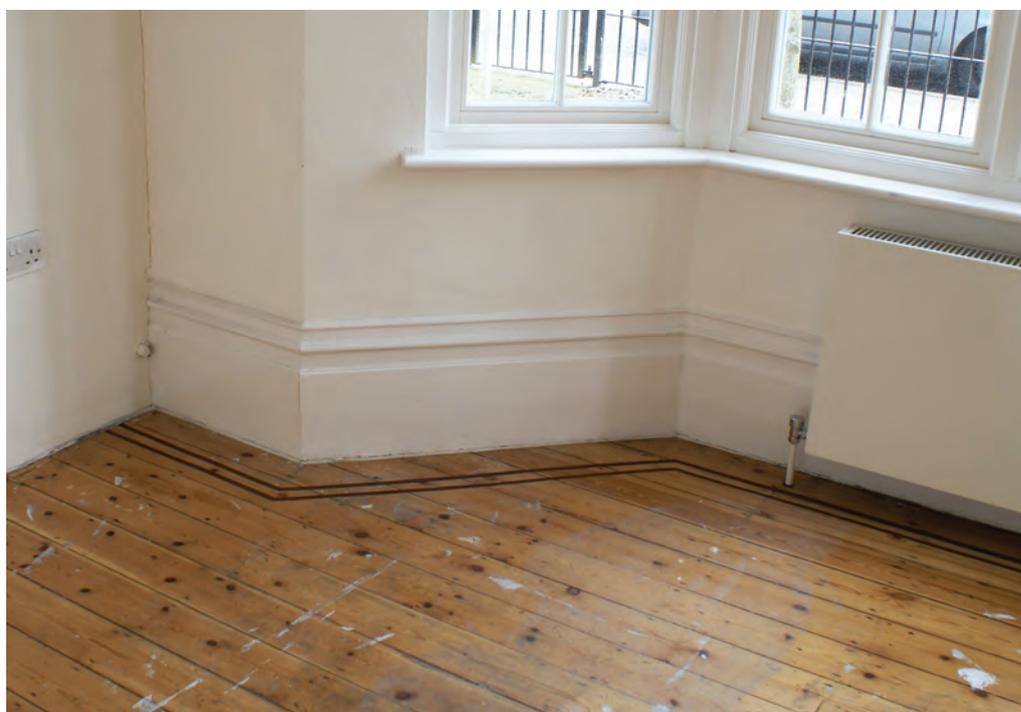
Image 3.23:   *Renovation* (detail), 2014
                Adhesive vinyl on floor

directly to human labour. *Arches* (2014), a work made during a residency at the Centre for Drawing at Wimbledon College of Arts, involved making drawings of wall cracks that mimicked existing cracks. Each drawing appeared next to the corresponding crack on the wall. As in the case of *Years Later*, this work aged the space by increasing the number of apparent cracks on the walls. *Renovation* (2014), a series of floor interventions also completed as part of my residency at the Centre for Drawing, included the duplication of existing marquetry designs on the floor. Parts of the floor were decorated using inlayed strips of darker wood. Using wood-patterned adhesive vinyl of a similar colour, I recreated the designs and placed my recreations opposite the originals, thus, making the floor design symmetrical.

Despite the differences in focus and motivation, most of the found marks Collis' and I work with are very often marks that are overlooked. Many of these, such as stains and scratches, are accidental. Others, such as wall cracks, discolouration, and dust, are signs of time and wear. Yet others, such as dirt on a dustsheet, are more clearly signs of usage. Overall, these are marks that are not meant to be shown or seen. They are marks that are "eminently ignorable" within certain contexts.[52] When discussing mimesis in literature, Erich Auerbach goes beyond the notion of likeness and points out that attention to detail, and specifically attention to what he calls "the random occurrence," brings forth things the readers share with literary characters, thus, achieving "realistic depth."[53] Random occurrences involve moments which are elementary in some way but which, according to Auerbach, reveal things we all have in common. In visual art, this "random occurrence" might translate to images or marks encountered in everyday life that are not particularly noteworthy. Collis' and my works replicate such "random occurrences," commonplace marks that one would not necessarily pay much attention to, especially when found on certain objects or within specific spaces.[54] In some ways, a form of invisibility is already inherent within such

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[52] The phrase is from Susan Collis. She used it to refer to objects, such as a stained technician's boiler suit, that would be "eminently ignorable" within a gallery. Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[53] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 552. The novel he uses as exemplary of this approach is Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

[54] I am not claiming that such marks are always ignored. Severe damage on an otherwise undamaged floor will of course be noticeable and the person whose job it is

marks. They may not be actually invisible but they are usually overlooked. Paint stains on a worker's stepladder are not especially noteworthy. Neither are some cracked tiles on a floor. These specific marks do not ordinarily capture the attention of the onlooker who will most probably not approach to study them closely. They are not meant to be seen in a way a painting is meant to be seen, for example. Moreover, it was not the intention of the worker using the stepladder to make those exact marks on the ladder. These marks are the unintentional leftovers of an activity, traces of the "main event," presumably not made to be seen by anyone. Thus, when first encountering these works, the marks may remain partially invisible, either because they are taken to be random stains and are not observed closely—a case of misconception—or because they are completely ignored.

In Collis' case, this invisibility is reversed when someone is close to the works and is looking at the marks. It then becomes clear that they are not random stains.[55] In fact, the trompe l'oeil aspect of the works depends on the eventual recognition of the marks since the "fooling" of the eye "unfolds precisely when the illusion is recognised as such."[56] There comes a moment of realisation when the stain "turns into" an embroidery or a carefully cut semiprecious stone. The artist's marks emerge as what they really are and confusion is dispersed. In fact, as the viewer approaches the works, all of Collis' marks eventually stand out, differentiating themselves from the surface and declaring their actual provenance.

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to repair that floor may have to study the damage closely. Within the context of an art exhibition or gallery, however, viewers are more likely to pay attention to what they consider to be artworks rather than to what appear to be unintended or natural marks on the floors and walls. They are also not likely to study such marks closely.

[55] The nature of the marks also becomes apparent through the very long materials lists that Collis provides in her exhibitions. In fact, the materials list acts as a way to direct people towards the work. Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[56] Geimer, "Image as Trace," 13.

Image 3.24:   Susan Collis, *Waltzer* (detail), 2007
Wooden broom, diamonds, white opals, turquoise,
tourmaline, seed pearls (oyster), freshwater pearls, white
mother of pearl, gold mother of pearl, coral, labradorite,
marcasite, red carnelian, 127.5 x 37 x 11 cm
Image published in *Susan Collis: Don't Get Your Hopes Up*.
Reproduced with the artist's permission.
© Susan Collis

Image 3.25:   Susan Collis, *Waltzer* (detail), 2007
Wooden broom, diamonds, white opals, turquoise, tourmaline,
seed pearls (oyster), freshwater pearls, white mother of pearl,
gold mother of pearl, coral, labradorite, marcasite, red
carnelian, 127.5 x 37 x 11 cm
Image published in *Susan Collis: Don't Get Your Hopes Up*.
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Moreover, in many of Collis' works the found mark is subtly enhanced and emphasised due to the materials and marking processes that she employs. In the case of the boiler suit and dustsheet pieces, the embroidered thread and the fabric may be of the same material, as I discussed earlier, however, the slightly raised texture of the embroidery leads to a distinguishing of the mark, or "figure," from the "ground" on which it is placed. The lustre and reflectiveness of some of the semiprecious stones Collis uses, such as pearls and diamonds, makes the marks differentiate themselves from the surrounding surfaces even more. Moreover, her process of inlaying these stones results in a slight difference in height between mark and surface. The result is that the figure separates itself from the ground. In addition, the use of semiprecious stones to recreate stains and drips, adds monetary and cultural value to the marks. In the boiler suit and dustsheet pieces, value is added through the time spent to make the embroidered marks. This notion of value again distinguishes the mark from the ordinary object/surface on which it is placed. This time the distinction is conceptual as a differentiation of value is established between mark and surface.[57] The question of value is central to Collis' concern with hidden labour. The subtle enhancement of the leftover traces of labour adds value to these specific marks, suggesting that, ultimately, "value lies not in materials but in labour."[58] The transformation of the found marks into labour-intensive embroideries, inlayed semiprecious stones or carefully cut vinyl, leads to a reconsideration of the found marks themselves. Collis' careful treatment of these usually ignorable marks, suggests their importance. Mimesis acts as a way of drawing attention to these marks and to the hidden, behind-the-scenes activities that bring them into being—the activities/work that happen in the studio and the gallery before artworks can be exhibited.[59]

In works such as *Years Later*, *Arches*, and *Renovation*, a slightly different situation occurs. The juxtaposition of actual scratches, cracks and marquetry designs

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[57] It could also be argued that the value of the precious stones imparts value to the object. Here, I am focusing on the relationship between the pre-existing object and the mark so I am looking at their relative "value."

[58] Prince, "Tell Me What You See," 8.

[59] Moreover, in Collis' case mimesis acts as a process of understanding how something is made. Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

with my constructed marks leads to confusion between the two even when observed from close by. In *Arches*, the visual similarity and physical closeness between each crack and its drawing resulted in visual confusion between the two.[60] In *Years Later*, the collaged pieces could easily be mistaken for real pieces of broken marble, and, thus, actual parts of the surface, a situation that occurred several times even when I was looking at the work from some distance. Given the size of the piece, it was nearly impossible to remember at all times which parts of the floor were actually damaged and which were not. Thus, the collaged marks and actual scratches often became indistinguishable from each other. A similar situation occurred with *Renovation* where adhesive vinyl and actual wood visually intermingled.[61] This confusion postpones the moment of recognition, which may or may not arrive. Even if recognition comes through close looking, when stepping back again the different types of marks become difficult to differentiate. Actual cracks and scratches may be seen as the artist's marks and, conversely, the artist's marks may be seen as cracks and scratches. The visual confusion leads to a conceptual confusion where it becomes challenging to identify who or what brought specific marks into being and where and what exactly the artist's marks are.

A similar temporary confusion occurs with some of Collis' site-specific pieces, such as *Rock Bottom Riser* (2007) installed at Seventeen Gallery in London.[62] The work involved adding white "paint drips" on the floor of the gallery. The "drips" were made out of round pieces of inlaid mother of pearl. These marks were based on a pattern of droplets Collis encountered in a street.[63] In this work, Collis' marks coexist with floor scratches, accidental marks, actual paint drips, and so on. In that sense, the work resonates with my work *Years Later* in which added "damage" coexists with actual damage. I believe there is a difference, however, in terms of how "far" the mark is from the surface. Collis' line of white "drips" visually stands out on the dark brown

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[60] Visitors to *Plans and Renovations*, in conversation with author, April 2–4, 2014.

[61] Tania Kovats, Jeffrey Dennis, Bernice Donszelmann, Rebecca Fortnum, and other visitors to exhibition *Plans and Renovations*, in conversation with author, April 2–4, 2014.

[62] Collis completed a similar piece, *Down to the Mother*, at Ingleby Gallery in Edinburgh in 2008.

[63] Shirley, "Don't Get Your Hopes Up."

floor whereas my collaged marks tend to visually move closer to the specific surface.[64]

I discuss this issue of closeness to the surface next.

Image 3.26:   Susan Collis, *Rock Bottom Riser*, 2007
                 Mother of pearl gemstones, 10 m (installed length)
                 Images published in *Susan Collis: Don't Get Your Hopes Up*. Reproduced with
                 the artist's permission. © Susan Collis

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[64] In Collis' work, the bigger pieces of mother of pearl extrude a few millimetres from
the floor. When walking on the work at Seventeen, I could feel the unevenness of the
ground under my feet.

WHAT MAY NOT BE THERE:
CONFUSION BETWEEN MARK AND SURFACE

In the previous section I focused on the partial confusion between the artist's marks and pre-existing or found marks. The artist's marks may be seen but they are usually confused with other kinds of marks, such as accidental stains or signs of use and wear. Now I shift my focus to look at the confusion between mark and surface. This involves the artist's marks becoming visually lost in the surface such that they may not be seen at all.

The emphasis in Collis' works is on mimicking found marks. Mimesis brings her marks closer to other marks—marks that are obviously important to her overall project. Most of Collis' marks clearly differentiate themselves from the surface of the objects she uses. Most times there is no visual confusion between mark and surface as the emphasis lies with the actual marks, which are usually transformed so as to stand out a bit more. When looking at the works from a distance of approximately two metres away, most of the marks are visible, even as merely signs of use and wear. One exception is a group of embroidered works that involve white thread on white fabric. One such work was shown as part of the installation *Forever Young* (2009). Collis embroidered white paint drips on a piece of white linen. From some distance away, the marks were impossible to see as marks and surface shared colour. As with Collis' other works, the embroidered marks were visible and identifiable upon close observation. The slightly raised texture of the embroidery actually made them stand out against the smooth cloth. Thus, the viewer's perception was altered as she stepped close to the work and realised that she had been looking at something else entirely.

In some of my works, the found mark has been modified to visually approach the specific surface on which it is placed. That is, in addition to mimicking aspects of found marks, my marks also mimic aspects of the surface. In the case of *Years Later*, for example, instead of adhering to the colours of the found marks I was recreating, many of which were much darker than the marble floor, I chose to use a vinyl whose colour was very similar to that of the museum floor. In the case of the stain paintings on vinyl flooring, I did not remake the found stains exactly but rather only followed their shapes and placements. Within each stain, the marks I painted mimicked

features of the vinyl. In these and other works, my marks are somewhere between the found mark and the surface I am marking. They are between a stain and wood pattern, between dirt and wood grain, between scratch and marble. They simultaneously mimic aspects of the surface and aspects of the pre-existing marks. Neither of the two mimeses is exact—my marks are more like a combination of the two. Thus, the artist's marks are actually *between* a mark and a surface.[65]

By mimicking or resembling features of the surface on which they are placed, my marks become partially indiscernible, camouflaged within the surface. The relationship between mimesis and partial invisibility is explored by Roger Caillois in his widely discussed essay, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia."[66] In this essay, Caillois focuses on the distinction between an organism and its surroundings. He describes organisms that mimic their environment, partially blending into it. For example, he discusses the Kallima butterflies which come to resemble the specific types of bush that they frequent. In the case of the Kallima, "imitation is pushed to the smallest details: indeed, the wings bear grey-green spots simulating the mould of lichens and glistening surfaces that give them the look of torn and perforated leaves."[67] The butterflies, thus, "become" leaves on the bushes, rendering themselves, as actual living butterflies, "invisible."[68] The "invisibility" of the organisms Caillois discusses comes about precisely due to their tendency to mimic their specific environment. It is, thus, a combination of mimicking something *and* situating oneself, as the mimic, over

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[65] In a sense, Collis' work is more accurately mimetic in its attempt to recreate specific types of marks whereas my work utilises mimesis as a way of bringing mark and surface closer together.

[66] Bernice Donszelmann pointed me towards this text during a discussion on my practice. Caillois uses the term "mimicry" instead of "mimesis." According to Gebauer and Wulf, the differentiation between the terms "mimesis" and "mimicry" relates to intentionality. Mimesis refers to mimetic activities performed intentionally and consciously, which might relate to pleasure and pedagogy, something that only human beings can do, again according to Gebauer and Wulf. Mimicry, on the other hand, refers to the mimetic activities of animals. Moreover, mimicry is confined to a physical relation whereas mimesis can mean a mental relation as well. Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 319, 5. In this text, I am using both terms so as to accentuate from early on the interweave between subject and object that I see occurring through the works. I discuss this issue in more detail in part III.

[67] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 22.

[68] Ibid., 24. Caillois uses the term "invisible" when discussing the continuity between organism and environment. I believe the term "indiscernible" is more suitable, as I argue later in the chapter.

or next to what one mimics. Through mimicry and placement, the organisms blend

into their environment, becoming continuous with it.[69] As Rosalind Krauss notes, the

distinction between an organism and its environment is a figure/ground distinction.[70]

Mimicry leads to the effacement of the figure and what we are left with in Caillois'

account is ground on ground.[71]

A similar situation occurs with some of my works. The artist's marks mime

features of the surface/environment. In the stain paintings, for example, by taking a

colour similar to that of the surface, the marks partially disappear. In the case of works

utilising collage, such as the floor collage at Museo Memoria de Andalucía, by using

materials that approximate the surface in terms of colour, pattern and texture, I

created marks that become almost indistinguishable from the actual surface.

Moreover, the shapes of individual marks echo marks already present on the surface,

leading to confusion between the two. In the case of the stain paintings, the "stains"

were painted using small marks that look like the printed marks on the vinyl. Thus, the

painted marks appear as if they are part of the printed pattern. Having the painted

marks and printed marks next to each other, on the same surface, amplifies the

confusion between them.

Sometimes, even when looking at these works closely, it is difficult to actually

differentiate between my marks and the surface. The marks become visually "lost" into

the surface and it may be unclear whether anything has actually happened to the

surface. Eventual recognition may be delayed even more or may not come at all, as in

the case of small pieces of adhesive vinyl that effectively disappear into the pattern of

vinyl flooring. Trying to detect such small pieces of collaged vinyl is not immediately

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[69] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer describe this as yielding to the environment, losing one's self in the environment "instead of playing an active role in it." Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 227. In addition, Adorno describes mimetic behaviour as assimilating to something other. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 416. Caillois offers his own interpretation as to why these organisms behave in this mimetic way, an issue discussed in chapter 7.

[70] Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, 155.

[71] Ibid.

possible, especially for a viewer who is unaware of what the work entails. The type of viewing invited is one that attempts to detect slight differences.[72]

In fact, the artist, as the first viewer of the work, is the first to experience this challenge of differentiating between mark and surface and between different types of marks. I often became confused both during the process of making and, subsequently, when looking at the work.[73] As soon as my marks on the vinyl flooring pieces dried, it was very hard to see them. I had to look very closely or look at the work at an angle to detect them. While working on the flower pattern drawings on cloth, I would often lose sight of my marks since mark and surface were almost the same colour. I sometimes resorted to counting how many "x" marks I had drawn in order to complete the image because, quite simply, I could not always see the image. In *Vice Versa*, while working on the inner side of the base of the box, my body cast a shadow, making my marks barely discernible. The graphite marks were close in colour to the old wood on the inner side of the box and that made it challenging to detect them even when I was not leaning over the box.

Mimesis, then, becomes a method for my marks to approach a surface and become partially indistinguishable from it. Instead of differentiating themselves completely from the surface, my marks partially disappear into it. They become continuous with the surface and with its pre-existing marks, including natural marks, like marble veins and wood grain, or mechanically printed marks, like the wood grain on vinyl. The artist's marks create a vanishing or "fugitive" image—an image that, in some places, almost escapes vision by becoming one with the surface. At some points, it seems as if the viewer can almost see something—a situation of presque vu.[74] At the same time, however, there is a feeling of uncertainty as to what it is, if anything, that she is looking at. The marks seem to have just appeared by themselves or to have always been there.

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[72] I return to the viewing of these works in chapter 8.

[73] My aim while making these works was not to create a "masterful" illusion to trick the viewer. The works depend, to a large extent, on confusion—an issue that is discussed in the following chapters as well—but this confusion covers both the making and viewing processes. This crucial point is discussed in part III.

[74] Presque vu is the almost seen (similarly to déjà vu which is the already seen). *Collins Robert French Dictionary*, 8th edition, s. v. "presque."

The possibility also exists that even if the artist's marks are noticed their status may remain equivocal. It may still be unclear what kinds of marks they are, what caused them to appear, or even why they are there.[75] They may be perceived to be accidental marks or more predictable marks that might have been found on that specific surface. For example, the painted marks on vinyl flooring may be perceived as accidental stains or dirt—marks that could have happened to the surface over time. Given vinyl's use as flooring, it is reasonable to think that.[76] Similarly, the graphite marks on wood may look like dirt, deposited dust on the surface of the old box. This leads to confusion not so much between mark and surface but between different types of marks, as discussed in the previous section.

The marks may emulate other marks but they remain human marks—carefully painted, drawn or cut. Their method of making and the motivation behind making them are very different to the pre-existing marks on the surface. This difference is challenged when the marks approach the surface, leading to a minor visual difference between marks and surface and between human and non-human marks. Michael Newman uses the phrase "non-human marks" to refer to marks produced by natural processes or accidents.[77] I would include in this group mechanically printed marks and unintended marks that accumulate over time, such as dust and wall cracks. Newman also associates non-human marks with non-marks. He writes that "examples of non-marks would be accidents occurring to the surface: stains, moulds, and other contingencies."[78] For Newman, the uncertainty of distinctions between human and non-human marks and between marks and non-marks is something that marks always already carry.[79] Marks are unstable and multiple and can move in any of the two directions.[80] In fact, Newman identifies the indistinctness between intended and

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[75] In that sense, they may remain below one's consciousness of "art," as Jeffrey Dennis has suggested.

[76] This is encouraged by the work's floor installation, an issue discussed in chapter 6.

[77] Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 97, 102.

[78] Ibid., 102.

[79] Ibid.

[80] For example, James Elkins provides a detailed discussion of a drawing by Pontormo where intentional and unintentional marks intermingle on the surface such that it becomes impossible to determine which is which. Elkins refers to this uncertainty as

unintended marks and between human and naturally produced marks as one of the tendencies of drawing from the eighteenth century onwards.[81] This tendency, which according to Newman leads towards something "absolutely inhuman," is present in the works discussed here.[82] It is coupled, however, with a tendency to approach the surface. By moving towards the surface, my marks move towards non-marks. To Newman's list of non-marks I would, thus, add marks that "become" part of the surface. They become one of the surface's features, partially disappearing into the surface and, in the process, undoing themselves as clearly defined marks.

MIMESIS, ZONES OF INDISCERNIBILITY, AND BECOMINGS

In the works by Collis and myself, mimetic marking is used as a way of approaching other marks as well as the surfaces that are being marked. As a result, a sense of continuity arises between marks and surface and between the artist's marks and pre-existing marks. This partial continuity shifts the relationship between artist's mark and surface, allowing an in-between state to be accessed. I end the chapter by focusing on the changed relationship between mark and surface and on their in-between state. This change in focus necessitates shifting to concepts that deal more specifically and in much more detail with the in-between. This shift occurs within the works themselves since the partial confusion between mark and surface draws attention to their in-between space/state, thus, enabling a move beyond mimesis, with its implied relationship of mime and mimed.[83] To consider this in-between, I initiate

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the strangeness and partial illegibility of marks. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 14–17.

[81] Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 97. The other tendency of drawing that Newman identifies is towards the "visionary," towards perfecting the mark and "finishing" the depicted figure.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Even though mimesis is situated between two things, it usually implies that one of them is the mime and the other the mimed. Thus, there is a one-way movement. This is a rather restrictive way to think about the partial confusion that occurs in the works. There are discussions that attempt to open up mimesis even further and allow for more possibilities. For example, at the end of their book Gebauer and Wulf suggest that mimesis can overtake and change reality, thus, implying a two-way movement. Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 319–320. For my purposes here, I find it more useful to shift to concepts that deal more specifically and in much more detail with an in-between state.

an encounter between the artworks and concepts from Gilles Deleuze and Félix

Guattari and Bracha L. Ettinger, an encounter that continues in the following chapters.

A mimetic mode of marking, as practiced in these works, results in something

akin to what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call zones of indiscernibility. In *What is*

Philosophy? Deleuze and Guattari develop the idea of zones of indiscernibility with

respect to concepts.[84] Every concept consists of components, which may potentially be

seen as other concepts. These components are "distinct, heterogeneous, and yet not

separable."[85] Each component "partially overlaps, has a zone of neighbourhood [*zone*

de voisinage], or a threshold of indiscernibility, with another one."[86] They continue,

> Components remain distinct, but something passes from one to the other,
> something that is undecidable between them. There is an area *ab* that belongs
> to both *a* and *b*, where *a* and *b* "become" indiscernible.[87]

A zone of indiscernibility, then, involves a partial overlap and a connection or

interchange between distinct terms. Erinn Cunniff Gilson clarifies that what passes

between the terms is not actually transferred from one to the other but is shared by

both. The element that is shared is "not a definable quality, form, or signification" but

rather "it is something imperceptible and indistinguishable *in* a quality, a form, or a

statement—it is something sub-individual."[88] Moreover, what is shared between the

terms is common to all of them and cannot be assigned to only one.[89] Deleuze gives

the example of the Gothic line in art which "is common to different animals, to the

human and the animal, and to pure abstraction (serpent, beard, ribbon)."[90] By visually

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[84] I should point out, however, that zones of indiscernibility are not restricted to concepts. Deleuze and Guattari provide their clearest and most sustained articulation of zones of indiscernibility in relation to concepts but they also use the term in relation to becomings. I discuss becomings later in the section.

[85] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 19.

[86] Ibid. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burcell, the translators of the book, note that the word "voisinage" generally means neighbourhood but it also has a mathematical sense. The neighbourhood of a point in a set is a subset, still contained within the set, that contains that point. Tomlinson and Burchell, Translators' Introduction to *What is Philosophy?* ix.

[87] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 19–20.

[88] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 100–101.

[89] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 59.

[90] Ibid., 130.

belonging to all these different terms, such that it becomes impossible to differentiate between human, animal and abstract components, the line constitutes zones of indiscernibility.

We can visualise a zone of indiscernibility as an area in which the terms of an apparently clear distinction overlap.[91] The partial overlap between the terms leads to their temporary suspension. The terms "endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation," thus, endlessly remaining just on the brink of differentiating.[92] It is impossible to say exactly where the boundary between them lies.[93] Deleuze explains that a zone of indiscernibility is "not a similitude, but a slippage, an extreme proximity, an absolute contiguity."[94] This extreme proximity or contiguity leads to continuity between others. As a result, these others, the components or terms, become limit points of a continuum rather than two completely separated entities.[95] This does not mean that they combine with each other or that they become identical. A zone of indiscernibility is "never a combination of forms" but rather a commonality between components.[96] Indiscernibility does not eradicate the distinction between them but rather "makes it unattributable."[97]

The word "indiscernibility" is significant within the context of this research. To discern means to perceive or recognise (something) or to "distinguish (someone or something) with difficulty by sight or with the other senses."[98] The word originates from the Latin "discernere," consisting of the prefix "dis," which means "apart," and

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[91] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 98.

[92] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 173.

[93] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 301.

[94] Deleuze, "Bartleby; Or, the Formula," 78.

[95] Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics*, 18.

[96] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 21. Deleuze is referring to Francis Bacon's paintings and to the zone of indiscernibility between human and animal in his painted figures. The figures do not involve the combination of forms, that is, Bacon is not combining human with animal parts. Instead, indiscernibility depends on the "common fact of man and animal," which Deleuze identifies as the fact of meat. Ibid., 21, 23.

[97] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 69.

[98] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed., s. v. "discern." The word "discern" alludes to the phrase "discerning viewer," which in turn is associated with taste and connoisseurship, something Jeffrey Dennis has pointed out to me. The issue of viewing is taken up in chapter 8.

the word "cernere," which means "to separate."[99] Thus, indiscernibility is related to

separation—to discern depends on the ability to separate between things, to bring

them apart. Something indiscernible is impossible to see or clearly distinguish,

impossible to separate from something else. In the idea of separating there is the

suggestion of having at least two things relating to each other in some way. To

separate between things suggests that they are different—there is something that

enables one to distinguish between them. This difference may not only relate to the

senses, something that can be seen, but to a conceptual indiscernibility—the inability

to differentiate between two ideas. As such, indiscernibility refers to both a form of

visual imperceptibility or invisibility as well as to indistinctness.

In the works discussed here, the artists' marks share visual features with other

kinds of marks and with the surface. Through this sharing, zones of indiscernibility

open up between artists' mark and surface and between different kinds of marks,

making it difficult to differentiate between them during viewing. In the case of my

works, there is an initial, and sometimes sustained, inability to distinguish between

mark and surface. Having made the works, I can usually detect the marks when

looking closely as I know that they are there. The type of viewing requested of others in

order to differentiate between artist's mark and surface is one where the eyes become

sensitised to minor differences, where they have to delve into zones of indiscernibility

and strive to make and attribute distinctions.[100] Moreover, the different kinds of marks

share a common context. Collis' marks are placed on objects and in spaces where the

stains and drips she remakes may also be found. The common context creates more

zones of indiscernibility, again making it difficult initially to differentiate between

marks. Similarly, my marks depend on the surface—they are marks that may be found

on that surface under everyday conditions. Thus, they share a common context with

the surface and with other marks. The visual and contextual commonality can make

the marks "unattributable"—it is difficult to determine whether they are part of the

surface, accidental marks, or marks made by the artist.

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[99] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed., s. vv. "discern," "indiscernibility."

[100] The viewing of these works is further discussed in chapter 8.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, zones of indiscernibility are the milieu of becoming.[101] In these zones, the terms or points are in a process of becoming something other. Becoming can be understood as a type of movement, an "empathic proximity and intensive interconnectedness," a resonance between points.[102] Becoming "constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man's-land, a nonlocalisable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other."[103] The process is not "delimited by a 'localisable' and definitive relation" to an other but rather involves "moving in the direction of a new feeling, seeing and experiencing of oneself alongside, or in provisional conjunction with, that which is other."[104]

> Becomings, as theorised by Deleuze and Guattari, emphasise the in-between:

> A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localisable relation to distant or contiguous points. A point is always a point of origin. But a line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure or arrival, origin nor destination. . . . A line of becoming has only a middle. . . . A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between.[105]

In the process of becoming, one does not actually turn into something other but is constantly becoming-other—there is no end but a perpetual in-between. Becoming, after all, "produces nothing other than itself."[106] The in-betweeness leads to the undoing or dissolution of the seemingly fixed points and to the sabotaging of oppositional binaries.[107] This is not a reductive or regressive move but a

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[101] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 173.

[102] Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 8.

[103] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 323–324.

[104] Phillips, *The Subject of Minimalism*, 33.

[105] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 323.

[106] Ibid., 262.

[107] Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 99. As Brian Massumi writes, becoming involves "tactical sabotage of the existing order." It entails "stopping the World As We Know It." Ibid., 104.

problematization and complexification.[108] By de-organising the points, the process of becoming allows them to do something else, to activate other functions and capacities.[109] As Brian Massumi writes, becoming converts the "either/or" to "both/and."[110] There is no absence or lack and there is no full presence or being. There is only becoming.[111]

Deleuze and Guattari insist that becoming is not the same as imitating or identifying with something other.[112] For them, imitation involves either resemblance of terms or correspondence of relations.[113] In both of these cases, difference is suppressed as imitation replicates what already exists. It leads to more of the same and there is no change, no creation.[114] In contrast, becoming should lead to something different and new. Moreover, Gilson argues that becoming cannot be reduced to a matter of resemblance "because becoming operates at a sub-individual level through affects, capacities, imperceptible movements, and intensities."[115] In other words, becoming is molecular and does not depend on molar resemblances.[116] This does not mean that becomings do not involve resemblances and correspondences at all. On one level, they

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[108] Ibid., 107. Massumi points out that this does not mean that a becoming is a problem that can be solved but rather that it is open-ended. Ibid., 183n25.

[109] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 101.

[110] Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 112.

[111] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 165.

[112] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 262.

[113] Ibid., 607n95. For Deleuze and Guattari, mimesis and imitation appear to be synonymous. In the English translation of *A Thousand Plateaus*, both terms are used interchangeably, although the term "mimesis" appears much fewer times.

[114] Imitation, as Massumi writes, respects the boundaries between different entities: "After the imitation, both bodies revert. Nothing has changed. Nothing was translated. Nothing mutated. No new perception came. No body escaped. Nothing really moved." Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 97. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is the production of difference that leads to creation. As such, imitation, resemblance, and representation are seen as non-creative since, according to Deleuze and Guattari, they suppress difference. Hallward, *Out of this World*, 69–71; Olkowski, "Difference and the Ruin of Representation in Gilles Deleuze," 476.

[115] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 101. Intensity can be thought of as potential energy, energy as difference in itself. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 61–67.

[116] Molar entities are aggregates that have definable, organised forms. They are divisible, unifiable and totalisable. They are associated with the macro and with arborescent hierarchical structures. Organisms, subjects, and objects are examples of molar entities. Molecular entities are composed of particles that cannot be divided without changing in nature. These particles constantly move and connect. Molecular entities are associated with the micro and with rhizomatic non-hierarchical structures. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 36–37.

may involve imitation but they go beyond it.[117] In fact, when discussing art, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that what starts out as "representation" or imitation, enters into a becoming.[118] Thus, mimesis, can in fact allow for becomings.[119]

Briony Fer's understanding of mimesis and resemblance, based on her reading of Caillois' text on mimicry and camouflage, is useful here. According to Fer, camouflage does not act as a sign for the surroundings but rather as a negative signifier, "a sign of non-being."[120] This resonates with my earlier discussion of non-marks, where I suggested that by approaching the surface, my marks undo themselves as clearly defined marks and move towards non-marks. Fer continues by suggesting that mimetic compulsion in artworks may not be "a matter of the art object carrying associations to or connoting things in the world, as we might understand resemblance; rather, it has to do with the coming-into-being of the subject in the visual field, on the understanding that that field is something we inhabit and which we cannot view from outside."[121] This coming-into-being *with-in* a field, suggests a continual process and can, thus, be understood as becoming, moving towards something other, initially, or at the simplest level, through resemblance. When seen through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, even the idea of non-being can be understood as productive. Becoming involves undoing fixed terms and de-organising them so as to enable them

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[117] Ibid., 262. Deleuze and Guattari write: "It could be said that the orchid imitates the wasp, reproducing its image in a signifying fashion (mimesis, mimicry, lure, etc.). But this is true only on the level of the strata. . . . At the same time, something else entirely is going on." Ibid., 11.

[118] Ibid., 336.

[119] This is something Rosi Braidotti suggests as well. When discussing Clarice Lispector's novel *The Passion According to G. H.*, she argues that mimetic repetition can open up paths of becoming. Braidotti, "Of Bugs and Women," 126, 134. In fact, the way certain theorists approach mimesis resonates strongly with how Deleuze and Guattari theorise becoming. Adorno, for example, writes that mimesis involves an exposure to the other, an affinity with the other. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 70. Walter Benjamin sees the mimetic faculty as the compulsion to become the other. Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty," 333. Mimesis can, thus, be understood as an opening to an other. In fact, the way Benjamin describes the process of him becoming like the butterfly he is trying to capture can be understood in terms of mimesis and becoming since something "in all the fibres of [his] being" strives to conform to the butterfly. Benjamin, "Berlin Childhood Around 1900," 351. This goes beyond thinking of mimesis only as resemblance, although the opening or movement towards the other in the works I have been discussing here involves visually resembling that other.

[120] Fer, *The Infinite Line*, 108.

[121] Ibid., 108.

to do something else, to become more and other than what they are.[122] As such, the non-being or undoing of the artist's marks, that is, their partial disappearance into the surface, can be understood as a productive move that leads to an in-between space; in other words, it can be seen as a becoming.[123]

The works discussed may start out by following a mimetic approach, where the artist's marks take on aspects of pre-existing marks and of the surface, but result in a kind of sharing, continuity or proximity between mark and surface and between different types of marks, leading to moments when these others *almost* conflate. Zones of indiscernibility emerge between different types of marks and between marks and surfaces. In these zones, marks enter into a process of becoming-surface or becoming-other-mark. The becoming does not remain only at the level of resemblance. The artist's marks resemble marks which could have been found on those specific surfaces, thus, the becoming-surface extends to issues of context and use. It is all of these together—visual resemblance and context—that allow the movement of the artist's mark towards the surface.

In fact, the artist's marks move towards the surface and pre-existing marks from their moment of creation since the surface used for each work plays a key role in the making of the specific marks. In her reading of Caillois' essay, Elizabeth Grosz notes that the environment "is not distinct from the organism but is an active internal component of its 'identity.'"[124] In other words, the organism does not so much yield to something other as is constituted by or depends on that other. As Fer's reading of the text suggests, the organism inhabits the environment and, thus, cannot be separated from it.[125] My discussion so far has shown that the artist's marks depend on the surfaces in multiple ways. In Collis' case, her marking materials and techniques

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[122] Grosz, *Becoming Undone*, 2.

[123] Following the example of others, such as Bracha L. Ettinger, Rosi Braidotti, and Elizabeth Grosz, I am adapting the concept of becoming to the works under discussion. I am, thus, not following all the specifics of becoming as given by Deleuze and Guattari. For now, my discussion on becoming remains focused on the relationship between mark and surface. I return to these ideas and expand on the issue of becoming in chapter 7, where I discuss the role of the artist in the making of the works.

[124] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 46.

[125] Fer, *The Infinite Line*, 108.

directly relate to each surface. In my case, it is the surfaces themselves that suggest the marks and that determine their forms, colours and patterns. The surfaces also point me to other related surfaces from which to take marks. As such, the surfaces actively contribute to the process of marking.[126] In a sense, the surfaces form an inextricable part of the marks. The artist's marks come into being *with* the surface or, to use Ettinger's term, are becoming-with the surface.[127] In the matrixial borderspace, several partial-others encounter each other, without assimilating and without rejecting each other. In the works discussed here, the mark and the surface can be seen as partial-others since the mark moves towards the surface as the surface contributes in the making of the mark.

The juxtaposition of the relationship between mark and surface and the concept of becoming can be taken further. According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming is always double—"that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes."[128] That is, both terms of the becoming change—it is never a one-way movement but a movement from two "endpoints" towards a shared space between them; a co-becoming, to use another of Ettinger's terms. Through this movement the two terms change asymmetrically.[129] In a sense, both terms are redefined and

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[126] As discussed in chapter 1, any surface can affect what the marks placed on it will look like. For example, oil paint applied on plain paper results in different kinds of marks than oil paint applied on primed wood. The effect I am referring to here has to do with the choice of marks and materials, that is, given a specific surface what kinds of marks can I employ to *approach* that surface?

[127] In the matrixial borderspace, there is no *I* without a *non-I*. As such, becoming is always becoming-with an other. Other terms Ettinger uses include becoming-together, becoming-in-ter-with, and co-becoming. All of these terms are used in the texts published in *The Matrixial Borderspace*.

[128] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 336.

[129] The asymmetry depends on the fact that Deleuze and Guattari theorise becomings as minoritarian, with a major term always moving towards a minor term. Major and minor refer not to quantities but to status, with majoritarian terms being the current dominant standard and minoritarian terms being the underprivileged or marginal. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 320–321. An example Deleuze and Guattari utilise that shows the asymmetrical change of the two terms involved in a becoming is of a painter making a painting of a bird: the painter may be in a process of becoming-bird at the same time as the bird is in a process of becoming-colour. Ibid., 336. Ronald Bogue argues that by theorising becomings as minoritarian, Deleuze and Guattari challenge traditional binary oppositions in Western society, such as the privileging of male over female, human over animal, and so on. Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, 35.

becoming leads to a double translation.[130] The artist's marks move towards the surface and its pre-existing marks and, simultaneously, the artist's marks partially transform the surface. They introduce a minor or minimal difference on the surface, transforming it from an everyday object to an artwork, even if it is an unannounced artwork that one has to strive to see.

Moreover, while the artist's marks are in a process of becoming-surface, the surface is in a process of becoming-active. This again begins with the process of making of the works. Many of the decisions pertaining to my marks were determined by the surface. In a sense, the surface is treated as if it has agency. This continues in the viewing of the works. The mimicking of the surface, leads to the marks' partial absorption by that surface. The word "absorption" again seems to imply that the surface has agency—that it does something. Of course, the surface does not absorb the mark physically. By having her marks take on features of the surface on which they are made, the artist allows for an absorption to occur. This is first a visual absorption as the marks become almost indistinguishable from the surface. It then becomes a conceptual indiscernibility, in the first place or at its simplest level, because it becomes challenging to differentiate between what was there and what was added by the artist—it becomes challenging to locate the artist's mark and work.

The result is that the relationship between mark and surface can no longer be seen as an opposition or clear overlay or containment. By having the marks approach the surface, aspects such as activity and passivity are shared between them. If Deleuze and Guattari's concepts allow the conceptualisation of the marks as becoming-surface, it is Ettinger's concepts that allow for a closer consideration of the specific nature of the relationship between mark and surface, beyond seeing it as a movement towards an other.[131] The relationships between partial-others in the matrixial borderspace form

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[130] Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 95.

[131] Ettinger's and Deleuze and Guattari's theorisations resonate. Ettinger, as Massumi notes, combines psychoanalysis with schizoanalysis, modifying both in different ways. Massumi, "Painting: The Voice of the Grain," 211. A full comparison between Deleuze and Guattari's concepts and Ettinger's concepts is beyond the scope of this project. It remains, however, a necessary theoretical task. As far as I know, a sustained and detailed discussion of Ettinger's connections with and divergences from Deleuze and Guattari has not yet been undertaken. Ettinger herself provides some comparisons between her work and Deleuze and Guattari in a number of texts including "The

intricate negotiations. Not only is there movement towards and an exchange with a partial-other—a process of borderlinking and co-emerging—but there is also a maintenance of a minimal distance—a process of borderspacing and co-fading. Thus, instead of one moving towards an other, there is a shared resonance, a constant negotiation or re-attuning between partial-others, allowing distance-in-proximity and jointness-in-difference.

Ettinger's terms resonate with the ambivalent relationship between mark and surface in my works.[132] A perceived continuity develops between artist's mark and

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Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," "The Matrixial Gaze," "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," "Weaving a Woman Artist With-In the Matrixial Encounter-Event," "The Art-and-Healing Oeuvre," "Gaze-and-Touching the Not Enough Mother," "Fragilisation and Resistance," "Uncanny Awe," and, most sustainedly, in "Trans-Subjective Transferential Borderspace." Brief comparisons between Ettinger and Deleuze and Guattari can also be found in Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," and Barrett, "Mutant Enunciations." Some of the similarities between the two theorisations include the critique of Oedipal subjectivity, the partialisation of the subject, the emphasis on the process of becoming (Barrett sees a correspondence between Deleuze and Guattari's becoming and Ettinger's co-emergence-in-difference), and the emphasis on connections and transgressions (Barrett discusses the correspondence between the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in Deleuze and Guattari and metramorphosis in Ettinger). There are also important differences. While Deleuze and Guattari adopt an anti-Oedipal stance, Ettinger adopts a non-Oedipal stance that aims to exist beyond and beside Oedipus. Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 12; Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 50. As such, she manages to bypass phallic logic altogether by not positioning herself against it. While Deleuze and Guattari suggest the possibility of endless multiplicity and limitless fragmentation, Ettinger insists on severality. She relies more on one-on-one connection and transconnection and on specific encounters between several partial-others. Ettinger, "The Art-and-Healing Oeuvre," 217. Deleuze and Guattari occasionally refer to multiplicities as symbiotic whereas Ettinger explicitly avoids this term as it implies fusion. She suggests that some multiplicities are symbiotic and some are matrixial. Lichtenberg-Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 53; Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 159n45. In Deleuze and Guattari's becoming, the emphasis is on movement and becoming is seen as passing between points. For Ettinger, becoming, which is always co-becoming with a partial-other, centres on transconnectedness and connects points. Ettinger, "The Art-and-Healing Oeuvre," 220, 230. Moreover, for Ettinger becoming-with an other is what constitutes the matrixial subject from the very beginning—from a matrixial angle, "*becoming-together* precedes *being-one.*" Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 72. Finally, Ettinger associates her theorisation with a rethinking of the feminine and sexual difference that does not result in neutrality. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of sexual difference—the "production of a thousand sexes" that passes through becoming-woman—has been criticised by several feminist thinkers for ignoring sexual difference. Examples include Braidotti, "Toward a New Nomadism," Grosz, "A Thousand Tiny Sexes," and, more indirectly, Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One.*

[132] I am drawing specifically on the *structure* of the matrixial borderspace. When considering subjectivisation, Ettinger points out that the processes within the matrixial stratum are nonconscious. Ettinger, "Gaze-and-Touching the Not Enough Mother," 208–209. The processes I am considering occur consciously since it is my aim, as an artist, to approach the surface through my marks. I am not attempting to

surface leading to moments of near conflation–the artist's marks *almost* become part of the surface, which, in turn, ceases to be strictly the "other" of the mark. Neither is an accidental stain the "other" of a painted or collaged mark. Instead, they share a space between them through which they transform each other. The various elements coexist, not as separate and independent entities, but as interrelated and interdependent parts. Obviously, the marks and the surface are not the same nor are the artist's marks the same as pre-existing stains. There is never complete assimilation of these elements and neither is there complete differentiation at all times. The distance or minimal difference between them is continually re-adjusted and negotiated "through oscillations of distance-in-proximity."[133] In fact, the relationships between mark and surface and between different types of marks are constantly shifting. As the viewer moves in space, marks partially appear and disappear. They shift between being part of the surface and being drawn, painted or collaged marks. Thus, there exists a constant negotiation between mark and surface as marks hover in and out of vision. As Ettinger suggests, it is precisely through these slight movements that meaning arises—it is not to be found in any clear-cut separation between mark and surface but rather is simultaneously emerging and fading in the shared in-between.

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create a one-to-one correspondence between my work and Matrixial theory but rather work through the resonances between my work and the structure of the matrixial borderspace.

[133] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 132.

4

TRACING OVER MARKS

This chapter further develops the discussion on the relationships between mark and surface by presenting a second method of marking developed during the research. Rather than a transfer of marks, this method involves marking directly over a pre-existing mark on the surface, following its features, such that my own mark appears over the previous mark. This move implies both repetition and partial concealment. I discuss these two aspects using Jacques Derrida's term *retrait*. Moreover, tracing over a pre-existing mark can imply visually capturing something and, thus, relate to a somewhat photographic way of working. I discuss this aspect through the notion of the index, first proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce and subsequently developed by Rosalind Krauss in relation to visual art. As such, the chapter brings together two points of view: the mark/*trait* functioning as a *retrait* and the mark functioning as an index. Using these points of view, I discuss how tracing over marks can lead to indiscernibility and the in-between notion of mark and surface.

IN THE MAKING

The *Shadow Pieces* (2008–2010) were made using handmade paper. The wrinkled edges of each piece of paper, along with its uneven texture, create several subtle shadows on the surface, something I became aware of after studying the surfaces for some time. To mark the surface, I outlined all the apparent shadows with pencil and then "filled in" these areas. For the first few *Shadow Pieces* I made in 2008, the shadows were filled in using rows of small vertical lines painted in diluted black ink. These marks were a response to the grainy surface of handmade paper.[1] Taking this into account, I decided to work with small marks that collectively made a bigger shape, echoing the structure of the paper. Eventually, after further experimentations, I began filling in the shadows using continuous pencil lines, following the subtle curves and twists of the paper's texture. This mode of marking seemed to adhere to the

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[1] Handmade paper is made up of a layer of paper pulp placed on a sieve. As such, it has a grainy texture, corresponding to the sieve. Plowman, *The Craft of Handmade Paper*, 12–13.

paper's texture more closely than the rows of short lines. Moreover, the pencil lines seemed to bring out the texture of the paper since they highlighted the fact that the surface was not smooth.

Image 4.1:   *Shadow Piece*, 2009
              Ink on handmade paper, 100 x 100 cm

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Image 4.2: *Shadow Pieces (Calendar)*, 2010
Graphite on handmade paper, 150 x 65 cm

In the summer of 2010, I spent almost three weeks in a chicken coop turned studio, on the mountains of Miramonte in California, as a resident artist at the Stonehouse Centre for Contemporary Arts. The first few days were spent studying the space: that is, the colours, textures, and materials. On one wall, a previous resident must have hung an unfinished painting in order to work on it. The painting had been removed but the space around it was demarcated by leftover red and black paint marks. These were painted over with white paint—probably to prepare the space for its

next resident—making them faintly visible. These traces eventually presented themselves as a potential drawing. I began drawing over the pre-existing marks, using red coloured pencils, the same colour as some of the stains. The location of the drawing was dictated by the old paint marks. In each paint mark I drew fine lines, following the texture of the wall. In a sense, my drawing recreated the faint stains, making them somewhat more visible. Over the course of a week, I worked my way around the surface, drawing over paint stains. My position depended on the stains' position. I worked within centimetres from the surface, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting or standing on a chair, occasionally sitting on the floor, all the while trying to reach as many stains as I could. This process of re-marking the wall partially reversed the action of painting the walls white by making the stains slightly more visible.

Image 4.3:   Stonehouse studio and paint stains on wall, Miramonte, California, USA

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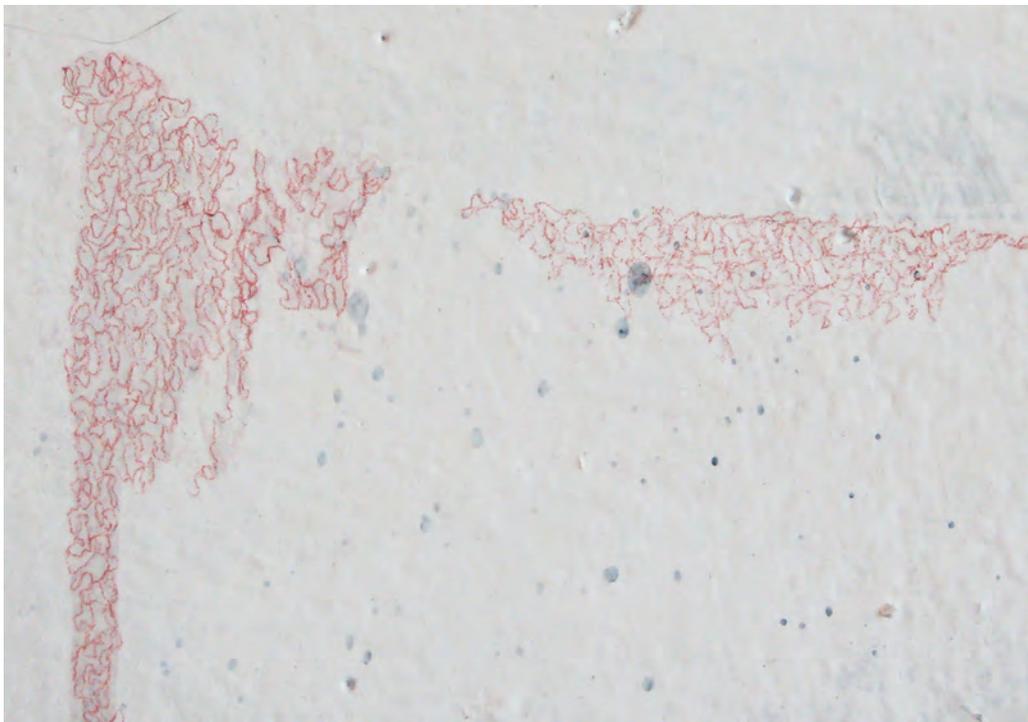
Image 4.4:   *Wall Drawing I*, 2010
              Coloured pencils on wall, 220 x 270 cm (wall size)

In August 2011, I curated a group exhibition at Tenderpixel Gallery in London. The works exhibited involved interventions on found or pre-existing objects. As part of my intervention, I covered scratches on the floor of the gallery with pieces of adhesive vinyl that I had cut to match the shapes of the scratches. The idea for this work emerged after spending several days studying the space. The floor was made up of wooden planks completely etched with scratches, probably caused by people moving furniture and artworks over the years. I chose a vinyl design that approximated the gallery floor, both in terms of colour and pattern. I worked on the floor, crawling along each plank, identifying the most prominent scratches, tracing over each one, cutting the vinyl according to the tracing, and placing it over the scratch. The process took two full days. My work, in a sense, partially "repaired" the old floor. Given the similarity between the collaged strips and the floor, the covered scratches and strips of vinyl almost disappeared into the environment. The adhesive vinyl has a satin finish, which gives the material a subtle shine. As I moved around the space, changes in light made some strips of vinyl more discernible.

Image 4.5:   *Minor Fix*, 2011
              Adhesive vinyl on floor, 426 x 376 cm (floor size)

The series of works *Light Capture* (2012–2015) consists of clear tape collages on packing paper. The satin-like surface of the paper and the combination of packing paper and clear tape when preparing packages, led to the idea of using clear tape to "mark" the surface. To make each collage, I first identified and traced around any highlights I could see on the piece of paper as it was placed on my desk. I then

manually cut pieces of clear tape to match each highlighted part and placed them over the corresponding areas on the packing paper. It was almost impossible to place each piece of tape exactly over its corresponding area. In some cases, the packing paper I was marking was not flat since it had already been used. In other cases, as I moved over the paper and as time went by, the light changed so it was difficult to precisely locate the position of each piece of tape. Once placed, the tape is almost indiscernible. The viewer has to move around each collage to see the small pieces of tape, which reveal themselves when light falls on them.

Image 4.6:   *Light Capture (Attempt #2)*, 2012–2013
Clear tape on used packing paper, 35 x 62 cm

Image 4.7:   *Light Capture (Attempt #1)*, 2012
             Clear tape on used packing paper, 11 x 12 cm
             (Shown under two different lighting conditions)

FROM MIMESIS TO FOLLOWING AND FROM JUXTAPOSITION TO OVERLAY

While the works discussed in the previous chapter involved recreating marks found elsewhere onto a surface—and simultaneously transforming them to bring them visually closer to the surface—the works discussed here involve tracing over pre-existing marks found on the actual surface.

Although I could still discuss aspects of these works in terms of mimesis—clear tape mimicking light, for example, or strips of adhesive vinyl mimicking inlayed wood—I transition to the term "following."[2] This term still implies the idea of miming something other but it also suggests the actual process of making these works—that of literally following a pre-existing mark with my eyes and hand. My hand, holding the marking tool, physically touches the pre-existing mark, leaving a trace over it. In the case of works involving collage, the traced outline of a pre-existing mark is used to guide the cutting of the piece of adhesive vinyl or tape which is then placed over the corresponding mark. The tracing is an actual part of each finished work, as opposed to it being used during the process of making but not being manifested in the actual work, as in the case of Susan Collis' works, for example, or my work *Years Later*.[3] Thus, the process of following plays a role in the making and is also an aspect of each finished work, where my mark overlays a pre-existing mark.[4] The term "following" also encompasses close observation and an adherence to something other, something that, in a sense, is taken as a model. In the case of the works discussed here, it is the

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[2] The term "following" encompasses a range of meanings, many of which apply to the works under discussion here. To follow involves a going or coming after, a going after something in order to observe, a going along a path, tracing the movement or direction of something, or happening after something as a consequence. It may also involve paying close attention to something or acting according to something, both of which apply to my marks. Finally, to follow may mean to mimic, copy, reproduce or emulate, to take something as a model. *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed., s. v. "follow." *Collins Shorter English Thesaurus*, s. v. "follow." As such, the term is at once more general than the term "mimesis" as well as more specific since it relates directly to the process of marking discussed here.

[3] Some of the works discussed in chapter 3 also involved the tracing of marks but these specific marks were not found on the actual surface I was marking. The works I discuss in this chapter depend on the tracing of pre-existing marks to a greater degree. Thus, I have decided to discuss the action of tracing in relation to these works. Some of the discussion also applies to the process of making of works discussed in chapter 3.

[4] Even in the case of works involving transitory marks, such as shadows and highlights, my constructed marks usually overlap with actual shadows and highlights during viewing.

surface with its pre-existing marks and features that is taken as the model and followed.

The following of the surface and its pre-existing marks means that the new mark depends on them. The pre-existing marks determine the location of my mark. Occasionally they also determine its colour, as in the case of the wall drawing at Stonehouse. The surrounding surface also determines features of my marks: the texture of the surface determines the shape and direction of the mark, as in the case of the shadow drawings, and the colours and patterns of the surface may determine the colour and material of the mark, as in the case of the floor collage. My mark follows not only the pre-existing mark over which it is placed but also aspects of the surrounding surface. A similar situation occurred with the works discussed in chapter 3, where my marks mimicked aspects of both the surface they were made on and found marks. The objective is not so much to make marks that look like shadows, stains or highlights but rather to make marks that approach the surface. Thus, my mark takes on aspects of the appearance of both the surface it is placed on and the pre-existing mark over which it traces.

The fact that my mark is placed over the mark that it recreates could suggest an attempt to approach the surface even further. Instead of creating new marks on a surface, I am now recreating what is already there. There is no transfer or solely juxtaposition but rather an overlay of marks. Whereas in the works discussed in chapter 3, the shape and location of my marks were based on other surfaces, in the works discussed here it is the surface I work with that determines these. The surface determines where the marking tool will touch it, what direction the marks will follow, and, consequently, the shape they will take. While these aspects could suggest further proximity between mark and surface, in actuality the situation is not so straightforward. My method of marking depends on the specific surface I am working with. Different surfaces suggest varied modes of marking and, thus, allow for different types of proximities. Thus, tracing over marks on a surface does not necessarily result

in further proximity between the artist's mark and the surface but rather in a different proximity.[5]

BESIDE AN(OTHER) ARTIST:
LOUISE HOPKINS

Since the mid 1990s, Louise Hopkins has been making paintings on patterned furnishing fabrics.[6] One of the fabrics she has been using shows groups of blue flowers repeatedly printed on the surface. Hopkins stretches the fabric, as would be normally done with canvas or linen, presenting to the viewer the reverse side of the pattern. The flowers are still visible but some details are concealed since the viewer is looking at the back of the fabric. Hopkins subsequently paints over some of the flowers, recreating the image using a range of brown and beige colours. She uses discrete tiny brush strokes, emulating, in a sense, the fine weave of the cloth, so that her painting is interwoven into the fabric's surface. The way the brushstrokes make up the image—as a group of juxtaposing marks that sometimes blend into each other and at times remain separate—resonates with the interwoven threads that the fabric is made up of. As Hopkins states, she is interested in "making a mark that becomes enmeshed within the surface" leading to "a woven area of paint and print."[7]

In *Aurora 13* (1996), Hopkins has painted over approximately half of the image. The surface is divided in a rough diagonal with the flowers on the right of the diagonal recreated in mostly brown and white oil paint. The paint is applied precisely

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[5] This reveals a point of tension between this text and the actual practice. For the sake of clarity, I could present each method of marking as approaching the surface even more. That is, the method discussed here achieves closer proximity to the surface than the method discussed in chapter 3 and the method discussed in chapter 5 achieves even closer proximity than both of the preceding methods. Although tempting, this clear linearity does not exactly correspond to the practice. Each method depends on the specific surface I work with and multiple methods may overlap within one work. Moreover, I am still working with all three methods, adapting them accordingly depending on the surface. I address this issue further in the next chapter.

[6] Hopkins primarily works with found surfaces and in many of her works she paints over pre-existing images. For example, she has made works that involve painting over maps and magazine pages in a variety of ways. The works I am specifically looking at are the ones where the pre-existing image is traced, recreated over itself. As such, here I am focusing on some of her fabric paintings, the works on song sheets, and a map painting.

[7] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

Image 4.8:   Louise Hopkins, *Aurora 13,* 1996
              Oil on reverse of furnishing fabric, 130 x 183 cm
              Image published in *Louise Hopkins: Freedom of
              Information*, 81. Reproduced with the artist's permission.
              © Louise Hopkins

Image 4.9:   Louise Hopkins, *Aurora 13* (details), 1996
              Oil on reverse of furnishing fabric, 130 x 183 cm
              Images published in *Louise Hopkins: Freedom of Information*, 79, 83.
              Reproduced with the artist's permission.
              © Louise Hopkins

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over the printed flowers, capturing their shape, size and, oftentimes, their shading. In fact, Hopkins uses the actual image on the fabric as a guide.[8] For example, where a flower is darker, Hopkins has painted over it with darker paint. The modelling, in a sense, is retained, although the painted flowers are not shaded in exactly the same way as the printed flowers and some painted flowers are made to appear fainter than others. In *Aurora 13*, each unpainted flower on the left side has its painted counterpart somewhere on the right side and the viewer can look for the matching flowers in the pattern. Thus, both the original unpainted flower and Hopkins' recreated flower can be seen on the same surface. Hopkins' marks come on top of the printed flowers, which they remake, and they also exist next to or near the blue printed flowers in the final work. As Ulrich Loock succinctly states, "the painting and its model" can be seen together.[9]

The sides of each fabric painting are left unpainted. The amount of fabric that can be seen on the sides is quite small but it still gives an indication as to what the fabric looked like and what the artist did to it. The sides, as the artist says, provide a way into the work since they reveal how the fabric looked originally.[10] They act as clues as to the artist's actions. More clues can be found on the actual painting. In some cases, looking at the painted areas carefully reveals the blue image underneath. There are regions where a brushstroke has not quite covered the fabric. Small, almost imperceptible unpainted blue dots peek through the paint or around painted stems, leaves and flowers, giving an indication of what lies underneath.

In *Songsheet 3 (ii) you're nobody 'til somebody loves you* (1997), Hopkins painted over all the printed material on a song sheet with white acrylic ink, re-tracing the lines, notes and text. Some black spots of printed ink can be seen scattered around the page but everything else is concealed. By painting with white ink over the text, Hopkins has turned the surface into an almost monochromatic painting, bringing to mind perhaps Robert Ryman's white paintings. Even though Ryman's paintings are

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[8] Louise Hopkins, email message to author, January 23, 2015.

[9] Loock, "Reproduction and Repression," 77–78.

[10] *Louise Hopkins*, DVD.

monochromatic, they retain the texture of his brushstrokes.[11] Hopkins, however, works on a surface with information printed on it and she uses the white ink to "erase" that information—a process Greg Hilty describes as "addition and subtraction, or addition by subtraction, or the opposite, or both at once."[12] She actually paints white-on-black, covering the black almost completely, resulting in an image of almost white-on-white. As a result, she partially eliminates the figure/ground polarity of the original printed page, a polarity she purposely tries to avoid.[13]
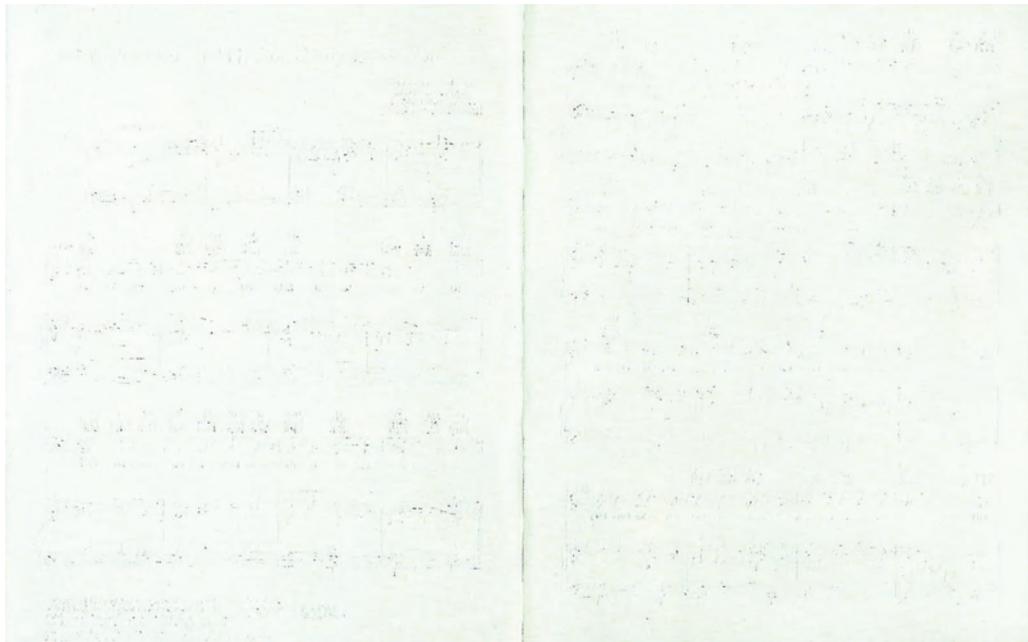
Image 4.10:   Louise Hopkins, *Songsheet 3 (ii) you're nobody 'til somebody loves you,* 1997
Acrylic ink on songsheet, 35.3 x 50 cm
Image courtesy of the artist
© Louise Hopkins

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[11] Ryman is an artist that Greg Hilty resorts to as well when discussing Hopkins' work because of the different quality brushstrokes they both employ when painting. Hilty, "Adjustment," 41. Ryman is also one of the artists Hopkins referred to during our conversation. His paint marks allow for an unravelling during the viewing that Hopkins says has influenced her. Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

[12] Hilty, "Adjustment," 41.

[13] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.
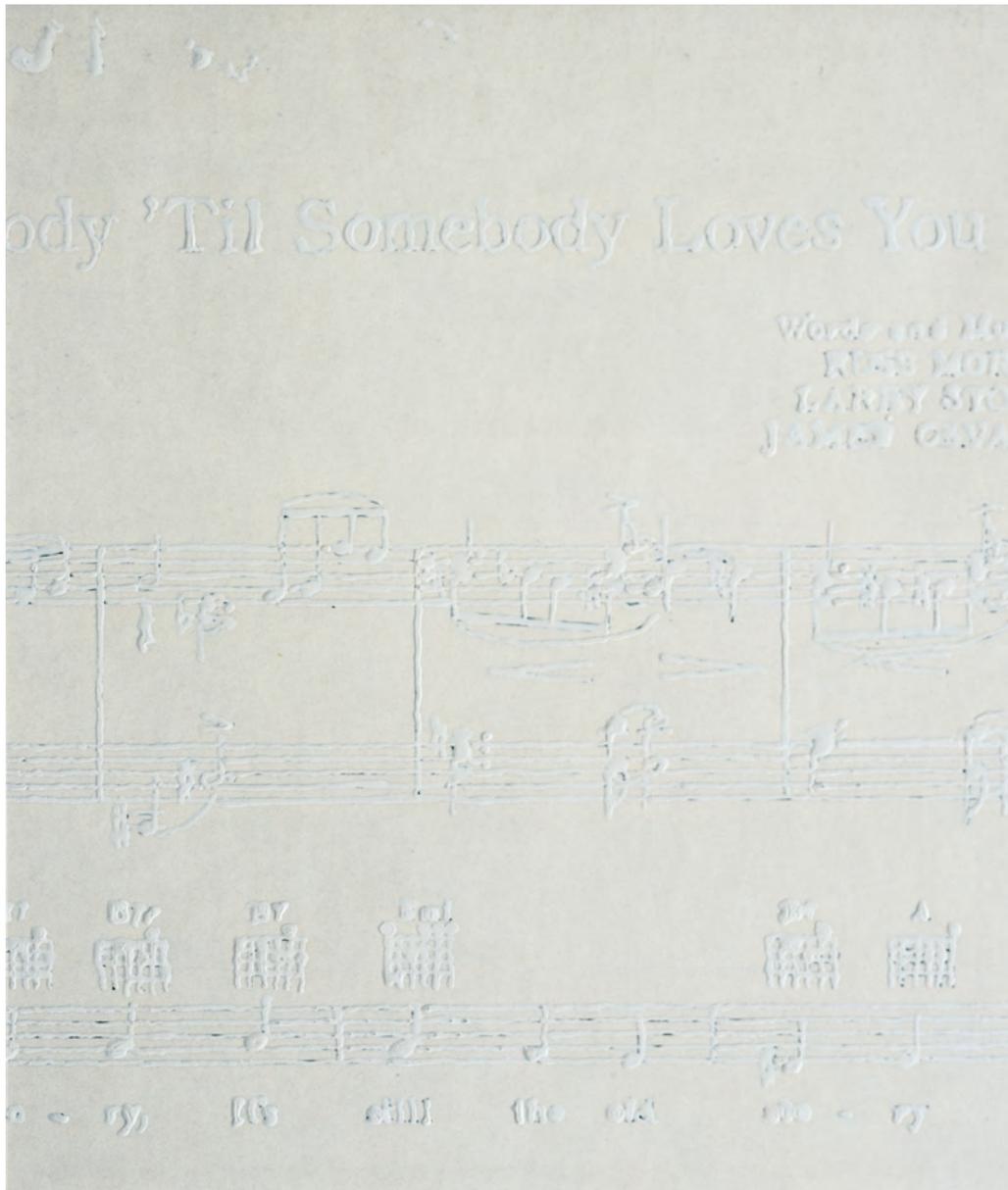
Image 4.11:   Louise Hopkins, *Songsheet 3 (ii) you're nobody 'til somebody loves you* (detail)*,*
1997
Acrylic ink on songsheet, 35.3 x 50 cm
Image courtesy of the artist. © Louise Hopkins

A similar tendency to bring a surface to a monochromatic state can be seen in one of her map pieces, *World Map* (1998). In this work, Hopkins has used white acrylic ink to trace over the line surrounding the map as well as thirteen clock diagrams at the bottom of the map. The white colour of the ink matches the white colour of the background. The shapes depicting land and the lines representing longitude and latitude have been painted over with light-blue ink, matching closely the colour of the surrounding sea. The paint extrudes slightly from the surface and covers

the printed shapes somewhat unevenly. When the work is seen from about four and a half metres away, it appears to be a monochromatic painting: a light-blue rectangle surrounded by a white border.[14] The blue rectangle comes across as painted because the paint differentiates itself slightly from the printed sea. The colour is slightly darker and some variations in texture can be discerned. Overall, however, the surface appears to be unified. The irregularities become more obvious as the viewer approaches the work. When standing approximately thirty centimetres away, I could start making out shapes in the blue rectangular area. As Hilty writes about Hopkins' works on maps, "ghostly pentimenti of original shapes of continents float under the inky surface cover the artist has applied."[15]

Image 4.12:   Louise Hopkins, *World Map,* 1998
                Acrylic ink on world map, 97 x 70 cm
                Images courtesy of the artist. © Louise Hopkins

TRAIT AND *RETRAIT*

The process of making these works—both Hopkins' and my own—involves closely following the pre-existing marks on a surface by tracing over them. In order to bring to the fore the specificities of this type of marking and to find the most productive terms through which to discuss it, it is useful, I believe, to compare it with other modes of marking. When tracing over a pre-existing mark, the degree of following, or the impulse to visually capture something, may be greater, or more extreme, than drawing from observation, where the artist looks at something and makes a drawing of it on another surface. Here, I begin to juxtapose these two modes of marking through Jacques Derrida's essay *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*. This juxtaposition helps elucidate the specificities and potential implications of the process of tracing for the relationship between mark and surface. It also moves the discussion of works that utilise the action of tracing beyond the, obvious perhaps, characterisation of copying and activates terms that draw attention to the potential significance of this process when trying to find ways of approaching a surface.[16]

The usefulness and value of Derrida's essay when it comes to thinking about marks, especially in relation to drawing, is evident through the number of texts that have made use of it. For example, James Elkins discusses *Memoirs of the Blind* when considering graphic marks. Despite his disagreements with Derrida's approach, Elkins acknowledges that Derrida provides "one of the more interesting accounts of graphic marks" and that he "touches on several properties that are important in graphic

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[16] Tracing, as a mode of marking, is oftentimes seen as merely copying and is usually deemed unsatisfactory and insufficient as a way of making art. Wollheim, "Why is Drawing Interesting?" 9. Moreover, it has been associated with a mechanical mode of working, with a certain slavishness to the model, and with deskilling, all of which are thought to undermine the artist's hand and eliminate subjective expression. Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, 142, 151; Kantor, "Drawing from the Modern," 17. It is also mostly used as a tool for learning how to draw or for refining drawings. Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*, 166. A full discussion of historical attitudes towards this type of marking is beyond the scope of this research. I am focusing on the potential of this mode of marking to *approach* the surface and allow access to an in-between state/space. Texts that discuss tracing in more positive terms, and on which I draw, include Newman, "Marking Time," and Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*, 260–285, which discusses copying in general.

marking."[17] Indeed, Derrida's text interweaves the act of drawing and the resulting drawn mark with perception, memory, blindness, and invisibility, to name a few of the themes touched upon. Elkins utilises Derrida's discussion as a starting point for his own discussion on marking, arguing that marks are both signs and non-signs. Additionally, in a series of essays, Michael Newman focuses on the coexistence of singularity and repeatability in the inscription of the drawn mark and the implications this has for rethinking the act of witnessing the other through visual art.[18] Nicola Foster's paper "Boundaries of Sight and Touch: Memoirs of the Blind and the Caressed," focuses on the intersection of sight and touch in Derrida's essay. She argues that Derrida's approach "can help towards an interpretation of drawing as a practice through which women artists seek expression as women, and as a language for expression as women, within Western patriarchal tradition."[19] For the editors of *Drawing Now: Between the Lines of Contemporary Art*, the importance of Derrida's essay lies in the fact that it suggests ways of thinking about drawing that escape predictable routes. In the book's introductory essay, they focus on the intersection of perception and conception in drawing and centre their discussion around Derrida's notion of blindness which, they argue, "disturbs the assumption that drawing must transcribe observation."[20]

My interest in *Memoirs of the Blind* is primarily due to the terms Derrida utilises when discussing graphic marks; that is, the French words *trait* and *retrait*. The word *trait* carries a variety of meanings including trait, feature, line, stroke, mark,

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[17] Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 18.

[18] These essays include, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," "Marking Time," "The Trace of Trauma," and "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing." Newman's question revolves around the possibility, or impossibility, of witnessing an "origin" or alterity that withdraws from presence. In the case of drawing, it is the thing drawn that withdraws, as I discuss in more detail later. Newman argues that this withdrawal is necessary as it makes possible narration and the testimony of a witness, a testimony which occurs through traces and which cannot be reappropriated.

[19] Foster, "Boundaries of Sight and Touch," 3. Foster argues that Derrida's essay challenges the primacy of vision in drawing (and in Western art more generally) by emphasising the role of blindness and touch. She juxtaposes his essay with Luce Irigaray's critique of vision, a critique that focuses on sexual difference, and her emphasis on touch. Foster concludes that there exists a need to invent a signifying visual language that acknowledges bodily relationships and sexual difference. This can be done by crossing the boundaries between sight and touch.

[20] Downs, Marshall, Sawdon, Selby and Tormey, Introduction to *Drawing Now*, xi.

dash, trace, border or limit.[21] As I discuss later, in Derrida's account, the *trait* is always already a *retrait*, implying both repetition and withdrawal. I believe the terms *trait* and *retrait* come closest to accurately capturing some of the issues pertaining to works that involve tracing over pre-existing marks on a surface, thus, making them particularly useful for this project. Moreover, Derrida's argument in *Memoirs of the Blind* is based, to a large extent, on the recurring moments involved in making a drawing: observing the thing to be drawn, drawing lines, and looking at the drawn traces. He attempts to theorise these moments and propose potential meanings that have implications for drawing in general. My focus in this chapter is also on the moments of making a mark and their implications, thus, Derrida's essay acts as a suitable companion.[22]

While the artist or draftsperson is making a drawing based on observation, her gaze will constantly move between the drawing on the paper and the person or object drawn.[23] Inevitably at some moments she will be looking at the person or object observed while her marking tool moves blindly on the page, like the cane of a blind person, inscribing *traits* (marks, traces). At other moments, she will be looking at the page, drawing the person or object from memory, trying to capture the *trait* (feature,

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[21] *Collins Robert French Dictionary*, 8th edition, s. v. "trait." Translators' note in Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 2; Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 219. In *Memoirs of the Blind*, the word *trait* has mostly been left in French so as to retain all of its possible meanings. In this chapter, to keep the discussion clear, I have included in parenthesis the most appropriate meaning(s) for the word *trait* as it is used in each specific context. I have also retained the italicisation of the French term, as in the English translation of *Memoirs of the Blind*.

[22] *Memoirs of the Blind* touches on a range of issues and Derrida's observations on the act of drawing have been interpreted in several different ways. For my purposes here, I focus on observations that relate specifically to the drawn mark and to the functions of the *trait* and *retrait*. My analysis of Derrida's text draws on my own experiences as an artist as well as on analyses by James Elkins, Nicola Foster, Michael Newman, and Robert Vallier.

[23] Derrida usually refers to a "draftsman" ("dessinateur" in the original French text) and the artists he discusses are all male. There are two instances where he acknowledges sexual difference (although not in direct reference to the fact that the artists he uses are all male). The first instance is when he points out that the famous blind of Western culture are almost always men; there are no "great blind women." Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 5. There are of course blind women but the Greek and biblical narratives focus on men. Ibid., 6. Derrida contrasts these narratives with Pliny's story, which places a draftswoman at the "origin" of drawing. Ibid. The second instance is when Derrida points out that those who weep—the mourners in images and narratives—are usually women. Ibid., 127. In my text, I refer to the person making an artwork as artist or draftsperson. I also discuss Pliny's story later in the chapter.

trait, possibly the outline of the person) before she forgets it. The draftsperson cannot look at the person or object drawn *and* at her drawing simultaneously.[24] Thus, there is a visual gap between the thing to be drawn and the drawing, or between "model and copy" as Robert Vallier writes.[25] A space of blindness or invisibility persists between what is to be represented and the representation, either because the draftsperson draws without seeing the drawing or because she draws from memory without seeing the model.[26] In the latter case, present perception is sacrificed to memory and the hand of the draftsperson draws according to what is remembered, what is no longer currently present or visible.[27]

The invisible *trait*-not-yet-traced (line, mark, trace) must pass through the space of blindness or invisibility between model and drawing before being inscribed on the page and becoming visible.[28] As the *trait*-not-yet-traced traverses this space of

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[24] Ibid., 36–37. Similarly, artists drawing entirely from memory base their drawn marks on what they remember, what they no longer see before them.

[25] Vallier, "Blindness and Invisibility," 194. The term "copy" is problematic since, like mimesis, it has had a number of interpretations in art theory and art history. Richard Shiff discusses some of these interpretations in "The Original, the Imitation, the Copy, and the Spontaneous Classic" and "Representation, Copying, and the Technique of Originality." For now, I am using the term to mean a similar mark to the first.

[26] In fact, what Derrida is describing comes very close to my experience of the life drawing class. I recall one instructor saying that we should be spending more time looking at the model and less time looking at our drawing—our hand should "blindly" follow our gaze. Another instructor, advised us to move our eyes between the model and our drawing as quickly as possible, so as to minimise, as Derrida might say, the space of blindness or invisibility between the drawing and the person drawn. Thus, the blindness Derrida describes is something artists drawing from observation experience whenever they start to draw.

[27] Vallier, "Blindness and Invisibility," 195; Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 41, 47–51, 92.

[28] This passage through invisibility has been interpreted in several different ways. According to Michael Newman, it refers to the moment of putting the marking tool on the page. The tool covers the point of contact, thus, as the draftsperson begins to draw, the mark cannot be seen. Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 220. Eliane Escoubas' discussion agrees with and expands on this: "At the instant when the point of the pencil or the pen touches the canvas or the paper, the artist does not see the point on which the point marks." This point merges with subsequent points and disappears in the drawn line. Escoubas, "Derrida and the Truth of Drawing," 205–206. According to Elkins, the passage through invisibility refers to "the necessary voyage into blindness that every mark makes as it moves across the blank surface." This voyage relates to the "darkness of the not-yet-existent image." That is, at the beginning, the drawing only exists in the draftsperson's mind and that is where the *trait* begins. The *trait*-not-yet-traced is invisible quite simply because it does not yet exist. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 19. Elkins' point can be associated with the fact that objects in the world do not actually have outlines—these must be invented by the person drawing. These may all be valid points and, in fact,

blindness, this passage between invisibility and visibility, it retreats; it becomes a

retrait, a withdrawal.[29] The artist must work quickly to capture the *trait* (feature,

outline) before it fades away in forgetfulness and invisibility.[30] Memory may not be

entirely trustworthy, thus, the *trait* remains in the passage between invisibility and

visibility, hovering between the two. As Derrida writes, "the heterogeneity between the

thing drawn and the drawing *trait* remains abyssal, whether it be between a thing

represented and its representation or between the model and the image."[31] In drawing

there is "no possibility of return," and "one therefore traces only the shadow of the

thing."[32] The singular event of seeing the model (the other) may leave a trace on the

page but the singularity of the event—the moment of visual sensation as a singular

experience—is lost in the representation.[33]

Once the *trait* (line, mark, trace) is traced, what remains of it tends towards

nothingness. Derrida calls this the "*withdrawal [retrait] or the eclipse, the

differential inappearance of the trait.*"[34] As Michael Fried writes, "the necessity of

such a *retrait* follows from the inherently differential structure of the *trait* in Derrida's

account."[35] That is, the thickness of the drawn *trait* (line, mark, trace) "tends to wear

itself out so as to mark the single edge of a contour: between the inside and outside of

a figure."[36] The drawn *trait* marks a difference, thus, "it cannot strictly speaking

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they are all suggested by Derrida's discussion of the invisible *trait*-not-yet-traced.
Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 45–53.

[29] *Retrait* in French means retreat, withdrawal, revocation, shrinkage, and
contraction. *Collins Robert French Dictionary*, 8th edition, s. v. "retrait." It can also
describe something that remains in the background. *Collins Robert French
Dictionary*, 8th edition, s. v. "en retrait." Finally, it means redrawing, a meaning I
discuss later in the chapter. Translators' note in Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 3.

[30] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 48.

[31] Ibid., 45.

[32] Vallier, "Blindness and Invisibility," 197, 198.

[33] Foster, "Boundaries of Sight and Touch," 7.

[34] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 53. The French word "inapparence" that is used in
the original text refers to what is not apparent, what lacks appearance or visible
symptoms, the hidden or invisible. *Collins Robert French Dictionary*, 8th edition, s. v.
"inapparent."

[35] Fried, "Between Realisms," 1.

[36] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 53. In this sense, the *trait* according to Derrida
differs markedly from what Deleuze and Guattari call an abstract line—a line that does
not delimit anything and that does not describe a contour. One of their examples is
Jackson Pollock's drip line. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 547–551.

manifest itself."[37] It is "no longer what it is, because from then on it never relates to itself without dividing itself just as soon, the divisibility of the *trait* here interrupting all pure identification."[38] The *trait* refers both to itself, as drawn mark, and to the object drawn—the other. It remains divided between these two.[39] It becomes a limit, or rather tends towards a limit that is never actually reached. Ideally, at the limit, only the surroundings of the *trait* appear, that which the *trait* joins only in separating and which, thus, does not belong to it.[40] In a sense, the *trait* retreats into representation— it "appears and disappears constantly: it divides itself, interrupts its own identification."[41] This withdrawal relates to Hubert Damisch's observation that drawn marks are substituted by a line, which is substituted by a contour, which leads into "the field of imitation."[42] That is, what starts out as a drawn mark, eventually becomes a line, which is then seen as a contour and, finally, a figure. The drawn mark becomes subsumed in this progressive substitution. As Derrida writes, "*nothing belongs to the trait*, and thus, to drawing and to the thought of drawing, not even its own 'trace'."[43] The *trait* (mark, line, trace) partially retreats in the process of delineating a figure—it becomes part of a depicted person or object.

Thus far, there are two differentials, or withdrawals, implied in Derrida's account. The first is the difference between the actual person or object and the

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[37] Fried, "Between Realisms," 1. Derrida has also discussed the *trait*'s differential structure in *The Truth in Painting*, 11.

[38] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 54.

[39] Note that the word *trait* itself is divided between referring to the model's features, traits or outlines and to the drawing's traces, marks or lines.

[40] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 54. Derrida allows for the possibility of not reaching this limit: "A tracing, an outline, cannot be seen. One should in fact not see it (let's not say however: 'One *must* not see it')." Ibid., 53. Thus, the withdrawal of the drawn trace is partial. Moreover, in Derrida's assertion that the *trait* joins only in separating, I hear an echo of Tisseron's discussion of the drawn mark as a "symbol of separation." Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 34.

[41] Vallier, "Blindness and Invisibility," 199. Elkins offers a different interpretation of this disappearance: the mark becomes a field of colour which ultimately becomes surface. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 20, 26, 28–29. By this he is referring to a mark becoming a surface when it is crossed by a subsequent mark and not to indistinctness between the artist's mark and the pre-existing surface, which is what I am focusing on.

[42] Damisch, *Traité du Trait*, 67, 76; Newman "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 106n4; Newman, "Marking Time," 276. The quote in the text is Michael Newman's translation of Damisch's text.

[43] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 54.

drawing of that person or object. According to Derrida, something of the actual person or object withdraws in the space of blindness between what is to be represented and the representation. As such, the drawing can never precisely capture the actual person or object. The *trait*, taken as the feature the draftsperson has seen and commits to memory, partially withdraws by becoming a drawn *trait*/trace. The *trait* is, thus, "the trace of the other."[44] The second differential or withdrawal pertains to the mark's differential structure. The mark separates between the inside and outside of a figure. Therefore, it generates a difference on the surface that allows the figure to be seen, a mark/surface differentiation. It acts as a border between the inside and the outside— the figure and the ground. The mark belongs neither inside nor outside and, according to Derrida, nothing belongs to it. Rather, it marks a limit.[45] As such, both model and "copy" partially withdraw, one in memory and the other in representation.

In addition to implying retreat and withdrawal, the word *re-trait*, suggests repetition, a remaking of the *trait*. In figurative drawing, which is the kind of drawing Derrida focuses on, the *trait* (mark, line, trace) is meant to depict something else, another *trait* (feature), and not itself.[46] It comes as a repetition, or almost-repetition, a "copy" of a pre-existing model. It is never an original mark but always a re-mark. As Michael Newman suggests, "the first mark is always second if it is to be identifiable and to signify."[47] The *trait* (mark, line, trace) can then be considered as a reminder of something else, of an other. At the same time, the *trait* is the remainder of remembrance.[48] As both reminder *and* remainder, the drawn *trait* is never entirely present nor absent but rather implicates both presence and absence.[49] The *trait* can

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[44] Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 221.

[45] In this sense, the mark echoes the structure of the frame as a parergon. The frame, according to Derrida, is neither part of the work nor outside the work but rather marks the limit between the work and everything else. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 9. Likewise, the mark marks a limit and frames the figure.

[46] By figurative I refer to drawings that depict recognisable forms. Most of the works Derrida discusses involve the human figure.

[47] Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 221. Newman draws on Derrida's discussion in *The Truth in Painting*, 11.

[48] I would add here that the drawn *trait* is also a remainder of the artist's actions, of her movements while making the drawing. It, thus, brings together two remainders. I return to this aspect later in the chapter.

then be thought of as a trace that hovers in a passage or on a permeable border between invisibility and visibility.[50] Whether not-yet-traced or finally inscribed, the *trait* remains, always already, a *retrait*, an almost-withdrawal and an almost-repetition.

Derrida's text may provide a remarkable account on marking and it may utilise and activate terms that are very insightful, yet it is not without its problems. As James Elkins writes, Derrida starts with an interesting account of marking, as discussed above, but then assimilates this to writing and language.[51] His text in fact oscillates between discussing images and biblical and mythological stories. The discussion of marks eventually becomes subsumed in narrative and the images end up illustrating Derrida's text, a critique also raised by Mark C. Taylor.[52] Elkins is critical of Derrida's text because, as he says, Derrida sets up a dynamic of "dying away, collapsing, fading, 'wearing out'—the mark is *not being seen*, there is a general disinterest in seeing and a concomitant fascination with the invisible."[53] As Taylor also notes, "the theme of this study [*Memoirs of the Blind*]—blindness—is symptomatic of a persistent uneasiness with visual materials."[54] This dynamic of fading or falling away eventually leads to writing. Elkins quotes Derrida:

> For is it not the withdrawal [*retrait*] of the line—that which draws the line back, draws it again [*retire*], at the very moment when the *trait* is drawn, when it draws away [*se tire*]—that which grants speech? And at the same time

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[49] This connects the *trait* to Derrida's wider philosophical project which challenges the possibility of full presence. His analysis of the *trait* and the *retrait* echoes, in many ways, what he has already said about the trace structure in earlier writings. The trace, in Derrida's sense, is a play between presence and absence that questions the possibility of full presence. As such, traces "are constituted by the double force of repetition and erasure, legibility and illegibility." Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 284. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak offers a clear discussion of the trace in the translator's preface to *Of Grammatology*. Moreover, Michael Newman connects the *trait* and *retrait* in *Memoirs of the Blind* to différance. Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 221.

[50] Wolfreys, "Art," 87.

[51] Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 18.

[52] Taylor, *The Picture in Question*, 68.

[53] Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 20.

[54] Taylor, *The Picture in Question*, 68.

forbids separating drawing from the discursive murmur whose trembling transfixes it?[55]

According to Elkins, this entire argument leads to the falling away of the drawn trace in favour of the irreducibility of the written trace.[56] He concludes that Derrida's account "is a repressive reading, a way of silencing the drawn trace by letting it melt quietly away into writing" and argues that there is more to say about the drawn trace than "'it withdraws,' 'it wears itself out,' it becomes invisible, it becomes writing."[57]

While I agree with Elkins' and Taylor's criticism for the most part, I do think that the relationship Derrida sets up between the *trait* and the *retrait* can prove very useful when thinking about specific types of marks. In fact, it can be used to say *more* about marking since it opens up ways of conceptualising marks.[58]

CLOSELY FOLLOWING:
TRAIT AND *RE-TRAIT* IN PRACTICE

While Derrida's account focuses on drawing from observation or memory, here I consider his text in relation to works that do not follow this model of marking

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[55] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 56.

[56] Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 21–22. In fact, Maria Scott argues that at the centre of *Memoirs of the Blind* is a battle waged by writing against drawing and that Derrida ultimately sides with writing. Thus, his text must be approached with scepticism, for "how . . . can we believe what Derrida's text tells us about drawing?" Scott, "Textual *Trompe L'Oeil* in Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*," 246. Scott makes a valid point and my response, as an artist, is to juxtapose Derrida's text with practice and to read it *through* practice.

[57] Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 22. As noted earlier, Derrida's analysis of drawing is based, to a large extent, on his earlier texts on writing and language. His broader philosophical thinking may help explain his overall approach in *Memoirs of the Blind*. This is a point Elkins makes as well when he relates Derrida's discussion to parts in *Of Grammatology*. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*, 19. Michael Newman's interpretation in "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing" also helps explain Derrida's apparent disinterest in the visual. Newman sees *Memoirs of the Blind* as Derrida's attempt to talk about the issue of witnessing. That is, what is at stake for Derrida is the status of a witness and the discussion on drawing provides a passageway to arrive at that. I believe that, even if Derrida's actual interest is the action of witnessing, his discussion of drawing is valuable nonetheless because of his discussion of the *act* of drawing.

[58] Elkins himself uses the concept of blindness that Derrida attaches to drawing to discuss other types of visual absences involved in images. In effect, he unfolds Derrida's blindness into a multiplicity of concepts: the unrepresentable, the unpicturable, the inconceivable, and the unseeable. Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail them*, 251–261. My work is closest to the unseeable category which involves hidden details in images, details that are physically present but somehow hidden.

but rather involve the tracing of pre-existing marks.[59] This juxtaposition allows for the specificities and implications of this mode of marking to emerge. In the works discussed in this chapter, the surface to be marked is not blank and the hands of the artist are guided by what is already there. The eye does not switch between model and "copy" since the "copy" is placed right on the model. This kind of marking is not based on memory but on close and intense observation since the artist's marks carefully trace over the model. Present perception then is not exactly sacrificed to memory during the making of these works nor does the hand of the artist proceed blindly—instead it tries to follow closely whatever is already there.[60]

There is, in fact, a brief reference to this kind of marking in Derrida's text when he refers to Pliny's story of the possible origin of the plastic arts, a story that has often been used in the past as the supposed origin of drawing:[61]

> It was through the service of that same earth that modelling portraits from clay was first invented by Butades, a potter of Sicyon, at Corinth. He did this owing to his daughter, who was in love with a young man; and she, when he was going abroad, drew in outline on the wall the shadow of his face thrown by a lamp.[62]

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[59] I have found two other texts that utilise *Memoirs of the Blind* to discuss works that do not involve the kind of drawing from observation that Derrida focuses on. In "Marking Time," Michael Newman briefly refers to the text when discussing Avis Newman's *Webs (Backlight)* series of paintings. These paintings involve making marks on canvas, covering them with a wash, and then making marks over the obscured marks. My analysis here resonates with and builds on Newman's analysis. In "Drawing as Outside Art History," Keith Broadfoot uses *Memoirs of the Blind* to write about Jackson Pollock's line, a line that, according to Michael Fried, has no inside or outside. Reading the essay, reveals a very interesting clash between this line and Derrida's *trait* whose only job, according to Derrida, is precisely to separate between the inside and outside of a figure (in representational drawing). Broadfoot argues that Pollock's line paradoxically enacts the appearance of the disappearing *trait*.

[60] This is not to suggest that some form of blindness does not come to play a role in these works. I return to this issue later in the chapter.

[61] This story has been discussed in several other texts on marking. Examples include: Hubert Damisch, *Traité du Trait*; Michael Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing" and "Marking Time"; Deanna Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*; David Rosand, *Drawing Acts*; Lisa Saltzman, "Faraway, So Close"; Richard Shiff, "On Criticism Handling History" and "Performing an Appearance"; Richard Wollheim, "Why is Drawing Interesting?" My use of this story here is not meant as an acknowledgement of it as a story of "origin" but rather relates more to the type of marking described, that is the tracing over of something.

[62] Pliny, *Natural History*, 371–373.

Derrida focuses on the fact that the woman turns away from her lover in order to trace his shadow. He sees this as an instance of blindness—the artist turning away from her model in order to make the drawing: "It is as if seeing were forbidden in order to draw, as if one drew only on the condition of not seeing, as if the drawing were a declaration of love destined for or suited to the invisibility of the other—unless it were in fact born from not seeing the other withdrawn from sight."[63] He concludes that, even though the woman "follows the *traits* of a shadow or a silhouette," her "*skiagraphia* or shadow writing . . . inaugurates an art of blindness" such that "from the outset, perception belongs to recollection."[64]

Derrida disregards, however, the actual process of drawing. The woman does indeed turn away from her lover but, at the same time, she turns *towards* the shadow cast on the wall. The woman's drawing is based not on some memory of what the man looks like but on careful observation and tracing around of the shadow. If we take the shadow to be her model, then the drawing is placed right on the model, aiming for a one-to-one correspondence between them. If we imagine the actual scene, we may see the shadow trembling on the wall due to the flickering light of the candle in the lamp. The woman brings herself very close to the wall and slowly tries to follow the fleeting image of the unstable shadow. I imagine that drawing a precise and accurate outline is important—it is his shadow and she, presumably, has decided to keep something of him with her. She, thus, must work carefully and attentively.[65]

Tracing over something is a different process than looking at something and trying to draw it on a separate surface. Both processes can involve careful observation and precise marking, but going over something implies following the original much more closely, aiming for an almost one-to-one mapping.[66] The artist tries to approach

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[63] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 49.

[64] Ibid., 49–51.

[65] Texts that refer to Pliny's story and that deal, to various extents, with the specifics of how the drawing is performed include Saltzman, "Faraway, So Close," which views the drawn marks as the tracing of a projection, Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," which suggests that the fleeting shadow is the "model," and Shiff, "Performing an Appearance," which focuses on the issue of indexicality.

[66] I am not making a claim as to validity or quality. I am not suggesting that one process is somehow better than the other. I am pointing out their differences so as to

the initial mark by physically working very close to it, touching it. When working on the Stonehouse drawing, I tried to follow as closely as possible with my pencil both the shape of each paint stain as well as the rough texture of the wall. Similarly, while cutting adhesive vinyl to put over the floor scratches at Tenderpixel Gallery, I first traced the shapes of the scratches using tracing paper, and then cut the vinyl to match the traced shapes. I then tried to place each piece of cut vinyl exactly over its corresponding scratch.

These processes that involve going over a pre-existing mark, sometimes multiple times, may enable the artist to capture some aspect of that mark more accurately. In a sense, this practice of marking tries to avoid the blindness that Derrida discusses—that space of invisibility between model and drawing. Tracing over the model could be seen as a rather extreme attempt at capturing the *trait* by minimising (though, not eliminating, as I discuss later) the space of blindness between model and drawing. The surface with its pre-existing marks becomes the model for the artist's work. The artist's mark comes as close to the initial mark as physically possible—the actual distance between them is collapsed, as one mark is placed over the other, and model and "copy" occupy the same space. It is in fact possible to view both model *and* "copy" simultaneously, both while making the work and after the work is completed, as I further discuss next. Thus, the artist's *trait* is quite literally a *re-trait* since the artist recreates the *trait* that is already there.[67]

RE-COVERING THE PRE-EXISTING: FROM *RE-TRAIT* TO *RETRAIT*

Looking at the works discussed so far, both Hopkins' and my own, I would argue that it is precisely the attempt to capture the *trait* and minimise the blindness of the artist that eventually allows a different kind of blindness to surface: a blindness

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argue for the specificity of tracing as a process of marking and to justify my choice of tracing when looking for ways to approach the surface.

[67] This is complicated by the fact that the pre-existing marks in some works are themselves in a process of disappearing. The paint stains at the Stonehouse studio, for example, were painted over with white paint. Thus, the process of marking may involve a process of recovery or retrieval. This is discussed later in the chapter.

involving concealment. This concealment allows the *retrait*, as retreat or withdrawal this time, back into the discussion via a somewhat different route.

The remaking of a pre-existing mark on top of itself, can lead towards two endpoints or limits: on the one hand, the pre-existing mark may be partially lost or concealed and, on the other hand, it may be retained or even emphasised. In fact, some form of loss and some form of retainment occurs in most of the works discussed so far, in varying degrees depending on the work. Thus, there is tension between concealing and retaining or emphasising.[68]

Since the artist's mark comes right on top of the pre-existing mark, part of that first mark is physically covered and, inevitably, concealed. The tendency to obscure is most apparent in Hopkins' painting *World Map* and in her song sheet pieces.[69] The printed clock diagrams on the map and the printed text and musical notation on the song sheets have been painted over with white acrylic ink. The ink resembles white correction fluid used to erase errors in text. The action of erasing occurs by covering over the printed text and not by actually removing it. By converting the black printed marks into white painted marks, Hopkins brings about their partial disappearance as they recede into the whiteness of the paper. In *World Map*, all land has been painted over with light-blue ink, leading to its visual absorption by the surrounding sea. Similarly, my floor collage at Tenderpixel Gallery involved the concealment of scratches. The scratches were covered with strips of adhesive vinyl whose pattern approximated the dark brown wood of the floor. Thus, the covered scratches almost disappeared into the floor.[70] Another word that Derrida uses in *Memoirs of the Blind* to discuss the *retrait* or withdrawal is precisely "eclipse."[71] An eclipse enacts an

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[68] When discussing Avis Newman's *Webs (Backlight)* series of paintings, Michael Newman argues that they involve both repetition, a "saving" of the first mark, as well as loss through covering. Newman, "Marking Time," 273, 274. I draw on his analysis here. Newman goes on to discuss this simultaneous retrieval and loss in terms of trauma, representation, and the sacrifice of singularity and presence to mitigate loss and preserve memory or remembrance. My discussion moves in a different direction.

[69] Fiona Bradley describes Hopkins' painting on maps as defacement, destruction, deletion, removal, reduction, and annihilation, and relates it with a "harshly destructive impulse." Bradley, "Mark Making," 17.

[70] Implicit in my discussion of the concealment of the pre-existing marks is the concealment of the artists' marks. This issue is taken up in the next section.

[71] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 53.

obscuring by covering or concealing. The initial marks in the works discussed are partially eclipsed, moving towards a *retrait*.

Note that in the works just discussed concealment occurs in at least two ways: the pre-existing mark is entirely covered by another mark (cover as physical concealment) and this other mark takes the colour of the background, thus, "erasing" the pre-existing mark (camouflage as visual concealment).[72] The type and degree of concealment varies from work to work. In my wall drawing at Stonehouse, the drawn marks on the wall only partially cover the paint stains, which peek through the spaces between the red pencil lines. Since both the paint stains and pencil marks are red, the degree of visual concealment of the paint stains is minimised. In my *Light Capture* collages, even though some highlighted areas are completely covered by tape, the fact that it is clear allows the underneath surface to be seen. There is, thus, a range of concealments or withdrawals.
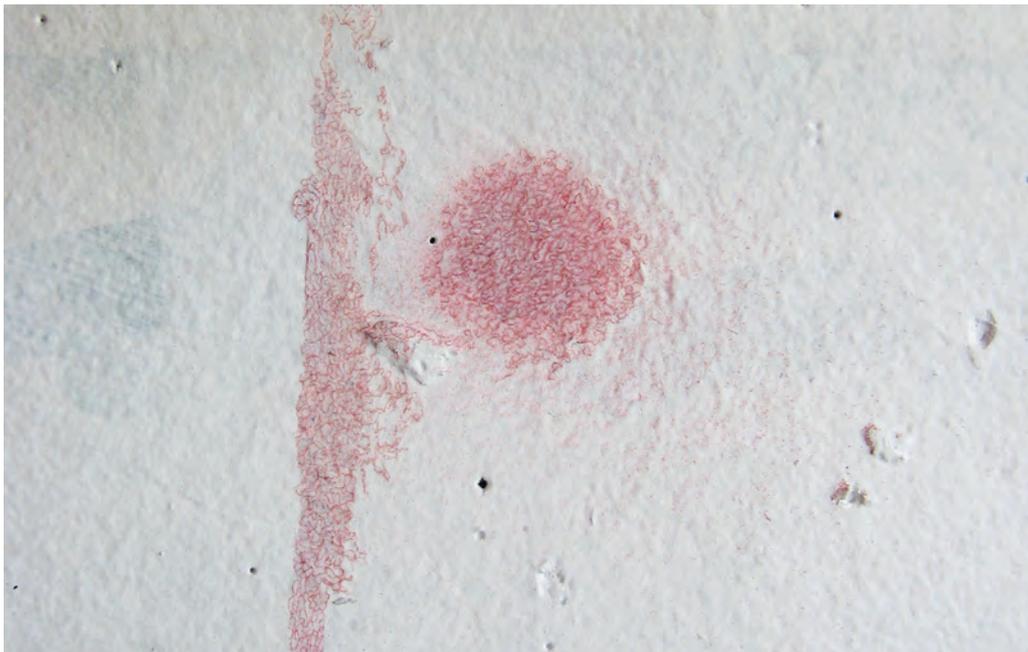
Image 4.13:   *Wall Drawing I* (detail), 2010
Coloured pencils on wall, 220 x 270 cm (wall size)

Whatever the case, concealment is never complete. The process of making these works—the remaking of a previous mark over itself—results in an operation of partial cover-up. Some part of the original mark is recalled in the remaking, thus, re-

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[72] It would have been a different work if, say, Hopkins had traced over the text using red paint. In that case, there would be physical covering or concealment of the printed mark by the painted mark but no "erasure" or camouflage.

trait and *retrait* coincide. That is, the original mark is both repeated and withdrawn-by-concealment. Even in the case of Hopkins' song sheet works, where the printed text is traced over with white ink, some parts of the text are retained. The work partially does away with the figure/ground relationship present on the page. It tries to return the page back to sameness, back to ground, before any type of mark was imposed on it. It is not a complete return, however. Hopkins traces over the marks, leaving the rest of the page untouched. This has the effect of making the concealed printed marks partially visible as a relief. Upon close observation, the viewer can perceive the texture of Hopkins' painted marks and can still read most of the printed information. Moreover, the ink Hopkins uses is absorbed by the printed marks, some of which come to appear like incisions in the raised ink marks. In several cases, when looking closely at the song sheet works, I could see the printed characters as embossed images within the ink. The same occurred with *World Map*. When I studied the blue ink closely, I could actually start making out names of cities and countries as well as borderlines between countries.[73] Therefore, the printed marks did not withdraw from sight completely.

Image 4.14:   Louise Hopkins, *World Map* (detail), 1998
Acrylic ink on world map, 97 x 70 cm
Image courtesy of the artist. © Louise Hopkins

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[73] It took a while for this to occur. Initially, I had thought that the almost imperceptible lines I could see were creases or cracks in the dried paint. I eventually recognised a few letters and read some of these "creases": Vancouver, Washington, California. It was then that I realised that many of the lines I could see were traces of the information printed on the map.

I would argue that any concealment that involves tracing over something, can never be complete. Some part of the mark or image covered is retained in the tracing, even if it is just a silhouette, as in the case of some of my *Faulty Samples* (2012–2015), which involve painting over parts of fabric samples. In *Faulty Samples* (*Back to Black)* (2013), the shape of each flower is discernible, as are the shapes of individual petals. I painted over each petal in turn, thus, my brushstrokes follow the image even as they physically cover it. The same stands with Hopkins' fabric pieces and song sheet pieces where the painted mark follows the printed mark.

Image 4.15:   *Faulty Samples (Back to Black)* (detail), 2012
Acrylic on fabric, 29.2 x 39 cm

Image 4.16:   *Untitled*, 2009
                Graphite on found cardboard, 22 x 19 cm

The other endpoint or limit of tracing over a pre-existing mark has to do with an emphasis of that mark. A series of cardboard drawings from 2009 reveals this tendency. When looking for ways to mark cardboard that somehow related to the surface, I turned to cardboard's texture.[74] The texture of corrugated cardboard, especially old and used cardboard, intrigued me because of the existence of a partially hidden middle layer that could only be "seen" through its effects on the two outer layers. I made many drawings with pencil, ink, acrylic and pastels trying to find a way of working with this texture. My interest was reinforced after finding some old cardboard boxes in the street near my studio. Some of them had been run over by cars and the combination of tyre marks along with the texture of the cardboard created an image on the surface. Taking my cue from this image, I decided to focus on graphite whose dark-grey colour referenced the marks left by dirt and car tyres on the found cardboard. I made several drawings on cardboard that consisted of evenly shading the whole surface with graphite so as to allow the changes in texture to emerge.[75] The

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[74] I was able to get large quantities of cardboard from a paper factory in Cyprus. These included odd-shaped pieces that were discarded around the factory. I also found many old cardboard boxes in streets and recycling bins.

[75] These works also follow the transfer and transform mode of marking discussed in chapter 3. The marks I create, resembling dirt, could potentially be found on old cardboard. They are also roughly based on marks seen elsewhere.

graphite marks emphasised the cardboard's texture and also documented what had

happened to the cardboard so far. Any wrinkles, crevices or tears became more

prominent after shading the whole surface. The texture of the middle layer also came

to the fore and intricate yet subtle images were created on the surface.[76]
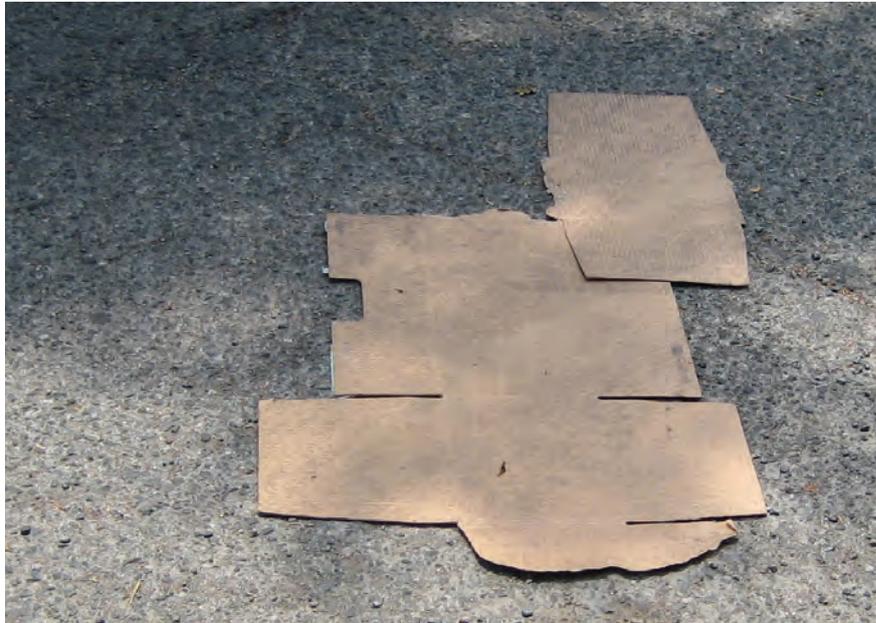
Image 4.17:   Found cardboard box in street, Limassol, Cyprus

Image 4.18:   *Untitled* (detail), 2009
Graphite on cardboard, 46 x 83 cm

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[76] An artist I talked with at the private view of *Re-Surface*, where I exhibited these works, compared the images to hieroglyphs and Arabic characters. He suggested that something resembling hidden characters was beginning to form on the surface of the works. Joe Roberts, in conversation with author, August 13, 2009.

Of course the cardboard drawings do not involve an exact tracing over of something, since the entire surface is shaded, but they do suggest how partially covering a surface with marks may emphasise its features. In the *Light Capture* collages and *Shadow Pieces*, the added marks emphasise aspects of the surface as well as the pre-existing marks they trace. The clear glossy tape on packing paper emphasises the highlights formed on the surface and, consequently, the surface's reflective quality. The pencil lines on handmade paper emphasise the surface's texture as well as the shadows formed on it at the time of making, an action reminiscent of the Corinthian woman's tracing of the shadow.[77]

In some works, where the pre-existing mark on the surface is partially imperceptible, the emphasis comes in the form of a retrieval. For instance, in her fabric paintings, Hopkins works on the back of the fabric, thus, seeing the remains of the image. Fiona Bradley sees this as a sign of the artist's "tacit rejection" of the furnishing fabric.[78] She also sees these paintings in terms of deletion and "annihilation" of the printed mark.[79] I would argue that what actually occurs is much more complex. Hopkins could have deleted or annihilated the printed pattern by painting over it in other ways, yet she chose to trace over the visual remains of the flowers, carefully remaking them. Even though there is physical concealment, it is accompanied by an impulse to retrieve or recover, to bring forth the image once again. This two-way movement is evident in the way Hopkins discusses these works. She describes the turning over of the fabric as a type of suppression and she discusses her paint marks as both suppression and devotion, "smothering what's already there and at the same time kind of re-growing it or re-enlivening it."[80]

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[77] These marks may also emphasise the shadows and highlights formed on the surfaces during viewing. The pencil marks may overlap with actual shadows and the clear tape on packing paper makes the surface more reflective.

[78] Bradley, "Mark Making," 15.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

Image 4.19:   Louise Hopkins, *Recess*, 2010
               Oil on reverse of furnishing fabric, 25.3 x 20.2 cm
               Image courtesy of the artist. © Louise Hopkins

The wall drawing I worked on at Stonehouse attempted to retrieve the faint paint stains on the wall. The stains had been painted over with white paint, partially withdrawing from sight, and my pencil marks made them slightly more visible. A recent series of works, *Rain* (2014), involves the recreation of the possible appearance of a windowpane at some moment in the past when it has rained. Using transparent acrylic medium, I create new "raindrops" over the leftovers of dried droplets on the dusty surface. For works on separate pieces of glass, I leave the glass outside on rainy days in order to allow the traces of raindrops to form. I then recreate the raindrops over these traces. The raindrops, whose past presence can only be implied through the nearly imperceptible traces, are thus partially retrieved.

Image 4.20:   *Rain (March 26, 2014, 3:00–4:30 pm) (detail)*, 2014
               Acrylic medium on glass, 30 x 40 cm

In works involving shadows and highlights, marks that are unstable because they change over time, the tracing enacts an attempt to capture something and retain it, in addition to emphasising it. The pre-existing mark in these works is something fleeting, unstable, here one minute and gone the next. It is, thus, already in a process of withdrawal and there is an attempt to somehow capture it by recreating it over itself.

Thus, in trying to emphasise, retrieve or capture the initial *trait*, the artists end up partially covering it with their own marks. This is a paradoxical situation since the attempt to somehow retain the *trait* leads precisely to its partial loss. The artists' marks enact a *re-covering*, an action that partially recreates *and* obscures the model at the same time.[81] In a sense, these works enact the futility of attempting to capture the *trait*. The artists seem to be attempting the impossible, that is to retrieve something that, according to Derrida, is always in a process of retreating or withdrawing. They are paradoxically trying to somehow retrieve a *retrait*. The works, therefore, enact an attempted recovery that results in becoming a re-covering, partially covering whatever was to be recovered. The pre-existing mark is partially remade and partially withdrawn through this re-covering. It becomes a *retrait*.

We are, thus, back to the issue of partial concealment. If in Derrida's account present perception is sacrificed in order for drawing to exist, in the works discussed in this chapter the model is partially "sacrificed" for the works to occur. Of course marking in general can be seen as an operation of cover up since it usually involves covering some part of the surface that is being marked, as discussed in chapter 1.

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[81] My use of the "interruptive hyphen"—as Anna Johnson calls it in "Nomad-Words" when discussing its use in Ettinger's writings—aims to point out the double meaning embedded in the word "recover": retrieve, regain, but also cover again. That is, the word "recover" contains within it "cover." Both of these meanings of the word play a role in the works discussed here. The pre-existing marks are somehow recovered through remaking but they are also covered through that remaking. The surface itself is re-covered as it is covered twice: once by the pre-existing marks and again by the artist's marks. Parts of it may also be recovered, as they are emphasised by the artist's marks. My use of the terms "cover" and "re-cover/recover" parallels Derrida's use of "*trait*" and "re-*trait*/*retrait*," although the meanings suggested differ since "*retrait*" (withdrawal, retreat) and "recover" can be seen as pointing in opposite directions. Looking at the pairs of words and thinking about the pre-existing mark, re-*trait* (remaking of the mark)/*retrait* (withdrawal) and re-cover (covering of the mark)/recover (retrieval), reconciles the difference. In a way, the term "re-cover" complements and supplements the term "*re-trait*" as the action of re-covering captures more precisely the process of tracing over a mark.

Marking can be seen as absenting the covered surface, leading to the mark's "presence as absence of unmarked ground."[82] In the works discussed here, the cover up is partial since the mark operates as a cover that simultaneously conceals and retains aspects of the surface and its pre-existing marks.[83] There is no absolute absenting or covering of the surface since it is only partially covered—parts of it are remade. Thus, neither of the two limits or endpoints is ever actually reached: there is neither a complete concealment of the model nor a complete retainment but a process of re-covering.

Viewed as loss and retrieval, this double process of the re-covering of the surface is related to Feud's analysis of the fort/da game and to Tisseron's analysis of marking.[84] The artists' marks re-enact loss and retrieval through covering and remaking the pre-existing mark.[85] There are, however, some important differences that I believe allow for a conceptualisation of the works that escapes the fort/da structure. The loss and retrieval in the works discussed here is simultaneous since it happens within the same movement. This departs from fort/da and its two movements but still keeps the works within Tisseron's analysis of marks as simultaneously separating and joining.[86] Unlike Tisseron's analysis, however, the works discussed here do not involve absolute positions. There is no absolute loss or absence of the surface and no absolute retrieval or presence. Rather, there occurs a process of partialisation that can only be considered through the relation between the artist's mark and the pre-existing or "other" mark.

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[82] Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 44.

[83] Helen Frankenthaler's stain paintings provide an interesting counterpoint in that her stain marks do not completely cover the surface either. This partial concealment, however, is achieved through the use of diluted paint that is physically embedded into the canvas and not by tracing over a pre-existing image. Frankenthaler's marks are discussed in detail in Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*.

[84] Newman relates Pliny's story of the Corinthian woman to fort/da since both actions involve loss (the absence of the lover and the absence of the mother) and retrieval (the creation of the lover's outline, the repetition of the fort/da game and the retrieval of the reel). Newman, "Marking Time," 273.

[85] This analysis resonates with Michael Newman's analysis of Avis Newman's *Webs*. Ibid.

[86] Tisseron, "All Writing is Drawing," 37.

THE ARTIST'S MARK AND THE "OTHER" MARK:
FROM RE-*TRAIT* TO CON-FUSION AND *RETRAIT*

The previous section focused on the partial retreat of the pre-existing mark, the model. This section focuses on the partial retreat of the artist's mark, the "copy," in relation to the pre-existing mark. The artist's mark is a *re-trait* in that it remakes a *trait* that is already on the surface. The physical coincidence between model and "copy" can lead to confusion between the two since the artist's marks visually mingle with the pre-existing marks. The artists' marks follow aspects of the surface closely such that rather than the mark covering the surface, the opposite may be occurring at times with the surface absorbing the mark, causing it to become a *retrait*.

In both Hopkins' and in my own works, the artist's mark depends on and is partially controlled by the surface and its pre-existing marks. On the one hand, this can be understood as a limitation or restraint placed on the artist's mark. The painted or drawn mark—conventionally conceptualised as personal and expressive—is here depersonalised by following a pre-existing mark, a mark brought into being by another person or another process.[87] Through being partially determined by this other mark, the artist's mark retreats or is held back, and its separation from the surface is suppressed.[88] On the other hand, this dependence on the surface can be conceptualised as a different mode of relating to an-other. In a sense, during the making process there is respect for the initial mark, the model, and an attempt at recreating it (even while covering it). Derrida's favoured word "observation" might be appropriate here. As he says, this word "associates scopic attention with respect, with deference, with the attention of a gaze or look that also knows how to look after."[89] The

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[87] Hopkins describes her marks as being in a state of "*passionate neutrality* or *passionate detachment*" and "expressive but only up to a point." There is a holding back of the marks in the systematised way in which she works. Louise Hopkins, email message to author, November 6, 2012. The conceptualisation of marks as expressive or as revealing something about the artist's character or state of mind has been discussed in several texts, including: Gaiger, *Aesthetics and Painting*; Hauptman, "Drawing from the Modern," 47; Pethebridge, *The Primacy of Drawing*, 103; Pietropaolo, "Expression"; Rosand, *Drawing Acts*. The conceptualisation of marks as expressive is also related to indexicality, an issue I discuss later.

[88] At the same time, this kind of marking may require better manual control because "mistakes" are more obvious. Thus, the process of marking involves more and less control on the part of the artist. I return to this is chapter 7.

[89] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 60.

artist does not completely disrupt what was already there but tries to work with it. Thus, the artists' marks are not exactly "other" to the pre-existing marks since they are based on them—they are tracings and traces of them. The artist's marks are effectively becoming-surface, becoming-other, as discussed in chapter 3. As a result, the artist's mark and the pre-existing mark on the surface are, to use Ettinger's terms, partial-others or border-others.[90]

This approach to making may lead to confusion between marks, or rather *partial con-fusion* since the marks appear to *almost* merge at times.[91] Through their similarity and physical overlay, a zone of indiscernibility opens between them such that they move towards each other. While viewing, in some works this movement tends more towards the pre-existing mark and the surface while in other works it tends more towards the artist's mark. Given the types of marks I recreate and the mode of presentation of my works, my marks usually move towards the pre-existing marks and the surface, becoming confused with them. In Hopkins' case, the opposite movement sometimes happens, with the pre-existing marks becoming confused with the artist's painted marks. In both practices, the movement can be bidirectional with one kind of mark temporarily taken as the other or remaining unidentifiable.[92]

The site-specific drawing I worked on at the Stonehouse studio has a direct relationship to the existing stains on the wall. Because of the limited time at the residency, I did not draw over every single stain. From a distance of about one and a half metres away, it was almost impossible to distinguish between the drawn marks

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[90] The two marks are of course different but their relationship is not presented as oppositional or hierarchical. The artists' marks involve painted, drawn and collaged handmade marks whereas the pre-existing marks involve accidental marks, natural marks, and mechanically printed marks. Historically, these marks were often seen as oppositional. Specifically, the industrial mass-produced printed image was considered as the "other" of painting, which was supposed to result in unique works of art. Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, 193–194; Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 18–19. This oppositional relationship between marks has been challenged, especially since the 1960s, with artists' marks tending towards the accidental, the mechanical or the readymade. Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 97; Flatley, "Art Machine," 83; Schwarz, "'Not a Drawing'," 13–19; Krauss, "Sense and Sensibility," 46, 48–51.

[91] As explained in footnote 81, my use of the interruptive hyphen aims to point out the double meaning embedded in the word "confusion": confuse and fuse together.

[92] This is something that changes depending on the viewer's distance from the works and her level of attention. I return to the issue of distance in a later section.

and the actual stains as a zone of indiscernibility emerged between them. While

making the wall drawing, even if I could see my marks at close proximity, whenever I

tried to step back and look at the whole work, I would lose some of them. The attempt

to get a complete view resulted in the image partially escaping. This is a rather strange

situation to be in while working in the studio. As a visual artist, I am used to having a

complete view of each piece. With these works, I could not see and definitively identify

every single mark at any given moment. The marks that had been made a moment ago,

partially escaped my vision the next moment. This is a result of the process of

making—the specific character of each surface determined the specific character of the

marks. I worked with what was already there and my marks became, to some extent,

part of that "already there." They entered a process of becoming-surface, becoming-

other.
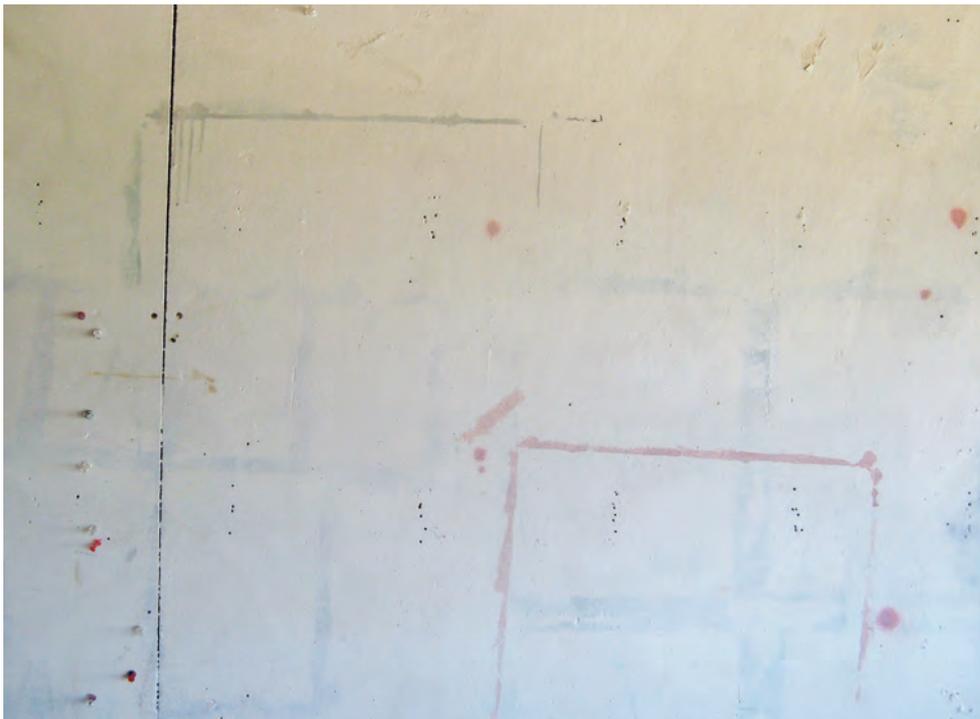
Image 4.21:   *Wall Drawing I* (detail), 2010
                 Coloured pencils on wall, 220 x 270 cm (wall size)

       In the case of the shadow pieces, when one of them is placed back on the wall,

actual shadows may partially coincide with the painted or drawn marks, depending on

the time of day and lighting conditions. The two are seen together, overlapping each

other. Each kind of mark partially conceals the other and does not allow the viewer to

see it by itself. In fact, while working on the shadow pieces, I could not see all the marks clearly. Confusion arose between the drawn marks and the actual shadows. After making some marks on a piece of paper, I would put the work on the wall. From a distance, the marks and shadows were hard to differentiate as the drawn marks mimic shadows well. I saw what I thought was a shadow and approached to mark it with pencil only to realise that I had already drawn over that region. Conversely, I sometimes saw what I thought was a drawing and subsequently realised that it was a shadow. The process of making involved repeated "mistakes" stemming from not realising immediately what it was I was looking at.

This partial withdrawal of the various marks into each other is precisely what leads to partial indiscernibility of the artist's mark in my works. The artist's marks are thought to be stains, shadows, highlights or scratches. Thus, they recede into the surface, becoming confused with its pre-existing marks. They are not seen as artist's marks to begin with but as part of the specific surface. Moreover, the marks I choose to trace over, which are related to the surfaces I work with and which are usually natural or accidental, may be seen as non-marks, as discussed in the previous chapter. Therefore, they may go unnoticed, a situation that was again discussed in the previous chapter in relation to both Susan Collis' work and my work. The pieces of handmade paper and packing paper may appear to be unmarked by the artist, since my marks register as subtle shadows and highlights, while the wall at Stonehouse and floor at Tenderpixel may appear unchanged, since my marks become stains and scratches.

It seems then that these works lead to the partial concealment/withdrawal of both model *and* "copy." As discussed in the previous section, the model is partially sacrificed for the works to occur. The sacrifice of the model leads to the partial sacrifice of the artist's mark which almost loses itself in its attempt to capture the pre-existing mark. Model and artist's mark, thus, partially eclipse each other. Rather than the mark signifying presence, it performs a *retrait*, partially remaking and withdrawing into the surface, which is itself partially re-covered. Relative presence and absence are, thus, shared between mark and surface, approximating what Ettinger calls pres-absence—a state between almost-presence and almost-absence that includes

both mark and surface.[93] This is a state that moves beyond the fort/da structure of marking as analysed by Tisseron. Instead of occupying absolute positions, either consecutively or simultaneously, pres-absence involves an encounter among several and suggests minor oscillations and in-between positions of presence-in-absence, absence-in-presence and absence-with-presence.[94]

Hopkins' works on song sheets result in a similar situation. Her marks trace over the printed marks, concealing them and remaking them. Since her ink marks are white, they partially disappear into the white page, withdrawing into the surface. In her fabric paintings, a somewhat different situation occurs. When the viewer looks at the paintings from a distance, the surface seems to unify and painted and printed marks are almost impossible to separate. The viewer can see that the brown beige flowers stand out more than the light blue flowers but the initial assumption is that both sets of flowers have been painted.[95] The viewer is, after all, looking at what appears to be a representational painting on stretchers hanging on the wall. Thus, the model is mistaken for the "copy," an opposite movement to that initially occurring in my works where the "copy" may be mistaken for the model. In Hopkins' paintings the painted mark, while still commingling with the pre-existing printed mark, sometimes asserts itself more strongly as the mark of an artist. The fact that these works are presented as stretched canvases hanging on walls probably "validates" the painted marks as the marks of an artist. The song sheet pieces and *World Map* are also shown hanging in frames.[96] Hopkins' "erasing" of the text and images makes these works approach the condition of monochromatic paintings, with the artist's painted marks subtly distinguishing themselves from the paper.

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[93] Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 181. There are resonances between pres-absence as an in-between state involving oscillations of almost-presence and almost-absence and the *trait* or trace structure in Derrida's thinking, which involves an absence always already within presence. The concept of *retrait* also oscillates between almost-repetition (re-presenting) and almost-withdrawal (absenting). A complete analysis of resonances between Ettinger and Derrida is beyond my scope here.

[94] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 86.

[95] This is based on how I have experienced Hopkins' works. A similar experience is described by Fiona Bradley. Bradley, "Mark Making," 15.

[96] The exception is the work *Songbook 3* (1997) which is shown open in a vitrine. The pages shown have been painted in the same way as Hopkins' other works on song sheets, that is, the printed lines and text have been traced over with white ink. Louise Hopkins, email message to author, January 23, 2015.

Image 4.22:   *Louise Hopkins: Freedom of Information* (installation view),
The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 2005
Image published on Fruitmarket Gallery web site
(http://www.fruitmarket.co.uk/archive/louise-hopkins/).
Reproduced with the artist's permission.

Even in the case of the *Faulty Samples* paintings, works that resonate strongly
with Hopkins' paintings on fabric, my marks become indiscernible. The initial marks
are mechanically printed on the fabric. My interventions either change the pattern
completely, by "erasing" all flowers in the pattern for instance, or become isolated
printing errors, by "erasing" one flower or one shape in a pattern. As such, the painted
marks either become part of the pattern or they become unintentional errors, a
situation that is discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, the painted marks take on
colours that pre-exist on the fabric and remain relatively flat, both in terms of texture
and colour. Thus, they do not assert themselves as painted marks. This, in addition to
the fact that, unlike Hopkins, I work on the front of the fabric samples, leads to my
marks becoming partially lost in the surface. Moreover, the indiscernibility of my
marks largely depends on how these works are displayed. As mentioned earlier,
Hopkins' paintings are presented as paintings, requesting to be viewed. My approach
to installation differs, an issue discussed in chapter 6.

Thus, the artist's mark is partially eclipsed in two ways: firstly, by following
the pre-existing mark closely rather than asserting its own presence, and, secondly, by
becoming partially con-fused with the pre-existing mark, a consequence of the process
of following that mark.[97] The two marks move towards each other, entering into a

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[97] The eclipsing of the artist's marks is revisited in chapter 7, which focuses on the
artist.

process of becoming-other, such that a zone of indiscernibility emerges between them. Within that zone, the two marks are partially and temporarily con-fused. The physical overlay leads to perceptual confusion, where the various marks visually commingle, as well as to conceptual confusion, where the marks are taken to be something other than what they are. In the end, the marks withdraw, not so much in memory or in representation as Derrida suggests, but rather into each other and into the surface, becoming, alongside the surface, pres-absent.

Image 4.23:   *Faulty Samples (Gone)*, 2012
                Acrylic on fabric sample, 29.2 x 34 cm

A MATTER OF DISTANCE (IN PROXIMITY)

At the same time of course, and significantly so, the pre-existing and added marks are not the same. The artists make decisions that differentiate their marks from the pre-existing marks, maintaining a difference between them.

In the wall drawing at Stonehouse, I did not remake the existing stains exactly, using, for example, diluted paint. This would cover the initial stain completely and would also make it impossible to differentiate between the two kinds of marks. Rather, I used coloured pencils and followed the texture of the wall while filling in each stain. In an attempt to approach the surface, my marks were based on characteristics of both the stains (the colour and shape) and the wall (the texture). A difference was, thereby, introduced both in terms of material and in terms of the appearance of the two types of marks. The aim was not to make the exact same mark but rather to make a mark that overlaid the first mark, setting up a relationship to it. The artist's mark enacts a movement towards an-other mark, a becoming rather than identification or sameness. The mark does not turn into surface but remains a mark-becoming-surface.[98]

Similarly, Hopkins does not try to make her mark look like a printed mark but rather she follows the printed mark while making her own painted mark. In fact, Hopkins is interested in the contrast between the marks, a contrast that becomes visible when the viewer is very close to the work.[99] What she is looking for is "a way for the painted and the printed to sit together," on the same surface. She is looking for "a mark that makes that happen," that allows for those two different processes to coexist "side by side or one on top of another."[100] The way this coexistence comes about is through a mark that, while remaining a painter's mark—indicating the movements of the artist's hand while holding a small brush, utilising smooth blending between colours, allowing the paint to sit over the surface, covering it—also sets up a relationship with the printed mark by literally following its traces. In the fabric

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[98] Here I am paraphrasing Bogue's discussion of Gregor's becoming-insect in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis.* Bogue writes that Gregor "does not turn into an insect, but remains a man-becoming-insect." Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 111.

[99] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

[100] Ibid.

paintings, the traces of the printed image are recreated as a painting. In the case of *World Map* and the song sheet works, Hopkins' marks again differentiate themselves from the flat printed image. Her painted marks extrude slightly from the surface and in some cases her brushstrokes are evident.

The close relationship between different types of marks and the simultaneous difference maintained between them suggests processes of borderlinking and borderspacing operating in parallel. Through the following of pre-existing marks on the surface, the borders between different types of marks and between mark and surface are transgressed allowing for connections. At the same time, these connections do not lead to sameness—the marks are not identical—but to jointness-in-difference. This is not an absolute difference but one that is inextricable from the closeness between marks—it approximates the continual attuning and adjustments of distance-in-proximity and separation-in-jointness.

In all the works discussed so far, it is possible to see the difference between the two types of marks and mark and surface when looking at the works closely and attentively. With some works, like Hopkins' *World Map* and *Songsheet 3 (ii) you're nobody 'til somebody loves you*, the difference between the marks emerges when the viewers approach the surfaces. In *Aurora 13*, seeing the brown flowers and blue flowers next to each other from close up, the viewer realises that the brown flowers are painted and that the blue flowers are printed on the fabric (and that she is looking at the reverse side of the fabric). Other works are more challenging and require the viewers to spend time with them before they can begin to differentiate between marks. The types of marks I usually work with and my installation approaches may make it more difficult to identify the works and observe the marks. Even if recognition comes through close looking, when stepping back again the different types of marks may become difficult to differentiate. Thus, partial confusion returns. The marks at times appear to partially merge and artist and initial mark-maker or process are temporarily con-fused.

BESIDE AN(OTHER) ARTIST:
BRACHA L. ETTINGER

A large part of Bracha L. Ettinger's practice involves painting over photocopies of found readymade images.[101] These include old family photographs, archive material depicting scenes from concentration camps during the Second World War, and texts and diagrams from books. These images are first "submitted to the [photocopy] machine."[102] As the photographs are photocopied, Ettinger interrupts the process by opening the door of the photocopier mid-run, thus, retaining the toner in its grainy, sticky form, before it sets. The resulting image, a ready-re-made, has a grainy, unsettled quality.[103] Moreover, parts of the original images are lost, making it impossible to describe the photocopied images in terms of definable forms. Instead, the resulting images can be characterised as "trace-forms."[104] This process of transforming images into trace-forms cannot be fully controlled by the artist whose "painterly will" and "aesthetic choice" are suspended by the photocopying process.[105]

By being transformed into trace-forms, the found images are given a new life. Ettinger has written in one of her notebooks:

> Parts of documentary photos become abstract zones of light, shadow, opacity, transparency. Concentrated or thick, sparing or transparent—what the zone had been before an accretion of meaning.
> The truth-value attributed to the document is infused with doubt and the idea of a precise thing collapses. Multiple possibilities open up.[106]

The transformation of the images into trace-forms creates openings with which the artist can work. These are literal visual gaps—missing parts in the resulting photocopied image—as well as conceptual openings—the documents no longer depict

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[101] An account of how Ettinger's practice developed from the 1980s to the mid 1990s is given by Pollock in "Gleaning in History." Moreover, it is Pollock that describes the images Ettinger works with as readymades. Ibid., 278.

[102] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 222.

[103] The term "ready-re-made" is from Pollock, "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma," 864. Pollock also describes the images as "readymade remade-unmade things." Pollock, "Gleaning in History," 274.

[104] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 222.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 31.

precise forms and no longer allude to specific meanings. They are "infused with doubt," allowing the artist to explore other possibilities.

It is on these trace-forms that Ettinger then paints with oil paint, responding to the photocopic dust left behind. She writes,

> I begin with traces
> of an image (or of
> combined images)
> as it makes no sense
> to begin without an image
> —but only in order
> to erase as rebirthing
> and to arrive
> at the end to the
> image that is born
> for the first time.[107]

Ettinger's marks vary from work to work. In some cases, the paint is applied in small horizontal brushstrokes around or over specific parts of the image. Some characteristics of the image underneath are, thus, retained and some shapes are emphasised. In other cases, parts of the photocopied images are partially concealed using relatively wide vertical and horizontal brushstrokes of translucent colour. In each work, the painting process is repeated, adding layers of brushstrokes for at least a year. These layers accumulate such that the photocopic grains become one layer among several layers of painted lines.

Unlike Hopkins' fabric paintings and my works, Ettinger does not follow the pre-existing image exactly nor does she trace over forms precisely. In fact, when she paints, she works in a non-conscious, unthinking yet attentive way.[108] Her willpower comes in at the beginning, when choosing which image to work with.[109] She then

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[107] Ettinger, *Notebook*, 2005–2006, Appendix A. As per the artist's wishes, I am retaining the formatting of the notes as those were written in her notebooks. The transcribed notes are juxtaposed with images of the corresponding notebook pages in Appendix A.

[108] Massumi, "Painting: The Voice of the Grain," 202–203. In a conversation with Craigie Horsfield, Ettinger describes working on her paintings while listening to patients. She describes the process as something that happens "unthinkingly." Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 44.

[109] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225.

responds to the photocopied image in a "thinking-feeling" way "arising from the material dynamic of the painting process," her hand initially guided by the grains she encounters.[110] What happens, she says, is not her choice and she often does not know why things happen.[111] She clarifies, however, that for her "it's not about perception. It's about connecting."[112] In fact, Ettinger redefines the word "observation." She writes,

> Painting that observes margins by the inverse of concept. To observe (lehitbonen) in Hebrew comes neither from gaze nor visible, but from comprehension and reason (bina and tvuna). It indicates an inner process. You observe through the mind and through reflection; observation is interpretation. The very perception is change, like comprehension, like conception. The limits of the conceivable are each time transgressed anew. Metramorphosis.[113]

Thus, for Ettinger, observation is primarily an inner process. By observing the grains on the photocopies, Ettinger connects inside and outside. Of course, in several works, there is a sense of visually following the photocopied image in that the paint marks are mostly placed on and around the figures. It is these works I focus on.[114]

One of the images Ettinger consistently returns to is a photograph documenting a massacre that took place at the Jewish ghetto of Mizocz in the Ukraine on October 14, 1942. Following an uprising against the Nazis, the ghetto inhabitants were taken to a ravine and shot. The photograph Ettinger works with depicts a group of women and children standing in line awaiting execution.[115] This image forms the starting point for several works belonging to the *Eurydice* series (1992–2007).[116]

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[110] Ibid., 223. Or, as Pollock puts it, it is a sensual rather than visual response. Pollock, "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma," 864.

[111] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225; Bracha L. Ettinger, email to author, June 18, 2013.

[112] Quoted in Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 222.

[113] Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 27.

[114] I focus on two paintings here, *Eurydice*, No. 17 and 23, but other examples include *Eurydice*, No. 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 20. As Pollock writes, Ettinger's brushstrokes do not, in general, demarcate figures or objects. Sometimes, however, they do bring forth aspects of the photocopied image. Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 115.

[115] Pollock, "From Painting to Painting," 204.

[116] As Pollock notes, Ettinger knew this photo as a child and later re-encountered it in a museum and a film. Pollock, "Gleaning in History," 283. The ethical implications of working with these types of images as well as looking at these images are discussed by

In *Eurydice*, No. 17 (1994–1996), Ettinger painted over a photocopied, and, thus, degraded copy of the photograph using mostly black, red, blue and purple paint. Purple, one of Ettinger's "grief colours," appears in a range of tones, from very dark—almost black—to very light.[117] She appears to have applied and then wiped away red-purple paint from some parts of the image, giving them a faint tint. Elsewhere, she applied short horizontal lines, emphasising parts of the image: the women's heads and hair, one of the women's eyes, and what appears to be the outline around a woman's shoulders. Looking at the painting from afar, the viewer can see the painted parts more clearly while the rest of the photocopic grains fade away in varying degrees.

A close viewing of the painting reveals more of the artist's actions. Using a very fine brush, she laid on the image several layers of short and thin horizontal paint lines or colourlines.[118] The horizontal lines appear to have been applied slowly and with care. They resonate with the trace-forms since they roughly follow parts of the photocopied image. They also follow the grains of the photocopied image. The grains deposited on the paper through the interrupted photocopying are arranged as a grid, forming broken yet perceptible horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines. In a sense, Ettinger's brushstrokes connect these leftover grains that have lost their lines by offering them new lines—the artist's brushstrokes become "line-rays, strings drawn between grains."[119] The new lines partially reconstruct the degraded image and partially transform it into a different image.

There is a woman in the photograph who faces the viewer. Her eyes have been painted over with layers of lines, turning them into dark holes. Ettinger also seems to have passed her brush over the leftovers of the mouth, drawing four black horizontal

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Pollock in several texts, such as "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma" and *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 120–121.

[117] Pollock calls the colours Ettinger uses "grief colours." Pollock, "Nichsapha," 66. Purple, specifically, is the colour of mourning according to Goethe's colour theory. Pollock, "From Painting to Painting," 208. Buci-Glucksmann also points out that purple "is the colour of the ambivalence death-life in numerous cultures" while red, another colour Ettinger works with, "is the colour par excellence, a sign of energy, a breath and a light, symbolising all at the same time, blood, Eros, and life." Buci-Glucksmann, "Eurydice and her Doubles," 89.

[118] In the essay, "Colourline Painting by Bracha L. Ettinger," Sofie Van Loo calls Ettinger's painted lines colourlines as they couple drawing (line) with colour.

[119] Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 34.

Image 4.24:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Eurydice*, No. 17, 1994–1996
               Oil, xerography with photocopic dust, pigment and ashes on paper mounted on
               canvas, 52 x 26 cm
               Images published in Lichtenberg Ettinger, *Artworking 1985–1999*, 110; Ettinger,
               *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the
               Freudian Space of Memory and Migration.*
               Images courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

lines over parts of four broken photocopic grain lines. The brush appears to have

touched the surface very lightly, allowing the paint to catch onto the texture of the

paper, leaving essentially paint grains on the surface. The paint grains connect with

the photocopic grains, remaking the mouth. It could be that I am mistaken, however.

It could be that the lines I see where the mouth once was, are leftover photocopic

traces. Perhaps the grains smudged as the paper was pulled out of the photocopier. Looking at a magnified reproduction of the painting at this moment does not help. The lines could be painted or they could be photocopied. This is precisely the border that begins to shift the more the viewer looks at the painting. Painted lines and photocopic grains commingle, approaching each other or becoming-other in some parts, such that it becomes challenging to determine where the painting ends and where the photocopy begins. In other parts, painted lines and photocopic traces maintain their distance, allowing their differences to emerge when viewed closely.

Even though, from some distance away, parts of the figures appear more clearly—because of Ettinger's added brushstrokes that create dark, concentrated areas of layered colourlines—on closer observation, the figures begin to vibrate and dissolve. Lines and grains escape each figure and drift outwards, turning the figure's edges into fuzzy, unstable zones. These fugitive marks create localised "vibratory movement" that is "tightly wound between the dark of the figural contours and a fuzziness clouding them."[120] The artist's brushstrokes simultaneously attempt to recover *and* dissolve trace-forms by connecting them with other trace-forms and grains.[121]

In *Eurydice*, No. 23 (1994–1998), Ettinger worked with a slightly different part of the same image. The painting over the figures is much more extensive than in *Eurydice*, No. 17. Again, she has laid down layers of colourlines that partially intermingle with each other and with the photocopic grains. In some parts, it is possible, after close observation, to begin to differentiate the layers while in other parts, where dark areas of colourlines bleed into dark areas of accumulated photocopic grains, it is very difficult to pull them apart. As Pollock writes, the artist's brushstrokes overlay, resonate *and* interweave with the photocopic grains.[122]

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[120] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 226.

[121] Lone Bertelsen argues that knowing the exact source of the images is not important. After all, the images may not be clear at all. She argues that what is clear is that the works do not belong in the Oedipal symbolic structure as "they have no means of symbolic or subjective *expression* in phallic signifying regimes." Bertelsen, "Matrixial Refrains," 135. My analysis here of the relationship between mark and surface in Ettinger's work is in line with Bertelsen's argument.

[122] Pollock, *One Painting Opens Onto the Many*, 1.
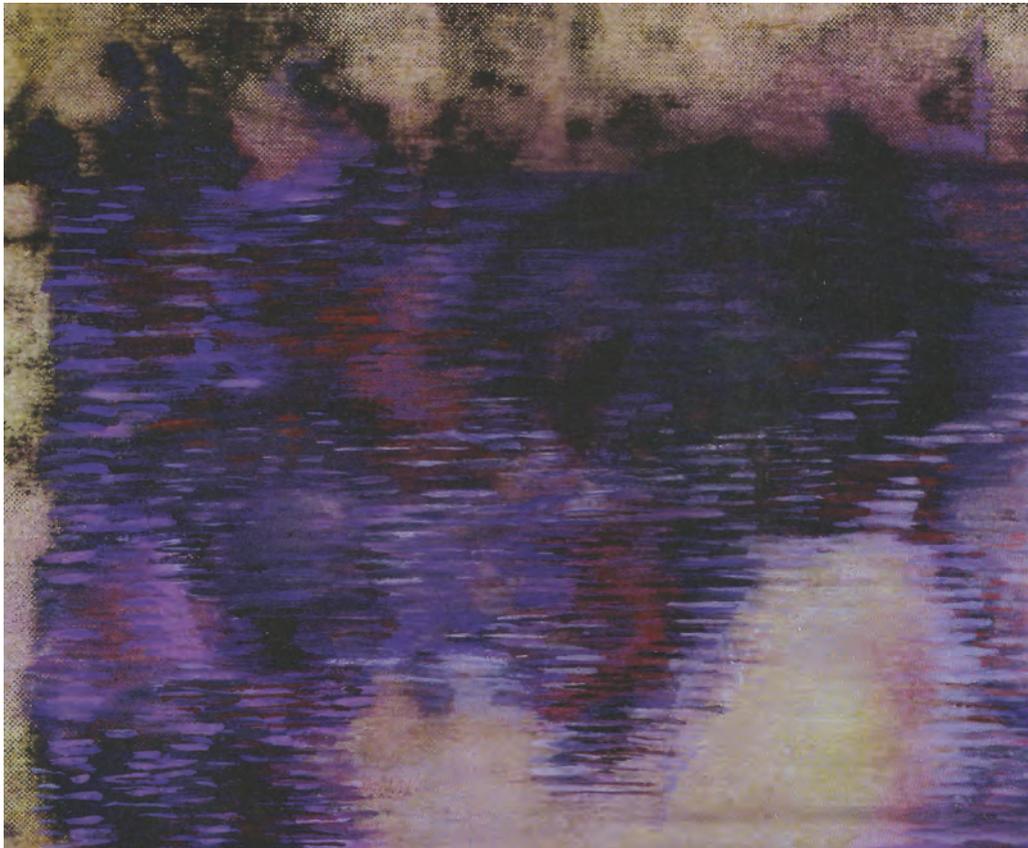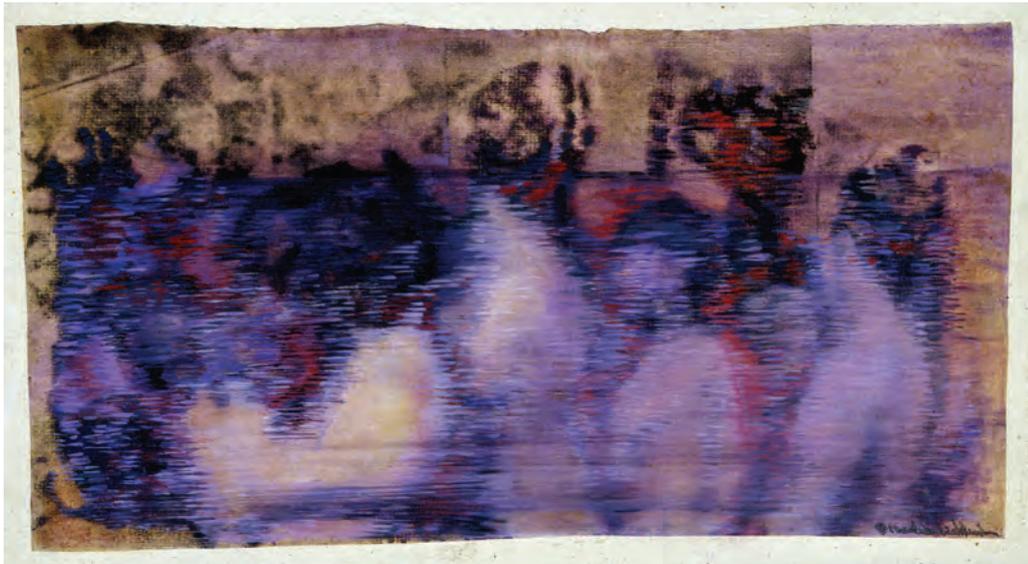
Image 4.25:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Eurydice*, No. 23, 1994–1998
Oil, xerography with photocopic dust, pigment and ashes on paper mounted on canvas, 47.5 x 25 cm
Images published in *Art as Compassion: Bracha L. Ettinger*, 90–91.
Images courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

As in *Eurydice*, No. 17, painted lines escape the confines of each figure, spilling over its edges. It is as if the painted lines cannot stand still[123]—they drift between trace-forms, transgressing borders and outlines; they flicker, pulse, and vibrate, forming an engulfing mist of purple. Thus, the trace-figures appear "bathed in a veil of colour created by the pulsing repetition of tiny horizontal paint-laden brush strokes that weave an incomplete coloured membrane."[124] The trace-figures are dissolving before the viewer's eyes. Drawn by the vibrating colourlines, they leak into each other and into the background. Or, perhaps they are forming before the viewer's eyes, pulling themselves together from the enveloping mist of grains, strokes and colours. They become apparitions, in the process of both appearing and disappearing.[125]

Ettinger's process of painting these works resonates with the process of making of the photocopied image. She makes her paintings "like" a photocopier.[126] Ettinger describes her process thus: "I am 'scanning' the page like a machine, tracing, erasing, imprinting, dispersing photocopic dust, smearing and spreading pigments and ashes, connecting a cord and separating some grains."[127] The short painted lines resemble the action of a scanner that moves horizontally across an image, copying it line by line.[128] Ettinger moves horizontally across the image but instead of copying she

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[123] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225.

[124] Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 14.

[125] Ettinger uses the term "apparition" in her notes in relation to painting. Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 95, 111. Moreover, both Pollock and Lyotard have written about Ettinger's work in terms of apparitions. Pollock, for example, has described the photocopied image Ettinger works with as a "becoming-fading apparition," an apparition suspended between appearing and disappearing, yet materialised in photocopic dust. Pollock, "From Painting to Painting," 202. For Lyotard, apparition is "appearance struck with the sign of its disparition [disappearance, absence, extinction]." Lyotard, "Scriptures," 102.

[126] Buci-Glucksmann, "Eurydice and her Doubles," 73.

[127] Ettinger, "A Coil Withdraws Inside a Coil," 67.

[128] This has been pointed out by both Griselda Pollock and Rosi Huhn. According to Pollock, Ettinger's hand movements and "their repeating 'blind' passage across the already trace-inhabited surfaces" echo "the machinic operations of contemporary forms of mechanical reproduction." Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration,* 22. Specifically, Pollock gives an account of the photocopying process as light-based and blind. Ibid.*,* 19–20. Rosi Huhn compares Ettinger's horizontal brushstrokes with "rays, frequencies, or the image interferences that dominate technology today (screens, scanners, x-rays, ultrasound)." Huhn, "Traumanatomy,"

touches or strokes it repeatedly and lightly using a small brush. Moreover, her tiny horizontal brushstrokes resonate with the photocopic grains. As Massumi astutely puts it, "the artist paints with the grain."[129] Just like the photocopied image is composed from and dissolves into several grains of dust, the painted veil is composed from and dissolves into several lines of paint. Massumi continues:

> A more flowing, paint-graininess meets semi-set toner grain. The meeting is variegated by its support, textured paper. . . . Machinic paint-brushing takes over where the copy machine left off.[130]

Ettinger's brushstrokes not only resonate with the grainy structure of the photocopied image but they also resonate with the structure of the unevenly textured paper (or of the canvas behind the paper). The grain she paints with may, thus, have multiple meanings:

> Touch the grain of the canvas. Touch the grain of the skin and with the grain of the skin touch the grain of the body. Touching the grain of the paper is like touching the non-face with the grain of the skin.[131]

A double movement of copying and erasing or remaking and covering emerges in Ettinger's work, linking it with the other works discussed in this chapter and with the concept of the *retrait*. This double movement is initiated right from the start, with the photocopying process. Ettinger explains: "I chose photographic documents which I photocopy with a machine which I have broken and which does not fix the image completely; in this way I interfere with the image by erasing it at the same time as I copy it."[132] This simultaneous erasure and copying continues with the painted colourlines that sometimes attempt to re-cover the almost lost image, which is both partially remade and partially concealed. In her notebooks, Ettinger has written:

> Reworking which is also effacement. Creating the trace is also to erase it; erasing the trace is also to make it appear. The instant of confirmation is the

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236. Huhn also points out that the degree of definition of screen images used to be measured in horizontal lines. Ibid., 238n30.

[129] Massumi, "Painting: The Voice of the Grain," 202.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 14.

[132] Quoted in Ducker, *Translating the Matrix*, 11.

instant of its corrosion. That which arises from me to meet all this; and that
which arises from all of this to meet me.[133]

Effacement and repetition, thus, proceed together. The layers of colourlines loosely
repeat the photocopic grains and each other—a "repetition-with-a-difference" through
which "traces are carried but nothing really repeats itself."[134]

At the same time, the colourlines and photocopic grains withdraw into each
other. The overlay, resonance, and interweave between painted lines and photocopic
grains leads, in some cases, to partial confusion between the two. This does not mean
that the various layers collapse into each other but rather that their edges are porous
and unstable, much like the edges of the trace-forms, allowing them at times to seep
into each other—a metramorphic process.[135] Thus, the strict differentiation between
paint and support is refuted and painted colourlines and photocopic traces co-inhabit
a shared space.[136]

Similar to the fabric paintings by Louise Hopkins, Ettinger works on an
image—the unfinished photocopy—that is in a process of disappearing (or appearing).
Unlike Hopkins' paintings, however, Ettinger's do not recover much. In the case of
Hopkins, the flower is recreated in detail, usually in more detail than the original.[137] In
Ettinger's case, the figures remain elusive. Instead of an exact remaking, the paintings
suggest an enveloping that surrounds the figures in layers of paint while sometimes

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[133] Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 34.

[134] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 133; Ettinger, *Notebook*, 29.6.05–15.8.05.

[135] As discussed in chapter 1, metramorphosis refers to processes of change and exchange that do not involve fusion, replacement or displacement of past entities. Rather, the entities participating in the metramorphosis, transgress their borderlines and transform each other asymmetrically through a shared borderspace. In the works by Ettinger discussed here, the layers of paint do not replace or erase the photocopic layer and neither do they merge with it completely. Instead, the layers seep into each other and coexist on the same surface.

[136] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 25. The coexistence of Ettinger's painted marks and the mechanically produced photocopy has been addressed by Pollock and Huhn. Huhn writes: "Hand and machine become equal vehicles of reproduction and innovation, blurring the borderline between original and copy." Huhn, "Moving Omissions," 7. Pollock addresses the difference between the marks: "The icon of commodity culture, and the signature artistic gesture that has traditionally been reified as the authentically self-affirming opposite of the commodity, collide to explode the claims of both." Pollock, "Gleaning in History," 278.

[137] Louise Hopkins, email to author, January 23, 2015. Hopkins also noted that she probably uses a much smaller brush than the person who made the original image.

emphasising some of their features, such as the outlines of their bodies. In fact, through the interweave between the layers of paint and photocopic grains, new images are "born for the first time."[138] In this metramorphic process, the photocopy is transformed rather than recovered:

> the photocopy doesn't narrate anything
> and neither represents anything.
> It is the witness that
> disappears gradually,
> that which painting becomes. Even the witness
> cannot remain "pure"
> witness. In metramorphosis
> with the painter at work
> (le peintural)
> the witness co-emerges
> transformed, there and through this.
> Painting with the figures
> doesn't indicate figurative painting.[139]

Ettinger assumes the role of witness to the disappearing traces, or rather wit(h)ness—being with and witnessing the apparitions.[140] The wit(h)nessing occurs through the repeated action of applying colourlines over the photocopy such that the process of witnessing "achieves some kind of symbolisation through tracing . . . passionately."[141]

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[138] Ettinger, *Notebook*, 2005–2006, Appendix A.

[139] Ettinger, *Notebook*, 1996–1997, Appendix A. This reluctance or inability perhaps to recover the image is directly related to the types of images Ettinger works with. These are images that are difficult to view. On the one hand, what they depict may be literally difficult to look at. On the other hand, viewing them turns us into voyeurs whose gaze "kills" the women a second time. Huhn, "Traumanatomy," 236. Ettinger's repeated brushstrokes and layers of colour protect the women from this second death and offer "*material* resistance" to the mastering gaze enacted by the photograph. Pollock, "Abandoned at the Mouth of Hell," 145. This makes us, as viewers, not "voyeurs of the suffering of the other" but rather "gleaners of its [the painting's] *cendres juives* [living ashes]." Ibid. 150. Moreover, Ettinger's approach may relate to the limits of representation in general and, more specifically, to the impossibility of representing certain events. According to Judith Butler, the images Ettinger works with can only "become available to us precisely as what is broken." Butler, "Bracha's Eurydice," x. Jacques Derrida's discussion of the impossibility, and perhaps inapplicability, of representing what has been witnessed provides another lens through which to view Ettinger's paintings. Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 104.

[140] Wit(h)nessing involves becoming a participatory witness, witnessing-together or witnessing and being-with. Ettinger, "Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing," 91. This term is discussed by Johnson in "Nomad-Words," 232–234.

[141] Le Nouëne, "Le Cabinet de Bracha," 221.

In the end, Ettinger's Eurydice remains in a state of perpetual appearing/disappearing, "a shade who exists between life and death, a figure of loss and love."[142] What the paintings attend to is the appearance of the disappearance, or the disappearance of the appearance.[143] This resonates with the double movement of the *retrait*: repetition and withdrawal. The figures are partially remade and partially concealed, hovering in a mist of purple, and mark and surface resonate with each other and interweave into each other, becoming inextricable.

Image 4.26:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Eurydice*, No. 9, 1994–1996
Oil, xerography with photocopic dust, pigment and ashes on paper mounted on canvas, 26 x 32 cm
Image published in Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, *Artworking 1985–1999*, 105.
Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

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[142] Buci-Glucksmann, "Eurydice's Becoming-World," 227. In the Greek myth, Eurydice was the wife of the poet and musician Orpheus. After she was killed, Orpheus travelled to the underworld to retrieve her. His music enchanted the god of the underworld, Hades, and Persephone, who agreed to let him take Eurydice back on one condition: he must not look at her until after they left the underworld. On their ascend, Orpheus could not control himself and turned back to look at Eurydice, who was following him. The moment of viewing, thus, coincided with the moment of her loss as she vanished into the underworld. Papahatzis, "Orfeas," 294, 297–299. As Pollock writes, "his backward glance 'kills' her a second time." Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 12. Pollock suggests that this legend acts as an allegory for woman in phallocentric culture, and specifically the m/Other who must be abjected. She is the necessary loss for (masculine) subjectivity. Pollock, "Abandoned at the Mouth of Hell," 163–164. According to Massumi, it is precisely the moment of appearance/disappearance of Eurydice that is "crystallised on the surface of Ettinger's painting." Massumi, "Painting: The Voice of the Grain," 207.

[143] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225.

IN-BETWEEN TRACES:
BORDERLINKING AND BORDERTIMING

Ettinger's work opens up the dimension of time, in addition to space, when thinking about the relationship between mark and surface. The artist works on photocopies of photographs which record and preserve events belonging to a shared history.[144] She paints with traces of people whose appearance was captured via photography and then partially transferred to photocopies. In fact, Ettinger works with traces on multiple levels: traces of others, traces of past events, and photocopic traces of photographs/documents.[145]

The overlay, resonance and interweaving of the layers in her work, both photocopic and paint layers, enacts a borderlinking through time, a reaching out to a past moment and to the material traces of those who came before, "the traces of lost generations."[146] Time in the matrixial borderspace is an elusive bordertime. This is not linear or historical time but rather the transgression of instances of time, or the instantiation of thresholds, and the coexistence of "accumulated almost-repetitions."[147] Various moments in time "intermingle in a shared resonance chamber."[148] In Ettinger's paintings, traces from the past (the photographed and then photocopied figures) mingle with the painted traces of the artist's brush. As these traces coexist and interweave, so too do the different moments in time—the past persists in the present as trace and the present looks at/after the past.[149] This looking

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[144] Photographs, as Roland Barthes argues, result in a new space-time category. They are "immediately spatial and anteriorly temporal," leading to "a consciousness of the thing's *having-been-there*." Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," 33.

[145] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 135.

[146] Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 18.

[147] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 24. The challenge matrixial bordertime poses to linear and historical time is discussed by Nigianni in "The Matrixial Feminine or a Case of Metempsychosis."

[148] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 24.

[149] I am paraphrasing both Nigianni and Pollock. Nigianni has written that "Matrixial time as border-time is . . . a past insisting in the present as a trace, a trace that cannot be represented without fading out." Nigianni, "The Matrixial Feminine or a Case of Metempsychosis," 2. Pollock has written that in Ettinger's work "coming after, in time, means, in effect, always walking behind those who come before, looking after/at them, looking towards what they may be looking for, or looking towards, which may be immeasurable loss, and death." Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 223.

after, or observing in Derrida's sense, occurs through the almost-repetition or almost-tracing of the photocopic grains by the colourlines.

Ettinger conceptualises this interweaving of temporalities as besidedness, "a 'before' as beside."[150] As Pollock writes, "what comes 'after' dwells beside, what was 'before' dwells beside, but as already transformed by one another and in/as the traces in the new."[151] When looking at the paintings, oppositions pertaining to the relationship between surface and mark, such as under/over and before/after, founder. Instead, there is a continuous beside, a "co-inhabited time-space."[152] This besidedness suggests that "past and present are not hierarchical in their contribution to the formation of meaning."[153] Looked at differently, it suggests that mark and surface—the artist's painted mark and the pre-existing readymade surface preserving the trace of the other—are not hierarchical in their contribution to meaning. Meaning emerges through their besidedness, connections, and interweave.[154]

The other works discussed in this chapter, by Louise Hopkins and by myself, also respond to surfaces and marks that pre-exist their encounter with the artist. They may not be photographic and, thus, do not have the same relationship to history as Ettinger's work, but they have been made at some point in the past, prior to their meeting with the artist's marking tool. The marks on the surfaces, especially, have been deposited there by a person or process that came before the artist.

The careful tracing of the pre-existing marks by the artists' marks, in Hopkins' and in my own works, suggests both a partial redoing and undoing of the past (of the

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[150] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 106.

[151] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 22.

[152] Ibid., 103.

[153] Ferris, Introduction to *Matrix-Borderlines*, 3.

[154] The concept of besidedness is particularly valuable and productive and can be understood in several different ways and on a number of levels. For Ettinger, it relates to the matrixial stratum of subjectivisation which comes before yet exists beside and beyond the phallic stratum. Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 106–107. It also relates to our relationship with history, and specifically with traumatic events. In Ettinger's case, the event she keeps returning to is the Holocaust, the trauma of which can be transgenerationally transmitted. Pollock, Introduction to *After-Affects | After-Images*, 9–11. As Pollock argues, this horrific event "happened but it is not in the past." Rather, it remains beside the present moment—"a moment that is both 'after history,' and is yet a continuous 'beside' history." Pollock, "Gleaning in History," 274. Thus, besidedness relates to both psychic time and historical time. I return to this concept in chapter 6 to discuss the relationship between specific works and space.

surface)—a re-covering action that involves temporal as much as spatial dimensions. Works that tend towards visual concealment suggest more of an undoing, a partial absenting. In *Songsheet 3 (ii) you're nobody 'til somebody loves you,* the page is partially returned to a "blank" state, before any information was printed on it. In *Minor Fix*, the scratches are partially undone by being covered by strips of wood-patterned adhesive vinyl. Works that tend towards remaking, such as Hopkins' fabric paintings and my work *Wall Drawing I*, suggest a repetition of a past action—the remaking of the flowers, which implies a redesigning of the fabric, and the remaking of someone else's paint stains. This is a partial re-presenting, as in making present again. Since partial concealment and remaking coexist in the works, partial absenting and presenting also coexist.

The overlay of marks may lead to partial confusion in time. Usually, in painting and drawing the artist's marks are added onto a surface. There is a linear sense of before and after—before the encounter with the artist the surface was unmarked and after its encounter with the artist it became marked. In the works discussed here, as marks are partially con-fused, past and present may also be con-fused. It may not be immediately clear what came first and what came second. Through the undoing/redoing of a pre-existing mark, a link between past and present emerges, creating something akin to bordertime or besidedness. In actuality, the artists' marks may exist over the surface and may come after a pre-existing mark, but they function as spatial and temporal *retraits*—the re-covering of marks and redoing/undoing of past actions leads to marks and moments partially commingling and withdrawing into each other.

In the case of my works, as well as Hopkins' songsheet works, as marks and moments are confused, the time of making is partially eclipsed. The artist's marks are initially taken to be part of the surface, for example, old paint stains on a studio wall. Thus, they assume the character of the "already there." They become part of the surface's appearance rather than something that was subsequently added to the surface. Moreover, in works where the artist's marks simulate light and shadow, the marks appear to be occurring at the moment of viewing. Instead of being seen as something that was constructed by the artist in a past moment, they may appear to be

natural shadows and highlights taking place in the present. The linearity of time is disrupted and it is not clear what was subsequently added by the artist on a surface and at which moment that addition took place, or even if it took place at all. Thus, the in-between of mark and surface has both spatial and temporal dimensions and involves challenging a spatial overlay as well as a linear ordering.[155]

THE MARK AS INDEXICAL

So far I have juxtaposed a mode of marking that involves tracing over pre-existing marks with drawing from observation using Derrida's essay *Memoirs of the Blind*. This has allowed me to discuss aspects specific to the process of tracing over a mark, aspects that relate to my use of this process in order to approach the surface. There is, however, another way of conceptualising tracing, a way which has been peering through my words so far and which brings the process of signification into my discussion of marking: tracing as indexical. My shifting to the term "index" is not related to substitution or opposition—I am not substituting "index" for "*retrait*" or opposing the two terms. Rather, I attempt to distil, and rethink from a slightly different angle, the specificities of the process of tracing, the functions of the resulting mark, and the particularities of the relationship between mark and surface.

When discussing *Memoirs of the Blind*, I wrote that Derrida briefly touches on Pliny's story of the origin of drawing. I criticised Derrida's text for only considering the woman's distance from the man, whose shadow she traces, and for ignoring the closeness between the woman and the actual shadow as well as the specific action of tracing around the shadow. In fact, Derrida has referred to Pliny's story before, in a much earlier text, and has written about it in more promising terms. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida writes:

> The movement of the magic wand [the marking tool the woman is using] that traces with so much pleasure does not fall outside of the body. Unlike the

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[155] The relationship between spatial and temporal aspects of marking was brought to my attention by Louise Hopkins during our discussion. She said: "I often see figure/ground as talking about linear time and, in many ways, by removing that figure/ground relationship then time takes on a different form." Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

spoken or written sign, it does not cut itself off from the desiring body of the person who traces or from the immediately perceived image of the other. It is of course still an image which is traced at the tip of the wand, but an image that is not completely separated from the person it represents; what the drawing draws is almost present in person in his shadow. The distance from the shadow or from the wand is almost nothing. She who traces, holding, handling, now, the wand, is very close to touching what is very close to being the other itself, close by a minute difference; that small difference—visibility, spacing, death—is undoubtedly the origin of the sign and the breaking of immediacy; but it is in reducing it as much as possible that one marks the contours of signification.[156]

Here Derrida does indeed notice the physical closeness between the woman's body and the shadow. He also points out that when tracing, the drawn mark's "distance from the shadow or from the wand is almost nothing." The "space of blindness" between "model" and "copy," as conceptualised in *Memoirs of the Blind*, is here minimised.[157] As the woman draws, she almost touches the shadow, since the "magic wand" she holds "does not fall outside of the body." Furthermore, by almost touching the shadow, she almost touches the man himself since the shadow "is very close to being the other." In fact, the shadow is "an image that is not completely separated from the person it represents; what the drawing draws is almost present in person in his shadow." What Derrida alludes to here, is a relationship between model and "copy," or object and signifier, that is almost physical or continuous.

This physical contact or continuity points to the operations of the index. An index is a type of sign identified by Charles Sanders Peirce as referring "to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object."[158] What makes the index a sign is "the actual modification of it by the Object."[159] In other words, an index refers to its object not through likeness, like an icon, or through convention or law, like a symbol, but through existential or indicative relations, what Peirce calls dynamical

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[156] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 234.

[157] In *Memoirs of the Blind*, as I have argued earlier, this minimisation of distance due to the specificity of tracing over the model is subsumed under drawing from observation and memory.

[158] Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce 2*, 143.

[159] Ibid.

connections.[160] The action of an index "depends upon association by contiguity" and that includes direct contact, sequential occurrence, or proximity (spatial and contextual).[161] An index may have a direct physical connection with its object, as in the example of footprints or of a weathercock turning because of the wind that physically causes it to turn, or it may indicate its object, like a demonstrative or relative pronoun or a pointing finger which "forces the attention to the particular object intended without describing it."[162]

In the case of Pliny's story, the shadow cast on the wall has indexical qualities since it is actually caused by the presence of the man's body and its interaction with the light conditions in the space. It also points back to him—the presence of the shadow means that he is there. The woman traces around this indexical sign, touching the shadow with her marking tool and, by association, almost touching the man himself, as Derrida points out. In so far as her marks are in physical contact with the shadow, which guides their placement and shape, they can be seen as having an indexical quality, even if they are not directly caused by the shadow.[163] Once the shadow disappears, what will be left on the wall will be an outline that potentially looks like a person's silhouette. Thus, the iconic qualities of the drawing may eventually take precedence over its indexical qualities.[164] While shadow and drawing

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[160] Ibid., 170.

[161] Ibid., 172.

[162] Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce 1*, 195.

[163] In her discussion of Marcel Duchamp's work *Tu m'* (1918), Rosalind Krauss refers to the depicted shadows of readymades as indexical traces, even though they are not actual shadows. Krauss, "Notes on the Index," 70. Likewise, Richard Shiff calls the tracing of a shadow by a marking tool "just as indexical as the tracing of the shadow by the sun." This is so because the marking tool "actually touches the contour of the shadow as it renders its image." Shiff, "On Criticism Handling History," 71–72.

[164] As Shiff notes, the boundaries separating iconic drawing and indexical tracing are not always clear. Shiff, "On Criticism Handling History," 85n11. In the case of the traced shadow, the resulting image may have both iconic and indexical qualities. This line of thinking depends on viewing Peirce's categories of signs not as strict categories but as qualities or functions that may coexist in a sign. This is something Peirce discusses in several of his papers. Referring specifically to the indexical quality he writes, "it would be difficult if not impossible, to instance an absolutely pure index, or to find any sign absolutely devoid of the indexical quality." Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* 2, 172. Moreover, he discusses paintings as having indexical qualities. He argues that a painted portrait is not a pure icon because the viewer is "greatly influenced by knowing that it is an *effect*, through the artist, caused by the original's appearance." Ibid., 51. Elsewhere, he writes that "the connection here [between painted portrait and person painted] is an indirect one. The appearance of

are in contact, however, it is the operation of the index that assigns meaning to her marks—they are what they are and where they are because of the pre-existing shadow which has indirectly brought them into being (causing the woman to pick up her marking tool and start to draw) and which really affects them. As Michael Newman writes, "she seeks to mark the shadow in its singularity and at its place" rather than make a representation of it elsewhere.[165] Moreover, her marks point right back to the shadow they delineate, acting, as Newman suggests, "like a linguistic index: '*That* is his shadow'."[166]

Similarly, the works discussed in this chapter involve tracing around and over a previous mark or image on the surface rather than making a representation of it somewhere else. The artist's marks have a direct relationship to the pre-existing marks and features of each surface, which act as their models or referents. In the case of the shadow pieces, I trace around the shadows formed on the paper while working on it as well as follow the texture of the handmade paper, which guides the direction of my marks within each shadow. The drawn marks, thus, refer to both the shadows and the surface's texture. In another work, *Wrinklegrams II* (2012–present), the pre-existing mark involves the wrinkles formed on sheets of paper that have been crumpled up. To make these works, I used found crumpled lined paper or I crumpled up sheets of paper in my hands.[167] Then, the paper was unfolded carefully without, however, completely

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the person made a certain impression upon the painter's mind and that acted to cause the painter to make such a picture as he did do so that the appearance of the portrait is really an effect of the appearance of the person for whom it was intended. The one caused the other through the medium of the painter's mind." Peirce, *Peirce on Signs*, 141–142. In other words, the portrait is still caused by an actual object and still bears an existential connection to it even if that connection is indirect. This point is discussed in detail in Martin Lefebvre, "The Art of Pointing," 230–232, 238–239. Another useful example of the coexistence of sign functions is provided by Michael Leja who argues that Jackson Pollock's paint drips can be seen as simultaneously indexical (pointing to his gestures), symbolic (taking on meaning within the specific field of painting), and iconic (becoming recognisable as a Pollock painting). Leja, "Peirce, Visuality, and Art," 117–119.

[165] Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," 93.

[166] Ibid., 94.

[167] This lined paper was collected from recycling bins at schools where I taught. I also bought pads of A4 lined paper. The decision to use this kind of paper was made right before my trip to the US in the summer of 2010 for two artist residencies. The locations of the two residencies were quite remote and it would not be easy finding art materials close by. Writing paper, on the other hand, would be easy to find at any bookstore or even grocery store. Moreover, pads of A4 lined paper were convenient to

straightening it out. I subsequently painted white lines over all the wrinkles.[168] Again, there is a direct relationship between my mark and the crumpled paper. The marks refer to the action of crumpling up the paper by re-marking that action, wrinkle for wrinkle. I come to realise the full effect of my previous action on the paper by tracing over the resulting marks, touching them, confirming them, recalling them or perhaps erasing them.[169]

Image 4.27:   *Wrinklegrams II*, 2012–2013
Acrylic on lined paper, 21 x 29.7 cm each

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transport in my backpack or suitcase. After I returned to Cyprus and went back to teaching, I started collecting sheets of lined paper from the recycling bins of the schools. Thus, the use of this kind of paper depended on my specific working conditions.

[168] Initially, the colour of the painted lines echoed the colour of the existing lines on the paper—a light purple-grey colour. The painted lines were also deliberately kept very fine and flat, like the ones already printed on the paper. This was not always possible. At times, the painted lines would become thicker due to the paint and the difficulty of painting on a crumpled piece of paper. Since the surface used was not flat, I had to be careful not to flatten it out completely by resting my hand on it for long. Given this situation, it was not always possible to have full control over the painting process. Thus, the visual correspondence between the painted and printed lines was not always sustained. Eventually, given the problems encountered, I turned to white paint—instead of trying to match the existing lines, the new objective was to match the white colour of the actual paper. I also made a series of wrinkle drawings on crumpled up index cards using a blue pencil that resembled the blue lines on the cards.

[169] The white paint looks like correction fluid. By going over the wrinkles with white lines it seems as if, conceptually, I am erasing them.

Image 4.28:   *Wrinklegrams II* (detail), 2012–2013
               Acrylic on lined paper, 21 x 29.7 cm each

In Ettinger's paintings, the issue of touching is highlighted since the artist's brush is literally touching the elusive figures of others, "brushstroking" their traces as those were imprinted on a surface, first via photography and then via (disrupted) photocopying.[170] The short and fine colourlines suggest a light touch, a caress perhaps. The accumulated lines suggest a series of touches, documenting the multiple moments when the artist's hand met the photocopy. Griselda Pollock writes that the paint marks function as "signs of attention" rather than as signs of things in the world (illusion) or as signs of the artist's subjectivity (gesture).[171] As "signs of attention," the paint marks attend to the traces, borderlinking to them and re-covering them, as well as draw the viewer's attention to those partially re-covered traces.

Thus, in all of the works discussed in the chapter there is an association by contiguity between "copy" and "model," or signifier and referent, as the artist's marking tool touches the pre-existing marks on the surface and as the deposited marks physically exist over and next to the pre-existing marks. In fact, by having the

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[170] The term "brushstroking" is used by Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225.

[171] Pollock, "Oeuvres Autistes," 17.

surface with its pre-existing marks act as the referent, the indexicality of the artist's marks is foregrounded as they are literally attached on that surface and are viewed with it. Of course touching a surface via a marking tool is something that happens anyway when drawing or painting on something. When tracing over a pre-existing mark, however, it is the surface that, as referent, guides the hand of the artist, positioning it over that mark.[172] Moreover, it is the pre-existing marks and features of the surface that bring the artist's marks into existence (through the artist's actions). The location, shapes and/or colours of the artist's marks follow what is already there, to varying degrees in each work. The result is not strictly speaking, or not only, an iconic representation in the sense that the drawn, painted or collaged marks do not look simply like shadows, wrinkles, printed flowers or human figures. Rather, the artist's marks touch and repeat a previous mark on which they depend existentially and whose presence they indicate through following and proximity.

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THE LOGICS OF THE INDEX:
FROM PICTORIAL TO PHOTOGRAPHIC

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In her two-part essay "Notes on the Index," Rosalind Krauss discusses a photographic model for understanding the operations of the index when it comes to painting and drawing. She differentiates this from what she calls a pictorial model. The photographic model and its differentiation from the pictorial model allow for a more detailed analysis of the relationship between mark and surface in the works I have been discussing.[173]

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[172] It is tempting, given the discussion on blindness in Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind* and his comparison between the marking tool and the blind person's cane, to compare this mode of making marks, by literally touching the model with the marking tool, with a blind person that touches the face of a person to get to know them or recognise them. This might imply that this mode of marking has more to do with touch than with sight, something suggested by Loock when she writes that in Hopkins' fabric paintings—and presumably in works that utilise tracing over the model—perception is unnecessary. Loock, "Reproduction and Repression," 77. I remain hesitant to make this distinction. After all, the artist's eyes remain open while making to be able to detect the visual differences on the mostly flat surface. Also, as someone who has made this kind of work I know how the eyes begin to hurt after a while, after following the hand and the marks underneath the hand intensely for a period of time. Finally, I do not find moves that privilege one sense over another productive when it comes to thinking about making art.

[173] These texts and the photographic notion of the index were brought to my attention by Bernice Donszelmann during a discussion of my practice.

The photographic model is based on the indexical qualities of a photograph. Photographs are the result of a physical imprint—light bouncing off of an object and falling onto a light sensitive surface.[174] As such, their resemblance to their object "is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature."[175] This physical connection between photograph and object, imparts to the photograph indexical qualities.[176]

Krauss goes on to explain how this "photographic index" relates to art of the 1970s by discussing works presented at the *Rooms* exhibition at P. S. 1 in May 1976. One of the works she discusses is a series of paintings by Lucio Pozzi. Pozzi's paintings replicated the line of change separating two colours on the walls on which they were installed. The works may be seen as registering a situation in the world—the meeting of two colours on the wall.[177] Krauss writes,

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[174] The relationship between the photograph and the object photographed has of course been problematized through both darkroom and digital manipulation processes. Still, in terms of physics, photography involves a passage of light from the object to the camera, light which is redirected in various ways by the camera lens. Even digital photography starts by following the same logic—light coming from the direction of the object hitting a light-sensitive surface that instead of creating a negative on a film changes pixels on a screen. This process results in the creation of an imprint via light.

[175] Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 106. Rather than nature I would prefer to say what lies before the camera.

[176] The indexicality of photography is an issue that has been widely discussed in literature. Such writings include Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 106, Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Krauss, "Notes on the Index," parts one and two, Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 196–197, and Lefebvre, "The Art of Pointing." The indexical qualities of photographs are in addition to whatever other qualities photographs may have. For example, a photograph that looks like the object it represents also bears an iconic relationship to that object. There are also photographs that do not exactly look like the object, as in the case of a blurry photograph for instance. The various understandings of a photograph are discussed by Lefebvre, "The Art of Pointing." Moreover, there are several objections to seeing photography as indexical. Such objections are discussed in Geimer, "Image as Trace," and Elkins, *Photography Theory*. I am using the photographic logic of the index as a way to think through marking and, as such, I do not engage with critiques that deal more directly with the functions of photography. I mostly draw on Krauss' discussion, which appears to be less concerned with the ontology of photography as such than with a rethinking of the indexical operation within painting and drawing. It seems to me that her argument is not that photographs are indexical but rather that the index in painting and drawing can be understood as photographic, relating to a "photographic" registration or imprinting of the world rather than to the artist's gesture.

[177] Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 60.

> The effect of the work is that its relation to its subject is that of the index, the impression, the trace. The painting is thus a sign connected to a referent along a purely physical axis. And this indexical quality is precisely the one of photography.[178]

Krauss argues that Pozzi reduced "the abstract pictorial object to the status of a mould or impression or trace."[179] His paintings involved the transfer or imprinting of a selected part of the wall or "natural continuum."[180] They ultimately aimed to "capture the presence of the building, . . . to force it to surface into the field of the work."[181] Furthermore, she argues that Pozzi's paintings "point to the natural continuum, the way the word *this* accompanied by a pointing gesture isolates a piece of the real world and fills itself with a meaning by becoming, for that moment, the transitory label of a natural event."[182] As such, the paintings become "empty signs (like the word *this*) that are filled with meaning only when physically juxtaposed with an external referent, or object."[183]

Mary Ann Doane points out that the photographic logic of the index, as analysed by Krauss, brings together two seemingly incompatible definitions given by Peirce: the index as trace and the index as deixis.[184] Doane explains:

> As photographic trace or impression, the index seems to harbour a fullness, an excessiveness of detail that is always supplemental to meaning or intention. Yet, the index as *deixis* implies an emptiness, a hollowness that can only be filled in specific, contingent, always mutating situations.[185]

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[178] Ibid., 60, 63.

[179] Ibid., 63.

[180] Ibid., 64. The notion of continuity comes from Roland Barthes. Barthes' proposition that the photograph is a message without a code is followed by "an important corollary: the photographic message is a continuous message." Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 5. Krauss expands on this point: The real world is a continuum and what a photograph does is to isolate a piece of this continuum and transfer it to an image, which is essentially an imprint. Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 64.

[181] Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 65.

[182] Ibid., 64.

[183] Ibid.

[184] I have also done the same in the previous section, for reasons that will become clear here.

[185] Doane, "Indexicality," 2.

The photograph captures whatever is happening before the lens in the instant the button is pressed. It, thus, bears a one-to-one correspondence with the actual scene captured. It is also a "witness of an anteriority," reproducing a past moment.[186] Pozzi's paintings, understood through the photographic logic of the index as trace or imprint, capture the colour change on the walls and align themselves with that change exactly. They visually fill themselves with the wall.[187] Simultaneously, the index, as deixis this time, acts as a pointing finger and, thus, requires some distance between itself, as sign, and its object.[188] It is necessarily empty and draws attention to its object through proximity or context.[189] It is also linked to presence, to the moment of its proximity to its object.[190] Pozzi's paintings only make sense as deictic indices when placed on the wall they replicate. Their minor differentiation from the surroundings (small protrusion from the wall and flatness of the panels) provides the distance necessary for them to point to the wall. Therefore, the index as analysed by Krauss brings together these two roles as well as, paradoxically, material connection and distance, fullness and emptiness.

IMAGE CANNOT BE REPRODUCED

Image 4.29:   Lucio Pozzi, *P. S. 1 Paint*, 1976
Acrylic on wood panels
Image published in Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2,"
62.

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[186] Doane, "The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity," 136.

[187] And, as a result, are partially camouflaged within it, becoming part of the continuum, an issue Krauss does not address. This is further discussed in chapter 6.

[188] Doane, "The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity," 136.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

The works discussed in this chapter reveal a tendency to register a pre-existing situation by somehow "imprinting" it. The situation registered involves marks, images and features of a specific surface and the imprinting involves the action of tracing—marking around and over pre-existing marks. In the case of Ettinger's work, the imprinting is not exact as she does not follow the photocopic grains precisely.[191] In the case of Hopkins' work and my work, the imprinting is more exact as we trace around marks carefully and consistently (even obsessively). These works attempt to set up a one-to-one correspondence between the artist's marks and the pre-existing marks, "photographically" capturing or documenting whatever is already present on the surface. For example, the shadow drawings are attempts to capture the appearance of the surface during a specific time period. The process is, in this respect, quite photographic as the marks capture a specific moment, or series of moments since the making is not instantaneous, for future viewing.[192] Each shadow piece becomes rather like a snapshot, albeit not perfectly accurate, of the paper's appearance during the making.

Moreover, the artist's marks are literally attached onto the surface, overlaying the marks they follow and capture. If we consider them to be moulds, a term Krauss uses to describe Pozzi's paintings, then these are moulds that are forever attached to their referent.[193] The marks can be seen as empty signs, as Krauss suggests, that are filled with meaning through their physical attachment to the surface and its pre-existing features, both of which form part of the work alongside the artist's marks. The marks' meaning depends on their pointing to the surface on which they are made. The simultaneous overlay and minor differences between the artist's marks and pre-existing marks enable this pointing to occur. In a sense, the pointing is amplified in works where the relationship between artist's mark and pre-existing mark tends more

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[191] I want to emphasise again that I am focusing on paintings by Ettinger where the painted marks do in fact appear to loosely follow the photocopic grains.

[192] The story of the Corinthian woman, which combines touching with seeing, has also been interpreted as photographic since her marks capture a projection. Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 117.

[193] Of course the marks made on walls and floors, such as the site-specific floor collage at Tenderpixel, are eventually removed. It is only when attached to their referent, however, that they are presented as completed artworks.

towards partial emphasis, retrieval or capture. For example, the lines drawn through the paint stains at Stonehouse make the stains slightly more visible and also visually reveal the somewhat bumpy texture of the wall by transforming it into red lines. Looked at as indexical, these marks point to the "natural continuum": their surrounding surface and to the pre-existing stains.

Taking Krauss' analysis into account, the process of tracing can be conceptualised as allowing the physical presence of the surface to enter the field of the work. This indexical operation allows the surface (referent) *into* the mark since, on the one hand, the mark is partially determined by the surface and, on the other hand, it points, via following, to proximate features of the surface. The index allows "the matter of things" or "the facts of matter"—in this case the surface—into signification.[194] The works document all of the artist's touches and re-touches, each of which attends to and draws attention to the surface, saying "this." That is, the marks mean in relation to the specific surface. In terms of approaching the surface, that is, becoming-surface, this seems to be getting very close indeed—the artist's marks partially renounce any meaning that is not directly connected to the surface. They are made in response to it, depend on it, point to it, and can only mean *with* it. In fact, given Peirce's definition of signs, if the marks are taken as indexical signs then they actually stand *for* the surface.

I say partially renounce any meaning not connected to the surface because the marks are also connected, however subtly, to the hand that made them. The artists' marks are handmade and are never exactly the same as the pre-existing marks. As such, they are connected to the marker's body. As Derrida writes, "the magic wand that traces . . . does not fall outside of the body" of the person who traces.[195] Thus, the artist's marks can also act as an index of the artist's hand holding a marking tool and performing minute swerving movements or drawing almost straight lines or cutting uneven shapes.[196] The resulting marks form the traces of the artist's actions, pointing

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[194] Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation*, 180.

[195] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 234.

[196] The possibility that an image can display several indexical relations to various referents in the world is discussed by Lefebvre, "The Art of Pointing," 229. I address the issue of cutting and its relation to the artist's hand in the next chapter.

back to the actual making of the work.[197] Krauss calls this understanding of the index, which reached a highpoint in writings surrounding abstract expressionist painting, the pictorial model.[198] Unlike abstract expressionist painting, in the works I have been discussing the artist's marks depend on both the artist's body and pre-existing marks and features of the surface. In other words, they depend on at least two "bodies." Going back to Derrida, the movement of the marking tool is connected to both "the desiring body of the person who traces" *and* to "the immediately perceived image of the other" that is traced.[199] The artist's touches and re-touches are not only saying "this" but rather "this and that." They point in at least two directions one of which is the artist, an issue I return to in chapter 7.

Moreover, the pre-existing marks on a surface can also be seen as functioning like indices. Several of these marks, such as the scratches on the floor at Tenderpixel or the paint stains on the wall at Stonehouse, are traces of other people's actions and movements. As such, they bear a physical connection to those others and indicate their past presence in those spaces. Ettinger's work, in particular, brings this aspect of the traces of others to the fore since she works with unfinished photocopies of photographs—and, thus, traces of photographs—holding traces of human bodies.[200] Even the surfaces Hopkins works with can be seen as bearing traces of a printing process or traces of someone's design, as in the case of the fabrics. The artists' marks can, thus, be seen as indices of indices, pointing to the marks on the surface which in turn point to something other. The repetitive nature of the artists' marks, that is, the artists' marks as *re-traits*, can also apply to the functions of the marks. In a sense, the artists' painted or drawn marks repeat the indexical function of the pre-existing

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[197] Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation*, 179–180, 184.

[198] Krauss associates the pictorial model with the use of indexical signs in paintings, especially abstract expressionist paintings, as a way of establishing the presence of the artist. Paint on canvas takes on the role of the artist's trace, signifying "his" movements in space. Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 60n2; Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, 259–260, 325; Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," 25–29; Leja, "Peirce, Visuality, and Art," 117–199. A feminist critique of the conflation between painted mark and artist's body in abstract expressionism is given in Pollock, "Painting, Feminism, History" and "Killing Men and Dying Women."

[199] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 234.

[200] Given that Ettinger disrupts the photocopying process, indexicality is partially broken, as issue I turn to later in the chapter.

marks. In effect, the artist's tool touches the marks/traces that an-other process/person has left and leaves her own traces over them. Thus, the traces of the artist commingle with the traces of others, saying "this and that and the 'other'."

The works can, thus, be understood using both the pictorial and the photographic model of the index, although perhaps not at the same time. For example, from afar, the marks on the shadow drawings may appear to be shadows. As the viewer approaches, it starts becoming more apparent that the "shadows" are drawn. The pencil marks, which act as an index of the texture of the paper and as an index of the artist's hand, eventually emerge. While the combination of the artist's movement and the tool's trace fall, according to Krauss, within the pictorial logic of the index, the physical presence of the surface and its pre-existing marks fall within the photographic logic. The two logics meet where the two marks, the pre-existing and the added, meet. What I am suggesting here then is that, seen through the lens of the index, the artist's mark becomes an in-between site or meeting point of artist, marking tool, mark-making process, surface, and pre-existing mark, depending on and pointing to parts of everything—the artist's movement, the tool's trace, the surface's features, and the pre-existing mark's location, shape and colour. These "others" are connected through the mark—now understood as the trace of several others—and its proximity to the surface. I return to this issue in chapter 7.

Coming back to the specific relation between mark and surface, in chapter 1 I referred to Philip Rawson who describes the artist's mark as representing the encounter between the artist's hand and a surface.[201] The marks in the works discussed in this chapter underscore this encounter between a marking hand and a specific surface since they depend on and point to both—they are handmade yet they follow features of the surface on which they are made. In particular, they emphasise the role the surface can play in the encounter since it is allowed *into* the mark. The indexical mark approaches its referent/surface, getting very close to it indeed. Parallel processes of borderlinking and borderspacing and oscillations of distance-in-proximity are initiated between indexical mark and referent/surface, keeping the two

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[201] Rawson, *Drawing*, 59.

inextricably attached to each other yet maintaining between them a small difference. As a result, the mark/surface distinction becomes harder to sustain, both visually and conceptually, as mark and surface are no longer clearly separated.

INDEXICALITY AND ITS LIMITS

. . . In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.
Suárez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lérida, 1658

Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science"

These memories were not simple ones; each visual image was lined to muscular sensations, thermal sensations, etc. He could reconstruct all his dreams, all his half-dreams. Two or three times he had reconstructed the whole day; he never hesitated, but each reconstruction had required a whole day. . . . I suspect, however, that he was not very capable of thought. To think is to forget differences, generalise, make abstractions. In the teeming world of Funes, there were only details, almost immediate in their presence.

Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes, His Memory"

While the process of making the works is clearly related to the indexical, aspects of that process, as well as features of the resulting marks, both confirm and challenge the indexical operation. Thus, the indexical aspect of the works is limited or, conversely, the works may be suggesting or reaching towards certain limits when it comes to utilising the index as part of a process of making and thinking about art.[202]

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[202] This insight as to the limitations of indexicality was offered by Bernice Donszelmann.

The first limit has to do with the photographic logic of the index and the issue of transformation. According to Roland Barthes, a photograph does not involve a mathematical transformation from an actual scene to an image.[203] By transformation Barthes means an encoding, breaking down reality into units and turning these units into signs that are "substantially different from the object they represent."[204] A photograph can "transmit (literal) information without forming it with the help of discontinuous signs and rules of transformation."[205] Thus, the relationship between signified and signifier is that of registration or of a "quasi-identity."[206] In other words, the photograph is the "perfect *analogon*" of reality, a "*message without a code.*"[207]

Barthes contrasts photography with drawing, which is a coded message. Drawing involves transforming an object or scene into lines or other kinds of marks and it also involves selecting what to reproduce since a drawing does not reproduce everything (and, possibly, *cannot* reproduce everything about the original *trait*, as Derrida suggests).[208] In contrast to drawing and painting, the photograph does reproduce everything placed before the camera lens. According to Krauss, the photograph could be called "sub- or pre-symbolic, ceding the language of art back to the imposition of things."[209]

The works here follow the photographic logic but up to a point. As discussed earlier, the second mark is not exactly the same as the first mark. In some cases the marks cannot really be the same—how do you make a shadow or a highlight? Some encoding is necessary for these marks to be converted into my marks. I can capture the approximate shapes and locations of the first marks but I have to transform them to materials and processes I can work with. In other cases, the marks could be the same, as in the example of the paint stains at Stonehouse. Difference, however, would then

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[203] Although it does involve reduction in terms of proportion, perspective and colour as well as manipulation in terms of cropping and flattening. Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 5; Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," 25.

[204] Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 5.

[205] Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," 32.

[206] Ibid., 25.

[207] Barthes, "The Photographic Message," 5.

[208] Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," 32.

[209] Krauss, "Notes on the Index," 75.

be eliminated and the marks would collapse into each other, much like Funes'

reconstruction of a day that essentially took an entire other day.[210] It would not be

possible then to actually witness the encounter of the two marks or the becoming-

other of the artist's mark. The need for encoding arises from the fact that the artist's

mark is placed over the pre-existing mark (referent) which is partially captured at its

place.

The issue of encoding may challenge the photographic functions of the index

but, at the same time, it assists its deictic functions. As discussed earlier, the deictic

operation requires some distance between sign and referent. It is precisely this needed

minimal distance that the process of encoding provides. The distance retained

between the marks differs from work to work but in most cases the decision has been

based on another feature of the surface. For instance, the coloured pencil used for the

drawing at Stonehouse is red to match the paint stains on the wall while the drawn

lines that work their way through the stain follow the texture of the wall. The

difference between the marks is discernible only when practicing close and careful

viewing. It is only then that the indexical operation of the artist's marks reveals itself

to the viewer.

In addition, photographic indexicality breaks down in the making of some of

these works because it approaches a practical impossibility or even absurdity. It is a

similar problem as the one described in Borges' story "On Exactitude in Science,"

where the cartographers end up making a map that is as big as the empire.[211] The

problem of exactitude surfaces particularly in my work as well as in Hopkins' fabric

paintings. It is driven by an attempt to capture parts of the surface, in my case in an

effort to approach it through marking.

While working on the wall drawing at Stonehouse, the more I looked at and

studied the surface, the more marks emerged. This made it virtually impossible to

draw all the stains. On starting to work on each section, only a few clear stains could

be detected. Eventually, the eye got "trained" and started seeing nuances in light,

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[210] This story was suggested to me by Rebecca Fortnum.

[211] This story has been used to discuss Lai Chih-Sheng's *Life-Size Drawing* in the catalogue of the exhibition *Invisible: Art About the Unseen 1957–2012*. The story was first suggested to me by Jeffrey Dennis.

shade and texture. As more time and effort were invested, more faint stains could be discerned. Moreover, as the light changed during the day, further stains seemed to appear. Slight changes in the texture of the wall created minor changes in colour and those became noticeable as well. This detection of variations had the potential of becoming an obsessive, endless activity and this was something I experienced while working on this piece. There always seemed to be more things to see. The futility of the task became more and more pronounced each day—the near impossibility of ever managing to go over every single stain in the time I had. The following paradox, thus, occurred in the studio: the more I looked at the image on the surface, the more complex and ambiguous it became. Instead of finding more visual clarity and stability as I worked, I became more uncertain.

A similar situation occurred with the wrinkle paintings. Given the varied light conditions and the placement of the paper on my desk each day, the shadows on the paper shifted and my perception of wrinkles changed. From some angles I could see a specific group of wrinkles. By turning the paper another way, another set of wrinkles would appear. To go over all the wrinkles previously created, I had to continuously turn the paper around and look at it from various angles. Returning to a painting at various times during the day to see if something had been missed became the norm. It was actually not possible to ensure that I had gone over every single wrinkle. What if there were very subtle disturbances on the surface that could not be seen clearly with a naked eye?

Moreover, while working on these pieces, my hands altered the surface. At times, I had to put my hand on the paper in order to paint over the wrinkles. Due to this, a crumpled sheet of paper would end up somewhat flattened out by the time the work was completed. I also had to carefully unfold some parts so as to paint over wrinkles that were hard to reach. It was almost a case of the observer altering the observed environment—not unlike the "observer effect" in physics, which refers to changes that the act of observation or measurement will cause on the phenomenon being observed or measured.[212] It was almost a process of "sculpting" the paper by

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[212] Sassoli de Bianchi, "The Observer Effect," 217–218.

altering its texture while painting. Both marks and surface changed together as opposed to one remaining static. This situation could potentially go on indefinitely, hurtling me into a kind of vicious cycle. My attempt to paint over the wrinkles would at times create more wrinkles that I would then have to paint over and so on.

In addition, these surfaces may change. Any transport from the studio space to London or to an exhibition space can alter them slightly, creating more wrinkles or flattening out the paper. The crumpled paper will probably not be flattened out completely but it can become flatter than how it had initially started out.[213] This affects the perception of the wrinkles and of the painted lines. Moreover, when the wrinkle paintings are stored, they are necessarily placed on top of each other. Each individual sheet of paper is very light but taken as a whole they can form a substantial mass. One pad of lined paper containing eighty sheets weighs approximately four hundred grams. Thus, the works at the bottom of the pile are being affected, however slightly, by the weight of the ones placed on top. Given the malleability of the paper, I have to wonder what the works will look like a year from now. Thus, even if no wrinkle is left out at the time of making, there is no guarantee that this will not change in the future.

Of course it is always possible to rework the surfaces—look at them again from time to time and go over any newly formed wrinkles. This would then mean that the piece is never finished. "Completeness," a perfect photographic indexicality, is unattainable. In fact, every so often, I return to one of the wrinkle paintings to trace over wrinkles I previously missed—to approach the goal of being in touch with all the wrinkles on the surface. Overall, however, the logic of the photographic capture is a near, if not total, impossibility.[214]

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[213] Attempts to flatten the paper by soaking it and letting it dry or ironing it have not been entirely successful up to this point.

[214] This situation is exasperated with works that involve tracing over transitory marks that change as I work, such as shadows and highlights. I often speculated whether the task of going over all the shadows meant covering up the entire or most of the piece of paper with marks. The shadows kept changing position, shifting on the surface of the paper. If I were to go over all the shadows and work on the piece indefinitely, then it is likely that most of the paper would end up with marks. Just like Borges' map, my marks might end up covering the whole surface. Unlike the map, however, the surface would become unintelligible due to the temporal layering, as Bernice Donszelmann has pointed out. Moreover, the impossibility of going over all the shadows becomes apparent when the shadow pieces are exhibited. The conditions under which the pieces will be shown each time will create different shadows that may not match the

In Hopkins' fabric paintings, the pre-existing images are more stable and the artist can use the actual image printed on the fabric as a guide while painting. Her carefully painted marks reveal obsessive attention while remaking each flower. In fact, photographic capture is exceeded since the painted flowers often display more details than the printed flowers on the front of the fabric. On the contrary, in Ettinger's work photographic capture is questioned. Instead of entering into a process of obsessively capturing the pre-existing images, Ettinger challenges the notion of indexicality right from the start. The interrupted photocopying process "breaks the indexical relation of photograph and event."[215] Idexicality is further broken when painting commences since the artist's marks do not attempt to precisely trace over the remainders of the figures but rather remain almost-repetitions or almost-encounters.[216] It is as if Ettinger accepts her inability to capture these specific images.[217]

The issue of the physical covering of the pre-existing marks—the referent—by the artists' marks both confirms and challenges the marks' status as photographic, thus, pointing to another limit pertaining to indexicality. On the one hand, the marks' indexical nature rests on the fact that they trace over their referent, which, being the surface, is part of the work, and, as such, they establish a physical one-to-one connection to it. On the other hand, this covering leads to the partial effacement of the referent, of the thing the artist's marks precisely attempt to register or indicate (when the marks are seen as indexical). Thus, the covering confirms the impossibility of fully capturing the referent since parts of it are partially eclipsed.[218] It also brings up the

drawn marks. Given this situation, the shadow pieces eventually became snapshots of a very specific time—I only worked on a shadow piece from approximately 10 am to 1 pm on a specific day. No more shadows were added after that. Similar issues appear when working on the *Light Capture* collages. The collages are kept in a fixed location while working. I mark out all the highlights I can see in a specific part and then complete the collage in that part. Coming back to an unfinished part on a different day usually means that the marked out areas no longer correspond to highlights. Whatever is completed does not change and, so far, I have not gone back to add highlights I missed. There will always exist highlights that I have missed.

[215] Pollock, "From Painting to Painting," 202.

[216] The term "almost-encounter" is from Pollock, "Thinking the Feminine," 14.

[217] I am not referring to technical inability but to an aesthetical-ethical attitude. As discussed in footnote 139, this relates to the specific images Ettinger works with.

[218] Krauss briefly addresses this issue in the work of Pozzi, where the paintings are placed over the sections of the wall they recreate. She explains it, however, using the temporal logic of photography. The "logic of effacement" at work in Pozzi's paintings

question of how much the artist's marks can actually point to the partially covered referent. The artist's marks, functioning as an index *and retrait,* both point to and partially hide or erase the referent, to different degrees in each work. Moreover, the covering of pre-existing marks also implies that the artist's marks exceed their indexical operation. They not only act as traces or pointers but they actually modify the surface/referent, however subtly. What appears to be occurring then is a coexistence of seemingly incompatible operations—capturing and effacing, presenting and absenting, pointing and hiding—which are partialised and shared, and an interweave between signifier/mark and referent/surface that verges on the meaningless.

In fact, the index has several characteristics that place it precariously on the edges of signification. To start with, there is its closeness to its object, to matter, to fact, to the real.[219] The index testifies to the fact that the referent was present and that its presence affected the sign. This is an acknowledgment of "the invasion of the semiotic systems by the real."[220] The implication here is that the index is found between semiosis and the real. When discussing Pliny's story of the Corinthian woman, Derrida seems to place the specific action of tracing—an indexical action—right at the limits of signification. Signification, he writes, depends on a minute difference between model/referent and drawing/signifier. This difference—"visibility, spacing, death"— marks "the origin of the sign and the breaking of immediacy." When tracing, this spacing is minimised, revealing "the contours of signification" and placing tracing on the edge of meaning.[221] Moreover, the index is only "pure assurance of existence," "brute and opaque fact."[222] Its limited operation as indication or evidence of

corresponds, according to Krauss, to the "having-been-there" of photography. That is, the building is represented "through the paradox of being physically present but temporally remote," or as "a presence seen as past." Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 65. I am more interested in the confusion of presence and absence when it comes to the referent (and my marks).

[219] Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation,* 179–180.

[220] Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time,* 70.

[221] Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* 234.

[222] Doane, "The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity," 135.

"existential presence" results in what Krauss calls "meaningless meaning."[223] Pozzi's paintings, for example, are an imprint of the natural continuum and point back to it, acting as an otherwise mute "label of a natural event."[224] Finally, there are the contradictions embedded within the index as a concept, an issue Doane has pointed out. As photographic trace the index is physically connected to its referent, displays an abundance of details and repeats a past moment, while as deixis, it is empty, necessarily distanced from its referent, and connected to presence.[225] Thus, as a concept, the index remains suspended between apparent contradictions: trace and deixis, fullness and emptiness, past and present, material connection and distance.

According to Doane, Peirce himself placed the index at the edge of signification when he wrote the following:

> An index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant. Such, for instance, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole; but there is a hole there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not.[226]

As Doane points out, with this move Peirce renders the interpretation of the indexical sign—an otherwise necessary part of the triadic structure of the sign—unnecessary.[227] This turns the index into a sign-under-erasure and situates it "on the very threshold of semiosis," "potentially outside the domain of human subjectivity and meaning."[228]

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[223] Krauss, "Notes on the Index," 78. This is the kind of meaninglessness that Borges so effectively captures in the two short stories I have referred to, "On Exactitude in Science" and "Funes, His Memory."

[224] Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 64.

[225] Doane, "Indexicality," 2.

[226] Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 104.

[227] Briefly, according to Peirce, a sign consists of three interrelated parts: the representamen (which can be understood as the signifier), the object signified, and the interpretant (the interpretation or understanding generated in the mind of someone receiving the sign). Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 99. A detailed discussion of the triadic structure of signs is given by Atkin, "Peirce's Theory of Signs."

[228] Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, 94. Placing a term under erasure involves writing a term, crossing it out, and keeping both the word and its deletion. This device designates a term that is inaccurate yet still necessary within a specific context. Spivak, Translator's Preface to *Of Grammatology*, xiv. The term "under erasure" comes from Jacques Derrida who adapts it from Martin Heidegger. Ibid.

This hovering on the edges of meaning is pushed even further in some of the works I have been discussing in this chapter, where the artist's marks, as *retraits* this time, withdraw into their referent, becoming partially confused with it. This has implications for their pointing function when the works are viewed. Since in all works the artist's marks follow something other, the pointing to the artist's hand is restrained.[229] The pointing to the surface varies, depending on the work. I would argue that in Hopkins' and Ettinger's case, the artists' marks convert the surface into a painting, thus, drawing attention to that surface. In the case of my work, the partial visual withdrawal or indiscernibility of my marks questions their ability to act as an index. It does not cancel out that ability because, based on Peirce's thinking, not seeing the marks as what they are does not actually negate their indexical function. It does challenge it though, especially in cases where the marks may not be seen at all. That is, in the attempt to approach the surface/referent, the marks/indices may come dangerously close, finding themselves at "the contours of signification." Instead of "saying" things, the marks only "whisper."

It seems then that the marks function as more and less than indexical since at times their indexical operation is challenged, at other times it is confirmed, and sometimes it is even exceeded.[230] In the works under discussion, the marks as indexical relate to their referent/surface through oscillations of distance-in-proximity, reaching very close yet retaining a minimal difference. This difference-in-proximity sometimes reveals itself, allowing the permeable borderlines between others to emerge, and sometimes almost fades away, allowing others to transgress those borderlines.

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[229] I discuss this further in chapter 7.

[230] This line of thought agrees with James Elkins' argument in *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them* that marks are simultaneously signs and non-signs. This is something Barbara Bolt also suggests, especially in relation to indexical marks. She argues that the "indexical sign, with is causal relation between the thing and its sign, points to a way of considering the matter of things—the matter of objects, of the body in process and the matter of the work. . . . The index has real material effects. It allows us to witness the force of materialisation. . . . This takes us beyond the sign to the facts of matter." Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation*, 179–180. My analysis resonates with both authors' thinking.

CO-SHARING AND CO-BELONGING, OR SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A *(RE)TRAIT* AND AN INDEX

Throughout the chapter, the marks I have been discussing occupy seemingly impossible positions: they can be seen as *retraits*, implying both partial repetition and withdrawal, and they can be seen as more-than-and-less-than indexical. These conceptualisations entail other impossible positions: presence-with-absence, capture-with-effacement, pointing-with-hiding, being-in-non-being. In ending the chapter, I consider these "impossibilities" in relation to the notions of meaning and meaninglessness. I attempt this by turning to Deleuze and Guattari's and Ettinger's theorisations once again.

Before considering this "meaningless meaning," a brief revisiting of "meaningful meaning" as it pertains to the relationship between mark and surface. When discussing abstract painting, Rosalind Krauss asserts that painting "is a field of articulations or divisions." She argues that "it is only by disrupting its physical surface and creating discontinuous units that it can produce a system of signs, and through those signs, meaning."[231] A "continuous, bounded, detachable, flat surface" is ruptured "into the discontinuous units that are the necessary constituents of signs."[232] This rupturing is done through drawing, which Krauss describes as "lines of division."[233] The point is that pictorial meaning emerges through segmentations and divisions. Jacques Derrida articulates something similar when discussing representational drawing. According to Derrida, the drawn mark at its limits marks a border, "the single edge of a contour: between the inside and outside of a figure."[234] The *trait* generates a difference on the surface that allows the figure to be seen, a figure/ground or mark/surface differentiation. Ideally, at the limit, only the surroundings of the *trait* appear, that which the *trait* joins only in separating.[235] The mark, thus, acquires the ambivalent status of joining and separating figure and ground.

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[231] Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 64.

[232] Ibid., 63, 64.

[233] Ibid., 63.

[234] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 53.

[235] Ibid., 54.

In both accounts, the surface is divided up through lines or marks whose main functions seem to be discontinuity and differentiation. In fact, these accounts do not say much about the relationship *between* mark and surface beyond seeing it as one of separation, or, at the opposite extreme, fusion. In this sense, they mostly remain within Tisseron's account of marking as a play of fort/da.[236] Meaning depends on a mark/no mark or presence/absence differentiation that allows the figure (whether abstract or representational) to emerge as distinct from the surface.

The marks in the works I have been discussing do not simply separate and join the surface. As *retraits*, the artist's drawn, painted or collaged marks overlay and remake accidental stains, natural marks, and mechanically printed or constructed marks that pre-exist on the surface. The overlay is never complete but rather some aspects appear to be temporarily shared between these others causing them to partially withdraw into each other. The relationship between the artist's mark and the mark already found on the surface is not one of absolute difference since the marks both differ from each other and retreat into each other. These works then may enable a partial sharing between different marks and between mark and surface. As indexical, the artist's marks isolate and almost-repeat parts of the natural continuum—that is, the surface—and are also physically placed within that continuum. Thus, rather than creating divisions on the "continuous, bounded, detachable, flat surface," they open up to the surroundings and create continuities *with* the surface, continuities that sometimes result in partial confusion. Moreover, in all works, the relationship between mark and surface shifts depending on the viewer's distance from the work and attentiveness towards the work.

As a result, the marks do not exactly create rigid segmentations and divisions on the surface or result in contours that separate "inside" from "outside." Rather, the marks create a relationship between what was there and what was subsequently

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[236] I should point out that Derrida's account destabilises the notion of a mark by associating it with both almost-presence and almost-absence, as discussed earlier. It does not, however, deal with the relationship between mark and surface, beyond saying that the mark separates and joins the surface. This is not to say that the account offers nothing of use when thinking about that relationship. As I have shown, the conceptualisation of the mark as a *retrait*, and my juxtaposition of this concept alongside tracing, provide openings for considering the relationship between mark and surface in different ways.

added. The artist's mark does not so much create a border but, paradoxically, attempts to partially dissolve the border it is supposed to create. It acts as a borderlink, to use Ettinger's term. A borderlink does not separate and join because these actions, as absolutes or extremes, are destabilised. Borderlinking operates in an in-between state, leading to jointness-in-difference. It is paralleled by borderspacing, a separation-in-jointness that retains a minimal difference between mark and surface. Thus, processes of borderlinking and borderspacing emerge allowing the encounter between the marks and between mark and surface to materialise through oscillations of almost-merger and almost-separation.

It is no longer possible to speak of presence versus absence or even of presence and absence as these are partialised and shared between mark and surface. The artist's mark becomes partially lost in the surface, to varying degrees in each work, while, at the same time, remaking or almost-repeating parts of the surface. The surface is partially remade as it is being partially covered. Pres-absence is shared between the different elements of the work. Rather than thinking about alternations of presence and absence, Ettinger suggests considering "continual attuning and readjustment of distance-in-proximity" and of co-emergence and co-fading.[237]

Particularly in the case of my work, the artist's marks almost disappear into the surface, becoming nearly con-fused with pre-existing marks. As indexical, they come so close to their referent that they barely point to it. As I discussed in chapter 3, this sign of almost-non-being or non-existence can be seen as a coming-into-being or becoming-with an other. When becoming-surface or becoming-other, the artist's mark is partially undone. The focus shifts from the mark as separated from the surface to the mark as inextricable from the surface, or even as standing for the surface. At the same time, as the marks enter into a process of becoming-surface, the surface itself is modified, however minimally, by the marks. Thus, mark and surface engage in what Deleuze and Guattari see as a double becoming or in what Ettinger sees as co-becoming.

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[237] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 87.

In *Memoirs of the Blind*, Derrida briefly addresses the issue of belonging in relation to the mark. While the mark acts as a border between the inside and the outside of a figure, it can belong neither inside nor outside and, according to Derrida, nothing can belong to it. What happens then when the mark ceases to act solely as a border and becomes a borderlink? As it opens up to the surface, it may become possible that aspects of that surface begin to belong to the mark and the mark may begin to belong to the surface. The mark is, after all, physically attached to the surface and to the pre-existing mark it repeats. If mark and surface are partially continuous with each other, if they share a space between them, then potentially what belongs to one belongs to the other as well; the co-sharing and co-becoming with the surface leads to co-belonging. In the artworks under discussion, mark and surface belong together and whatever meaning arises can do so only through their relationship.

Thus, from co-sharing, co-becoming and co-belonging, we arrive at what Ettinger calls co-meaning—meaning as a transgression of borderlines between partial-others and as mutual co-transformation. This is meaning that is situated in-between and arises through transformative connections and relations (borderlinking and borderspacing) *with* an other rather than through opposition or alternation. It arises "in the slight movements in-between closeness and remoteness or proximity and distance, alongside or before alternations of presence/absence."[238] The artist's marks in the works discussed so far do not exist apart or independently from the surface. The marks need the surface to exist and acquire meaning and, at the same time, they also impart meaning to the surface. It is their relationship as in-between that allows this meaning to emerge, a meaning that depends on shareability and oscillations of distance-in-proximity rather than on clear and identifiable oppositions. It is meaning that problematizes phallic binaries of mark/surface and presence/absence and that does not proceed by substitution or splitting but by partial continuation and differentiation-in-togetherness.

Needless to say, this matrixial meaning is borderline or minimal meaning. It is in this borderline state, on the trembling edges of signification, that matrixial meaning

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[238] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 82.

meets the indexical mark, as sign-under-erasure that almost-means through oscillations of distance-in-proximity between itself and its referent/surface. The equivocal character of the indexical mark, as analysed in the chapter, places it in a position to enable some form of non-phallic or matrixial meaning to begin to emerge. Simultaneously, matrixial theorisation allows for the possibility that "meaningless meaning" might just be *different* meaning that emerges through in-between spaces and encounters between others.

5

CUTTING AND CONNECTING SURFACES

This chapter focuses on the third method of marking developed during the research, that is, the use of the same material for both mark and surface. Inevitably, all of the works discussed in this chapter are collages as they involve attaching cut pieces of a material on other, larger pieces of the same material. The material coincidence between mark and surface, which suggests a folding of the surface onto and into itself, leads to the mark partially disappearing into the surface. Furthermore, slight discontinuities between mark and surface may come across as mistakes in the production of the surface, rendering the artist's interventions indiscernible. Finally, repeated and regular marks can lead to a reorganisation or remaking of the entire surface. I consider these aspects through the terms *retrait* and index which were discussed in the previous chapter and which are rethought here in relation to the specific works.

IN THE MAKING

The idea of cutting small pieces of a surface and using them as my marks on the surface arose out of observations in the studio while working on the exhibition *Re-Surface* in 2009. I became interested in the juxtaposition of pieces of old vinyl flooring and my studio's wooden floor. The vinyl pieces came from my grandparents' house and, as they were quite dirty, I had placed them on the floor.[1] Some of them were worn down and irregularly shaped, with small holes scattered all over them. I eventually began seeing these pieces as marks on the floor and decided to make works that involved cutting pieces of vinyl flooring in irregular shapes and affixing them on other, larger pieces of vinyl. My initial attempts were not particularly successful as it was quite difficult to cut the vinyl into specific shapes using scissors or a cutter. Moreover, the cut pieces extruded too much from the surface, declaring themselves as additions. In other words, these experiments did not lead to ambivalence between mark and

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[1] The specific circumstances surrounding the use of this material are discussed in chapter 3.

surface. They did not result in spatial or temporal confusion or in an in-between

mark/surface state, as works discussed in previous chapters did.

Image 5.1:   Found vinyl flooring on studio's floor, Limassol, Cyprus

Image 5.2:   Experiments with smaller pieces of vinyl flooring placed on bigger pieces

Nevertheless, these experiments proved useful as they presented another way in which I could explore the in-between of mark and surface. By this point, I had realised that by having my marks approach the surface in various ways, I could potentially challenge an apparently straightforward relationship between mark and surface and achieve partial confusion between them. Earlier works had attempted to approach the surface through remaking or tracing over and around pre-existing

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marks, as discussed in the previous chapters. My marks had tried to come as close as possible to these other marks and to features of the surface without, however, becoming irreversibly indistinguishable from them. This would eliminate the mark and would not lead to an in-between. A difference between mark and surface and between different types of marks was maintained partly through the material used and the making process—the various kinds of marks had been made in very different ways and using different material. What would happen then if the mark were literally part of the surface? How would this affect the relationship between mark and surface?

To resolve the issues I had with the vinyl flooring collages, I eventually turned to adhesive vinyl in 2010. I chose adhesive vinyl designs that resembled the flooring I already had. I cut small pieces of adhesive vinyl in various shapes and affixed them on pieces of vinyl flooring. The vinyl remained flat on the surface, extruding only marginally. These works appealed to me because they led to partial confusion between mark and surface, resulting in my interventions becoming almost indiscernible. Smaller pieces of adhesive vinyl partially disappeared into the pattern of the flooring or came across as part of the printed wood's figure, making it challenging to identify them as the artist's interventions. At the same time, the added pieces of adhesive vinyl resulted in some interruption, however minimal. They did not disappear completely, becoming utterly unrecoverable. Rather, it was still possible to view these works in terms of mark and surface and to witness the mark's movement towards the surface.

Over time, I began basing the shapes of the cut pieces on pre-existing floor stains.[2] I also began making works on pieces of found wood, using wood-patterned adhesive vinyl.[3] In each case, I chose a vinyl design that approximated each specific type of wood. Some of these works involved the recreation of existing stains or scratches on the wood using adhesive vinyl. The recreated marks were usually made next to the original marks and, given the similarity between the wood and the adhesive vinyl, from a relative distance the collaged marks registered as another kind of stain.

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[2] These stain collages are also discussed in chapter 3.

[3] I collected many pieces of leftover wood, mostly plywood, from my father's model airplane workshop. I also found several pieces of leftover wood at various places where I completed residencies.

Image 5.3:   *Stain Collages*, 2011–2012
               Adhesive vinyl on found vinyl flooring, 43 x 37 cm, 30 x 19 cm

Image 5.4:   *Untitled* (details), 2010
               Adhesive vinyl on found wood

In other works on wood, I modified the wood's grain and figure. I cut sections of
wood-patterned adhesive vinyl—my scissors following the printed lines of the growth
rings—and transferred them onto pieces of wood. In some cases, the vinyl rings were
placed in such a way so as to run perpendicular to the growth rings of the actual wood,

introducing a partial interruption on the surface.[4] The satin finish of the vinyl on the matte surface of the wood introduced another visual disruption.

These works eventually became part of the series *Masquetry* (2010–2015). The more recent works to form part of this series involve adhesive vinyl collages on adhesive vinyl, such that mark and surface are not only similar but actually the same. Thus, the difference between mark and surface is minimised even more. For all of these works, I have been using adhesive vinyl designs that resemble wood. I have experimented extensively with ways of introducing marks on the surface, going from more obvious disruptions to much subtler interventions, all the while trying to remain within a narrow margin of difference from the surface such that mark and surface commingle. For some works, I cut around printed wood rings and affix them onto other pieces of vinyl, thus modifying the imaged wood's grain. For other works, I have used small pieces of vinyl to disrupt the design on the surface, resulting in marks that look like printing errors. Finally, I have tried using pre-existing patterns and marquetry designs found on wooden furniture and remaking them in adhesive vinyl.[5] I cut pieces of vinyl based on the pre-existing designs and attach them onto an intact piece of identical vinyl. The small pieces are usually placed in such a way so as to match the pattern underneath, keeping visual disruption to a minimum.

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[4] The works *Minor Fix* (2011) and *Years Later* (2013) developed out of these earlier works. *Minor Fix* involved using pieces of adhesive vinyl to cover scratches on a wooden floor while *Years Later* involved affixing pieces of marble-patterned adhesive vinyl on a marble floor to recreate scratches and broken tiles. These works are discussed in chapters 4 and 3 respectively.

[5] The first collages I made using found patterns were the ones forming part of the installation *Leftovers II* (2010), discussed in chapter 3.

Image 5.5:   *Masquetry I* (selection of works), 2011
Adhesive vinyl collages

I extended this mode of marking, that is, using the same material for both mark and surface, to works on a variety of surfaces. In the series of works *Dotted Lines* (2010–2015), I punch holes in lined A4 sheets of paper, using a hole puncher, and glue the punched out round pieces, the chads, onto other sheets of the same type of paper. The round shapes of the chads echo the existing holes on the paper that are used to store it in a folder. The actual tool I am using, the hole puncher, relates to stationery

and A4 lined paper. As such, it makes sense to use the chads for the works as opposed to cutting the paper in various other shapes.[6] That is, the material, shape and method of making of the marks directly relates to the surface. When gluing the chads on sheets of paper, I try to alter the existing lines on the paper by recreating them, however imperfectly, or by redirecting and disrupting them.[7]

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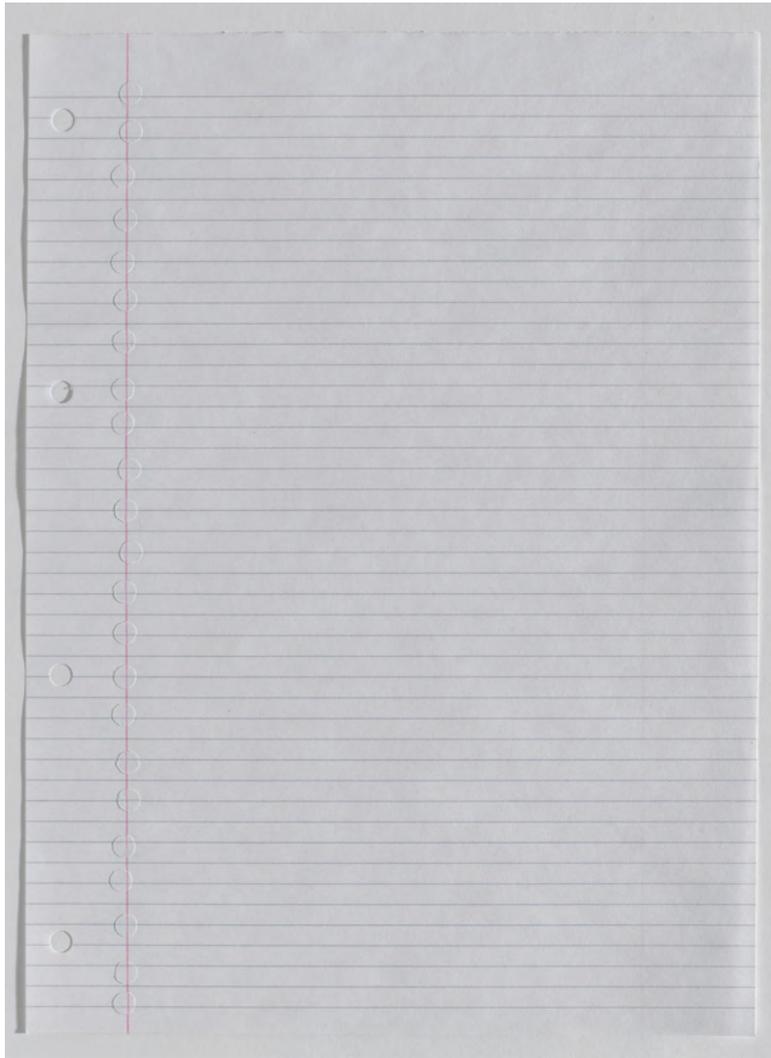
[6] Early attempts to make works on lined paper involved cutting the paper in various geometric shapes and gluing these on identical sheets of paper. Most of these works were not particularly successful as the added pieces declared themselves as such. Moreover, the choice of shapes was rather arbitrary and did not directly relate to the paper in most cases.

[7] I initially turned to lined paper when I began working as a resident artist at various remote locations. Pads of lined paper are readily available in a range of stores at a low cost and are also easy to transport while travelling. My use of lined paper is also addressed in chapter 4.
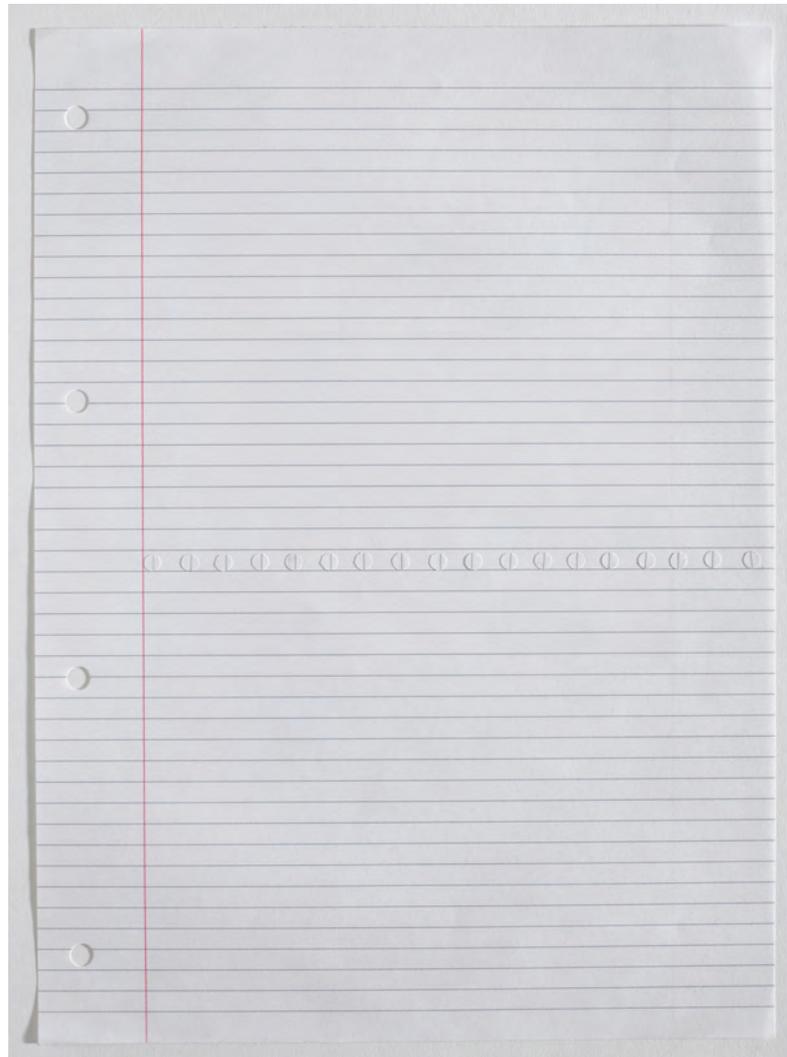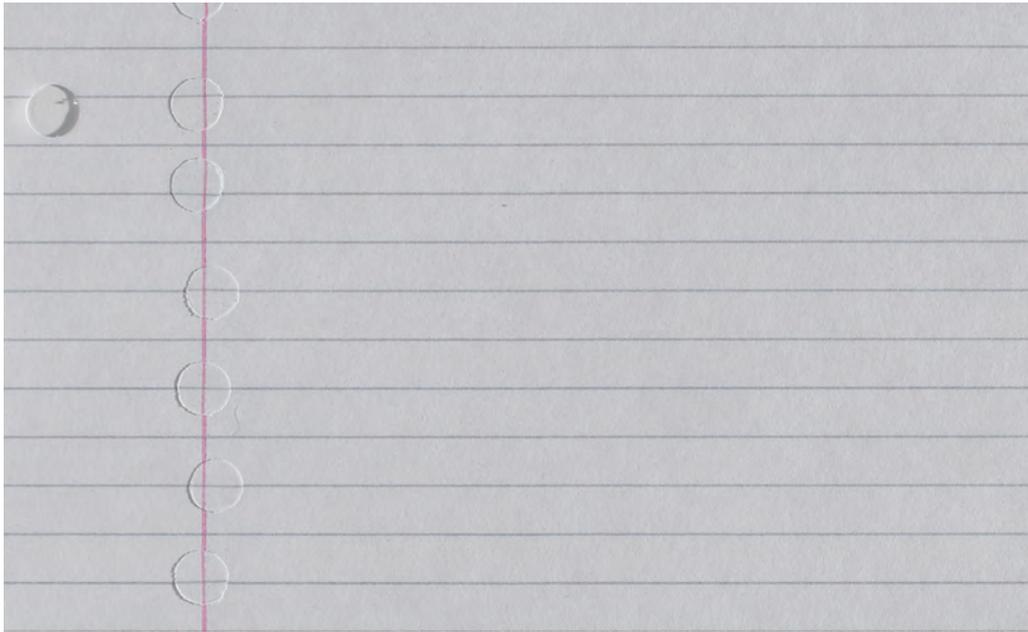
Image 5.6:   *Dotted Lines* (selection of works), 2010–2015
               Paper collages, 21 x 29.7 cm each

Faulty Samples (2012–2015), the most recent work made using this mode of marking, includes a series of collages on found fabric samples and leftover pieces of fabric.[8] The works on these fabrics involve using cut pieces of the surface to modify the pre-existing printed pattern.[9] In the case of found sample books, which may include samples of the same pattern in slightly different colours, I often used small pieces of one sample to make a work on another similar sample. If I could not find two similar pieces, or in the case of leftover fabrics which were usually all different, I would cut a piece of fabric in two and use one part as the surface. Each work depends on the image printed on the specific fabric. I cut around parts of the image, isolating, for example, individual leaves, and then use them to remake the pattern on another piece of the fabric, thus, reorganising the surface. For instance, in *Faulty Samples (Unkempt)* (2014), green leaves have been added over all of the flowers. In other works, the interventions are more isolated. An example is *Faulty Samples (Pyramid)* (2014) where a single piece has been glued on the geometric pattern, disrupting its regularity.

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[8] The fabric samples were obtained from a home furnishing store in Cyprus. I had originally visited this store in 2012 to acquire leftover pieces of vinyl flooring. One of the employees, a family friend, showed me the store's warehouse where they kept the previous season's furnishing fabric sample books and carpet samples. These are usually thrown away after some time. The employee kindly let me take as many sample books as I liked. Over the years, I made additional visits to the store to get more sample books as well as carpet samples. Moreover, I obtained leftover pieces of fabric from various fabric stores in Cyprus. These leftovers are usually cut into smaller pieces and sold cheaply as quilting materials or are sometimes given away for free.

[9] Several works on fabrics also involve painting over parts of the design or adding painted elements to the design. Some of these works are discussed in chapter 4.

Image 5.7:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Unkempt*) (detail), 2014
Fabric collage, 38.3 x 29.4 cm
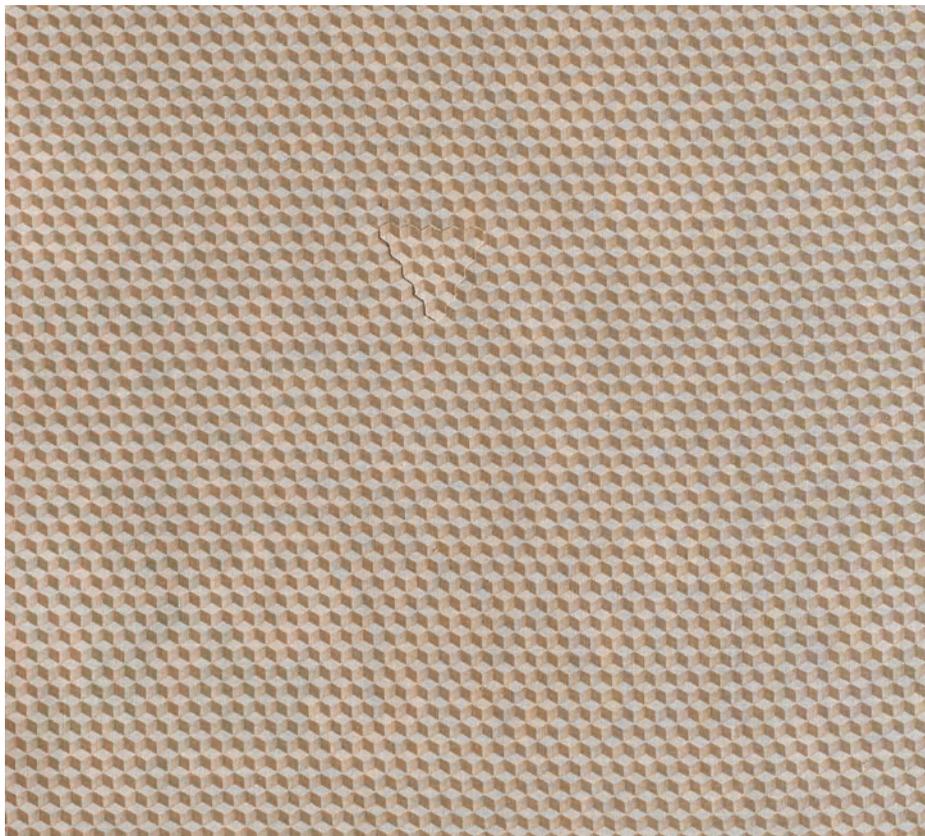
Image 5.8:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Pyramid*) (detail), 2014
Fabric collage, 32.5 x 29.2 cm

TOWARDS MATERIAL SAMENESS

The works described above can be divided in two groups: works where mark and surface are made out of different yet visually similar materials, and works where mark and surface come from the same exact material. In the latter case, the surface is approached not only visually but in terms of material as well. Before discussing the specificities of this method of marking, I should point out that several of these works can also be discussed in terms of the methods explored in the previous chapters.

The making of the works presented in this chapter involves a literal transfer of material since parts of one surface are transferred onto another surface. Moreover, several works, such as those involving the recreation of stains and marquetry designs, enact a transfer of pre-existing marks from one surface to another. As such, these works can be discussed in terms of transfer, an approach developed in chapter 3.[10]

In addition, the making of these works usually involves cutting around an image, as in the *Faulty Samples* works, or along a printed line, as in several of the *Masquetry* works. In some cases, the cutting occurs in accordance to a pre-existing shape that has been previously traced, as in several of the *Masquetry* works that involve the recreation of decorative patterns or stains. The cut pieces are then placed over an identical image, recreating parts of that image. These works can be discussed in terms of remaking a pre-existing mark over itself, an approach developed in chapter 4.[11]

What I focus on in this chapter is the material sameness between mark and surface and how that affects the relationship between the two. Thus, I concentrate on works where mark and surface come from the exact same material. I have chosen to discuss this method of marking last for several reasons. Chronology played a part: this method arose after the other two, as described earlier, and took a longer time to develop. More importantly, by placing it last in the construction of this narrative, I aim

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[10] Some of these works are, in fact, discussed in chapter 3.

[11] The work *Minor Fix*, which was discussed in chapter 4, embodies this overlap between marking methods: the marks followed the pre-existing scratches and were placed over them (hence the inclusion of this work in chapter 4), but the marks were also made out of adhesive vinyl that resembled wood (hence the relation of this work to works included in this chapter).

to reveal a development in the practice and in my methods of marking. This development involved a movement from the more general to the more specific: from a mimetic mode of marking that involved transferring marks, to one involving directly tracing over marks (which was discussed using the terms *retrait* and index and which may also be discussed in terms of mimesis), to one involving the use of surface as mark (which may also be discussed in terms of mimesis, *retrait* and/or the index). This development was not something I had planned or foreseen but rather something that arose through making work with the specific aim of approaching the surface.

I do not mean, however, to imply a simple or straightforward progression from one method to the next, where each subsequent method is somehow better or achieves a closer relationship to the surface. Rather, each method achieves a different closeness: mark and surface may share contextual closeness, physical closeness, and/or material closeness. The use of each method depends on each specific surface I work with. After all, several methods may coincide in each work, something that has made the organisation of these chapters quite challenging. Even though I have identified three main methods of marking, in the actual works these overlap, one seeping into the other almost imperceptibly at times.

WHERE IS THE MARK?

One of the first questions that arises with my collages relates to the nature of the marks. Instead of making a mark using a pencil or a brush, I am now cutting pieces of a surface and affixing them on an identical surface. In the previous sections, I referred to the collaged pieces as marks without explaining my choice of word. On the one hand, it may be that addressing this question is unnecessary. In contemporary art, processes of marking are very often seen in an expanded view. Catherine de Zegher, for example, includes collage in her extended definition of drawing.[12] On the other hand, since I am concerned with slowing down my consideration of marks and

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[12] de Zegher, "Inside the Visible," 28; de Zegher, "A Century Under the Sign of Line," 27.

with zooming into the relationship between mark and surface, it is useful to begin by locating the mark in a more thorough and exact manner.

The entire collaged piece can be seen as a mark added to a surface. This is easier to conceptualise when imagining, for example, a small black piece of paper placed on a bigger white piece of paper. If a mark is a small area on a surface that has a different colour from its surroundings, then the black piece of paper can be seen as a mark on the white background. The entire collaged piece becomes the mark.[13] Viewed in this way, collage emphasises the specific process of marking that involves the depositing of matter on a surface. Instead of that matter being paint or graphite, it is a small piece of material, which, because of its boundedness and "persistent physical identity," has the potential to assert its material presence on the surface even more.[14]

Simultaneously, the small black piece of paper in the example given above is a smaller surface. In fact, in several writings on collage the affixed piece is referred to as a plane placed on top of another plane rather than as a mark.[15] Thus, mark and surface, as terms, coincide—the mark is a surface and the surface is a mark. This situation literalises what James Elkins considers as the "*ontological instability of the mark.*"[16] According to Elkins, any mark (painted, drawn and so on) has the potential to be seen as a field or surface, especially when crossed by a second mark.[17] Moreover, any surface can be turned into a mark since the act of marking a surface turns it from an apparently "infinite or undifferentiated" field into "a region with definite boundaries, and therefore ultimately a mark."[18] Collage literalises this instability since the mark is

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[13] This conceptualisation can be applied to works where the collaged pieces come from a visually similar yet actually different material, for example adhesive vinyl on wood. In that case, the whole collaged piece may register as a mark.

[14] Shiff, "Picasso's Touch," 39. Shiff writes that the fixity of collage pieces and their specific forms once cut and attached "prevent this medium from attaining the 'transparency' or self-effacing quality that often characterises paint in traditional painting or graphite in traditional drawing." That is, collage pieces do not "disappear" into a pictorial illusion and are more likely to appear as "foreign matter." Ibid.

[15] Examples of such texts include Rosalind Krauss, "In The Name of Picasso," Briony Fer, *On Abstract Art*, and Diane Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*.

[16] Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail them*, 25.

[17] Ibid., 25–26.

[18] Ibid., 28.

in actuality a smaller surface and since the surface can, if placed on a bigger plane, itself turn into a mark.

Additionally, according to de Zegher, collaged pieces introduce lines, and consequently marks, on a surface. In the catalogue of the exhibition *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, de Zegher writes that "the seam between juxtaposed planes" in Cubist collage, resulted in a line that "was both disjunctive, marking the edges of fragments of the fractured subject, and connective, delineating new relations."[19] Each collaged piece introduces a set of lines on the surface. These lines are to be found at the seams—they are the cut edges of each piece, located between the collaged piece and the surface.[20] The cut edges become visible as lines when the cut piece is attached to a background. The mark/line, then, is literally the difference between two surfaces, since the collaged piece is itself a smaller surface. De Zegher's language when discussing these lines resonates with Jacques Derrida's and Serge Tisseron's discussions of a line on a surface as something that both joins and separates. Line-as-cut-edge is both dividing, separating between fragments or between collaged piece and background, and connective, actually joining collaged piece and background and creating new relations between them.

Laura Hoptman takes this discussion further when she associates the seam between collaged elements, especially between elements that are found and elements that are made, with Marcel Duchamp's infra-slim or infra-thin (infra-mince). According to Hoptman, the infra-thin characterises a space that forever exists "as a seam between components" and is "called into being by the juxtaposition of two elements, almost but not completely conjoined."[21] Hoptman's discussion is on the level of the "art/life split."[22] She views collage as an arena where the conundrum of the art/life relationship, or the art-world/rest-of-world relationship, is continuously played out such that the two come extremely close without ever fusing—an infra-thin space is maintained between them. Collage is particularly suited to this task "by its

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[19] de Zegher, "A Century Under the Sign of Line," 27.

[20] Ibid., 30.

[21] Hoptman, "Collage Now," 9.

[22] Ibid.

very nature—by its obvious seams."[23] The seams allow it to bring disparate things into close proximity, letting them "contribute to a larger narrative" without forcing them to lose their identity.[24] Even though Hoptman does not directly associate the seam with a line and, thus, a mark, the suggestion is that the space/seam/line between collaged elements always exists. It produces meaning by simultaneously connecting and separating the various elements, by bringing them extremely close without ever allowing them to fuse. I return to Hoptman's conceptualisation of the seam as infra-thin in the following sections.

This entire discussion thus far is dependent on seeing the collaged piece and identifying the lines it creates on the surface. Even Hoptman implies that the seams must be visible when she insists that "in the best examples" of collage the different elements are detectable as such.[25] What happens, however, when surface and collaged piece are almost identical?

TOWARDS A PARTIAL UNDOING OF THE MARK OR WHERE IS THE MARK AGAIN?

The making of the works presented in this chapter involves a two-part process of cutting and attaching. The process of cutting usually involves cutting around an image or along a traced pre-existing line. The direction of cutting depends on each surface and on the images present on it. My decision each time is the result of close study of each surface. I am looking for ways in which I can intervene that are suggested by the surface itself. The physical action of cutting fabrics and adhesive vinyl corresponds to these surfaces' common use. In the case of the *Dotted Lines* collages, the cutting process involves punching holes into sheets of lined paper, an action that again corresponds to the specific surface. All of these actions separate and isolate parts of a surface. These parts are circumscribed by lines that conceptually run along their edges, in the sense de Zegher discusses. As the scissors move along a surface and as

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[23] Ibid., 11.

[24] Ibid., 10. Two artists Hoptman quotes while making her argument are John Stezaker and Martha Rosler. Stezaker insists that collaged elements retain their identity and Rosler sees collage as a suspension between opposite terms.

[25] Ibid.

the hole puncher cuts through paper, they create lines in space. Thus, the cutting action itself begins to create marks as isolated shapes that have been removed from a larger surface and as lines surrounding those shapes. Parts of the surface, thus, enter a process of becoming-marks.[26]

The second action involves attaching these now isolated, separated, and removed parts onto other, larger pieces of the same surface. This action is meant to complete the creation of the mark, which should become visible as a form or as a set of lines when placed against a background from which it differs. This follows from de Zegher's observations: the line she sees on a collage is the line made when cutting a surface, which is then transposed on another surface. In the works under discussion here, however, the completion of the mark becomes more of an undoing. Since collaged piece and surface come from the same source—the same block of lined paper, the same piece of fabric, the same roll of vinyl—the attaching suggests an undoing of the cutting by connecting the piece back to a bigger surface. The collaged piece is part of that surface, first removed and subsequently reconnected to it. Instead of completing the marking process, the second action, the attaching, attempts to undo the first action, the cutting, which implies undoing the mark altogether. In a sense, the mark enters a process of becoming-surface, going back towards its initial state.

In fact, the mark is partially undone visually. The attached piece is quite literally, a repetition of the surface.[27] It is almost as if the surface folded onto itself, repeating its features: a case of surface becoming-mark-becoming-surface. There is an undeniable material continuity between mark and surface and there is also partial

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[26] A discussion of the cut as mark is provided by Hubert Damisch, who devotes the first chapter of his book *Traité du Trait* on incisions. He refers to incisions on a surface as marks, *traits* (strokes, marks, features) or traces when discussing the work of Lucio Fontana. Damisch, *Traité du Trait*, 15–20. Of course in the case of Fontana, the incision remains on the surface, that is, a piece is not completely cut out to be relocated somewhere else. Still, Damisch's discussion of a cut as mark enables me to view my cutting process as the beginning of a mark. In addition, Richard Shiff's comparison between the cut in collage and the brushstroke in painting, suggests a parallel between the two activities: the cut can be seen as the mark in collage just like the brushstroke can be seen as the mark in painting. Shiff, "Picasso's Touch," 41–42; Shiff, "Cézanne's Physicality," 162.

[27] In the case of the fabric samples, each attached piece can also be seen as a small sample of the surface, which is itself a sample of a specific fabric. The mark then repeats, in a sense, the function of the surface since it is a sample of a sample.

visual continuity; they display the same pattern or the mark forms part of the surface's pattern. In other words, mark and surface are border-others, sharing visual and material characteristics.[28] As such, the edges of the collaged piece cannot always be visually determined. The mark, as both an added piece of material and as the line separating that material from the surrounding surface, is partially erased. The collaged piece withdraws into the surface, almost becoming one with it and, thus, coming close to reversing its removal from it. Consequently, both the cutting and the attaching—the process of making/marking—are partially undone. In the works under discussion, the artist's interventions—the added pieces of paper, fabric or vinyl—are essentially camouflaged by being an actual part of the surface. Of course the degree of continuity between mark and surface varies from work to work depending on the placement of each collaged piece, an issue taken up in the next two sections.

DÉJÀ VU:
PARTIAL CONTINUITY AND *RETRAIT*

Continuity is achieved when the collaged piece and the area it is placed over are visually identical. That is, the collaged piece is placed over the location it occupied in the image before being removed—it is put back in its place. This has the effect of remaking parts of the surface over themselves, a situation that resonates with the discussion of the *retrait* in the previous chapter.

This remaking occurs most successfully in some of the works belonging to the *Masquetry* series. For *Masquetry I*, a work installed at Tenderpixel Gallery in August 2011, I recreated an Art Nouveau marquetry design on a piece of adhesive vinyl.[29] I cut

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[28] The term "border-other" is Ettinger's. Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 112.

[29] Over the course of this research, I collected a number of marquetry designs through visits to museums. The specific design I chose for *Masquetry I* came from a small cabinet I photographed at the Cleveland Museum of Art in July 2011. The cabinet was made by the French designer Louis Majorelle in 1910 in the Art Nouveau style. The reason for choosing this specific marquetry design for my work related to function and size. The original design was made for the two cabinet doors. My collage at Tenderpixel was installed on a cupboard door, approximately the same size as each of the cabinet doors. My work, thus, recreated one of the doors of this cabinet. The collage was made in situ and placed over the cupboard door, covering it exactly. The "lining" of the cupboard with adhesive vinyl resonates with the once common use of this material as shelf lining.

Image 5.9:   *Masquetry I*, 2011
                Adhesive vinyl on cupboard, 67 x 48 cm

pieces based on the design from a larger piece of vinyl and then tried to place them on

an identical piece, over the exact location that corresponded to them. With several

pieces I was successful, meaning that there was minimal visual differentiation between

the two surfaces. The wood image continued almost flawlessly from one surface to the

other. Moreover, adhesive vinyl is quite thin and cutting it with a pair of scissors or a cutter results in smooth edges. When each cut piece is placed carefully on the larger piece and smoothed over, it attaches itself uniformly onto the background. Therefore, when looking at this work, the surface appears to be flat and completely homogeneous. The texture emerges when I look at the work closely and sometimes it is necessary to touch it to find the edges of each collaged piece. In a sense, the becoming-surface of my marks or the undoing of the marks is here *almost* complete.

Given the method of making such works, it is not always possible to achieve a perfect visual continuity between mark and surface. Oftentimes, when trying to place a cut piece of vinyl over its exact position, I would miscalculate or I would accidentally move at the last minute, leading to a slight mismatch between the two images. I tried removing and reattaching pieces to ensure the images matched exactly, however, this process resulted in damaging the edges of the vinyl pieces, making them less smooth. Because of this, I decided to refrain from moving pieces once they were attached. Accidental mismatches were, thus, retained. These points of mismatch are almost like a "visual stutter," a slight unexpected interruption in the flow of the image.[30]

The attempt to recreate parts of the surface appears in the *Dotted Lines* series as well. For several of these works, I tried to recreate the existing lines on the paper, even if imperfectly, by placing each chad in such a way that the printed line on it coincided with the printed line on the page. Since the chads are made using a hole puncher, their edges are not always smooth which makes some of my interventions

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[30] I am borrowing the term "visual stutter" from Barbara Bolt. Bolt has adapted the term from Gilles Deleuze's essay "He Stuttered." Deleuze discusses a situation where the mode of speaking of a literary character—stuttering, whispering and so on—affects the quality of writing such that it is language itself that stutters or whispers. This is a situation where content (the affects under consideration) and material (language as a system) resonate with each other. Bolt uses the term "visual stutter" to describe moments in a painting when the insistent materiality of paint disrupts the depicted image, causing visual language to stutter. Bolt, "Painting is Not a Representational Practice," 46–47. I am using the term to refer to moments of visual disruption or discontinuity. These moments are also caused by matter, although not paint's matter specifically. Even though I was aware of Bolt's use of the term, it was Rosemary Betterton who suggested using it as an apt description for these works.

more discernible than in the *Masquetry* series.[31] Also, given the not completely opaque white surface of the paper, the added chads sometimes differentiate themselves by taking on a stronger white colour. Still, with several works, from a short distance away the viewer cannot clearly see the glued chads but only a slight disturbance on the surface.[32] In one work, only two chads have been glued onto the paper, coinciding with two lines on the page. When I look at this work from a distance of about one and a half metres away, it takes me a long time to find these interventions; they come across as two very subtle changes on the page.[33] Even when the works are observed closely, the interventions are sometimes unclear. For example, several viewers thought that the round shapes were embossed on the surface rather than added over it.[34]

Getting the line on a chad to match the line on the paper is not always possible, thus, minor mismatches are introduced, as in the *Masquetry* series. These visual stutters are partly a result of the process of making: I take a chad, put some glue on one side and then place it on the paper. I try to place it exactly where I want it—a process of aiming with my finger. I then have a few seconds before the glue dries to slightly move the chad around so that it matches the line it was placed on, something that is not always achieved. Moreover, I have found that the colour of the lines on different sheets of lined paper, even from the same pad, can vary—being slightly darker or lighter. This difference in colour results in a mismatch when I glue a chad on a line—the colour of the line on the chad may not be exactly the same as the colour of the line on the page. When dealing with the red margins, this variation is amplified. Some margins have been printed somewhat thicker than others while the intensity of the colour varies noticeably between different sheets (when studying the lines closely,

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[31] The hole puncher I was using during the residency at Stonehouse started malfunctioning after a few days and the chads were not completely detached from each piece of paper. I had to carefully pull them off and this resulted in crooked edges.

[32] In the catalogue of the group exhibition *Errors Allowed*, these collages were described as creating an "'infra-subtle' universe." *Errors Allowed*, 218.

[33] A recent development pertaining to these works involves scanning them and then printing the image on plain A4 paper. In a sense, this action remakes the lined paper as a flat surface. I am currently experimenting with modifying the scanned image digitally, making the chads more and less discernible. I am considering eventually presenting the prints bound as a notepad, as if they were regular lined paper.

[34] Resident artists at Ragdale Foundation, in conversation with author, June 4–14, 2010.

that is). The differences in colour, in combination with the mismatches caused by the making process, result in lines that appear to be slightly wobbly, not entirely uniform from one end to the other nor completely straight—visually stuttering.
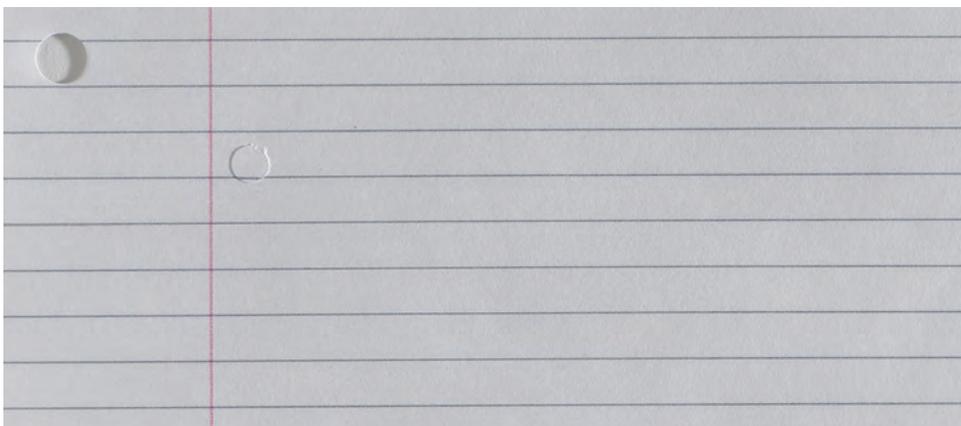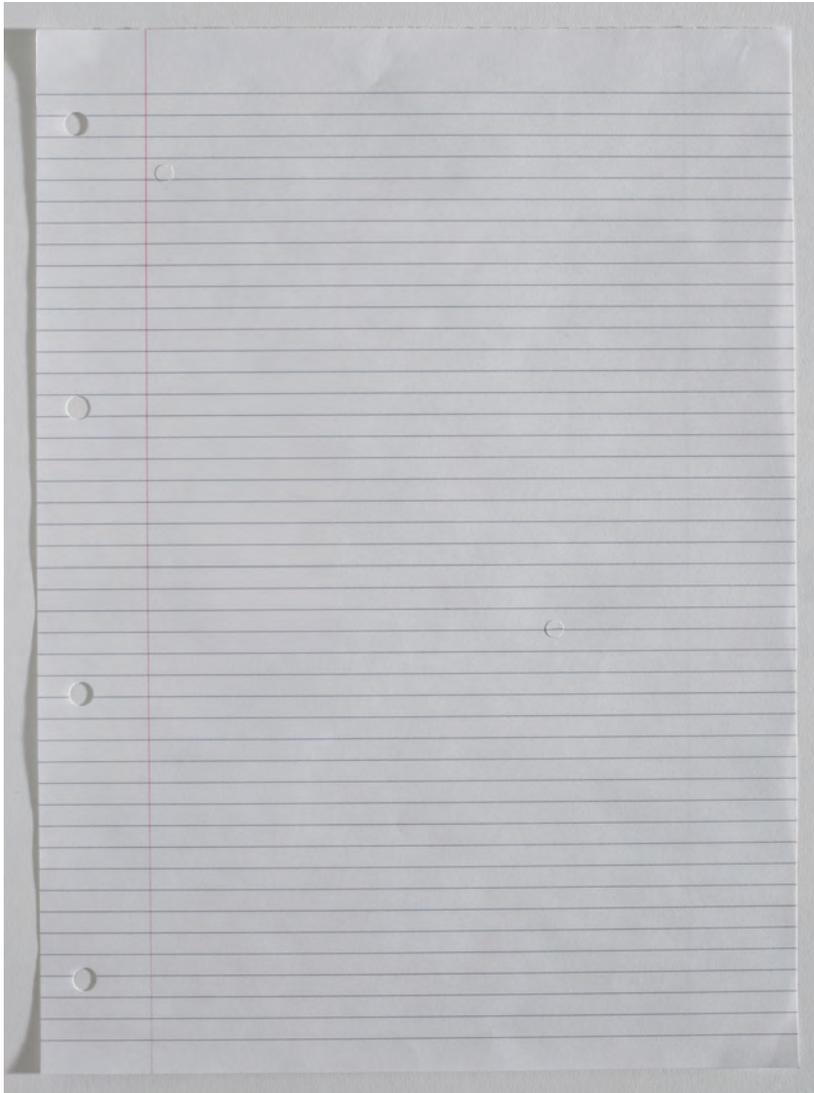
Image 5.10:   *Dotted Lines*, 2010–2015
                Paper collage, 21 x 29.7 cm
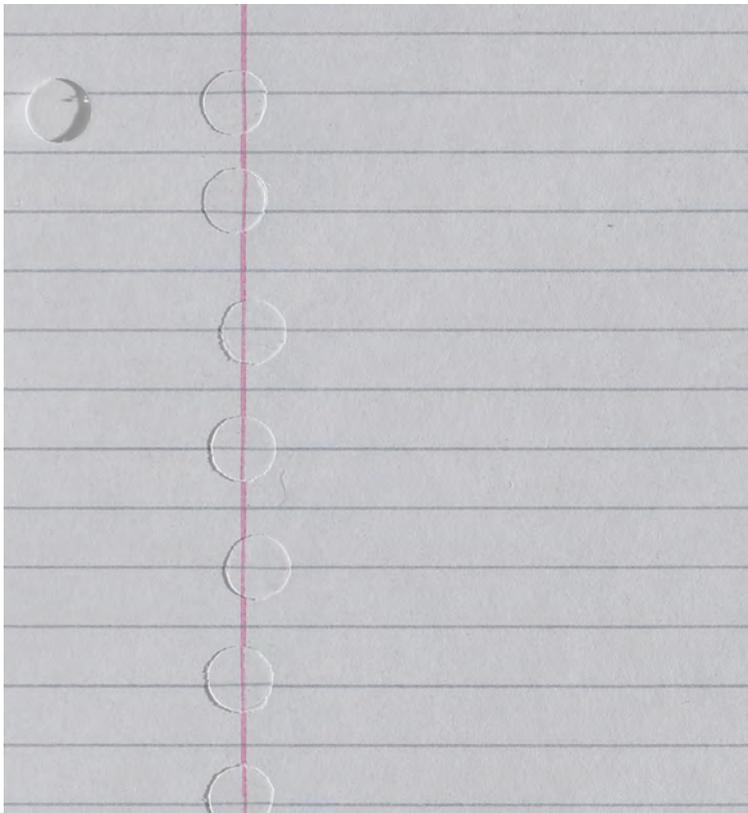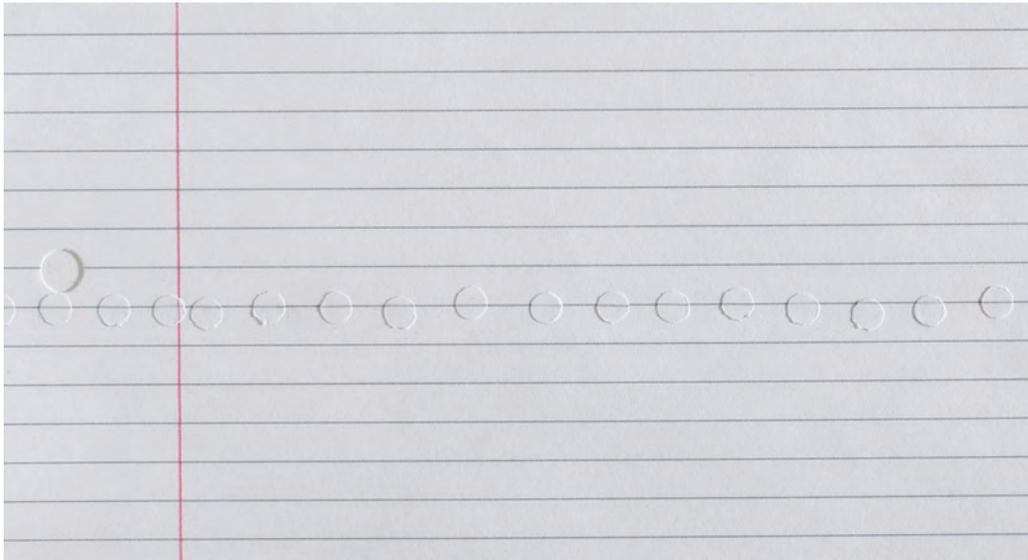
Image 5.11:   *Dotted Lines*, 2010–2015
              Paper collages, 21 x 29.7 cm each

Even though these works do not directly involve a tracing over of something,
they still relate to the discussion in chapter 4 since they involve a remaking of parts of
the surface. The mark, then, can still be seen as operating within a *retrait*. The artist's
intervention or mark is literally a repetition of the surface that simultaneously
withdraws into the surface and becomes partially lost. The surface not only folds *onto*
itself—repeats itself—but also folds *into* itself, rendering the repetition partially

indiscernible.[35] This folding onto and into itself of the surface partially undoes the artist's mark as well as the spatiotemporal relations between mark and surface, the "spatial register of collage," as Briony Fer calls the placement of one plane on top of another.[36] Indeed, in actuality, I am still affixing one plane on top of another. Visually, however, this spatial and temporal order—one plane over another, one plane after another—is disturbed. The continuity between collaged piece and surface means that background and foreground partially cohere with each other. It is not immediately possible to see which piece, if any, was placed on top of the surface. Instead of a clear distinction between before and after, between surface and mark, a situation approximating what Ettinger calls besidedness arises. Before and after, surface and mark, coexist such that at times they become indiscernible. The surface, in other words, may appear to be unchanged.[37]

Difference has been introduced of course, despite the material sameness between mark and surface, but it has been confined to a very fine line between surface and mark, an almost imperceptible infra-thin space, to go back to Hoptman's discussion of Duchamp's term. Another way to understand infra-thin is as an almost indiscernible difference that still makes a difference.[38] One example Duchamp gives is when the smoke of tobacco smells also of the mouth that exhaled it.[39] Another example involves "the infra thin interval" which separates two things considered to be identical,

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[35] The action of folding is actually embedded within the operations of the *retrait*. In terms of movement, the return and withdrawal of the *retrait* almost forms a fold, a wave that retreats and returns. Derrida, "The *Retrait* of Metaphor," 66. The conceptual fold of the *retrait* is literalised in the collages under discussion here, where the surface is both repeated and covered through being folded over itself—the mark operates as the fold.

[36] Fer, *On Abstract Art*, 30.

[37] The spatial register of collage—one plane over another—was something Cubist collages challenged. In his discussion of Picasso's *Ace of Clubs* (1914), Richard Shiff draws attention to the fact that collaged pieces placed over the surface appear to lie underneath drawn elements on the surface. Shiff, "Picasso's Touch," 43. This spatiotemporal challenge relates to pictorial illusion and representation. In the case of my works, it relates to the partial disappearance of my interventions and their indiscernibility from the surrounding surface. In other words, it is specifically connected to my aim to make marks that approach the surface.

[38] Duchamp wrote down several examples associated with the infra-thin in his notes. Each example illuminates a slightly different aspect of the infra-thin, thus, allowing for somewhat different understandings of the term.

[39] Duchamp, *Marcel Duchamp, Notes*, note 33.

such as two forms cast in the same mould or two mass-produced objects.[40] The mark and surface in the works discussed in this section are almost identical since the mark forms part of the same mass-produced material as the surface. The mark is also placed over a nearly identical part of the surface. The difference between the layers is almost indiscernible, approaching the condition of the infra-thin. It is still there, however, and contributes to how the relationship between mark and surface may be understood.

In addition to minor visual discontinuities in the image, there is always a small textural differentiation as the added pieces extrude slightly from the surface. If the viewer were to touch the surfaces, she would be able to feel the added pieces. She would also be able to see the added pieces when looking at each collage sideways rather than straight on or whilst moving and viewing each work. Both of these situations are made possible with the way the *Faulty Samples* series is presented—as a set of modified sample books that viewers can look through. As such, touching is invited and the viewer can move through the works as she looks through the books.[41]

As with works in earlier chapters, the relationship between mark and surface approximates a parallel and shifting process of borderlinking and borderspacing. Parts of the mark and of the surface leak into each other and this continuity challenges the border between them. The seam/line that, according to de Zegher, both separates and joins collaged piece and surface, here functions somewhat differently. It does not clearly operate as a line of separation nor as a seam that holds two things together yet apart. It also does not disappear completely, allowing collaged piece and surface to fuse. Instead, its status remains equivocal. At times, it appears to partially dissolve, allowing a transgression of boundaries while maintaining a minimal, almost imperceptible spacing or difference. At other times, the minimal difference between collaged piece and surface slowly emerges. This difference can be thought of as difference-in-proximity or distance-in-proximity in two senses: it arises in proximity, when the viewer is very close to the work, and it also arises *through* the proximity and along the connection between mark and surface—it is the infra-thin space between

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[40] Ibid., notes 35, 18.

[41] The viewing of these works is further discussed in chapter 8.

them. Given the material continuation between mark and surface, it might be more appropriate to think of it as distance-in-extreme-proximity. As the viewer observes and, in some cases, touches the surface, marks begin to arise, both as forms and lines. Even when lines emerge, however, it sometimes remains unclear which parts belong to the surface and which parts have been added to it, that is, which is the surface and which is the mark. The lines and the forms they *almost* demarcate may be difficult to place exactly.

PRESQUE VU:
CONTINUOUS DISCONTINUITIES

The mismatches between mark and surface are amplified in works where the added pieces are not attached "at their place" but rather somewhere else on the surface.[42] Rather than attempting to remake parts of the surface precisely, these works attempt to partially disrupt and reorganise the surface. Given that surface and collaged piece have similar or identical images on them and come from the exact same material, the disruption and reorganisation can only ever be partial and may require work to be identified.

In several *Dotted Lines* works, lines are redirected or new lines are made using the line fragments on each chad. In one collage, a vertical line has been added almost halfway through the page while, in another collage, a horizontal line has been added between two printed lines. These interventions are more discernible since the interruption they cause is greater. In several *Masquetry* works, I cut printed wood rings from a piece of adhesive vinyl and attached them onto another piece in such a way so that they run perpendicular to the wood rings on the background. Again, these interventions are more discernible since they cause a greater disruption on the surface.

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[42] I experimented extensively with various interventions on a surface, from interventions that tended more towards visual continuity to interventions that tended more towards discontinuity. I was interested in seeing how these various interventions came across and how far continuity and discontinuity could be explored before arriving at a clear mark/surface differentiation. The variety of works is a result of this experimentation.
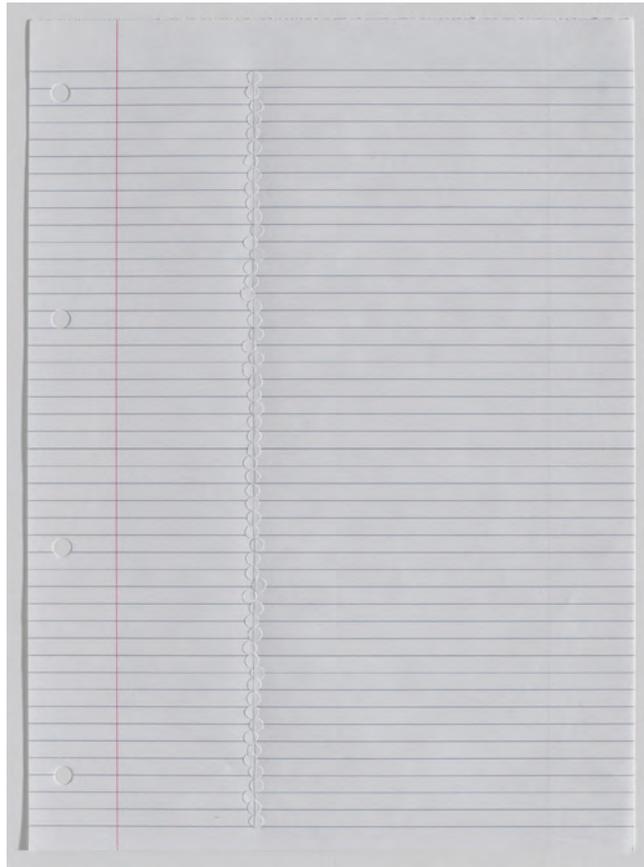
Image 5.12:   *Dotted Lines*, 2010–2015
               Paper collage, 21 x 29.7 cm

Image 5.13:   *Masquetry IV*, 2014
               Adhesive vinyl collage on board, 38 x 50
               cm

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In the *Faulty Samples* works, the placement of pieces varies each time depending on the pattern. In *Faulty Samples (Stack)* (2014), a series of cubes from the geometric pattern has been attached next to another series of cubes, resulting in a small stack. For the work *Faulty Samples (Outgrowth)* (2012), one of the flowers of the pattern, near the edge of the piece of fabric, has been "grown" with the addition of collaged flowers, leaves, and branches. The outgrowth almost reaches the other end of the piece of fabric, "growing" over pre-existing foliage. The addition of flowers and leaves results in many interruptions or visual stutters. Interrupted leaves, missing bits of flowers, coloured shapes that lurk around recognisable images and that do not seem to belong anywhere—these emerge when looking closely. They appear around the border between a collaged piece and the surface, a border that is quite difficult to locate despite these scattered bits of images around it. Even though each piece is not "at its place," it still partially blends in with its surroundings, becomes absorbed by the busy pattern and vivid colours, and may require time and attentiveness before it can emerge. As such, even these more obvious disruptions in the printed image have the potential to be seen as part of the surface. Given the partial continuity between mark and surface, it is still possible to assume that this is how each sample was originally printed. A zone of indiscernibility emerges between collaged piece and surface: perhaps the outgrowth is part of the pattern or perhaps the stack of cubes is a printing mistake, an accident.

The visual disruptions in the *Masquetry* works are probably the most successful in presenting themselves as already part of the surface rather than the result of an intentional addition. The visual disturbances in many of these works are actually discernible. Some wood rings appear to end suddenly and some materialise out of nowhere. These disruptions are a result of collaged pieces placed over the pattern, but this does not immediately register. The surface initially comes across as flat and homogeneous, as discussed earlier. As such, disruptions in the pattern either register as part of the pattern—the pattern has been designed with these disruptions or the original photographed wood already had these disruptions as part of its figure—or
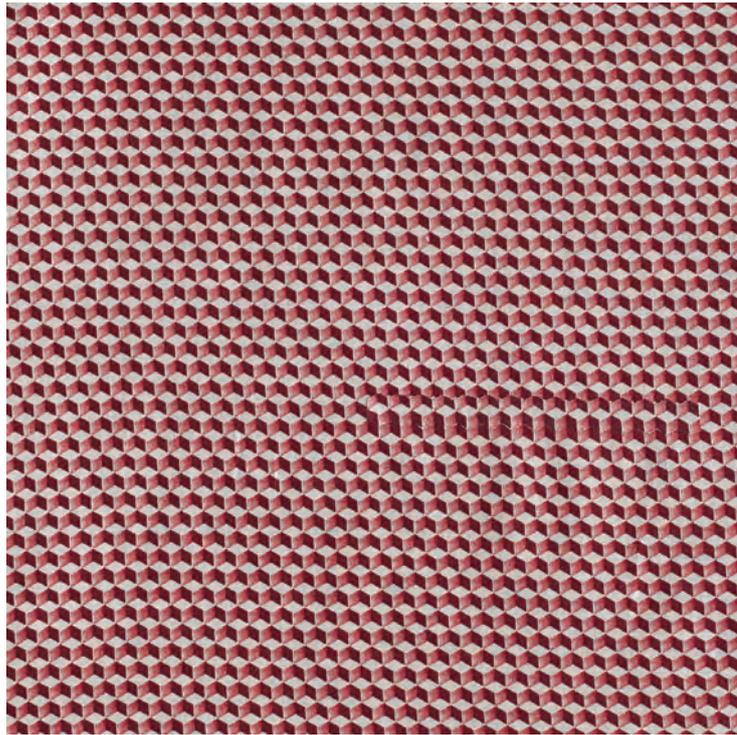
Image 5.14:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Stack*) (detail), 2014
Fabric collage, 29.5 x 26 cm

Image 5.15:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Outgrowth*) (detail), 2012
Fabric collage, 29.2 x 35 cm

as a printing error.[43] Even in cases where the disturbance is quite obvious, such as when wood rings appear to run perpendicular to each other, the homogeneity of the surface—its consistent texture and colours—suggests that this is how the vinyl was actually printed. Even when I look at some of these works from a relative distance, I cannot say with certainty which parts have been attached onto the bigger piece. I can see the disturbance, I can see where the pattern is interrupted and I know that I added small pieces of adhesive vinyl at various places, but I cannot tell which pieces are in the background and which are in the foreground. As discussed in the previous section, it makes no sense talking about background and foreground—the two have almost merged, giving the impression that nothing was actually done to these surfaces. This is how they were manufactured in the first place.

Even though the interventions may be more discernible in works where the collaged pieces are "out of place," the disruptions can still come across as part of the manufacture of each surface: either part of its original design or a result of an error during printing. Thus, the artist's mark is still partially undone. In works where the collaged pieces are "at their place," the mark attempts to remake parts of the surface, to match its initial design and printing. In works where the collaged pieces are "out of place," the mark attempts to go back and modify the initial design or intervene in the printing of each surface, remaking it as a slightly different surface.

<div align="center">

BESIDE AN(OTHER) ARTIST:
LOUISE HOPKINS

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For a series of works from 2003, Hopkins worked on graph paper and sheet music. She used a knife to carefully scratch away parts of the printed information. In *Untitled (476)*, she removed parts of the blue lines printed approximately at the centre of a sheet of metric graph paper, leaving a large area almost blank. She then recreated

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[43] There are several commercial adhesive vinyl and laminate designs that include intentional disruptions in their pattern. Some of them are meant to give the appearance of various types of wood. Others look like smaller planks combined together, imitating the appearance of wooden floor designs. Moreover, I have come across adhesive vinyl designs where the printing is not of a good quality, thus, resulting in blurry images, or where there are actual mistakes in the pattern, such as smudges or parts where there is a slight discontinuity, as if the surface moved slightly as it was being printed.

the lines using blue acrylic ink, connecting all the remaining printed lines with her own, hand-painted lines. In the case of *Untitled (138)*, she removed all the notes from the sheet music and this resulted in the removal of several small sections from almost all stave lines. Some parts were not removed completely, leaving a ghostly trace of the printed notes and lines. She then used pencils to redraw the lines over the traces.

In both cases, her handmade marks result in a visual disruption. When looking at *Untitled (476)*, a big part of the surface appears to be faded, as if something spilled on it accidentally causing the printed lines to blur and lose their crispness and straightness. *Untitled (138)* differs in that what the viewer sees could potentially be sheet music that was not printed correctly. The dispersed pencil lines appear to be faded printed lines, the result of a malfunctioning printer or the result of printer ink running out. The fact that Hopkins' interventions are dispersed rather regularly on the page and the fact that they appear in groups, one after the other on consecutive lines (a side-effect of erasing the notes), support this scenario of a malfunctioning printer. In this case, the artist's interventions are conceptually erased since what we see is potentially a badly printed yet unchanged sheet of music staff paper.

Even though Hopkins' process of working differs from the works discussed in this chapter, the effect is similar. There is a continuity between mark and surface that partially hides or suppresses the artist's actions, precisely because these actions are a response to the surface or material at hand. As such, the operation of the mark in my works is closer to that in Hopkins' works rather than in other collages.[44]

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[44] For example, several of John Stezaker's collages, such as works from his *Castle* series, utilise very similar images or parts of the same image. His interventions are usually minimal and singular—a single cut piece added onto a surface, parts of two similar images juxtaposed, or even parts of the same image rearranged. There is usually some form of visual continuity between the various pieces, especially when they come from the same image. There is always, however, a visible disjunction and the line along which the parts are joined and separated is visible. The artist's interventions, however minimal, involve much more obvious violations of the surface and clearer visual inconsistencies than the works discussed in this chapter. The word "violate" is one that Stezaker uses when discussing his work. "The Encounter with the Real: John Stezaker in Conversation with Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Lynda Morris," 117. Instances of two identical surfaces overlapping can be found in a few of Picasso's collages where smaller pieces of newspaper are placed over larger pieces of newspaper. An example is *Bowl with Fruit, Violin, and Wineglass* (1913).
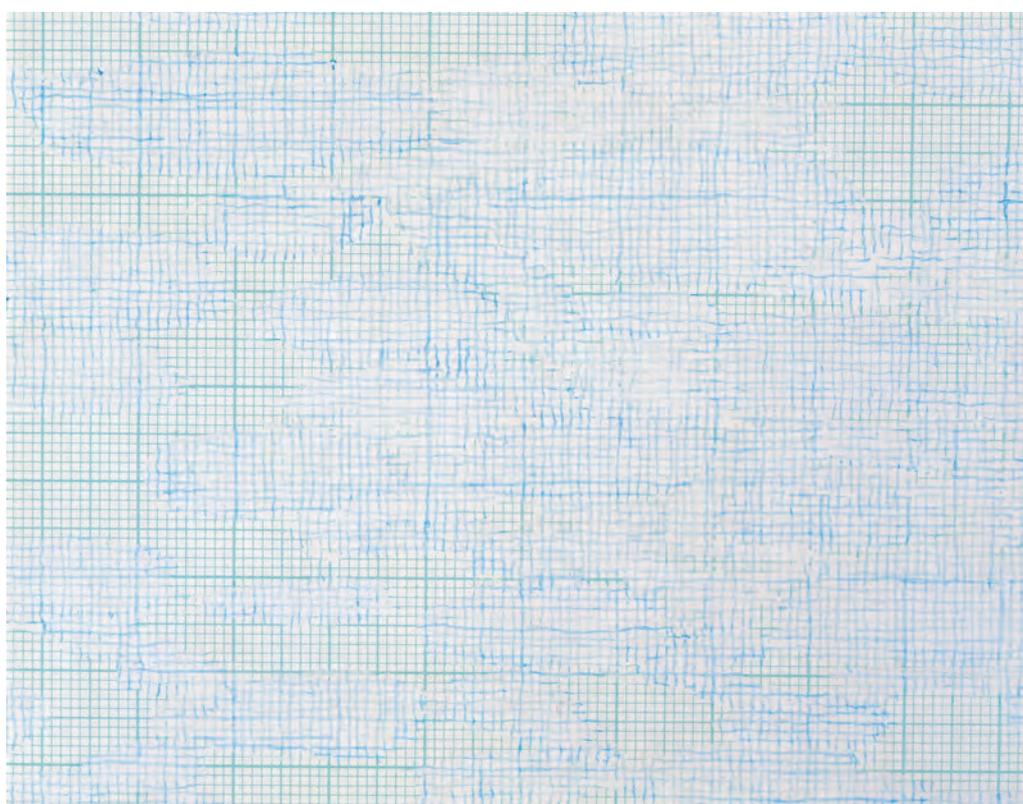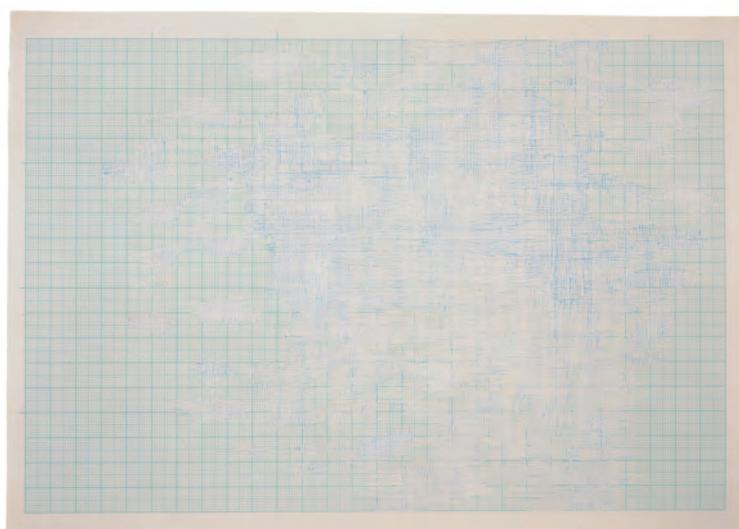
Image 5.16:   Louise Hopkins, *Untitled (476),* 2003
                Acrylic ink on metric graph paper, 50 x 41 cm
                Images courtesy of the artist
                © Louise Hopkins
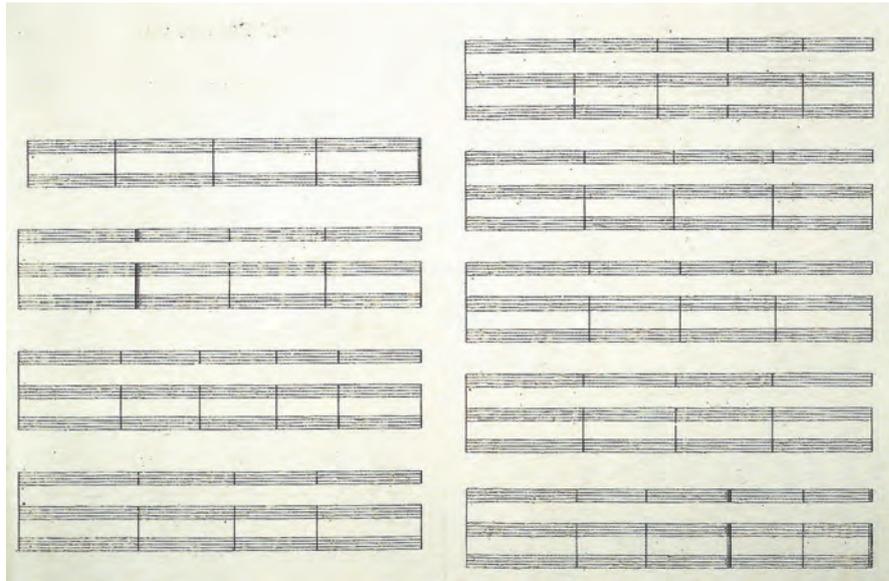
Image 5.17:   Louise Hopkins, *Untitled (138),* 2003
              Pencil on partly erased sheet music, 45 x 30.5 cm
              Images courtesy of the artist
              © Louise Hopkins

In Hopkins' case, the process of making involves erasure with a knife, a potentially violent act, followed by a remaking, a potentially healing/ameliorative act.[45] The hand persists but because it tries to recreate a previous mark, a mechanically printed mark, it remains partially suppressed. The artist's interventions initially come across as minor errors or accidents and only on closer inspection reveal themselves as handmade marks. Moreover, the works form an encounter between handmade and mechanically printed marks, something relating to Hopkins' interest in investigating "what a human being is physically capable of."[46] Her hand-drawn lines reveal her struggle while attempting to make a straight line and they also "betray" her presence as a human.[47] The human presence only becomes apparent when the viewer looks at each work closely. It is a human presence that requests another human presence—the viewer in the same space with the work—in order to emerge.[48] The works, as she says, involve a humanising or a "fitting in" of the human within something other.[49] These terms could imply two different directions: the humanising could mean changing the surface/other while the "fitting in" could mean changing the artist's mark/self to fit in with the other. Both of these movements coexist in Hopkins' work and each partially overtakes the other depending on the viewer's distance from the work.

The human intervention in my works is registered at a different level since the mark is not entirely handmade and, thus, even less obvious. It is of course hand cut, something that is quite obvious when looking at the uneven edges of the fabric pieces in the *Faulty Samples* series. The hand cutting is not as obvious in the *Masquetry* series and it is converted into the repeated action of manually operating a sometimes-

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[45] Fiona Bradley describes Hopkins' works as veering "towards savagery" since they involve "attacking them [the printed lines] with a knife." Bradley, "Mark Making," 19.

[46] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Relating to this, Hopkins says: "I think what matters is seeing something, being with it, being physically with it. That is what interests me with painting and drawing. You have to see it. You have to sit with it. It has physical presence." Ibid.

[49] Ibid. Hopkins is referring to the world ("how human beings fit into or exist in the world, and how they change it") as well as to the materials she uses for her paintings and drawings.

malfunctioning hole puncher in the *Dotted Lines* series. Both activities of cutting and attaching ultimately relate back to the hand.[50] They remain, however, quotidian and depersonalised, especially when compared with the artist's mark in painting and drawing.[51] According to Richard Shiff, activities such as cutting and attaching "never entered the discourse of 'expressive' pictorialism" since they are usually considered "mundane actions of which anyone is capable."[52] These actions are, thus, not associated with "a personalised authorial moment" nor with "artistic mastery."[53] Instead, they "define and retain localised physicality (the character of a cut indicates qualities of the given material)." Cuts "call attention to themselves, the action that generated them, and the physicality of the material they transform."[54] My mark in these works is not hand drawn or hand painted but rather is part of the surface, suggesting a fading out of the humanising aspect and a movement towards the otherness of the surface.[55] Through the cutting and attaching, attention is drawn to the qualities and materiality of the specific surface.[56]

In terms of the original/readymade distinction as relating to marks and surfaces, which was discussed in chapter 1, these works place the marks in the direction of the readymade. The original/readymade differentiation assumes that the mark comes from "inside," and may, thus, be valued as original, while the surface

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[50] Shiff argues that because of its dependence on cutting, collage "is very much an art of touch and hand" that encourages viewers to see "through the experience of touch." Shiff, "Picasso's Touch," 41.

[51] Ibid., 42.

[52] Shiff, "Cézanne's Physicality," 162.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] The issue of the "humanising" of the surface or the "dehumanising" of the artist is further discussed in chapter 7.

[56] It would be interesting in future research to compare these works with the more recent work of Susan Collis which involves remaking objects and marks from scratch. For instance, in *Bespoke* (2012), Collis commissioned a custom Formica laminate design that involved black paint drips on wood. The drips were not added on a readymade surface by the artist but were part of its manufacture from the beginning. Similarly, the installation included pieces of apparently stained tweed cloth. The apparent paint stains were formed out of differently coloured threads and were part of the cloth's design—they were created when the cloth was woven. In these pieces, both mark and surface are made out of the same material and process. I am not discussing these works here because in this research project I am focusing on interventions on a pre-existing surface.

exists "outside," as a readymade object.[57] This can no longer be sustained here since the marks, in approaching the surface, have become actual pieces of the surface, involving both "original" (the hand cutting and placing) and readymade aspects.

ALMOST COMPLETE REORGANISATION: REPEATED INTERVENTIONS

Earlier, I discussed how discontinuities introduced in the pre-existing pattern of a surface may be taken to be part of that pattern. Here, I focus on this issue further by looking at repeated interventions. Instead of creating isolated disruptions, these repeated interventions may result in a reorganisation and, thus, remaking of the pre-existing pattern—almost a remaking of the entire surface.

Many of the *Faulty Samples* works involve interventions that have been repeated in a regular fashion. In *Faulty Samples (Back to Front)* (2013), the purple flowers and leaves forming part of the background have been cut from a small sample of the fabric and placed on top of the flowers forming part of the foreground on a different sample of the same fabric. This has been done in a regular manner such that most foreground flowers now have a background flower over them. In *Faulty Samples (All Over)* (2013), the original fabric consisted of alternate columns of pink roses and columns of small white and yellow flowers, one next to the other. I removed the roses and white and yellow flowers from one of the samples and added them to a second sample in such a way that the columns of flowers now intermingle. Again, a new pattern has been created that is not as regular as the original pattern but still registers as a pattern due to the repetition of the roses and white and yellow flowers. In *Faulty Samples (Mirror Stage)* (2013), groups of flowers have been removed from part of the fabric sample and placed next to identical groups of flowers on the remaining sample in such a way that the two sets of flowers are mirror images of each other. This mirroring could not be achieved with all flowers because I did not have enough extra fabric. Again the semi-regularity of my interventions makes them appear like part of the pattern. Finally, in *Faulty Samples (Double Growth)* (2013), groups of flowers cut

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[57] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 72–73.

Image 5.18:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Back to Front*) (detail), 2013
                Fabric collage, 29.2 x 29.2 cm

Image 5.19:   *Faulty Samples I* (*All Over*) (detail), 2013
                Fabric collage, 50 x 50 cm

Image 5.20:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Mirror Stage*) (detail), 2013
                Fabric collage, 29.2 x 34 cm

Image 5.21:   *Faulty Samples I* (*Double Growth*) (detail), 2013
                Fabric collage, 29.2 x 32 cm

from a fabric sample have been placed on an identical sample such that the two sets of flowers, the ones on the surface and the ones added, are joined at their stems. Consequently, the stems appear to flower from both ends. The choice of which stems to "grow," began randomly at first. Then, the next collage piece was placed as close to the first one as possible without overlapping it, so as to keep the surface relatively flat, and so on.

In these works, the repetition and semi-regularity of the interventions allow the formation of a new pattern. The artist's interventions approach the surface by simulating, to some extent, the repetitiveness of the pre-existing pattern. In other words, my interventions and the surface share a repetitive nature. Repetition is a defining characteristic of these decorative patterns, with the same images repeated at regular intervals.[58] Working with samples means that I can only see a section of the pattern, thus, this repetitiveness may not always be obvious. Theoretically, the next section of the fabric repeats the sample and so on. This allows my semi-regular interventions to blend in with the pattern. Even though my interventions may not be identical everywhere on the surface, the suggestion is there that the next section of the fabric will look exactly like the modified sample. My interventions are, thus, more convincing as a pattern. In fact, they create a new sample of a product that does not exist, effectively redesigning the fabric.[59] There is, thus, a two-way movement—the pre-existing pattern is being disrupted and transformed into another pattern while the artist's interventions eventually begin to become part of the new pseudo-pattern. There is closeness between the two as one partially "consumes" the other, opening zones of indiscernibility between the actual printed pattern and the collaged pattern.[60]

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[58] This is discussed, for example, in E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order*, 37, 151–155. The repetition of decorative patterns is not something this research focuses on. My focus is on the relationship between the artist's marks/actions and the surface. Repetition within this research becomes a meeting point between the pre-existing patterns on the fabrics and my own interventions.

[59] As Rosalind Krauss points out, the technique of collage is derived from commercial practice. The moving around of "bits and pieces" of material before affixing them on the surface, specifically reminds of layout design. Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, 71. My collages, acting as reorganisations of the surface, can be seen within this tradition as redesigns of the fabric.

[60] I have experimented with a variety of fabric samples. The most successful in terms of this closeness between the pre-existing pattern and my interventions are the ones

As the artist, I am emulating the repetitive nature of the pattern as well as the mechanical mode of reproduction of the surface. I come up with a rule, based on the pre-existing pattern, and I then repeatedly follow that rule to a degree of completion, that is, until I run out of pieces to add or until the rule has been completed. The artist's actions become somewhat mechanised, approaching the method of mass manufacture of these fabrics. The original designer of these fabrics designed one section that was then automatically repeated on a computer to give a sense of larger sections of the fabric, a process called tiling or patterning.[61] The actual fabric was then manufactured mechanically, with the same pattern printed again and again. The artist's actions emulate this repetitive process since the interventions are repeated in order to remake the pattern.[62]

The regularity and repetitiveness of the interventions renders the artist's actions partially indiscernible since they become absorbed in the repetitiveness of the pattern. By emulating the repetition inherent in the pre-existing pattern, the interventions result in becoming part of a new pattern. Each sample is almost redesigned and presented as if this has always been its design. The repeated interventions, thus, form another instance of a *retrait* since they involve a repetition that results in the withdrawal of the artist's actions. The repeated interventions become partially subsumed in the pattern, withdrawing into it. Paradoxically perhaps, the repetitive work of the artist renders the interventions indiscernible as, initially at least, more work results in "less" to see in terms of the artist's actions. If I were to add more marks to these samples, as long as I kept the repetitive nature of the interventions, my actions would still remain partially indiscernible.[63]

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where the printed pattern is quite busy. In those cases, the artist's interventions are more effectively absorbed into the surface and become a new pattern that incorporates both the pre-existing pattern and the added pieces of fabric.

[61] In mathematics, tiling involves fitting together shapes, without gaps between them and without overlapping, to create a repetitive design. Patterns involve the repetition of the same motif in a more or less systematic way. Grünbaum and Shepard, *Tilings and Patterns*, 1–13.

[62] The artist's position in relation to these works is taken up in chapter 7.

[63] With these works, there is the possibility of repeating various interventions on the same surface, given a greater supply of fabric, so as to reach a point of nearly breaking the pattern and almost revealing the artist's actions. This situation would aspire to the

A different situation is suggested by a group of Louise Hopkins' fabric paintings. For *Untitled (282)* (1999), Hopkins chose a fabric displaying courtly love scenes—aristocrats courting young ladies, surrounded by flowers, wreaths, pheasants, and swirling banners, scrolls, and ribbons. The artist worked on the front of the fabric this time. She chose specific marks already present in the design—thin and short straight and wavy lines used to form and shade the depicted figures—and recreated these in all the empty spaces of the pattern, "overwhelming the image with itself."[64] The repeated painted marks radically modify the printed pattern, which gets almost completely drowned in the "all-overness" of the web of lines.[65] From some distance away, the work appears to be an all-over abstract painting. Printed and painted lines have slightly different colours but from afar it is impossible to determine that the marks resulted from different processes of making—they all look like painted marks, especially since the work is presented as a stretched painting hanging on the wall.

Whereas Hopkins' painted interventions modify extensively the pre-existing pattern, subsuming the printed images and transforming the piece of fabric into a painting, my interventions initially come across as part of the pattern. In a sense, they move the other way—instead of subsuming the pattern, they almost become subsumed by it. Of course, in both Hopkins' and my own works, there is a two-way movement: the artists' marks depend on the surface and are, thus, partially suppressed, while at the same time they change the surface, possibly partially suppressing it. I am suggesting, however, that Hopkins' fabric paintings initially tend towards the suppression of the pre-existing pattern while my collages initially tend towards the suppression of the artist's marks. Nevertheless, both groups of works open zones of

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creation of an infinitely proliferating surface, a condition Briony Fer identifies in the collages of Yayoi Kusama, which are based on photographs of her work. One such example is *Compulsion Furniture (Accumulation)* (c. 1964). According to Fer, these collages "thicken a surface to such a state of crowded intensity that it proliferates to infinity, endlessly repeating." Fer, *The Infinite Line*, 94. Exploring this almost endless repetition in relation to indiscernibility is a future development of this project.

[64] Bradley, "Mark Making," 15.

[65] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

indiscernibility between the artists' marks and the surface with its pre-existing marks such that a clear differentiation between the two becomes challenging.

Image 5.22:   Louise Hopkins, *Untitled (282),* 1999
Oil paint on patterned furnishing fabric, 146 x 130 cm
Images courtesy of the artist
© Louise Hopkins

IN SEARCH OF MEANING:
INDEXICAL CONTIGUITY AND THE IN-BETWEEN

While discussing Pablo Picasso's collages, Rosalind Krauss suggests that the affixing of a collaged piece, the setting down of one plane on another plane, "is the centre of collage as a signifying system."[66] Krauss argues that placing a plane on a support literalises depth since the plane is physically in front of or on top of the support. This actual and clear overlap leads collage towards representation since "the supporting ground that is obscured by the affixed plane resurfaces in a miniaturised facsimile in the collage element itself."[67] The collaged element, in other words, comes to represent the obscured plane. According to Krauss, who follows Ferdinand de Saussure's analysis of the sign, collage demonstrates the need to efface something in order to represent it. This condition of absence is essential to the operations of the sign, which is a "substitute, proxy, stand-in, for an *absent* referent."[68] It is only by obscuring and, thus, absenting the ground that the collaged element can represent it. As such, collage manages to effect "the representation of representation."[69]

In the works under discussion here, the collaged element does indeed cover the support but this obscuring comes across as partial precisely because the collaged element is quite literally a piece of the support. Instead of pencil or paint on a surface, or instead of collages where the collaged element is of a different material and/or colour from the surface, in these works both the surface and the collaged pieces come from the exact same material. The works discussed in chapter 4 lead to only a partial covering of the pre-existing marks because aspects of those marks are retained when tracing over them. Similarly, the works discussed in this chapter lead to a partial covering of the surface because the mark, the collaged element, *is* part of the surface.

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[66] Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," 37. My use of Krauss relates to her discussion of the basic action of collage, which is the one I have followed in the works discussed here: cutting small planes and attaching them on a bigger plane. Given Krauss' focus on this basic act, I find her analysis useful and relevant to my research, which is not about collage specifically but rather about finding ways of responding to and approaching surfaces.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 33. Italics added.

[69] Ibid., 37.

And precisely because it is part of the surface, it partially disappears into the surroundings, rejoining the pre-existing pattern. The collaged element is, therefore, itself partially obscured. This means that the covering/obscuring is not obvious, as I discussed earlier. There is almost an obscuring of the obscuring of the support, as the collaged element becomes nearly indiscernible from its surroundings.[70]

The fact that the collaged piece is actually part of the support—part of the surface—problematizes Krauss' discussion. If it is the thing itself then how or what might it mean? Barbara Bolt's discussion of the index in relation to collage is useful here. According to Bolt, the index provides "the key to the being of collage."[71] The example Bolt uses is Picasso's collage *La Suze* (1912) in which the bottle label on the work *is* an actual bottle label. As such, in the case of collage, the signifier and the referent may coincide.[72] To fully comprehend Bolt's point, a revisiting of Peirce's multiple definitions of the index is necessary. In addition to the index being defined as physically caused by its object—an existential quality—and as pointing to its object—a deictic quality—the index is also defined as being part of a whole. The index, according to Peirce, can be a fragment of its object or it can be part of a group in which it belongs and which it, thereby, indicates. For example, odd numbers act as an index of all numbers.[73] In Bolt's discussion, elements used in a collage are taken out of a specific context—a bigger whole—and relocated onto a flat surface. As fragments, the collaged pieces are indices of their previous context. They also *are* a thing in themselves—just like odd numbers *are* numbers, the wine label on Picasso's collage *is* an actual label. Thus, the index in collage combines signifier and referent, bridging the gap between them.

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[70] If the obscuring evident in collage effects the "representation of representation," as Krauss argues, then the obscuring of this obscuring suggests an undoing of representation. This point relates to the partial undoing of the mark and of the spatial register of collage, issues discussed earlier in the chapter. As this research does not focus on the issue of representation, this suggestion will remain just that for now.

[71] Bolt, *Art Beyond Representation*, 180. She also includes other art forms within the indexical: assemblage, performance art, and environmental art.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce 2*, 176. This definition can still fall within the existential qualities of the index since being part of a whole or part of a group implies some form of contiguity. Moreover, a part of a whole can deictically point to that whole.

Since I have already referred to Krauss' discussion of Picasso's collages, I should point out that this indexical analysis does not quite agree with her overall discussion of those collages. Krauss insists that in Picasso's case the sign, "like the linguist's tokens, has no natural relation to a referent, no real-world model that gives it a meaning or secures its identity."[74] Picasso's signs are symbolic, taking on meaning based on oppositional differences from a surrounding context. A piece of newspaper, for example, can mean a solid surface or it can mean immaterial atmosphere, depending on what is happening around it in each work.[75] The crucial point is precisely that Krauss is referring to works that, according to her analysis, depend on structural differences, on oppositions that allow meaning to surface. This is not the case with the works under discussion in this chapter. Difference here is not oppositional but barely exists as an infra-thin space on the verge of indiscernibility. This minimal difference between mark and surface approximates differentiation-in-jointness along the mark's almost indiscernible edges.

The contiguity of the index, thus, provides a more fruitful point of view. The mark's indexical operation depends on its adherence to its object—the surface—throughout the process of making. If an index has an existential or ontological connection to its referent or if it depends on the existence of the referent, then the mark-operating-as-index depends on the surface it points towards. Without the specific surface, there would not be this specific mark. The presence of the mark indicates the existence of the specific surface. The mark, thus, does not mean apart from the surface. This issue was discussed in the previous chapter as well. When using the surface as mark, or when using the surface to mark itself, the collaged piece "points," however subtly, to the surface indicating that it is *that* (which is exactly why it becomes difficult to see the mark). The mark *is* part of the surface—the signifier and the referent/object coincide both physically and conceptually. The indexical mark, in this case, is getting almost too close to the referent/surface, thus, challenging its operation as an index.

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[74] Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, 28.

[75] Ibid.

This nearly complete adherence to the surface is the mark's partial undoing, as I have shown, since it places the mark in an equivocal position. On the one hand, the mark tries to remain close to the surface—in fact, in the works discussed in this chapter it has become part of the same material as the surface. On the other hand, to be a mark (and an index) it needs to differentiate itself from the surface, the same thing it is a part of. The mark places itself somewhere between these positions. At the same time that the mark forms part of the surface, it also modifies the surface, thus, introducing a minor difference and exceeding its indexical operation in the process. A pure index can only provide "pure assurance of existence" of its referent.[76] A mark that is determined by the surface but also modifies the surface exceeds this function. The marks discussed in the previous chapter also exceeded their indexical function. The marks discussed here seem to exceed their indexical function sometimes less (materially they are the same as the surface) and sometimes more when they lead to a greater modification (reorganisation) of the surface. It almost seems as if the surface will turn into an index, pointing to the mark that modifies it. After all, according to Peirce, an index can be its own object, indicating itself.[77] I do not think these works reach this point because a differentiation, however indiscernible, persists, thus, mark and surface never become exactly the same. The mark and the surface may open up to each other but they also open up to several other others—the artist whose actions modified the surface, the designer(s) whose work brought the surfaces into being, and the processes used to construct the mark and the surface. These encounters take place at the seam where mark and surface meet. Hence, meaning is situated in an infra-thin space, somewhere between mark and surface.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this meaning can be thought of as co-meaning—a transgression of borderlines between border-others and a mutual co-transformation. This in-between meaning emerges through processes of borderlinking and borderspacing, slight oscillations of proximity and distance, between mark and surface. The artist's marks in the works discussed in this chapter, as well as in the

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[76] Doane, "The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity," 135.

[77] Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce 2*, 176.

previous chapters, do not exist apart or independently from the surface. This becomes even clearer in this chapter where the marks literally consist of parts of the surface. They cannot but mean *with* the surface. To further address the issue of co-meaning, it is necessary to unfold the current discussion and consider all the others that participate in the encounter between mark and surface. This unfolding will have to wait till part III.

6

MOVING THROUGH WORKPLACES:
FROM MARK AND SURFACE TO WORK AND SPACE

The previous chapters dealt with the relationship between mark and surface within each work, focusing on how it can move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state can be accessed. In this chapter, my discussion unfolds to include the relationship between work and space.[1] Since all works are shown within a space, their relationship with that space affects how they are viewed. Through the work I have made as part of this research, I consider how the notion of the in-between can extend into installation. When making and installing works, I have attempted to destabilise the border between work and space so that their relationship can move beyond a clear differentiation or opposition. In addition to the levels of indiscernibility discussed in earlier chapters, yet another level of indiscernibility arises when exhibiting works within a space—an indiscernibility that results from the besidedness and continuity between work and surroundings.

Within the context of this project, I view the relationship between work and space as parallel to and an extension of the relationship between mark and surface. Any installation of work in space can be seen, in its most basic form, as an overlay. Work is brought into the space and placed over it in some way, whether this involves hanging paintings on walls or placing objects on the floor. Within the general figure/ground framework, in traditional or conventional installations of artworks the space forms the ground on which the works/figures "stand." The work, as an autonomous "siteless, nomadic art object," can be detached from its surroundings, which act as a temporary backdrop while the work is being shown in that space.[2] This conventional work/space relationship parallels the basic mark/surface relationship

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[1] By space I am referring to the actual physical space within which I worked and exhibited the work as well as, to some extent, the relationship of that space to its immediate surroundings and geographical and cultural context.

[2] This is how Miwon Kwon characterises works seen within modernist ideology. She states that such an ideology is still predominant. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 30.

discussed in chapter 1.[3] The parallel between the two relationships relates to the action

of placing something, whether that is a mark or a work, over a pre-existing surface.[4]

Moreover, both relationships depend, to a certain extent, on clear differentiation—the

mark or work differentiates itself from the surrounding surface or space. In terms of

installation, the staging of an object is usually supposed to draw the viewer's attention

to that object. Conventional exhibitions of paintings, for example, do just that by

placing the works at appropriate heights and with the appropriate distance between

them so as to allow the viewer to focus on one painting at a time.[5]

This conventional model is not always followed and it has been questioned

extensively, especially since the 1960s, through installation and site-specific art.[6]

Specifically, the re-conceptualisation of site as something other than a pure blank

space waiting to receive work and the focus on display as something integral to how a

work is experienced and understood—issues emerging out of installation and site-

specific art practices—have implications for my research. Conceptualising a space as a

non-blank entity that I can respond to resonates, methodologically, with the way I

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[3] This is not to imply that the two relationships are exactly the same. The dynamics of marking a surface are not the same as the dynamics of placing work in a space. For example, an issue like gesture is usually only relevant to marking and cannot be discussed in the same way when considering the installation of work.

[4] In fact, several installations of artworks have been written about in terms that allude to marking. Lucy Lippard, for example, views some sculptures as drawings, and consequently marks, in space. One of her examples is Eva Hesse's *Right After* (1969). Lippard, "Eva Hesse," 73. Briony Fer refers to Blinky Palermo's small paintings as "set in the enlarged pictorial space that the room has become," suggesting that the space is the ground that the works "mark." Fer, *The Infinite Line*, 193. Finally, Catherine de Zegher views several installations of objects in space as creating lines, and, thus, marks, in space. She gives several examples in "A Century Under the Sign of Line."

[5] Both Miwon Kwon and Mieke Bal point out that this type of installation is a modernist mode of presenting work. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 30; Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, 148.

[6] As the minimalist and earthworks artists of the 1960s and 1970s recognised, the "'site' in and of itself is part of the experience of the work of art." Suderburg, "Introduction: On Installation and Site Specificity," 4. Moreover, many examples of installation art have made the space part of the work. As Claire Bishop writes, "in a work of installation art, the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity." Bishop, *Installation Art*, 6. Finally, site-specific art has searched for ways in which it could engage with space. The meaning of site-specificity has changed over time, going from referring to works that are inseparable from their site—with site being conceived as a real place with its specific peculiarities, rather than a pure blank space—to works that are mobile and nomadic and which respond to sites as conceptual and discursive, in addition to physical, spaces. Kwon, *One Place After Another,* 11–31.

have been conceptualising and working with surfaces—as non-blank objects that I attempt to approach. Moreover, attending to the installation of work is an issue of artistic responsibility. As Hilary Robinson has pointed out, installing and exhibiting work form part of "the broader aspects of enunciation through the making of art," and, thus, require the artist's close attention.[7] My focus on the installation of work relates to my attempt to approach space and to access between-instants, beyond overlays and oppositions.[8]

In the Making

Issues concerning the installation of works and the relationship between work and space emerged in 2008 when I began working with found vinyl flooring to make stain paintings.[9] In attempting to find ways of displaying these works, I tried placing them on the floor, where the vinyl would have been found under normal circumstances. The works partially blended in with the wooden studio floor, visually disturbing the border between themselves and the environment. Relating to the notion of a fugitive or vanishing image, such as the stains painted on the vinyl, these works became fugitive artworks. They oscillated between being a piece of art or a piece of floor. This situation appealed to me as the relationship between work and space resonated with the relationship between mark and surface within the work. Moreover, my own marks on the vinyl echoed the scratches, dirt and stains on the actual floor, some of which were replicated on the vinyl, creating a rapport between the works and the surrounding environment.

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[7] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 84.

[8] I do not think that simply working within installation or site-specific art immediately overcomes the issue of overlay. There are several examples of installation or site-specific art that operate within clear figure/ground relationships. For example, Shelagh Wakely's *Curcuma Sul Travertino* (1991) depends, to some extent, on the differentiation between the turmeric and the floor, even as that relationship is rendered unstable due to the loose powder.

[9] These works are discussed in chapter 3. As explained in that chapter, the vinyl flooring came from my grandparents' house, which at the time was being renovated.

Image 6.1:   Installing *Stain Paintings* in the studio, Limassol, Cyprus

My studio is located in a house in central Limassol. My maternal grandparents had it built in 1963 and eventually gave it to my parents. In 1983, my family moved to a bigger house and the old one was rented out. Since 2008, I have been using the living room of the old house as my studio. It is a large space with a wooden floor, wooden doors, and a big window facing the street. The house kitchen has a tile floor, which is covered with sheets of vinyl flooring, and the kitchen cupboards are covered with a light coloured wood patterned laminate. The kitchen shelves, as well as all the wooden shelves in the bedrooms, are lined with adhesive vinyl displaying various wood patterns.[10] The house has not been renovated since 1983. The walls are cracked, paint is peeling off, and humidity stains have formed on the ceilings. Parts of the

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[10] Adhesive vinyl was used until relatively recently in Cyprus to line furniture, usually bedroom and kitchen shelves. Lined shelves can still be found in village summer homes and in old houses that have not been renovated, like my studio.

wooden floor have been damaged, the doors and furniture are scratched and stained, and the vinyl kitchen floor is full of small holes and tears.

Image 6.2:   Studio, Limassol, Cyprus

The vinyl flooring installation sparked my interest in the relationship between works and space. In subsequent installations of work in my studio, during 2008 and 2009, I began working with features of the space, for example, placing works according to the cracks on the wall. I also started using surfaces that formed part of the studio terrain. One of these was cardboard, which, as packing material for artworks, forms a staple surface in my studio. Through these experiments, the significance of space in relation to my project began to surface. I realised that my response to each surface could be extended to a response to the surrounding space. In retrospect, this first space, my studio, along with the first found non-art surface I

worked with, the vinyl flooring, put me on a trajectory of interconnected spaces and surfaces, a trajectory that continues to this day.[11]

The engagement with space carried over to my trips to London. Over the past seven years, I have travelled to London approximately once every three months to meet with my supervisors and to show them work. I have been installing this work in project spaces at Chelsea College of Arts and sometimes at Camberwell College of Arts. Over time, I became familiar with these spaces and that knowledge began to influence my installation decisions.[12] Between 2008 and 2010, these small-scale yet frequent installations of work provided useful practice, enabling me to see the potential of a sustained dialogue between work and space.

The first active engagement with a specific space in which I had the opportunity to publicly exhibit work came with the exhibition *Re-Surface* at Tenderpixel Gallery in 2009. Given that an engagement with space was already developing in my practice, I decided to work closely with the exhibition space while making the work for the show.[13] The walls and floors of the gallery, as well as everything within the space, would act as surfaces on which to compose an installation, as surfaces to be "marked." Therefore, they needed to be observed and considered carefully. Between May and July 2009, I visited the gallery several times and took photographs and measurements, gradually acquiring an intimate knowledge of the space my work would inhabit. The installation of work for *Re-Surface* was guided by elements within the space, which is not a typical white cube space.[14] I also

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[11] The potential implications of the specific conditions of my working space on my practice were pointed out by Christine Battersby after I presented a paper at the Engendering Dialogue II conference on March 31, 2012. Battersby suggested that there was something more happening in the relationship between work and surroundings, both in terms of surfaces and in terms of marks and traces. She suggested not only looking at the studio environment but also at the context of Limassol and Cyprus. This investigation does not form part of this research.

[12] The project spaces at Chelsea usually have plain floors painted grey or covered with grey vinyl flooring, white walls with external pipes, and big windows. They are usually full of chairs, tables, and leftover student work as well as signs of use: paint splashes, pieces of tape, cutting knife marks and so on.

[13] This approach was also suggested by Jeffrey Dennis, Bernice Donszelmann, Rebecca Fortnum and Jo Bruton during my PhD confirmation interview on May 5, 2009.

[14] The gallery is a rather quirky space housed in a late 19th century building on Cecil Court in London. Bryars, "A Brief History of Cecil Court." The space was originally

made works specifically for the space, responding to the marks and materials found there. Some of these decisions are discussed in the following sections.

This early experimentation pointed to the need to engage with spaces where I could both make and exhibit work. Since travelling already formed part of the research, I extended this movement by undertaking a number of residencies. Like many artists working today, I became a travelling artist.[15] Thus, I found myself in a variety of spaces each year, spaces in which I both worked for specific periods of time and then exhibited the work. This allowed me to engage with each space closely, experiment with various installations, complete site-specific works, and, eventually, present the results of this engagement to an audience.

Simultaneously, this early work increased my awareness of surfaces already found around me, in spaces I moved through, as well as surfaces relating to activities I engaged in. These surfaces were part of my everyday experiences long before I began including them in my work. Lined paper, for example, formed a content of my backpack ever since I started school and I still use it for taking notes. As discussed in earlier chapters, I began using these surfaces when I started travelling for residencies partly because they were easily accessible and transportable.[16]

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used as a bookshop and subsequently a model shop specialising in miniature gauges. Traces of these previous functions have been retained: a big shop window facing the street, a counter behind the window for displaying objects, and cupboards for storing objects. There is also a cement fireplace base on the back left corner, plaster ceiling reliefs, and wood panelling covering the top section of the walls. The gallery's location, among specialty bookstores and antique and vintage stores, is rather odd and several visitors to *Re-Surface* commented on this. The gallery feels rather dislocated. In the past three years, the gallery has undergone several changes. For instance, the floor has been painted a light grey colour.

[15] The rather common phenomenon of the travelling or nomadic artist is discussed in Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 156–157. The need to travel is also tied to more practical considerations, not directly related to but definitely affecting this project. Even though I have my own studio space in Limassol, the need to reach a larger audience and to acquire funding to make work—funding that is very often tied to residencies—have made travelling a necessity. For example, the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture provides funding for Cypriot artists wishing to undertake residencies abroad, covering travel, accommodation, production and exhibition costs. The application process for such funding is competitive. A list of all residencies I completed during this research is found in Appendix E.

[16] There are also economic considerations relating to the choice of such surfaces, many of which are relatively cheap. Found surfaces and objects are usually free.

Image 6.3:   Spaces/Workplaces (Studio, Limassol, Cyprus; Project space, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK; Project space, Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK; Friends' Studio, Ragdale Foundation, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA)

Image 6.4:   Spaces/Workplaces (Studio, Stonehouse Residency, Miramonte, California, USA; Studio, Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, Amherst, Virginia, USA; Brenna Studio, Hambidge Centre, Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA; Project space, Centre for Drawing, London, UK)

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS:
APPROACHING A SPACE AND INSTALLING WORK

My process came to involve moving into or studying a space for a period of time, bringing some works and materials with me, making work in response to the material and/or the space, and setting up temporary interventions and installations within that space. The works and materials I brought with me depended on what was present in the space as well as on the function of the space. I usually brought surfaces that were already found in the space or that could have been found there given its normal use. Once I would begin working in a space, my increased familiarisation with it might lead to both immovable and movable site-specific works.[17] Upon leaving a space, I would take the portable works with me and leave behind or remove the immovable works, thus, partially erasing my traces.[18] The portable works could then reappear in another space, becoming part of another installation.[19]

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[17] Immovable works include the wall drawing at the Stonehouse studio, and the floor collages *Minor Fix* and *Years Later,* which have been discussed in earlier chapters. Most of my other work is portable. Being a travelling artist, it became clear early on in the research that the work needed to be able to travel. That is, it needed to be easily packed and shipped (compactly) or transported in my luggage. There were both economical reasons for this as well as practical reasons. Shipping large artworks often was not financially sustainable. Many times it was not even possible. For example, several residencies in the USA only accept shipped boxes up to a certain size and weight. Moreover, additional luggage restrictions imposed by commercial airlines over the past seven years have made it difficult to fly with work stored in large portfolio folders. The movability of site-specific art is something Kwon identifies as a subsequent development of site-specificity that comes to challenge its original rigid adherence to a specific physical site. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 11–31.

[18] For example, the directors at Stonehouse requested that the wall drawing remain there. I visited the studio a year after my residency and was able to see my fading lines. I was also told that two artists that worked in the studio after me had made wall paintings. The residency directors joked that I had started a trend. The collage *Minor Fix* was also left in the gallery. In 2012, Tenderpixel's floor was painted grey so whatever was left of the collage has been painted over. Up to that point, the work inadvertently participated in all exhibitions held at the gallery. As it partially disappeared into the floor, it could coexist with other works. A wall drawing made at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts in 2012, which was based on existing paint stains, had to be painted over as per the organisation's request to return the space to its original state. I could not, strictly speaking, return the space to its original state since covering my marks meant covering the traces left on the wall by another artist. The relationship between my marks and the marks of the "other" appears in part III.

[19] The blurry distinction between installation of art and installation art, as pointed out by Claire Bishop, surfaces in my approach. As Bishop notes, there is a difference between installation *of* art and installation art but the two activities often blur. Bishop, *Installation Art*, 6. My works can be seen as individual pieces that can appear by themselves or surrounded by other works. Simultaneously, a group of works within a space operates as an installation piece in that I consider the relationships between

The spaces within which I worked and exhibited involved both spaces I was assigned and spaces I chose. With assigned spaces, the space itself suggested responses and new surfaces and works that could temporarily exist within it.[20] These surfaces and works might, in turn, suggest new spaces for future projects. With pre-selected spaces, it was my current work and the surfaces I worked with that suggested the spaces in which they could temporarily exist, or they suggested an activity, which in turn alluded to a range of spaces. These spaces might subsequently suggest new surfaces and works. It was, thus, a circular process based on the intimate link between surfaces and spaces.

This circular process is exemplified by my residency at the Centre for Drawing in 2014. This space was "suggested" to me by my current work. The space is inside a house and retains its old features, such as wooden floors, big bay windows facing the street, decorative reliefs on the roof, and marquetry designs on the floor. It also shows signs of multiple changes over time. For instance, the two patterns on the floor reveal that at some point the space probably consisted of two separate rooms. I took with me a selection of stain paintings and collages as well as the *Faulty Samples* collages, which I felt would work well within the space, referencing its previous life as a room in a house. I also knew that other rooms in the building were used as offices, thus, I took the *Dotted Lines* collages with me. I also acquired surfaces that approximated materials already in the space. These surfaces included found pieces of wood, vinyl flooring and adhesive vinyl in patterns that matched the floor, and pieces of acrylic glass, a material I had not worked with previously. As such, the space itself suggested new surfaces and works.

Each encounter with a space had a quite literal effect on future encounters with spaces. Since new works were made in response to a space, sometimes using surfaces I had not used before, the body of works and the collection of surfaces forming part of this research slowly grew. Moreover, new marks were added to my

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works and between works and space, when deciding how and where they will be placed. Thus, the works retain a dual role as individual pieces and as parts of temporary installations resulting through encounters with specific spaces.

[20] During residencies, I was usually assigned a space. There was a certain amount of serendipity involved and I adopted an attitude of accepting a space and making do.

practice—marks I drew or painted over or marks I transferred onto surfaces. There was, thus, an accumulation of surfaces and marks through space and time. These surfaces and marks—traces of a space—travelled with me to other spaces and formed relationships with other marks. For instance, a stain painting made in my studio in Limassol, based on stains on the studio floor, was subsequently shown at Tenderpixel Gallery. Thus, surfaces and works migrated between spaces.

As a result of this process, there was a continuity in the types of places I worked and exhibited in. The spaces and surfaces I encountered near the start of this project, when my methodology had begun to develop, put me on a trajectory of interconnected spaces and surfaces. Most surfaces I worked with belong in interior environments, some more clearly in domestic environments while others in office or work environments. The spaces I tended to find myself in bear traces of another use or of other people and again relate to domestic or work environments, including the artist's studio. At the same time, both the surfaces and the spaces tend towards the ordinary. The surfaces are not actually associated with one specific place but with types of places. In this sense, they can be seen as rather generic and, to some extent, anonymous. For instance, the vinyl flooring I have worked with is quite ordinary and can potentially be found in a range of spaces. The fabric samples are trickier as the strong images they display invoke a range of cultural associations, which may determine the types of spaces these fabrics normally find themselves in.[21]

The fact that, on the whole, the surfaces and spaces are quite ordinary suggests that they can form points of contact or part of a shared experience with other

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[21] This is of course true of all the materials to some extent. Several people from Britain associate adhesive vinyl with the *Blue Peter* BBC television programme for children. This is something both Jeffrey Dennis and Rosemary Betterton brought up during discussions. Adhesive vinyl was often used in various crafts projects on the *Blue Peter* show, which has been running since 1958. "Fifty Facts About Blue Peter," BBC web site. In addition, adhesive vinyl is perhaps seen as rather quaint and old fashioned in the UK. Even something as ordinary as A4 lined paper can be surprising. During residencies in the USA, several American artists commented on the fact that the paper I was using had four holes on its side instead of three, as is the case with writing paper in the USA. The fourth hole designated the paper as non-American and, to some extent, as something different to what they were used to. These intricate qualities of materials (the "locality" of materials) are highlighted by the itinerant nature of my practice.

people living and working in similar conditions.[22] Many of the surfaces I have been working with form part of an infant's first tactile experiences. After contact with other human bodies—the inner body of the mother being the first contact—one of the first surfaces an infant touches is fabric. Once the infant can move within a domestic space, she feels the floor—wooden, laminate, tiles and so on—the furniture, the walls, and the glass windows.[23] Later on, paper becomes part of the experience when the infant is given paper to mark or when she goes to school. These surfaces, thus, evoke a sense of the familiar spaces or material environments many people move through. They are the surfaces encountered whilst growing up, perhaps still encountered on a daily basis. They are part of the ordinary and shared. The works, in a sense, attempt to find another way of touching these surfaces, as an artist.

In terms of the installation of works, my methodology was similar to that followed when marking surfaces. Just like the activity of marking had the task of approaching a surface, the activity of installing works had the task of approaching the space. My aim was to destabilise the border between work and space such that an in-between zone could be accessed. This approach is important within the context of the research as it amplifies, to an extent, the partial indiscernibility of the marks on each surface. If I were to present the works framed and attached to a wall, I might be partially undoing the relationships between mark and surface within each work. As it is, the relationship between marks and surfaces within each work persists in the installation of the work, with the walls and floors this time being the surface and the actual works becoming some kind of mark.

My specific methods of approaching a space shifted, depending on the space's materiality, its structure, its marks and features, its everyday use, and its history and how that history changed it. Sometimes, I installed works based on a narrative of use

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[22] I am by no means claiming that all people will recognise and relate to these surfaces. Many people, however, will, especially within Europe and the USA, which is where I have mostly been exhibiting my work so far.

[23] While discussing painting and collage, Richard Shiff notes: "The surfaces that offer a hand its initial experiences and induce it to acquire habits and practices are, of course, neither canvases, nor panels, nor papers. We encounter the surfaces of human bodies and domestic environments long before developing the specific manipulative practices that pictorial representation involves." Shiff, "Cézanne's Physicality," 180n81.

relating to the specific space. I also placed works next to features or marks so as to create partial confusion between my interventions and pre-existing elements. Occasionally, I recreated parts of the space and placed the recreation over the corresponding part or I placed works over similar or identical surfaces already present in the space. As with my marking approaches, the installation approaches often lead to the works becoming partially indiscernible. The works exist between being art objects and commonplace objects, and between standing out and blending in with the space. The specifics of each approach and its relation to indiscernibility are discussed next.

WITHIN TENTATIVE NARRATIVES OF EVERYDAYNESS

Many works suggest a specific placement within a space. This placement often depends on the particular surface and its common use, the marks made on each surface and their original location, as well as the features and functions of each space. By installing works in "normal" ways based on the material of each surface and the marks made on it, the works partially disappear into a narrative of use within a specific space.[24] This method of installing work roughly corresponds to the method of marking discussed in chapter 3, which involved the transfer of marks commonly found on a surface. Not only are the marks on each surface almost indiscernible, but the surfaces themselves also approach indiscernibility by being partially returned to the spaces/placements relating to their former use, before I had extracted and marked them. They, thus, oscillate between being artworks—drawings, paintings, and collages—and common materials or parts of furniture in a space.

Vinyl flooring, for example, is normally used as floor covering. This immediately suggests a "natural" placement for works made on this surface.[25] Moreover, the marks I made on vinyl flooring are based on floor stains. By placing these works on the floor, the constructed stains find their way closer to their original

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[24] Note that this method of installation does not involve turning a space into another type of space. Rather, narratives already implicit within the space are activated through the installations.

[25] I am not arguing against installations that effectively displace these materials, placing them somewhere other than where they are normally found. Within the context of this research, however, I have found the placing of surfaces within their everyday setting, a fruitful way of approaching a space.

location and are also seen next to actual floor stains. When a stain painting was shown in *Re-Surface*, placed on the floor at one of the corners of the gallery, it went mostly unnoticed. At the private view, people were walking all over it. Some did not realise what it was. Others realised that it was one of my works but, because of its placement, still walked on it.[26] The movement of people between the floor and the work reinforced the continuity between the two—both were seen as areas to walk on. Moreover, the movements of people created more marks on the vinyl, such as footprints. Eventually, my own marks were surrounded by these other marks. The confusion between painted and non-painted marks discussed in chapter 3 was, thus, further sustained. Likewise, a floor piece I worked on at the Ragdale Foundation in 2010, was initially mistaken for part of the floor—as if something had happened to the floor and was repaired using whatever pieces of flooring could be found.[27] In these cases, the placement of works creates a zone of indiscernibility between works and floor, making it challenging to differentiate between them.

Image 6.5:   *Stain Painting* (installation view), 2009
                Acrylic on vinyl flooring, 100 x 100 cm
                Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK

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[26] Visitors to exhibition *Re-Surface*, in conversation with author, August 13, 2009.

[27] Resident artists and staff at Ragdale Foundation, in conversation with author, June 1, 2010.

For the one-day installation *Paperwork*, in 2013, works on paper were shown in the Card Room at Chelsea College of Arts. The choice of this room, which is used for seminars and meetings, was made bearing in mind the work. Lined paper relates to activities such as writing, office work, and note taking within an educational context. Thus, finding notepads within a seminar/meeting room would not be out of the ordinary. *Dotted Lines* collages were shown laid out on tables as pages to be read, indicating possibly the commencement of a meeting. I kept some chairs next to the tables in an attempt to suggest an activity—sitting down and working, writing or reading. In fact, a couple of the visitors utilised the chairs by sitting on them and looking at the work more closely. The chairs seemed to encourage a focused engagement with the work as they enabled visitors to interact with it differently, as if interacting with a text. A group of paintings from the series *Wrinklegrams II*, perhaps leftovers at the end of a meeting, was spread on a table and on a group of stacked chairs. The pile of works, which initially developed from my multiple attempts to get it "right"—to make my painted lines as thin as the printed lines—conjures up images of a frustrated writer, office worker or student, repeatedly throwing pieces of paper away, dissatisfied with the result.[28] This association places the works within a narrative of everydayness in which they supposedly become useless leftovers to be thrown away. Showing the paintings as an irregular pile, confirms this narrative.

For the exhibition *Plans and Renovations* at the Centre for Drawing in 2014, a selection of *Dotted Lines* collages was displayed as "announcements" on two bulletin boards in the foyer of the building.[29] Several actual announcements were taped on the walls of the foyer so the bulletin boards with the collages acted as another group of

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[28] As outdated as this image may sound in the age of computers and digitalisation, I have seen students throwing paper away every day in my roles as high school teacher and university instructor in the past eight years. As recently as 2014, at the end of every lesson, I would find a pile of paper in the recycling bin of the class. Some of these pieces of paper have been used as part of *Wrinklegrams II*, as discussed in chapter 4.

[29] The bulletin board installation was first used for the exhibition *Mediterranea 16—Errors Allowed* in 2013. I had proposed three different installations and, after discussions with the curators, this installation was chosen. As the theme of the exhibition was "errors allowed," the installation, which presented the works as "announcements" and invited viewers to approach, enacted two "errors." The first was having apparently empty announcements on the bulletin board, that is, effectively announcing nothing. The second "error" was the realisation that the first "error" was actually untrue—the pages were in fact collages.

Image 6.6:   *Paperwork* (installation views), 2013
               Works shown: *Dotted Lines* (on tables) and *Wrinklegrams* II (on table
               and chair)
               Card Room, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK

announcements, "asking" viewers to approach and read them. The theme I chose for the installation in the main project space, "plans and renovations," arose, in part, from the fact that the other rooms in the house appeared to have been recently renovated, with carpets and new furniture brought in. Moreover, a new group of studios was being built behind the house. I could view and hear the builders from the back windows throughout my residency. As part of my installation, I made works with pieces of found leftover wood, which can be associated with construction work and wood workshops. The *Faulty Samples* books installed in the space alluded to the activity of choosing fabrics within home furnishing stores or within a space that is being built or renovated.

Image 6.7:   *Dotted Lines* (installation view in foyer),
            2010–2014
            Paper collages on bulletin boards, 21 x 29.7 cm
            each collage
            Centre for Drawing, London, UK

Image 6.8:   *Plans and Renovations* (installation views), 2014
Works shown: in top image *Light Drawings*, *Stain Paintings*, *Stain Collages*,
Renovation, and in bottom image *Faulty Samples*
Centre for Drawing, London, UK

For a presentation at North Branch Projects in Chicago, I focused on the use of the space as a community bookbinding facility.[30] Given that paper and fabric form two of the main materials used in the facility, I decided to show works on these materials. A selection of *Shadow Pieces* and *Dotted Lines* were attached on one of the walls. They resembled paper samples that people working in the facility could choose from. A selection of *Faulty Samples* collages was exhibited in a glass case. There were several glass cases in the space that displayed completed books. Finally, *Light Capture (Attempt #3)* was shown as a roll attached onto the wall. This placement emulated a series of paper and fabric rolls attached on the opposite wall. The collage appeared to be one of these rolls.[31]

Image 6.9:   *The Time of Day* (installation view), 2013
Works shown: *Light Capture (Attempt #3), Faulty Samples* (in vitrine)*, Dotted Lines, Shadow Pieces (Calendar)*
North Branch Projects, Chicago, USA

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[30] The invitation to exhibit my work here came in 2013 after the director of the space saw my collages on paper and fabric. Thus, the work suggested itself to the space.

[31] All of these installation decisions were arrived at through discussions with the space director and artist Regin Igloria, who was instrumental in helping me identify connections between my work and the space.

Image 6.10:   *The Time of Day* (installation view), 2013
Works shown: *Light Capture (Attempt #3),
Faulty Samples*
North Branch Projects, Chicago, USA

Image 6.11:   Rolls of paper and fabric at North Branch
Projects, Chicago, USA

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One-day installations in project spaces, usually within the college, embraced the temporariness associated with those spaces. *Leftovers I* was installed in a project space at Camberwell College of Arts. The space, which contained tables, chairs and other students' works and materials, is temporarily used by students to experiment with installations. Given the situation, I decided to work with the temporariness forming part of the regular use of the space. My installation comprised of materials that were literally leftovers from other projects. These were shown as stacks or piles leaning against each other and against the wall.[32] This tentative-looking placement made them exist between an art installation and a pile of random pieces that someone had left there. Or perhaps the objects were casually waiting to be installed properly or they had just been taken down and awaited removal. In either case, there was an unfinished quality to the installation that related to its temporariness—at any minute the pieces, which were not affixed anywhere, might be moved.

Image 6.12:   *Leftovers I*, 2010
Graphite on cardboard, graphite on wood, acrylic on wallpaper, acrylic on
vinyl flooring, 127 x 135 x 145 cm
Project space, Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK

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[32] The issue of leaning surfaces first came up in a discussion with the artist Maria Chevska on October 24, 2008. Her insights on installing her work in space and her discussion on leaning paintings and on the importance of space have been extremely helpful for me.

In fact, all the spaces in which I have worked and shown work belong to a narrative of temporariness, with artists occupying the space and showing work one after the other. This temporariness is embodied in some of my decisions regarding placement. Precariously leaning pieces, piles of surfaces, or works laid out on a table can literally be moved at any time. The sense that at any moment the current relationships can dissolve (but not completely since, having been experienced, they are partially retained in memory or depicted in photographic form) and new relationships can form (suggesting a potential for change) is embodied in the installations.

Due to these placements, which conform to the use of surfaces and spaces, a zone of indiscernibility emerges between works and environment, a zone in which it becomes difficult at first to definitively identify something as an artwork or as part of the environment and its functions. The works are, thus, camouflaged within the environment. Instead of presenting themselves to be viewed as artworks, they take on familiar roles that render them ignorable within a certain context.

BESIDE AN(OTHER) ARTIST:
SUSAN COLLIS IN BETWEEN EXHIBITIONS

The installation of work in several of Susan Collis' exhibitions embraces the idea of a narrative to be acted out. This narrative usually focuses on the behind-the-scenes work that takes place in a gallery space between exhibitions: the cleaning of the space, the painting of walls, the attachment or removal of nails on walls, and the construction or disassembly of display structures. Her installations involve placing works in an exhibition space such that they appear to be the leftovers of an exhibition or material used to install an exhibition.[33]

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[33] Solo exhibitions that follow this installation approach include *Don't Get Your Hopes Up*, Seventeen Gallery, London, UK, 2007, *Why Did I Think This Was a Good Idea*, Laura Reynolds Gallery, Texas, USA, 2008, *Susan Collis*, Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh, UK, 2008, *Twice Removed*, Espacio Minimo, Madrid, Spain, 2009, *Since I Fell for You*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK, 2010, and *I Don't Love You Anymore*, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, France, 2010.

Image 6.13:   Susan Collis, *Since I Fell For You* (installation
                views), 2010
                Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
                Images published on Seventeen Gallery web site
                (http://www.seventeengallery.com/artists/susan-
                collis/since-i-fell-for-you/). Reproduced with the
                artist's permission.

For an exhibition at Ikon Gallery in 2010, she placed one of her stepladder

pieces, "stained" with white paint drips, close to a wall.[34] The work appeared to be an

old stained ladder waiting to be used to hang something on the wall or to paint the

walls white. On the opposite wall, a piece of embroidered stain cloth was placed on the

floor. It appeared as if it was placed there to protect the floor from dripping wall paint.

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[34] *Susan Collis: Since I Fell for You*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, March 31–May 16,
2010.

In the adjacent space, a "dirty" boiler suit, possibly used by the technicians preparing the space, was hanging on a nail. Some pieces of what appeared to be leftover wood, along with more "dirty" cloths, were thrown in a seemingly random pile on the floor. These pieces might have been "architectural detritus . . . left over after a wall has been clad or partly demolished."[35] There are several scenarios the viewer could construct as to why these objects came to be there.[36] In an earlier exhibition from 2008, the installation included a "stained" table placed near one of the walls.[37] Based on the stains on the table, it appeared as if a pot of white paint was placed on it. The drips on the table must have been created by whoever had painted the walls.

In addition to these works, in both exhibitions Collis installed screws and wall plugs (screw anchors) on the walls. These were made out of semi-precious materials. Pencil lines usually made to mark the placement of screws for hanging work, were recreated out of gold and silver lines. Collis even installed screw and nail "holes" on the walls, made out of black diamonds and smoky topaz. These again appeared to be the leftovers of previous exhibitions—the holes, screws and marks left on the walls after the work had been taken down. These works actually originated from Collis' exhibition at Seventeen Gallery in 2007.[38] As Collis says, when she began working on the exhibition she "started looking at what was left over from the previous show, what was actually in the gallery already."[39] She decided to "recreate that layering of history on the surface" by remaking screws, plugs and holes and by installing them over the pre-existing marks. The installation was meant to highlight the marks that were already on the wall.[40]

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[35] Prince, "Tell Me What You See," 10.

[36] There is something quite theatrical in this situation that someone like Michael Fried might take issue with. Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 157, 160.

[37] *Susan Collis: Why Did I Think This Was a Good Idea*, Laura Reynolds Gallery, Texas, USA, October 4–November 15, 2008. Collis' exhibition was, appropriately perhaps, the first exhibition to take place in the gallery's new space.

[38] *Susan Collis: Don't Get Your Hopes Up*, Seventeen Gallery, London, March 1–31, 2007.

[39] "Conversation Between Mackay Butcher, Cylena Simonds and Susan Collis," 9.

[40] "Interview with Vincent Honoré." The process of placing semiprecious stones over pre-existing marks resonates with the discussion of marking in chapter 4. Not all of

Image 6.14:   Susan Collis, *Made Good*, 2007
18 carat white gold (hallmarked), coral, black onyx,
diamond, silver, 27 cm (installed length)
Image published in *Susan Collis: Don't Get Your Hopes Up*.
Reproduced with the artist's permission. © Susan Collis

The installation of the works fits within the narrative of the space—a show is being put up or taken down. The individual works themselves are camouflaged as everyday objects, as discussed in chapter 3. Their placement within the gallery space, according to the believable scenario of preparing for or cleaning up after an exhibition, reinforces the trompe l'oeil effect. As Mackay Butcher notes, Collis' works need the space, "with each there is a dependence on a peripheral element that supports it, that is required to make it active."[41] Butcher focuses on the wall plugs, which need the wall, both as a literal means of support and also "as the basis for the symbolic weight."[42] The objects depend on their support to make them appear like ordinary plugs, screws,

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Collis' marks were placed over pre-existing marks. One of her works was based on the screws, plugs and holes left on the wall of her studio after removing a shelf. Ibid.

[41] "Conversation Between Mackay Butcher, Cylena Simonds and Susan Collis," 13.

[42] Ibid.

tables and so on.[43] As mentioned in chapter 3, placing a work so that it fits perfectly within a setting, "which means that its position and framing must both be logical," is the second rule of trompe l'oeil as set out by Miriam Milman.[44] Collis' placing of her works within a gallery that is being prepared for an exhibition, is perfectly logical. Had the works been presented on plinths or hanging on the wall, the situation would have been very different. As it is, when the viewer encounters the space, it does look as if there is no exhibition. There either had been an exhibition or there will be an exhibition. In any case, there is definitely work taking place in the space, work that has yet to be completed.

One of Collis' aims when making this work is to focus on usually unseen labour and foreground its value by converting the traces of such labour into carefully made marks through the use of craft-based processes.[45] This depends on seeing something and then realising, upon closer observation, that it is something else than what it initially appeared to be. When the works are first seen within a gallery space, they look like actual tools. Thus, attention is drawn to the behind-the-scenes work that needs to take place before an exhibition can open to the public. By presenting her works as if they were actual stained ladders, brooms and cloths, Collis foregrounds the work taking place in the gallery—the painting of the walls, the cleaning of the floor, "all these things that are nothing special in themselves and yet crucial to the idea of display."[46] At the same time, she conceals her own work—the meticulous marking of the objects. Her installation decisions render her work initially invisible, camouflaging it within the specific context.[47] Of course, the work is shown within a gallery, thus, a

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[43] Of course some of the works *are* in actuality tables, brooms, stepladders and boiler suits. The masquerade in these cases relates to the artist's marks, which make the objects look old and used. By placing the works within a gallery space, the marks become more believable.

[44] Milman, *Trompe L'Oeil Painting,* 36.

[45] A detailed discussion of these works is given in chapter 3.

[46] "Interview with Vincent Honoré."

[47] In fact, a review written about the exhibition at Ikon Gallery completely misinterpreted the work, complaining that the artist had done nothing more than throw old objects around the space. Thus, Collis' work literally went unseen. Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A. Collis has also recounted an incident where she walked into Seventeen Gallery, before her 2007 exhibition had opened, and found the cleaner actually using *Waltzer* (2007),

viewer expects to walk in and view artworks. Eventually, it should become clear that the objects "thrown" around the space are the art pieces and that the viewer has not mistakenly visited the gallery too early, before the show was installed, or too late, after the show had come down. A list of works with very long materials lists and sometimes an exhibition plan accompany each exhibition, sending viewers on a journey around the space seeking the work.[48] The eventual realisation that the "tools" are meticulously marked objects once again draws attention to labour—the labour of the artist this time in remaking the leftovers of someone else's labour, thus, imbuing those leftovers with value.

There is a resonance between Collis' installations and my installations, which are discussed in the previous section. In both cases, a narrative of use is activated according to which certain objects are placed in a space in particular ways. Due to this placement, the works are rendered partially indiscernible as works of art. Collis embraces this mode of installing in much more specific ways, highlighting the unseen work that takes place in a gallery between exhibitions. She focuses more on gallery spaces and on the process of displaying artworks in such spaces. The play between visibility and invisibility relates to this process as well as to her own labour when making the works.

NEXT TO FEATURES AND MARKS

Several installation decisions I made depended on marks and elements found in the space. By placing works next to such elements, I attempted to create a non-hierarchical sense of continuity and besidedness between work and environment.

Some of the *Shadow Pieces* shown at *Re-Surface* were placed next to marks that echoed the drawn marks on the paper. Two drawings were placed close to the cement fireplace base, which was full of scratches whose shapes resembled the drawn shadows. Another drawing was placed high up on the wall, close to a mark caused by

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Collis' broom, to sweep up. "Interview with Vincent Honoré." The viewers' interaction with Collis' work is taken up in chapter 8.

[48] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

cracked and fallen paint. I had noticed this mark on the second day of installation. Again, the shape of this mark resembled the drawn shadows. Placing the drawings next to such marks, suggested a relationship between them. The similarity of the marks almost turned the pre-existing mark into another one of my marks, leading to partial confusion between my interventions in the space and the pre-existing marks. It was as if the shapes on the paper escaped their boundaries and spread on other surfaces in space.

Image 6.15:   *Shadow Piece* (installation view), 2009
Ink on handmade paper, 15 x 21 cm
Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK

Image 6.16:   *Shadow Piece* (installation view), 2009
                Watercolour pencil on handmade paper, 21 x 21 cm
                Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK

Site-specific movable works were sometimes placed next to the marks or features on which they were based. A collage made at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, involving the recreation of a group of floor scratches, was shown next to those scratches. The scratches were caused by chipped floor paint and some of them were quite subtle, just like some of the collaged marks on the vinyl. It was still possible, however, to discern the similarity between the marks through close observation. Thus, the placement of the work depended on the pre-existing marks and, in turn, the relation between the work and those marks emerged through their proximity.

In some cases, the placement of works depended not so much on similarity with pre-existing marks but rather on the existence of features that captured my attention. For example, while working at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, I noticed a taped piece of paper on the wall that had been painted over with white paint. It was unclear whether it was left there by a previous resident or whether it was a makeshift fix, covering something on the wall. I eventually placed a small *Light Capture* collage close to this piece of paper. The collage and the taped paper had approximately the same height and shared a similar makeshift quality. In addition,

Image 6.17:   *Stain Collage* (installation view), 2012
                     Adhesive vinyl on found vinyl flooring, 30 x 51 cm
                     Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, Amherst, USA

Image 6.18:   *Light Capture (Attempt #1)* (installation view), 2012
                     Clear tape on packing paper, 11 x 12 cm
                     Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, Amherst, USA

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both had edges that curled slightly away from the wall. During the open studio event, several resident artists insisted that I had added the piece of taped paper on the wall—the proximity of the two pieces allowed viewers to see both as my works.[49]

Elsewhere, I have made direct use of elements in the space in order to install work. For example, a light drawing on wood shown at the exhibition *Plans and Renovations* was placed on a pre-existing metal right-angle bracket affixed to the wall. I had originally considered removing the bracket but eventually I began seeing it as part of the installation. During the exhibition, it was unclear to viewers whether I had added the bracket as part of my installation.[50]

Image 6.19:   *Light Drawing II* (installation view), 2014
                Light on found wood, 18.5 x 9 cm
                Centre for Drawing, London, UK

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[49] Michael Craig, Nicole Parcher, and other resident artists at Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, in conversation with author, July 25, 2012. A similar situation occurred during the exhibition *Re-Surface*. At one of the corners of the gallery, there was a cement fireplace base. Several people originally thought that this cement block was one of my works as well. Sara Wilson, Joe Roberts, and other visitors to *Re-Surface*, in conversation with author, August 13, 2009. I suspect that this was partly due to the placement of the stain painting at the adjacent corner. Because of its placement, this floor piece directed attention to other elements on the floor and at the corners.

[50] Visitors to *Plans and Renovations*, in conversation with author, April 2, 2014.

Finally, some placements of work follow or extend features of the space. For instance, at the Centre for Drawing, a stain painting was placed right on the line separating the two different floor patterns. The printed lines on the vinyl followed and extended some of the spaces between actual wood pieces, forming an approximate square with the pattern on the floor, and also continued the zigzag pattern onto the other side of the room.

Image 6.20:   *Renovation* (partial view)*, 2014*
Acrylic on vinyl flooring, adhesive vinyl on floor, 32 x 19.5 cm
Centre for Drawing, London, UK

Many of these works do not necessarily become indiscernible but they may point towards a changed relationship between work and space, one that moves beyond a potentially hierarchical overlay. The works come to exist *next to* the space rather than simply over it. They are placed next to features or marks with which they resonate. Thus, they may draw attention to those features. The works partly come to operate as indices, in the deictic sense, pointing to elements in the space rather than only presenting themselves for viewing. In turn, those elements in the space can be seen as pointing back to the work. For instance, the collage on the vinyl flooring at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts points to the scratches on which it is based. The

pointing in this case happens through physical proximity and visual similarity. The scratches, in turn, point back to the collage, for the same reasons.

This mutual pointing allows a sharing and continuity, or indexical contiguity, to emerge between work and space, leading to partial confusion between them. It may be difficult to determine definitively whether something was created by the artist or whether it was already present in the space. Thus, the works as distinct objects start to recede and awareness is redirected to the relationship between work and space as partial-others. The suggested relationship is one of besidedness or continuity-in-besidedness, to use Ettinger's apt term.[51]

BESIDE AN(OTHER) ARTIST:
BRACHA L. ETTINGER AND THE FREUD MUSEUM

The notion of besidedness emerges in a very effective way in Bracha L. Ettinger's exhibition *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* at the Freud Museum in London in 2009.[52] The exhibition, which included paintings, drawings, notebooks, scannographs, objects, and archive photographs, involved opening up the borders between the artist's work and the space rather than merely placing the work over the space.

To begin with, there is a strong connection between Ettinger's work and the specific space, as Ettinger herself is a psychoanalyst and theorist who engages with Freud's work and has also worked with psychoanalytic texts and images in her artistic practice. Moreover, both Ettinger and Freud share a history that revolves around migration, exile, and genocide.[53] For my purposes here, I focus primarily on the actual

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[51] Ettinger, "From Proto-Ethical Compassion to Responsibility," 115.

[52] *Bracha L. Ettinger: Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration*, Freud Museum, London, June 3–July 26, 2009, curated by Griselda Pollock.

[53] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 191–192; Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 15, 65–77. Another personal link to the Freud Museum that Ettinger pointed out during a conversation has to do with the geographical proximity between the museum and the Tavistock Clinic, where she worked between 1975 and 1979. Bracha L. Ettinger, in discussion with author, Tel Aviv, July 13, 2013.

works and their placement in the space and not on the relationship between Freudian and Ettingerian psychoanalytic theory.[54]

According to Griselda Pollock, Ettinger's installation at the Freud Museum "created resonance, interweaving and overlay between her work and the material traces of the work of both Sigmund and Anna Freud."[55] Ettinger "*worked* the museum, weaving many strings, visible and invisible, through this space."[56] Pollock proposes the terms "resonance," "interweave" and "overlay" to suggest "the channels through which [the work] would interface with the history, contents and meaning of a museum that was both the historical Freud's space and a Freudian theoretical space."[57]

I begin with the term "overlay," which Pollock associates with the installation of work in Sigmund Freud's now empty bedroom.[58] The empty room approximates a typical gallery white cube space, offering its walls and vitrine case for artworks. Pollock has chosen overlay to be the theme of what she describes as "a more formal artistic display of paintings, works on paper, notebooks and scannography."[59] As I have argued earlier, the term overlay is what we may associate with the typical installation of artworks in a gallery, as Pollock suggests. The paintings in the bedroom were hung on one of the walls as a series of clusters placed close together. Below the hanging groups of paintings, more paintings stood on two wooden boxes whose signs ("This side up," "Fragile," and a handwritten "Bracha L. Ettinger") suggested that they might be the boxes used to ship the work to London. The scannographs were installed as a

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[54] To the best of my knowledge, the most extensive discussion of Ettinger's installation approaches is given by Pollock in "A Matrixial Installation" and *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*. Both of these texts discuss the installation at the Freud Museum and I draw on them throughout this section. Rosi Huhn also briefly refers to Ettinger's installation approaches in "Traumanatomy," 232 and 237n1.

[55] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 192.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 195.

[58] Even though Pollock associates each of the terms—resonance, overlay, interweave—with a room in the museum, she also suggests that all three terms apply to the entire exhibition. Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 5. In terms of installation, however, I agree with Pollock that overlay is the more appropriate term for the bedroom installation.

[59] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 224. Scannography is the term Ettinger uses to describe works involving digitally scanning pages out of her notebooks, printing them and sometimes erasing or drawing over them. Ibid., 192.

Image 6.21: Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation views), 2009
Painting wall in bedroom/exhibition room, vitrine in bedroom/exhibition room
Freud Museum, London, UK
Images published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration.*
Images courtesy of the artist, © B. L. E.

Image 6.22:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation view)*, 2009
Scannographs in bedroom/exhibition room
Freud Museum, London, UK
Image published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration*. Image courtesy of the artist, © B. L. E.

group on another wall in the room, falling over a wooden chest of drawers as "a jostling crowd of cascading papers."[60] Notebooks, drawings and additional scannographs were placed in rows in the vitrine case running along the third wall.

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[60] Ibid., 240.

Overall, the work differentiated itself from the space and was presented as something brought into the space and placed over it in order to be seen.

Even though the work overlaid the space, it was still not the typical installation of paintings in a white cube space, with works hanging at the appropriate height and with enough distance between them to allow each to be experienced on its own, singularly. Ettinger's installation was not a presentation of individual pieces but a laying out or an unfolding of a procession of work—a laying out of a practice. Notebooks were opened and laid out for me to look at, drawings lined the bottom shelf of the vitrine, paintings appeared as a continual series all over the wall, and scannographs fell over the drawers—such installations gave me a sense that these objects were presented as an offering to the viewer.[61] I got this sense mostly from the notebooks, private documents which were opened up within a public space, unfolding over the space, much like the scannographs, themselves pages from the notebooks, unfolded over the drawers. Within this line of thinking, the presence of the vitrine functioned well as it allowed work to be laid out for the viewer. The space formed the ground upon which this offering could be made. The presence of the wooden packing boxes, from which the work had presumably been removed, also contributed to this sense of unfolding. It took me back to the process of carefully packing each work and placing it in the box and then to the process of unpacking and laying out—a folding followed by an unfolding (unpacking) and then a further unfolding of the works in space.

The procession of paintings on the wall echoed the procession of women in the *Eurydice* paintings, several of which were shown in the room. I repeatedly saw

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[61] This was not the only time the works were installed in these ways. Ettinger has been presenting drawings and notebooks on flat surfaces and hanging her paintings in clusters since 1987. In her brief reference to the installation of Ettinger's work, Huhn suggests that through her exhibitions Ettinger engages with particular exhibition venues. She gives as examples the exhibition at the Freud Museum and the 1993 exhibition at the Russian Museum of Ethnography where, according to Huhn, the rectangular transparent frames of the hanging installation acted as a tribute to the Russian Constructivists. Huhn, "Traumanatomy," 232, 237n1. Given that specific installation approaches persist whenever Ettinger exhibits her work, I believe they form an important part of how the viewers approach and engage with the work. In fact, as I discuss later, many of these installation decisions parallel and extend the operations occurring within and between works.

glimpses of the row of women as I moved in the space.[62] The repetition of the partial image, the different ways of touching the traces every time, and the physical closeness of the works suggests that this is how they are meant to be seen—in groups that unfold over time and space. This parallels Ettinger's working method, which involves working on several paintings at the same time. Sometimes changes in one painting may lead to changes in another, older painting.[63] Moreover, the various degrees of appearance and disappearance of the figures among the procession of paintings, resonates with Ettinger's painting process where "the contours of the faces and figures disappear into the rhythm, then reappear."[64] This rhythmic partial appearance/disappearance and the co-dependence of works that the artist experiences whilst painting, is partially shared with the viewer through the installation.[65] As I moved, I followed images, traces, brushstrokes and colours as they unfolded from one painting to the next, and I carried traces from each painting with me, traces that persisted and participated in my viewing of the next painting. As I moved, each painting made me look back at other paintings that "called" to it.[66] Thus, the work happens not only within but also between works, over space and time. The spacing between paintings is perhaps better understood as an interval—spatial and durational—enough for a breath or a small step or a movement of the eyes. This small spacing parallels the distance-in-proximity between layers within each painting. What is within each work unfolds to include the surrounding space.

At the same time that the works were offered to the viewer, they also held something back. The notebooks were turned to specific pages, keeping the rest out of view, concealing secrets.[67] What I could see on each page was not always readily

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[62] Disturbingly, as I walked before the installation, I sometimes found myself following the women's procession.

[63] Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225.

[64] Ibid.

[65] The issue of a sharing between artist and viewer is taken up again in chapter 8.

[66] Ettinger quoted in Manning and Massumi, "No Title Yet," 225. Ettinger says: "Sometimes two paintings from different series based on the same image call to each other."

[67] As Patrick Le Nouëne writes, the notebooks "fold and enclose, close what is intimate in on itself, they conceal secrets." Le Nouëne, "Le Cabinet de Bracha," 221.

accessible, as fragments of texts in English, French, and Hebrew were covered by drawings or subsumed in traces of ink that leaked through from other pages.[68] In the paintings, the disintegrating photocopied images are partially covered by the artist's repetitive brushstrokes, keeping the images from full view.[69] Even in this approximate white-cube installation, something was held back. I am suggesting that the installation followed the process within the paintings—a process of covering and revealing or re-covering, as I have called it in chapter 4, that only allows glimpses of images. These glimpses unfold from one work to the next, making it impossible to see each work by itself (or, at least, that would be an entirely different experience). The works operate as an encounter among several, both within and between them.

The situation was different in Sigmund Freud's and Anna Freud's study rooms. Unlike the bedroom, these rooms are not empty but are presented as studies, containing the original furniture and various personal objects of the Freuds—books, photographs, Sigmund Freud's collection of archaeological objects, Anna Freud's weaving loom and so on. Ettinger's work came to be added to these rooms, again overlaying the space. The way it was installed, however, suggested a different relationship to the space, one not dependent on differentiation but rather on besidedness and partial continuation. I would suggest that the linking that happened between works placed side by side in the bedroom, occurred in the studies through the pre-existing objects within the space. I focus on the installation in Anna Freud's room as it included more paintings made following the process discussed in chapter 4.[70]

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[68] My thinking around Ettinger's work has been affected by my experience of looking at her notebooks in her studio in Tel Aviv. The process of opening the small cabinet in which most notebooks are placed, choosing one, and then carefully looking through it, allowed me to see a series of images, traces, marks, and texts unfold before me, with every turn of the page. It felt as if I was offered something to observe and read but, at the same time, it was not something I could easily decipher. I cannot read Hebrew and I have only intermediate reading knowledge of French. I could read the English texts but even some of those were partially illegible, hiding underneath drawings or ink stains. The whole experience became a journey of following traces, words, and images, seeing stains that seeped through the pages get bigger or smaller with every turn, and oscillating between looking, reading, thinking, remembering, and touching. A thought provoking discussion of Ettinger's notebooks is offered by Catherine de Zegher in "Drawing Out Voice and Webwork."

[69] The remaking and withdrawal of the images in Ettinger's paintings are discussed in chapter 4.

[70] The installation in Sigmund Freud's space mostly consisted of objects, photographs and drawings on paper. While the drawings involve marking over photocopied images, their methods of marking differ. I have chosen to focus on the works in Anna Freud's space because of my interest in paintings that involve an apparent tracing over of the pre-existing image. Pollock's texts cited earlier provide a discussion of all of Ettinger's installations in the exhibition.

Image 6.23:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation views), 2009
Desk in Anna Freud's room
Freud Museum, London, UK
Images published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration.*
Images courtesy of the artist, © B. L. E.

In Anna Freud's study, a small painting, *Halala*, N. 10 (1993), was placed on

the desk. The painting holds the grainy traces of a photocopy of a photograph

depicting a mother with her two children (Ettinger's mother with Ettinger and her

brother).[71] As in Ettinger's other paintings, the traces of the photocopy in *Halala*, N. 10 have been painted over with horizontal brushstrokes, making some parts of the disappearing image somewhat clearer while almost concealing other parts. The painting stood next to a photograph of Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham. Another photograph, depicting the Freud family, was found to the right, in a wooden frame. Ettinger's painting, also framed using a wooden frame, was presented as another object, an-other family depiction, on the desk. The painting is quite small, twenty by twenty-two centimetres, comparable in size to the photographs that surrounded it. The placement of the painting enabled it to develop a rapport or borderlinks with its surrounding objects and partially become a continuation of the terrain of the desk. Its suggestive depiction of an adult woman with two children resonated with the nearby photographs as well as with the specific context. As Pollock notes, this very desk may be the one on which Anna Freud wrote her texts on children and their troubled relationships with adults.[72]

On the right of the desk, and towards the back corner of the room, a small bookcase showcased some of Anna Freud's books and two small Asian statuettes standing next to each other at the centre of the lower shelf. On either side of the statuettes, in separate compartments, two of Ettinger's paintings were placed. They were slightly shorter than the compartments but the width seemed to fit just right. The paintings, *Matrix—Family Album*, N. 8 (2003–2005) and *Matrix—Family Album*, N. 6 (2003–2005), rework a photocopy of the same photograph as that in the painting on the desk. In *Matrix—Family Album*, N. 8, the mother's facial features have been re-covered—purple brushstrokes cover her eyes while photocopic dust traces of her nose and mouth are discernible. In *Matrix—Family Album*, N. 6, brushstrokes outline the shape of her face, but there are almost no traces of her facial features left after the interrupted photocopying process.

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[71] A copy of this photograph was placed in Sigmund Freud's study.

[72] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 94. Pollock also discusses the childhood of Anna Freud and her troubled relationship with her mother. Ibid., 91.
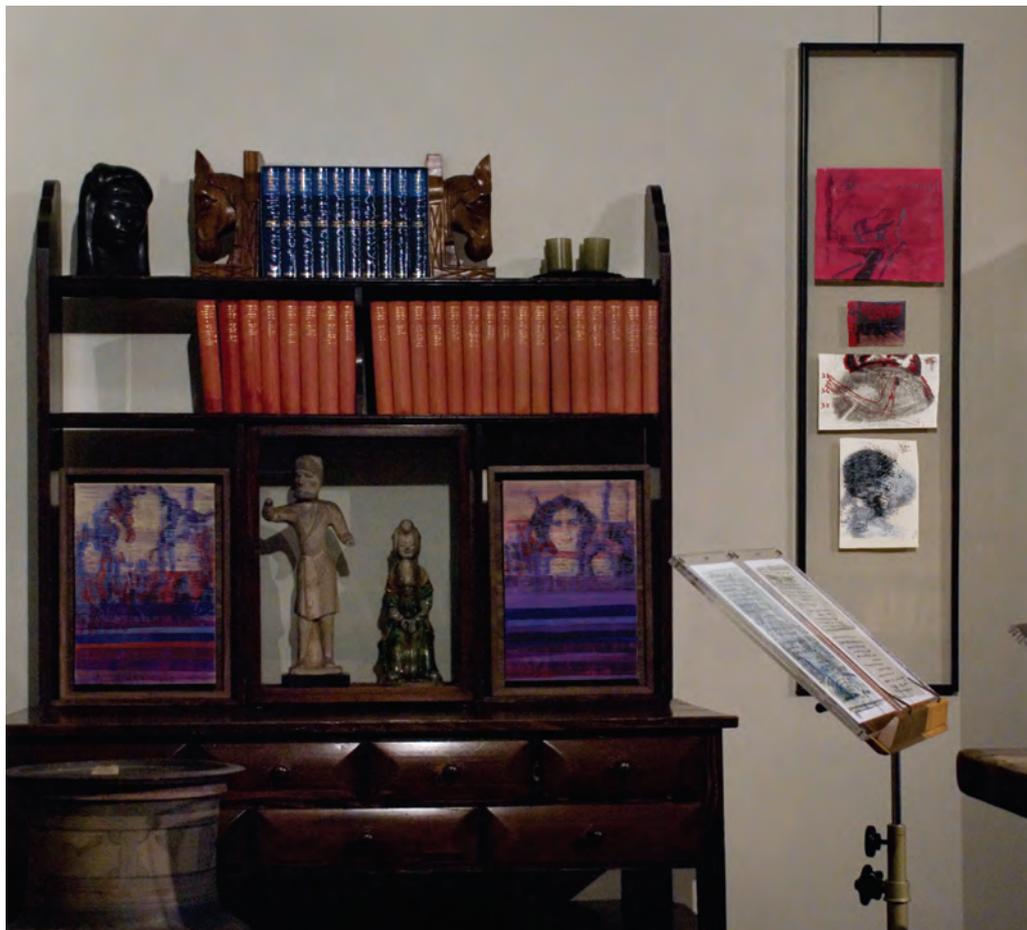
Image 6.24: Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation views), 2009
Bookcase in Anna Freud's room
Freud Museum, London, UK
Images published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration*; Ettinger, *Resonance, Overlay, Interweave*. Images courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.
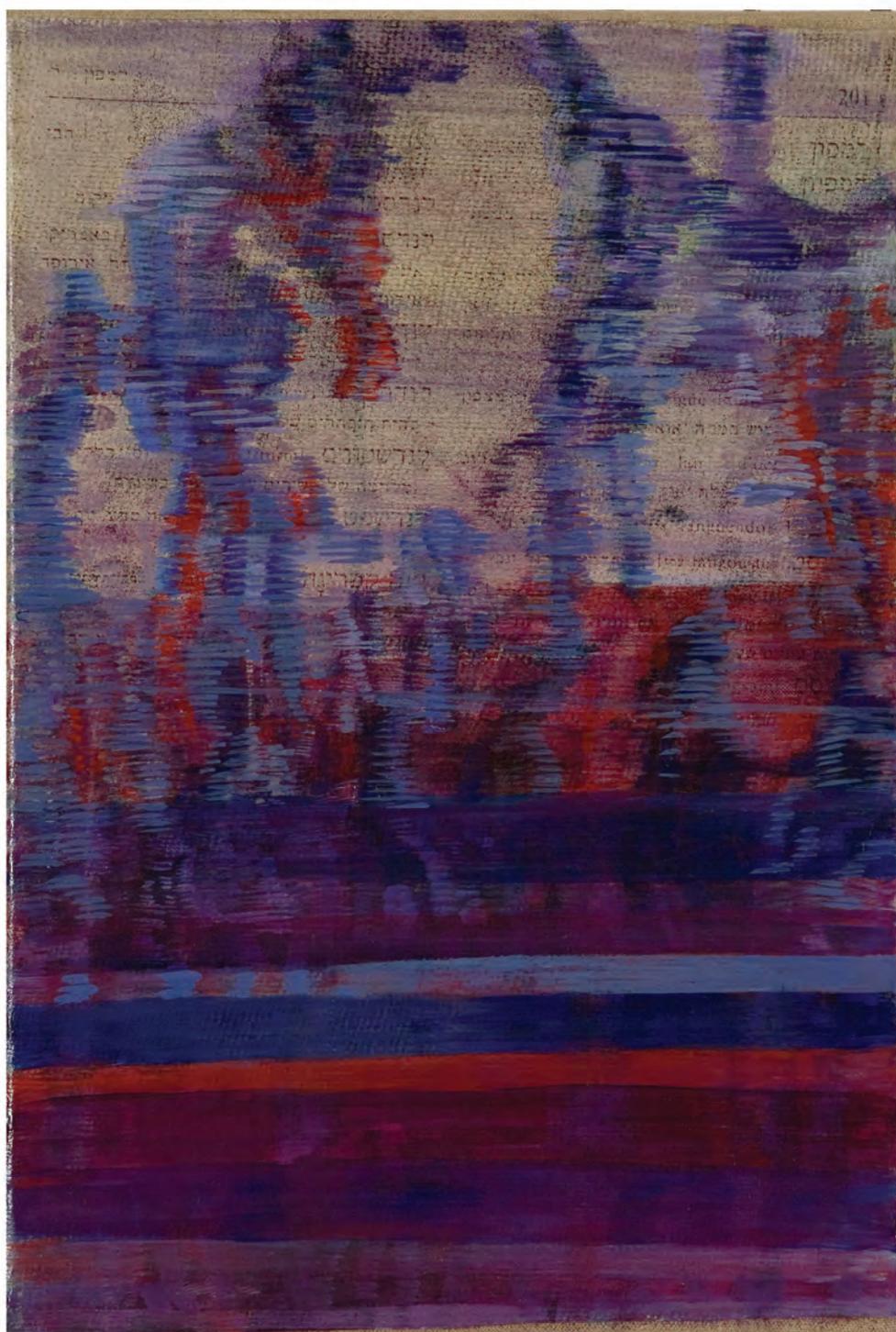
Image 6.25:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Matrix—Family Album*, N. 6, 2003–2005
               Oil, xerography and photocopic dust, pigment and ashes on paper mounted
               on canvas, 26.9 x 39.2 cm
               Image published in Ettinger, *Resonance, Overlay, Interweave*
               Image courtesy of the artist, © B. L. E.

The symmetric placement of the paintings, which almost have the same size, and the repetition of the same photograph on both, echoed the symmetrical design of the bookcase, the two statuettes, as well as the two bookends on the top shelf of the bookcase. The verticality of the paintings and central face of the mother created a visual correspondence with the statuettes, which stood in their midst. Ettinger's brushstrokes, especially the long red and purple brushstrokes on the lower half of each painting, resonated with the two rows of books placed in the compartments above the paintings, a row of red books and a row of dark blue books. The colour resonance between paintings and books (red and blue give purple) may not have been intentional but it did create visual connections between the paintings and their immediate environment. Once again, the paintings seemed to have found their place among the surrounding objects on the bookcase.

Their partial continuity with the space did not end here. The photocopied images on the two paintings and on the small painting on the desk "called" to each other. Moreover, the brightly coloured brushstrokes of the bookcase paintings "formally emulate[d]," as Pollock discusses, the woven threads on the loom, which was found across from the bookcase, on the other side of the desk.[73] Two finished pieces of striped textiles were placed on a stool before the loom while another half-finished textile was on the loom itself. The interweaving of the horizontal and vertical threads needed to create the textile was reflected in Ettinger's paintings with their interweaving of photocopic dust traces and horizontal brushstrokes.[74] Moreover, the half-finished state of the cloth created a rapport with the ghostly figures in the paintings, figures in a process of both appearing and disappearing. The textiles and paintings also shared a manual and time-consuming process of making. Cloth is "the product of duration, repetition and accumulation of many gestures with the individual

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[73] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 217. Pollock notes that there was no intention of generating such connotations.

[74] As Pollock writes, the accumulation of brushstrokes and layers of colour over time resemble the texture of weavings. Ibid., 222. Moreover, she points out that textiles do not operate within figure/ground relationships but rather depend on an interlacing of lines. Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 90.

threads."[75] So are Ettinger's paintings but instead of threads they involve grains, visual and material traces, and brushstrokes.

Image 6.26: Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation view)*, 2009
Loom, weaves, and scannographs in Anna Freud's room
Freud Museum, London, UK
Image published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration.*
Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

Pollock's choice of word when discussing these installations is telling. She repeatedly writes that Ettinger "inserted" her paintings in Anna Freud's space.[76] In other words, the pre-existing space was taken into account and the artworks were inserted *into* it rather than simply placed over it. Indeed, the painting on the desk was placed in between pre-existing objects, and the paintings on the bookcase were literally inserted into two compartments. Two other paintings were inserted in the midst of Anna Freud's diplomas, hanging by the entrance of the room. This process of insertion takes into account the terrain of the surrounding space. As such, it might be

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[75] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 214.

[76] Ibid., 215, 217, 221.

called, following Ettinger's thinking, *with-in-sertion*—being, at the same time, *with*, *into* and *connected to* the space. The space is not simply a container (assumed blank and passive) for the work but exists beside it and affects its placement and operations with-in it. Ettinger's phrase for such a relationship is "co/in-habit(u)ation with-in the other," a "resonating together, at the level of a shared resonance."[77]

Image 6.27:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation view)*,* 2009
Diploma wall in Anna Freud's room
Freud Museum, London, UK
Image published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay, Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration.*
Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

I would suggest that the works shown in Anna Freud's room were not offered to be seen, like those in the bedroom, but rather were offered to connect, borderlink, and interweave with the space. Interweave is the term Pollock chooses when she discusses this room, a term that captures the interrelations between works and space effected in part through the work's placement. Looking at the installation, there was a sense that the painted colourlines within each painting had escaped its borders and joined up with other colourlines in space as well as with other works in space, creating a visual and conceptual interweave of lines or strings. Thus, lines moved from the

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[77] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 28.

painting on the desk to the objects around it, to the paintings on the bookcase, to the

rows of books, to the loom on the other side of the room. In a notebook dated 2006,

Ettinger wrote,

> The line is free.
> The line is a freedom.
> The line escapes the image,
> it escapes form.
> Even when the image and
> the form appropriate the line
> it remains free. The
> line continues its working-through
> beyond the image and the
> form. When the line starts
> its working you never know
> what will appear. But even
> if you know, it is free.
> Like light.[78]

And elsewhere in the same notebook:

> When a line is a string it is both
> free and connected. Free by its
> movement and direction and
> connected by resonance and
> intensity and vibration[79]

The lines/strings escaped each painting and continued their "working-through" in the

space, connecting with it. In fact, the lines embraced the whole space since there was a

line of works all around the room: from the paintings among the diplomas by the

entrance, to the painting on the desk, to the scannographs behind the desk, to the

paintings on the bookshelf on the right, to the drawings hanging on the back wall, to

the scannographs by the loom on the left, to the paintings hanging next to the glass-

covered bookcase on the front wall—Ettinger's painted lines embraced the space,

implicating it in their working-through. The lines also moved across, from work to

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[78] Ettinger, *Notebook*, 23.08.2006, Appendix A.

[79] Ibid.

work and between works and objects. A visual and conceptual web was activated which encompassed the works *and* the space and which paralleled and extended the webs and layering within each painting.

I have focused on the placement of works and on the visual interweaving between works and space because they play a crucial role in engendering conceptual interweavings. Traces within the paintings—photocopic dust traces, photographic traces of the artist's family, and paint traces, the artist's traces—interweaved with the traces of another—Anna Freud's photographs, books, loom, and weaves. Pollock discusses in detail the relationship between the two women: their common profession as psychoanalysts and theorists, their common childhood experiences in relation to their mothers, and their interest in the maternal and trauma through their respective practices.[80] Pollock sees the placement of Ettinger's artworks within Anna Freud's workspace as interweaving "two moments of 'feminine' psychoanalytical movements."[81] Since Ettinger's and Anna Freud's theorisations differ, "such interweaving is not an echo but a differencing and critical move, a new kind of criticality: a non-annihilating criticality: a remaining beside."[82]

This "remaining beside" was suggested through the placement of works. The relationship of the work to the space did not remain at the level of work *over* space but rather passed to work *next to* or *beside* the space and work *into* space. The installation worked *with* and *through* the space and not in spite of it. Of course, the paintings differentiated themselves from the space and from other objects but never in a fixed, oppositional or absolute manner. Rather, at the same time that the paintings connected to the space they maintained a distance-in-proximity. They registered as paintings, as aesthetic objects, and the viewers of the exhibition who would have seen Sigmund Freud's study and bedroom, would eventually recognise the paintings as

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[80] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 213–224.

[81] Ibid., 221.

[82] Ibid. Differencing is the concept Pollock uses to "suggest how the desire for dimensions of difference, notably in relation to the feminine, the queer and othered, can creatively expand our readings of cultural forms." Ibid., 197n9. Differencing involves an "active re-reading and reworking" of the established norm in order to reveal that which is repressed yet always-already there as the norm's "structuring other." Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 8.

Ettinger's. This realisation, however, required time and attentiveness precisely because the work did not declare itself *over* the space.[83] Through time and attentiveness, the artist's insertions in space became discernible. This eventual appearance is important because it allows the "remaining beside" of the work and space and their interweaving to emerge. Ettinger's insertions difference the space, both visually and conceptually, without rejecting what is there and without collapsing into it. Instead, they form "artistic gestures of empathetic emplacement," opening possibilities of connection.[84]

Considering my practice alongside Ettinger's installations, I cannot claim to be aiming for a similar conceptual relationship between my works and specific spaces. The spaces where I have installed my work do not contain the same kinds of freighted objects and histories as the Freud Museum and neither do they contain so many personal objects of another person, although some contain traces of others. Many of them contained objects and furniture but without the very specific history and strong attachment to particular individuals as in a space like the Freud Museum. What I have engaged with are more anonymous types of spaces—residency studios, college project spaces, and gallery spaces. Within these spaces, the engagement between work and space attempts to go beyond a basic overlay, tending towards a sense of besidedness but sometimes also slipping towards imperceptibility. In my case, the insertion in space sometimes becomes partial absorption into space, especially in the case of site-specific works that respond to the space through visual and material correspondence.

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[83] Rosi Huhn writes that "Ettinger staged a game of deception confusing her work and her own autobiographic and historical documents with objects, images and documents in the collection of Anna and Sigmund Freud, thus, questioning notions of originality, authenticity and simply of origin." Huhn, "Traumanatomy," 237n1. Rather than deception, I would follow Pollock and think of the installation in Anna Freud's room as connection and interweave.

[84] Pollock, "A Matrixial Installation," 224. These connections can be intentional or unintentional. What is important, I think, is that by placing the works a certain way, the artist has allowed the viewer to engage in the interweave. This is further touched upon in chapter 8.

RECREATING PARTS OF SPACE, BECOMING-SPACE

For several works, I recreated parts of a space on a separate surface and then placed the recreation over the part it was based on. This method resonates with the marking method discussed in chapter 4 that involved directly tracing over pre-existing marks. It also resonates with the method discussed in chapter 5 since materials that are similar or identical may be placed over each other. In relation to the other approaches to installation discussed earlier—following a narrative pertaining to the space and placing works next to features of the space—this approach can perhaps be conceptualised more clearly as a becoming-space. The works partially blend into the space leading to moments of continuity and of minor difference-in-proximity.

The stain painting made for the exhibition *Re-Surface* at Tenderpixel Gallery was based on a section of the gallery's floor. Having a floor piece was suggested by the space itself. Parts of the wooden floor had been previously removed and replaced with new planks. This resulted in three patches that did not quite match the rest of the floor. My stain painting recreated and was shown over one of these patches. Recreation actually occurred on two levels: in terms of marks (paint marks as stains) and in terms of materials (vinyl as wood).[85]

Image 6.28:   Section of floor at Tenderpixel Gallery and same section with *Stain Painting*, 2009

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[85] In some works, only marks were recreated. A collage on vinyl flooring, made at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, was shown partially over a paint stain. The part of the paint stain covered by the vinyl was duplicated on the surface using adhesive vinyl. The placement of this piece was determined by a set of black paint marks that circumscribed a rectangular area. A past resident must have placed a surface there and painted it black, getting some paint on the floor. In other works, only materials have been duplicated.

This work partially disappeared into the floor, camouflaging itself within the space. This situation resonates with earlier discussions on mimesis and camouflage in chapter 3. The work also operates as a *retrait*, following the discussion in chapter 4. It repeats part of the space and, at the same time, withdraws into the space. By acting as a *retrait*, it challenges the borders between itself and the surrounding floor since it becomes floor on at least two levels: the surface used is an actual piece of vinyl flooring and it is used to mimic/repeat the floor and its marks. Both of these repetitions lead to the withdrawal of the work into space. A zone of indiscernibility, thus, opens up between floor and work enabling the work to enter into a becoming-space.

Moreover, being images of wood, the pieces of vinyl set up an indexical relationship between themselves and the actual floor. A revisiting of Rosalind Krauss' discussion of the index in relation to the paintings of Lucio Pozzi is useful here. As discussed in chapter 4, these paintings replicated the two colours of the wall, acting as imprints of the wall. Their placement over the parts they duplicated made the relationship between the paintings and the wall clear. The paintings pointed to the wall, presenting themselves as isolated instances of the natural continuum of the building.[86] Krauss compares the paintings with photography and argues that they follow the indexical logic as determined by the photographic model.

A work that literalises this point is Victor Burgin's *Photopath* (1967–1969), a series of photographs of an actual floor printed to real-life size and placed over the exact parts of floor they document.[87] The image on the photograph is continuous with the floor and, at the same time, marks a differentiation from it. The work is not only indexical in that the images are traces of the floor, following the conception of photography as an imprint, but also in that they foreground indexicality in their placement. That is, the indexical relationship is extended in the size of the

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[86] Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 64.

[87] This work was first presented in the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form: "Live in your Head"* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, in 1969. The photographs in that exhibition were printed in black and white. The piece was recreated, in colour photography, in 2011 for the exhibition *Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph, 1964–1977*, at the Art Institute of Chicago and this is the version I will be referring to here. Mary Ann Francis brought the original work to my attention when I first started working with vinyl flooring in 2008.

photographs, which have been enlarged to match the size of the actual floor planks, and in the placement of the photographs, which are placed exactly over the parts they depict.

IMAGE CANNOT BE REPRODUCED

Image 6.29:   Lucio Pozzi, *P. S. 1 Paint*, 1976
Acrylic on wood panels
P. S. 1, New York, USA
Image published in Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 62.

Image 6.30:   Victor Burgin, *Photopath*, 2011 (originally 1967)
Inkjet prints, dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist, Obj: 199959, The Art Institute of Chicago
Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago.

Both Burgin's and Pozzi's works are placed back into the continuum they came from.[88] According to Krauss, it is this placement that gives Pozzi's paintings meaning.[89] That is, the placement of both Burgin's and Pozzi's works allows the viewer to see that they point to something outside of themselves—the wall and the floor—by presenting themselves as registrations of that something. Moreover, both works exemplify the need to efface something in order to represent it. What is represented in each case—the wall, the floor—"is itself no longer present in the given sign" since it has been covered over.[90] Krauss calls this the "logic of effacement."[91]

At the same time, this placement back into the very continuum that the works register destabilises the relationship between works and space by precisely turning the works into parts of that continuum, causing them to partially disappear into their surroundings. When Krauss discusses the "logic of effacement" she is referring to the effacement of the object represented (an effacement or covering which, as I have argued in chapters 4 and 5, is partial since aspects of the object are retained in the repetition and since the object is part of the work). What about the potential partial effacement of the works themselves? While Krauss notes that Pozzi's paintings are "visually embedded" within the wall and are attached to their surroundings, she does not deal with the fact that because of this placement the paintings may partially disappear by visually blending in with their environment.[92] In other words, she focuses on the indexical operations of the works (registration and pointing) and not on their mimetic operations (mimesis-as-camouflage) or on the double operation of

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[88] As discussed in chapter 4, in Krauss' and Barthes' accounts, photography is seen as a selection of a part of the real world, a world which is seen as a continuum.

[89] Krauss, "Notes on the Index. Part 2," 64.

[90] Ibid., 65.

[91] Ibid. This discussion echoes her discussion of collage as the representation of representation precisely because it embodies the need to efface something so as to represent it (by placing one plane over another in the case of collage). This issue is discussed in chapter 5.

[92] Ibid., 63. I have only seen reproductions of Pozzi's installation, thus, I cannot tell for certain whether the paintings differentiated themselves sufficiently from the environment or whether they went unnoticed at times. The photographs, however, suggest that there was a potential for partial disappearance.

repetition/withdrawal (the *retrait*).[93] In order to think through the relationship between the works I have been discussing and space, all three operations need to be considered. It is not only that the works point to the space and present themselves as repetitions of that space that gives them meaning. It is also that in doing that the works come to share features with the space and, thus, may end up camouflaging themselves or withdrawing into space, becoming-space. This verges on meaninglessness, which, as I discussed in chapter 4, actually comes very close to the qualities of the index as sign-under-erasure.

The degree of closeness to the material world/space arises when comparing works. Burgin's work consists of photographs that are "intended as an object of contemplation, not an occasion for performance."[94] In the case of my work, the vinyl has a digitally manipulated image of wood printed on it but the surface is not only an image. It is material that is actually used as floor—it *is* flooring. The relationship, then, is somewhat different than in Burgin's piece where the photographs indicate the now concealed floor. The vinyl indicates the floor and, simultaneously, it is floor. The audience can actually walk on it without damaging it. Compared to Burgin's piece, on the one hand, the vinyl is once removed from the surrounding floor because it does not actually represent that floor but another floor. On the other hand, being used as floor itself, it is closer to the floor of a space as it belongs there. It operates in an indexical manner but it is also part of the floor, not completely differentiated from it, thus, it disappears further.[95] Moreover, it is marked with "stains." The juxtaposition of dirt and paint, actual stains and apparent or constructed stains, wooden floor and vinyl, suggests a set of differences and similarities that does not break down to fixed dichotomies. Instead, there is partial continuity between the different elements.

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[93] These may not be the only operations the works perform. I am focusing on them as they allow me to consider the relationship between work and space.

[94] Burgin quoted in Witkovsky, "The Unfixed Photograph," 25n43.

[95] Witkovsky actually suggests that Burgin's *Photopath* almost exchanged places with the floor since it protected the floor from light and wear. Moreover, it "flaunted its fragility" as the photographs became slowly damaged and decolourised over time. Ibid., 22.

Both of these works can be compared with Bethan Huws' *Riverside Piece* (1989), which involved the installation of a parquet floor over the actual floor of three spaces at Riverside Studios in London.[96] The parquet floor was placed a few centimetres higher than the original floor creating a "*raised readymade.*"[97] The work involved "a duplication of what's there," as Huws says.[98] It is not a photographed or represented floor but an actual floor that forced visitors to step up and into the space. In terms of closeness to the space, this intervention had the potential to become part of the space. For anyone not familiar with the work or space, it might have been reasonable to assume that that was how the space was originally constructed.[99]

IMAGE CANNOT BE REPRODUCED

Image 6.31:   Bethan Huws, *Riverside Piece*, Riverside Studio,
London, 1989
Installation view
Photo John Riddy. Courtesy the artist.
© Bethan Huws and DACS, London

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[96] Rebecca Fortnum brought this work to my attention. Huws completed more works that involved placing a new floor over sections of existing floors. Examples include *Kunsthalle Piece* (1990), *Frankfurt Piece* (1991), and *Whitechapel Piece* (2011).

[97] Copeland, "An Internal Depth: Interview with Bethan Huws," 123. The height was "the height of a normal joist that creates floors in buildings." Huws, "Riverside Piece," 33.

[98] Copeland, "An Internal Depth: Interview with Bethan Huws," 123. Huws has stated that there exists a desire in this piece to duplicate what is already there rather than create something new "that comes entirely out of me." She continues: "It's always in-between. The environment outside and you inevitably come round to yourself. . . . I didn't want to bring anything inside the Riverside. That's what I wanted, . . . to model the floor, a floor that I didn't invent or create." Ibid., 126.

[99] Huws has often stated that she is interested in reality. For example, about the *Riverside Piece* she has said: "I want it to be like looking out of the window. I want the work to be a reality, a total reality." Davis et al., "Sculpture Roundtable," 17.

Rosalyn Deutsche separates site-specific art into works that follow an assimilative model, integrating into the pre-existing environment, and works that follow an interruptive model, functioning as an intervention in a site.[100] Rather than a fixed distinction, I see these two categories as endpoints in a work/space relationship continuum. All three works discussed above belong in an in-between. The degree of continuation and differentiation between the works and the surrounding space varies in each case, with Huws' work probably coming closest to being the space. In other words, being an actual floor, it almost integrates into the space. The difference it introduces is the small step the viewers have to walk up to enter the correspondingly smaller space, a step that has been seen as both inviting and repelling.[101] Once the viewers step into the space, they can keep walking along. My vinyl works introduce a visual and material difference yet they lie almost completely flat on the floor and can be stepped on without being damaged. The viewer can keep walking along since the works do not announce themselves as being in the way.[102] Rather, they appear to belong there, despite any disturbances they may introduce. Burgin's work also lies flat on the floor but it introduces a visual and material difference—a long line that cuts across the floor.

My aim when installing works is not to have them be the space but to destabilise the border between work and space such that an in-between zone might be

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[100] Deutsche, "Uneven Development," 13–30. Deutsche's distinction concerns art in public spaces and it rests primarily on art's function within public spaces. Artworks that participate in a city's redevelopment project and that have specific utilitarian uses are termed as integrationist. Miwon Kwon generalises Deutsche's distinctions and uses them to discuss site-specific art in general. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 11, 170n3. Following Kwon, I see Deutsche's distinctions as useful when considering, in broader terms, the relationship between a work and the space in which it exists.

[101] Loock, "The Work in the Kunsthalle Bern," 9.

[102] Admittedly, it could be argued that the works actually are in the way. For example, drawing on Michael Fried's analysis in "Art and Objecthood," Briony Fer suggests that minimalist floor installations, with which these works might be compared, could be in the way of the viewer, interrupting her path. Fer, *On Abstract Art*, 126, 128. (Moreover, Anna C. Chave provides a critique of what she sees as minimalism's seizing of space in her essay "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power.") In the case of Huws' work, the step can be seen as both being and not being in the way. In my case, there is greater dependence on the viewer's perception of the piece. In any case, the works do not make their presence strongly felt. The question as to whether the artist's actions somehow take over the space, however subtly, is far from straightforward and is taken up again in part III.

accessed. This in-between or zone of indiscernibility between work and space parallels and complements the operation of my marks within each work, something that differentiates my work from Pozzi's, Burgin's and Huws' and places it more in line with Ettinger's and Collis'. My works probably position themselves somewhere between these practices since they attempt to approach a space on various levels (visual, material, conceptual) but this approach is always in relation to and as an extension of the marks made on each surface. The relationship between works and space is, thus, approached as another layer of the relationship mark/surface. As such, the works introduce a minimal difference in the space, just like the marks introduce a difference, however subtle, within each surface. The vinyl flooring pieces partially blend in with the surrounding space but also create minor disturbances. This process approximates borderlinking and borderspacing—a connection to space (sometimes one that gives rise to the works) along with a distance/difference-in-proximity.

Ending with a recent work, in *Rain* my marks recreated dried raindrops on pieces of acrylic glass that were then installed leaning against windows. Among the surrounding window and actual raindrops, the marks and pieces of acrylic glass partially disappeared. The disturbance appeared in the form of almost imperceptible lines that demarcated the edges of the acrylic glass. In the absence of actual raindrops, the painted raindrops acted as another minor disturbance that, at the same time, belonged in the space.

Image 6.32:   *Rain (March 26, 2014, 3:00–4:30 pm)* (installation
view), 2014
Acrylic medium on glass, 30 x 40 cm
Centre for Drawing, London, UK

FLOORED, CORNERED, AND FITTED:
UNANNOUNCED WORK

The methods of installation discussed in this chapter attempt to approach the

space in which the work is shown, striving towards a relationship between work and

environment that moves beyond an overlay that usually places the work over and

above the space. That is, the notion of the in-between is extended from the

relationship between mark and surface within the works I have made to that between

work and space.

The relationships suggested through the installations move towards a sense of

besidedness, with-in-sertion and continuation. A relationship of besidedness may

emerge when the work exists next to the space, resonating with specific features in the

space, and pointing to those features through placement. A relationship of with-in-sertion may arise through incorporation into a narrative associated with the space and/or the use of specific features of the space onto and into which work may be placed. Continuation may involve the work becoming visually and conceptually continuous with parts of the space. Besidedness, with-in-sertion, and continuation may roughly correspond to physical placements—next to, with and inside, and attached to—yet are interrelated rather than separate qualities and can operate simultaneously and through each other. Thus, by installing works in ways that take into account both the specificities of the work—in my case the surfaces used and the marks made—and the specificities of the space—functions, materials, and pre-existing traces—the installations move beyond an overlay and into besidedness, with-in-sertion, and continuity. As a result, the focus shifts to the in-between of works and space rather than giving preference to one of the two.

In fact, this close relationship is usually there from the beginning. Just like the surface participates in my marking decisions, the space participates in my making and installation decisions, determining what works can be exhibited there and how. Thus, many works are inextricably linked to the spaces with-in which they are made and shown—they come into being with-in the space.[103] Moreover, these works modify, however subtly, the spaces in which they are placed. As such, a process of co-becoming emerges between work and space where the two affect each other to varying degrees. The works are not wholly and solely artworks that exist independently of the surrounding space but are somehow constituted by and constitute part of the environment, which they also alter. They are not simply placed inside a space whose only function is to receive and contain them. The space itself does not merely exist behind the works but rather partially determines and absorbs them. Meaning, thus,

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[103] Given the fact that many works made with-in a specific space then migrate to other spaces, it might be possible to consider them as resonant with types of spaces and not only as site-specific, in the strict sense of the term. This conceptualisation draws on Kwon's discussion of site-specificity as no longer meaning actual attachment to a site but an engagement with space on several levels, and on Pollock's suggestion that exhibitions can do something different "when they are not so much site-specific as resonant with histories inhabiting spaces." Kwon, *One Place after Another,* 11–31; Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 12.

emerges through this interweave between work and space rather than through each element separately. Works and space coexist, co-become, and co-mean.

Ettinger's and Collis' installations also extend the mark/surface relationships within each work to the surrounding space, thus, contributing to a move beyond an overlay. Collis' installations are a continuation of the narrative constructed within each work through her marks and Ettinger's installations recreate and activate some of the relationships happening within the works. These approaches, and my approach, are different from Hopkins', which usually involves exhibiting works framed on the walls with some distance between them.[104]

In trying to find ways in which works could approach a specific space on multiple levels, a "deflationary impulse," to borrow Margaret Iversen's phrase, has emerged in my practice. The "deflationary impulse" relates, to some extent, to "the reduction of art to a thing in the world, undifferentiated from other objects or insufficiently differentiated."[105] Instead of the work differentiating itself from the space and exhibiting itself, it partially withdraws into the space. This partial indiscernibility can occur because the works become partially confused with pre-existing elements in the space, and/or because they conceptually come to belong to a specific place—becoming objects/surfaces usually found in that space—and/or because

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[104] Two exceptions I am aware of are the work *Songbook 3* (1997), which involved painting over the printed information on two pages in a songbook and which is displayed open in a vitrine, and the exhibition *Harness* (Mummery + Schnelle Gallery, London, October 16–November 22, 2008) where framed and unframed works were presented on the walls in clusters and one framed work was shown on the floor leaning against the wall.

[105] Iversen, "The Deflationary Impulse," 85. The relationship between art and non-art has been an ongoing one in the history of art since the 1960s. As Iversen writes, it was something feminist artists utilised as a way of challenging hierarchies. Iversen locates the foregrounding of such concerns, including challenging expressionism and transcendence, with minimalism. Mary Kelly identifies more types of art practices that "problematize the transcendental imperatives which predominate in critical and historical literature on art": film, photography, the use of found objects, and the use of "processes or systems where creative labour is apparently absent." Kelly, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism," 46. My work resonates with these practices as well as with later practices from the 1990s that drew on minimalism. Such practices, including Alix Pearlstein's wall and floor interventions and Polly Apfelbaum's floor installations of paintings on fabrics, are discussed in Scott, "An Eloquent Silence" and Zelevansky, *Sense and Sensibility*. Through my work, I hope to extend this challenging of hierarchies and rethinking of relationships by focusing specifically on the mark/surface and work/space relationships and by juxtaposing these with Matrixial theory.

they visually blend in with the space, disappearing in the floors, corners and minor peculiarities of the space.[106] As discussed earlier, this indiscernibility parallels, extends, and amplifies the indiscernibility of marks within each work.

In some ways, my installation decisions function against the explicit showing of work for viewing. The works' becoming-space involves an undoing of their presentation mechanisms. This is a paradoxical or even absurd position as visual art is meant to be viewed. The question may, thus, be posed: If a work is not viewed, then does it exist as art? I do not, in fact, consider the partial indiscernibility of my works as a straightforward failure or as merely a sign of non-being. The works are not actually absent or invisible but are becoming-other. The potential that they may be discerned through attentive viewing is always there. At the same time, the potential that they may not be discerned is also there. Given my aims of approaching a space, the risk of being overlooked is an inevitable quality of many of the works. The implications of this indiscernibility are explored in part III alongside the artist and viewer.

As much as the work attempts to remain unannounced, the space itself proclaims it in some ways. When the work is shown in a gallery or within the context of a showing of work, it is framed by its context.[107] Viewers walk into these types of spaces or situations expecting to see artworks. This expectation may encourage them to seek out the works, even if the works do not reveal themselves fully. Conversely, when the viewers' expectations are not quickly met, they may explicitly reject the work. There is always an implicit framing in operation whenever an artist hopes to actually show work. The wish to show work is somehow resisted by the work's tendency to disappear. These two seemingly incompatible frameworks again place the work, artist, and viewer at paradoxical positions, an issue further discussed in the next part of this text.

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[106] Regarding my floor installations specifically, I should point out that Briony Fer associates the "deflationary impulse" that Iversen identifies with "the interest and effect of the pull downward" seen especially in floor installations of minimalist work. Fer, *On Abstract Art*, 126.

[107] As Kwon points out, the site of presentation of work is a "*cultural* framework defined by the institutions of art." Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 13. This framework frames whatever is shown within it. This framing is also suggested throughout Brian O'Doherty's text *Inside the White Cube*.

Image 6.33: *No Second Chances With First Impressions* (installation view)*,* 2012
Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts, Amherst, USA

Image 6.34: *Plans and Renovations* (installation view)*,* 2014
Centre for Drawing, London, UK

ENACTING SUBJECTIVITY-AS-ENCOUNTER:

ON THE POTENTIAL MEANINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE
IN-BETWEEN AND INDISCERNIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

> To be a subject without turning the other and the Cosmos into an object—that
> is the question.
>
> Bracha L. Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance"

Part II discussed the methods developed through the practical research in order to access the in-between of mark and surface and work and space. It focused on the works I completed as part of the practical research and on what occurred in the studio as I was working and in exhibition spaces when I presented my work. As far as my research questions are concerned, part II engaged with the first two questions: How can the relationship between the artist's marks and the surface move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state can be accessed? As an extension of that, how can the relationship between work and space be shifted in a similar manner? It also partially dealt with the third question, mostly in terms of the relationships mark/surface and work/space: How does accessing this in-between change the relationship between subject and object and self and other?

As I discussed in chapter 2, the methodology of this project was emergent—my specific methods and interests shifted as I was working on the research. What began as a more general aim of responding to surfaces evolved into the more specific aim of *approaching* surfaces on several levels—visual, physical, material, and conceptual. As part II will have demonstrated by now, this approaching foregrounds the issue of indiscernibility, understood as both visual imperceptibility and a more conceptual form of indistinctness. As my marks approach the surface, it becomes difficult to differentiate between artist's mark and surface, at least initially. The marks come to be perceived as part of the surface—marks in the surface's pattern, accidental marks, or natural marks that appeared by themselves. Thus, instead of asserting their difference from the surface, and, consequently, their presence, the artist's marks seem to be "asserting" a degree of indiscernibility.[1]

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[1] Given the indiscernibility of my marks, the works are related to what can be considered invisible or nearly invisible art. As Ralph Rugoff writes, the history of invisible art begins in the 1950s and has been explored through a series of group exhibitions from the 1960s to the present: *Invisible Painting and Sculpture*

My interest in the notion of indiscernibility emerged out of my practice and was interweaved with my interest in responding to and approaching a surface. I, thus, see the two as inextricable aspects of the works I have completed as part of the research. That is, indiscernibility is inextricable from responding to and approaching a surface. Notions and methods of responding, approaching, and becoming indiscernible co-emerged through the work and co-transformed each other. Thus, they cannot easily be placed in clear relationships of cause-and-effect.[2]

The foregrounding of indiscernibility brings about additional questions. If the artist's marks are almost imperceptible, what might that mean for the artist? And what are the implications for the audience when they cannot immediately see or identify a work of art? Part III brings together these new questions along with the third question posed at the start of the research: How does accessing the in-between of mark and surface and work and space change the relationship between subject and object and self and other? The questions concerning the implications of the in-between and indiscernibility for the artist and audience can be placed under this question since they can be seen as expanding the possible meanings of the subject/object and self/other relationships. That is, I now unfold the discussion to include more relationships

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(Richmond Art Centre, Richmond, 1969), *At the Threshold of the Visible: Miniscule and Small-Scale Art 1964–1996* (Independent Curators Incorporated, New York, 1997), *A Brief History of Invisible Art* (CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2005), *Apparently Invisible* (The Drawing Centre, New York, 2009), *Voids: A Retrospective* (Pompidou Centre, Paris, 2009), *Invisible: Art About the Unseen 1957–2012* (Hayward Gallery, London, 2012). Within this group of works, the specific issue my works explore is that of marks that become almost indistinct from the surface on which they are made. Thus, invisibility, or rather indiscernibility, is directly related to the relationship between mark and surface.

[2] What this reveals I think is the difficulty of attempting to fit an artistic practice within an argument, in this case as part of an academic research project. That is, the two "logics"—the "logic" of practice and the logic of a theoretical argument—do not quite match. Initially, I had approached this as a logical or organisational problem. In trying to decide how to organise this text, I identified two routes. On the one hand, if I were to begin with the notion of responding to a surface, then indiscernibility would become the result of that response. On the other hand, if I were to begin with the notion of indiscernibility, then my modes of responding would be seen as aiming for indiscernibility right from the start. In actuality, a mixture of interests emerged out of my practice that had to do both with responding to something and disappearing. Thus, the two are not easily explained in terms of cause-and-effect relationships, where one causes the other unproblematically. As Bernice Donszelmann has pointed out during discussions, this is not a logical problem but something inherent in practice. Interests and notions co-emerge, interweave, co-transform, and coexist (sometimes in tension) through practice, and their relationships may not always be logically and definitively explained. This is one of the reasons why I introduced all notions—responding, approaching, becoming indiscernible—in the same chapter (chapter 3).

surrounding that between mark and surface: the relationships between the artist and her "others" and those between the audience and their "others." Within phallic meaning, these are still self/other relationships. In a sense, this unfolding can be seen as approximating a metramorphic process: each new relationship adds another layer to my thinking and discussion without replacing previous ones.[3] Chapter 7 focuses on the encounters between the artist (who is "behind" the marks made on each surface) and her "others" (the materials and the "others" who are "behind" the found marks, surfaces, and spaces). Chapter 8 focuses on the encounters between the viewer and her "others" (artworks and artist).

While part II remained very close to the practice and dealt with the actual making and showing of the work, part III moves a bit further away to consider the wider implications and meanings that may arise from destabilising the mark/surface relationship. It focuses on the interpretation of the works discussed in part II and on their potential implications for the artist and audience. It also discusses the potential significance of these implications for relationships between self and other within a wider context. Just as in part II I showed that the distinctions between mark and surface and between different types of marks, as well as between work and space, begin to destabilise, here I look at how the distinction between self and other begins to shift at the levels of the artist and the viewer. I, thus, turn again towards the theories of subjectivity discussed in chapter 1, that is, the Oedipal model of classical psychoanalysis and Ettinger's non-Oedipal Matrixial theory. In addition, I turn to the anti-Oedipal thought of Deleuze and Guattari, focusing on the concept of becoming. Using aspects of these three approaches to subjectivity, I attempt to understand and interpret specific issues raised by the research.

At the same time, all the issues discussed in this part are grounded in and build on the works and issues discussed in part II. The two chapters that follow are essentially two re-readings of part II and two re-viewings of the works discussed in part II. Each re-reading/re-viewing is performed through a different lens. Chapter 7

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[3] That is, the mark/surface relationship is not merely a metaphor for something else. There is no substitution of terms but rather an unfolding onto multiple layers of meaning.

revisits part II through the figure of the artist and her relationships to her "others."

Chapter 8 revisits part II through the figure of the viewer and her relationships to her

"others." Each re-reading/re-viewing draws out and further develops specific issues

that emerged out of part II.

THE ARTIST AND HER "OTHERS"

This chapter unfolds the discussion surrounding marks and surfaces and works and spaces by considering an additional layer of meaning: the relationships between the artist and her "others." These "others" include materials, processes, and the "others" who are "behind" the found marks, surfaces, and spaces the artist works with. I consider how accessing a mark/surface in-between state might shift the relationships between the artist and these "others." That is, I revisit the making and viewing of the works, asking what the relationship of the artist to her "others" is and what the implications of indiscernibility might be for thinking about subjectivity and otherness.

More than a Mark, More than a Surface

The works I have been focusing on, my own and those of Collis, Ettinger, and Hopkins, involve the artists using their hands and a variety of processes, such as painting, drawing, collage, intarsia, and embroidery, to deposit marks on a surface. These marks are the material trace or "inevitable fallout" of the activity of marking.[1] In addition to whatever else they may represent or indicate, they are also an indication of each specific artist's actions, as discussed in chapter 4. They act as indexical signs of the body that caused them, providing evidence of the artist's work and of her interaction with materials. In some works, such as my *Shadow Pieces* for instance or Ettinger's paintings, the marks follow the movement of the hand while making. In these cases, by unfolding the trace, the viewer can potentially "see" the gesture the artist performed.[2] My invocation of the index here is not meant as an adherence to modernist rhetoric and the unproblematic conflation of artist and mark but is rather an acknowledgement of the fact that behind these marks there is a human body that

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[1] Lee, "Some Kinds of Duration," 33.

[2] This not always the case. In Collis' intarsia works, for example, it is not possible to see individual hand movements even if the presence of the inlaid material indicates the actions of carving the surface, shaping the material, and inlaying it in the surface.

was involved in making them.[3] The human presence in the works under discussion is subdued and sometimes even partially effaced, an issue I return to later.

The artist's mark is not the only significant aspect of these works. Instead, there is a great deal more involved. As discussed in part II, the process of making involves approaching pre-existing external elements. These include surfaces that are marked directly, objects and marks that are modified or recreated elsewhere, and spaces in which works can exist. Collis works with marks and objects that she recreates. Ettinger works with photocopies of photographs on which she paints. Hopkins and I work with surfaces that are already marked in some way and that we also mark directly. As indicated in part II, these external elements relate in various ways to other people, other processes, other "others."[4]

In the case of Collis' work, these "others" are critical as they form part of the reason for doing the work in the first place. The marks she recreates were caused by people engaged in various activities: painting walls, cleaning floors, working in a foundry, making paintings in a studio, and installing works in a gallery. The locations of these marks and the objects on which they were found also relate to these activities: a stepladder can be used to paint walls in a gallery, brooms and dustsheets are used for cleaning up, and boiler suits are worn by people working in foundries and studios. Collis sees many of these activities as the unnoticed labour of the art world.[5] Choosing the leftover marks of these activities as her primary materials and remaking them on the types of objects on which they were originally found, or on which they may potentially be found, becomes her way of drawing attention to that labour. The unintentional leftovers of someone else's work—a technician's, a cleaner's, or an artist's—become the basis for her marks.

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[3] By modernist rhetoric I am referring to theorisations that view the painted mark as an indication of the (male) artist's presence, subjectivity and unmediated expressivity, which then become the main subject of the work. A critique of such theorisations is provided by Pollock, "Painting, Feminism, History," and Brennan, *Modernism's Masculine Subjects*.

[4] As I have pointed out in chapter 1, my use of quotes is meant to point out the phallic implications of "otherness," that is, viewing it as radical and oppositional alterity within the phallic sphere of meaning creation. The artist's "others" are considered as such only within the phallic sphere. The implication being that the "others" may not actually be that at all, something I address throughout the chapter.

[5] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

All the works by Hopkins that I have focused on in this text make use of mass-produced printed surfaces: furnishing fabrics, maps, sheet music, and graph paper. The pattern on the fabrics was designed by an anonymous designer or group of designers. They made sketches, either by hand or on a computer, modified them over time, and eventually ended up with the final image. This image was then printed repeatedly on fabric in a factory. Maps, sheet music, and graph paper are more standardised images but they still involve some design decisions and mechanised manufacture. In all of these cases, Hopkins engages with someone else's image and text as well as with a process that is different to painting.

Ettinger not only engages with other processes—photography and photocopying—but also with images of other people, "dust and traces from the universe of others."[6] Behind each surface is a photograph taken at a specific moment, documenting events and people. As discussed in earlier chapters, the photographs undergo a process of interrupted photocopying, leaving only traces of the figures. Then, the artist introduces painting onto/into these traces.

Many of the surfaces I work with are designed and mass-produced, like the ones Hopkins uses. Similarly to the furnishing fabrics, behind the adhesive vinyl and vinyl flooring there is a team of designers and a printing process. In the case of the *Light Capture* collages on packing paper, *Shadow Pieces* on handmade paper, and raindrops on windows, I am dealing with natural processes—shadows, light, and rain—and the visible traces left by those processes. Finally, site-specific works on walls and floors engage with marks left by other people in that space and with damage sustained over time either through human action or through natural deterioration. These pre-existing marks index those other people and processes. Moreover, each specific space displays particular architectural features and materials and refers to particular uses. All of these aspects bring other "others" to bear on the work.

In all these cases, the artists' marks never come entirely first to the surface—someone/something else was there before—and neither do they operate alone as the predominant element of the work. Instead, they respond to pre-existing elements.

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[6] Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 51.

They are always in an encounter with other marks, other processes, other people, other images, other moments and places. By approaching the surface, the artists' marks are approaching these "others," as I discuss in the following sections.

IN THE MAKING:
BECOMING-MARK, BECOMING-SURFACE, BECOMING-OBJECT,
BECOMING-OTHER

This section revisits the making of the works, my works and works by Collis, Ettinger, and Hopkins, focusing on the artists and their relationships to their materials, that is, the marks and surfaces they encounter. The marks employed by the artists in each case attempt to approach a pre-existing surface or mark. As such, the artists' marks come to be based on the marks of another person and/or process. In part II, I suggested that the artists' marks enter into a process of becoming-surface or becoming-other. Here, I suggest that the artists themselves, as human subjects, enter into a becoming-other during the process of making these works.

As discussed in part II, the pre-existing surface, mark, or object almost initiates the process of making. The surface/object is not treated as a "blank" page or a purely undifferentiated ground or "container" awaiting the artist's inscription, as Serge Tisseron's account of marking suggests. Even surfaces that visually appear to be almost blank, such as sheets of handmade paper, packing paper and plain walls in the case of my work, are not treated in this way. Instead, they are studied carefully to reveal their features and whatever natural or accidental marks may have formed on them due to those features. From the artist's point of view, any pre-existing marks are considered part of the surface. In Hopkins' and Ettinger's works, the artist's mark comes as a response to pre-existing marks and images on the surface. In the case of Collis' works, the common use and material of each object are crucial in deciding how to mark it. Thus, for all these artists the surface starts out with its pre-existing marks and images, its own figure/ground relations, and its own uses and conceptual, cultural, and historical associations. The surface then suggests to the artists ways of responding through marking, explicit or implicit ways, thereby "revealing" the artists' marks during the making. Thus, the process of making retrieves the surface, bringing it, in a sense, to the foreground.

The artists proceed by adhering to the surface in some way. In Collis' case, the making process involves a mimetic remaking of found marks and it is that which guides her choices. She even sometimes mimics the actions of other people while making. When deciding how to arrange the found marks on a table, for example, she considers what actions a painter using the table in a studio might engage in. The placement of the marks depends on these actions that Collis first performs virtually and then recreates through her marks. In an effort to "understand how something is made," she approaches the people that caused the marks she remakes.[7] In some works by Hopkins and myself, the marking proceeds by tracing over a pre-existing mark on a surface. The artists' marks in each case are "modelled" on the surface since their shapes, colours, and placements depend on its pre-existing marks (to varying degrees in each work). Ettinger responds to each surface in a more fluid and unconscious/non-conscious way, allowing her marks to scan over the traces of the photocopied photographs repeatedly. Finally, when using smaller parts of the surface as marks, I cut around images and remake or reorganise the pattern on each surface based on the pre-existing images. In this case, in following the surface, the artist's marks have literally turned into it.

It is as if the artists, beyond making an initial decision to have their marks be guided by some aspects of the surface, restrict their decision-making, temporarily suspend their judgement, and adhere closely or partially yield to something other. Several decisions regarding the artists' marks are deferred to the surface to the extent that, at times, the artists may be involved in a process of registration—capturing shadows, recreating flowers, remaking a paint spill. As Louise Hopkins says, sometimes dealing with all the choices painting affords is too much and working on a found surface limits those choices, "because if I want to make a dialogue with what's found, with what already exists, with something that somebody else has made, then

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[7] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A. Collis uses this phrase when discussing the embroidered boiler suits. She says: "I think that's what made me do the boiler suits in stitch. Because I really liked that idea of using a process to try to understand how something is made." Ibid.

that limits my possibilities."[8] Susan Collis finds pleasure in remaking something pre-

existing, doing "something totally pre-prescribed but so you can have the pleasure of

. . . using your hands."[9] This is not to deny the decisions the artists actually make,

starting with the decision to engage in this kind of work, and which are discussed in

part II. It is important, however, to acknowledge that these practices involve a partial

letting go of something during the making of the marks—of total control over the work

and of the capacity to make decisions about marks without considering external

elements.[10]

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[8] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

[9] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A. The question of pleasure, or even jouissance, is an interesting one when considering these works. It does not form part of the current research.

[10] This letting go associates these practices with other practices involving various forms of abdicating control when making marks. This abdication can happen in several different ways. Artists have utilised chance (Marcel Duchamp, William Anastasi, Robert Morris), the following of rules (Sol LeWitt, Eva Hesse, Katie Pratt), an adherence to a specific process (Dorothea Rockburne, Simon Hantaï, Robert Overby, Michelle Stuart), non-composition (Lucio Pozzi, Agnes Martin, Sylvia Plimack Mangold), repetition (Hanne Darboven, Marcia Hafif), and the use of readymade marks. Texts that discuss such strategies include: Hauptman, "Drawing from the Modern," and Garrels, "Drawing from the Modern," both of which provide historical overviews of these strategies; Singerman, "Noncompositional Effects," which discusses noncomposition in painting, with reference to monochromes, grids, and process-based work; Newman, "The Marks, Traces, and Gestures of Drawing," which addresses automatic gestures; Krauss, "Line as Language," which discusses drawings that address external space rather than acting as expressions of an interior mental state; Fer, *The Infinite Line*, which focuses on repetition; Lee, "Some Kinds of Duration," which discusses chance and contingency; Butler, "Ends and Means," which focuses on process drawing; Buchloh, "Hesse's Endgame," which addresses marks that are determined by external systems; Flatley, "Art Machine," which discusses a machine-like mode of making art; Schwarz, "'Not a Drawing'," in which he contrasts subjectively determined with materially determined drawings. Such modes of marking take some decision-making away from the artist and assign it to external elements. Within this wider framework, the works of Collis, Hopkins, Ettinger and my own, take that external element to be the surface and its pre-existing marks. In the case of my practice, this is a result of specifically attempting to *approach* the surface so as to access a mark/surface in-between. Many of the strategies mentioned above, especially since the 1960s, challenge the ideology surrounding modernist painting and the privileged role of the expressive, authorial and authentic mark. Kelly, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism," 46, 48; Krauss, "Line as Language"; Iversen, "The Deflationary Impulse." Moreover, the impersonal aspects of several of these strategies have sometimes been seen as non-subjective or asubjective. Fer, *The Infinite Line*, 61; Buchloh, "Hesse's Endgame," 120; Flatley, "Art Machine," 83; Schwarz, "'Not a Drawing'." Matrixial theory and the concept of subjectivity-as-encounter may enable a rethinking of this apparent lack of subjectivity, perhaps for some of these strategies. Instead of arguing for the asubjective or non-subjective, in this chapter I draw on Ettinger's theory to suggest that the works I have completed as part of this research may enact a *different* subjectivity.

Moreover, this is an active letting go in the sense that it is something worked towards—the artists' marking methods and marks initiate a partial movement towards an other. This is evident in the methods of marking, which approach an other as discussed earlier, and it is also apparent in the operations of the resulting marks— mimetic, *retrait*/re-covering, and indexical—all of which convey a movement towards an other. In the case of mimetic marks, this movement is towards the other that is mimicked: found marks and marks/features of the surface. By having their marks adopt features of the surface or by having their marks mimic other marks—accidental, natural or mechanically printed marks—the artists enter into a process of approaching an other. Their marks become similar and sometimes even partially confused with the marks of that other. In the case of marks that operate within a *retrait*/re-covering, the artists' marks partially remake the marks of an-other person or process. This repetition or following of the other again leads to partial confusion as the different types of marks begin to withdraw into each other due to their physical coincidence. In fact, in these cases it is the artists that enact a *retrait* since by repeating the marks of another, they partially withdraw as active decision-makers and originators of marks. Finally, marks that operate as indices existentially depend on *both* the artist and the pre-existing surface and mark. Instead of merely pointing back to the artists' actions/bodies, they also indicate something/someone other—features of the surface, the pre-existing mark, the marking process that originally brought that mark into being, the others involved in that process, and the others whose traces are left on the surface. The indexical mark becomes a meeting point between others—mark and surface, artist's mark and others' marks and traces, animate and inanimate, subject and object. As a result, sometimes its function as indicating the presence of the artist is subdued, as I further discuss later. In all cases, the artists engage with the marks of an other such that zones of indiscernibility open up, first between the artists' marks and pre-existing marks and the surface, and, secondly, between the artists and the others. It may be unclear what process brought the marks into being or whose marks they are. This transpires differently in each work, an issue I return to later.

The adherence to the surface affects the quality of the resulting marks, or, conversely, the quality of the marks confirms the adherence to the surface. As

discussed in part II, the artist's marks tend towards the depersonalised or anonymous. Ettinger works with short and fine colourlines that indicate a scanning movement along the surface. These marks can be seen as impersonal on several levels: they are very basic, they are repetitive, and they simulate a mechanical mode of reproduction. They also resonate with the "anonymous elements" of the photocopied image—the disappearing grains.[11] Hopkins also refers to her marks as anonymous. She states,

> How can I find a way for the painted and the printed to sit together, how can I find a mark that makes that happen? That's often to do with the scale of the mark and, to some extent, anonymity of mark. So I'm not adding specifics, I'm not making things up. . . . I'm just copying more of the same.[12]

The painted mark can be seen as anonymous since it "copies" something pre-existing which is itself anonymous—a mass-produced printed mark belonging to an image designed by an anonymous designer. The close remaking of a pre-existing mark in Hopkins', Collis' and in my works can be understood as a limitation or restraint placed on the artist's mark. Through being partially determined by this other mark, the artist's mark, as handmade, personal, expressive, original, or even human, remains partially suppressed.

In Collis' case and in several of my works, the artist's marks are based on accidental and ignorable marks. The lack of intentionality associated with these marks also suggests a degree of depersonalisation. In the case of works I have made involving natural or mechanical marks, there is a movement towards the non-handmade and non-human. This is amplified in my collages where the mark is not entirely handmade but hand cut. As discussed in chapter 5, compared with the painted or drawn mark, the collaged mark is considered to be more mundane, basic, and, thus, depersonalised.[13] Moreover, the collaged mark is literally part of the surface, suggesting a fading out of the humanising aspect and a movement towards the otherness of the surface.

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[11] Ettinger, "Uncanny Awe," 17. Ettinger also refers to the grains as anonymous in several of her notes. Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 48, 50, 51, 70, 88.

[12] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A.

[13] Shiff, "Picasso's Touch," 42; Shiff, "Cézanne's Physicality," 162.

This movement or passage towards an other that the artists engage in can be conceptualised as a becoming, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense. As discussed in part II, becoming involves two different terms or points moving towards each other, forming a zone of proximity or indiscernibility between them and engaging in an interchange. In part II, I used the concepts of becoming and zones of indiscernibility as a structure through which to discuss the marking process and the relationship between mark and surface. I suggested that the marking processes the artists work with enable a becoming-surface or becoming-other of the artists' marks. Can becoming also be used to discuss the relationship between the artists and the pre-existing marks and surfaces during the process of making and to what extent?

As I have discussed earlier, during the process of making, the artists adhere to and, thus, move towards the surface, a pre-existing mark, an-other process or an-other person. This movement towards an other resonates with the concept of becoming. This happens most clearly through the relationship between mark and surface. If the artist's mark is becoming-surface or becoming-other, then the artist who makes that mark can be conceptualised as moving towards something other. Instead of the mark being dependent solely on the artist, it also depends on the surface and pre-existing marks. Thus, the artists' marks are not exactly "other" to the surface and pre-existing marks since they are partially based on them.

Becoming, however, is not a simple movement and neither is it merely an issue of resemblance. As conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari, becoming is not consciously effected and operates at a sub-individual level. The term that is becoming is swept up, carried off, or drawn into a zone of proximity with another term.[14] What passes between the terms in this zone of proximity and what they share are "sub- or pre-individual components—powers, capabilities, affects."[15] It is almost as if becoming is something that happens to someone rather than something that someone does, even though for it to happen a suspension of rational thinking, a sensitivity to constraints,

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[14] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 307.

[15] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 101.

and an openness to the other might be required.[16] There is, of course, no need to try to make an artistic practice fit exactly within an extant concept or theoretical framework. In this case, however, I believe something of value happens when the encounter between the practices I have been discussing and the concept of becoming is pushed further. When viewing these practices through the lens of becoming, almost imperceptible aspects begin emerging. These are aspects of the making processes that were indicated but not extensively discussed in part II. These aspects—or sub-aspects perhaps—exist underneath this movement towards an other, or several others, that I am suggesting is underway in the making of these works.[17]

There is actual physical closeness involved in the making of these works as the artists have to be very close to the surfaces with which they are working. Collis engages in tabletop work, meaning that she sits very close to each surface as she is marking it, obsessing over getting the marks to be just right.[18] In the case of works involving marking over pre-existing marks, the artists place themselves a few centimetres away from each surface. When working on big paintings, Hopkins devises methods to enable her to work very close to the surface, such as balancing her chair on a table placed right in front of the painting and hanging the painting at different heights so as to be able to reach various parts over time.[19] Ettinger works very close to each canvas, which is placed on an easel before her chair. All the making and viewing is done within a small distance from the surface, almost without ever stepping back to look at the

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[16] Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 95–103. Massumi writes that becoming "is not a question of a consciously willed personal decision. Becoming is directional rather than intentional. The direction it moves in may appear 'unmotivated,' 'irrational,' or 'arbitrary' from the point of view of molarity." Ibid., 95.

[17] The characterisation "sub-aspects" is not meant as a demeaning term, implying that these aspects are not important. Rather, I am using it to suggest that these activities, which most likely happen along the way without being the thing aimed for, are found underneath and enable the making processes. To clarify: as an artist, I did not decide a priori that I would be making small marks or that I would spend so much time with each surface, but the decision to approach each surface through my marks led to, and is supported by, precisely these sub-aspects of my practice. This is something I realised after the fact. I would argue that something similar occurs with the other artists I am discussing. My conceptualisation of sub-aspects draws on Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of becoming as something sub-individual and on Ettinger's conceptualisation of the sub-subjective.

[18] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[19] Black, "Studio: Catriona Black Steps Into Louise Hopkins' Glasgow Studio," 19.

work.[20] While making work, I have found myself crawling on floors, tracing stains with my eyes just a few centimetres from the surface. I have also found myself working right up against walls or windows or sitting for hours bent over pieces of vinyl or fabric.

Moreover, the making of the works entails the artists performing gestures or movements that are small in scale. Many works involve detailed and precise marks, requiring the use of tiny brushes or other precision instruments. Many of Collis' works involve carving out small parts of wood and inlaying stones in them—stones that have been shaped using very fine electrical blades. Hopkins, utilising tiny brushes, paints carefully over the printed flowers for her paintings on furnishing fabrics. Likewise, many of my works focus on remaking small marks, such as highlights and paint stains. Finally, Ettinger also performs small movements that result in short and fine horizontal lines. Even though her work does not involve precise tracing, many of her painted lines are very thin, sometimes barely touching the surface. Overall, there are no large or forceful gestures that emphasise movement and presence. Rather, in these practices, gestures are restrained, kept small and relatively still, almost as if emulating the stillness of the surfaces the artists are working with, almost becoming-object.

Even though control over decision-making is partially relinquished, the resulting modes of marking may require substantial manual control over the making process. This is especially the case in works that involve tracing over a pre-existing mark. This kind of marking usually demands control and care when recreating the marks because "mistakes" may be more obvious. Thus, this process of marking implies both more and less control on the part of the artist.

The care, precision, and detail required in several of the works means that they take a long time to complete. Each of Hopkins' large flower paintings takes hundreds of hours to complete and requires intense focus.[21] My portable works are much smaller but they still call for substantial amounts of time. For the *Dotted Lines* collage where all the lines have been recreated using glued chads, each line took approximately fifteen minutes to complete, meaning that the entire collage, consisting

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[20] Bracha L. Ettinger, in conversation with author, Tel Aviv, July 13, 2013.
[21] Louise Hopkins, in conversation with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011.

of forty-five lines, required more than eleven hours of repetitive work. Ettinger returns to each painting again and again, working on it for at least a year. Even though in her case there is no clear task to complete, so to speak, as in the case of my collage which recreates all printed lines, Ettinger still returns to the same work. There seems to be a need to spend extensive periods of time with each painting, touching/marking it repeatedly. Collis is the only artist out of the ones discussed that employs studio assistants to help in the making of the work. As she says, it is not physically possible to complete work by herself in time for exhibitions. It is also not physically possible for one person to become adept, relatively quickly, at all the different techniques Collis utilises.[22] Larger surfaces are prepared by expert craftspeople—woodworkers, jewellers, and so on. The time-consuming and precise marking, however, is done by Collis. Since she "copies" pre-existing marks, she also has to trace over the originals, adding an extra step in the process. Each piece then takes several months to complete.

The extended time spent with each surface suggests an increased familiarity over time. This familiarity sometimes begins even before work on a piece begins. I have spent a lot of time simply looking at surfaces found in my studio, thinking of ways to work with them. A surface may lie there for months before I start trying out ways to mark it.[23] Hopkins experiments extensively with each surface, trying out various marks in order to see how the relationship between mark and surface might develop. She has "boxes and boxes of experimental drawings," and she tries out "loads and loads of different things all the time," looking for ways to get inside a surface.[24] She says,

> Often what I find out is that something I am trying just has no relationship with the surface whatsoever or that I need to continue and push further a certain kind of way of working, to challenge myself and push myself to find a way of making that close relationship with the marks that are already there. I

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[22] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[23] For example, I was carrying fabric samples to residencies with me for almost two years before I finally began working with them directly.

[24] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A. Hopkins also discusses specific studies she attempted while working with furnishing fabrics in Black, "Studio: Catriona Black Steps Into Louise Hopkins' Glasgow Studio," 18.

think that that is partly to do with developing an empathy but it's quite a cold empathy.[25]

The experimentation in Hopkins' case involves finding a mark that will somehow be close to and work with the marks on the surface, developing some kind of empathy with them.

This familiarity continues into the marking process. As more time is spent actually working with the surface, a shift may occur in how that surface is perceived. In my case, this shift manifested itself as increased sensitisation to the surface. As discussed in part II, the more I worked with and looked at a surface, the more variations in colour and texture I could detect. In a sense, the surface unfolded itself over time, revealing more information. This increased sensitisation oftentimes made my work more challenging as it became almost impossible to complete something. In cases where I had determined to mark over all pre-existing marks, the more I worked, the more marks I could see and this extended the time I spent working with the surface. In a sense, I came closer and closer to the surface as I worked with it and, thereby, became absorbed by it.

I suspect that a comparable shift may happen in Ettinger's case as she reworks her paintings. In a note dated July 3, 2005, she describes her process of working: "Scan and scan, each time more intensively, until intensity enters in resonance with other intensities."[26] Every time she scans a painting, adding marks, something may begin to change—her marks start to connect with the pre-existing traces, entering into resonance with them such that images begin to appear/disappear. This is something that can only happen through repeated scanning over time. Elsewhere she writes,

> I am the grain moving and becoming
> line. My real condition
> is trans-connection
> with other grains

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[25] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A. Hopkins has also pointed out that "the paradoxical state of *passionate neutrality* or *passionate detachment* is key to [her] approach to working on found surfaces and to the marks in [her] paintings in general." Louise Hopkins, email message to author, November 6, 2012.

[26] Ettinger, *Notebook*, 29.06.2005–15.08.2005.

vibrating with and against other lines,

entering transmission with

higher levels of

realisation

diffused[27]

Again, I take the reference to "higher levels of realisation" to indicate increased awareness over time as well as a closer connection between her marks and the photocopic grains. Over time, borders begin to dissolve and borderlinks form between them.

Another element that facilitates this closeness to and familiarity with a surface is the repeated return to each type of surface. Hopkins has thus far made eight paintings utilising the same furnishing fabric. She has painted these flowers so many times that, even though they are a found image, she may now be the one most familiar with them. "It's occurred to me," she says, "that I've painted this design so many times or repainted it more than perhaps the person who designed it ever painted it."[28] The repeated remaking, "bordering on devotion" or "extreme empathy," allows her to get to know the image closely.[29] Moreover, Hopkins has suggested that the remaking of marks found on the fabric,

was to do with almost getting close to something that happened before the printed fabric was made. Initially there was a drawing and an artist/designer made that drawing and I'm getting close to that.[30]

An anonymous designer or team of designers worked on these images in the past, possibly reworking and redoing them multiple times. By repeatedly remaking those marks and revisiting that earlier moment, Hopkins enters into a process of becoming that other person.

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[27] Ettinger, *Notebook*, January–February 2006, Appendix A.

[28] Louise Hopkins, in discussion with author, Glasgow, May 14, 2011, transcript, Appendix A. This may imply a certain ownership of the image, even though it was not her image to begin with, an issue I return to later.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid. Katrina Brown suggests something similar when she writes that what Hopkins does to the fabric is "to rediscover the original marks, which at some point in the distant past constituted the designs with which she works." Brown, "Louise Hopkins," 78.

Ettinger returns to the same images again and again. Two images she keeps returning to, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, are the photograph of herself, her mother and her brother and the photograph of the women at Mizocz. She has photocopied, enlarged, cropped, and marked these images countless times. Every new painting made using these images suggests a revisiting of those moments or a commitment to those traces. She repeatedly uses her marks to cover, protect, envelope, embrace, or connect with those others. The repeated return also suggests a working-through of shared trauma, a process that requires time.[31]

For Collis, the repetition of works has to do with refining her method of marking and developing better ways to create marks on specific surfaces. She has also used the same marks on various pieces. A specific group of paint stains on the handle of her studio broom has found its way on several works.[32] I would argue that beyond being a way of refining method, the repetition and return to the same marks allows the artist to become better acquainted with and come closer to them.[33]

In my practice, I have been returning to the same types of surfaces over the past six years: vinyl flooring, adhesive vinyl, lined paper, packing paper, and fabrics. Each work becomes a series consisting of several pieces. For example, so far, I have made thirty-five *Dotted Lines* collages, fourteen *Masquetry* collages, nine *Stain Paintings*, and approximately forty *Faulty Samples* works. I have also been returning to similar types of spaces: studio spaces that retain some domestic features. The repeated return allows me, to some extent, to know each surface intimately and to refine my marks in an attempt to approach that surface even more. For example, in the *Stain Paintings*, my painted lines have become smaller and less curly over the years. In other works, such as *Dotted Lines* and *Faulty Samples*, the repeated return relates

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[31] Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, 25, 148.

[32] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[33] The found marks the artists work with are obviously different. The meanings associated with archive photographs are different from those attached to furnishing fabrics and both are different from those associated with unintentional or natural marks. By discussing the various works together I do not mean to collapse the practices into each other or to deny these important differences. Doing a full comparative analysis of the different sources the artists work with, however, is beyond the scope of this project. What brings all the works together here is the movement of the artist towards an-other mark or an other's mark.

to an attempt to complete or exhaust something—to discover all possible ways of recreating or disrupting the printed lines or to find all possible ways of approaching a surface.

The final sub-aspect I want to discuss is the repetition involved in the actual making of each work. Each of Hopkins' works involve the making of similar marks and actions, whether it is painting the same flowers with the same curved brushstroke or attempting to make straight lines with a small brush on graph paper. Ettinger's marks vary from work to work but she returns to the small and thin horizontal brushstroke— the colourline—again and again. Within each painting, this brushstroke is repeated multiple times, often in numerous layers. For both artists, the repeated marking resonates with the mechanical method of production of the surfaces they use. The artists come in as human machines to partially remake the surface, entering into a becoming-machine. In works where I attempt to capture all pre-existing marks on a surface, I necessarily repeat the same actions for each mark, almost turning myself into a recording machine.[34]

These sub-aspects of each practice resonate with the sub-individual elements that Deleuze and Guattari identify as being behind, or rather under, every becoming. The important point here is that becoming happens on several levels and it is only by considering all these levels that a meaningful encounter can take place between these practices and the concept of becoming. I would argue that it is a combination of all the things I have discussed in this section that enables a becoming-surface/object/other of the artists on multiple levels. It is not only a matter of resemblance and confusion between the artists' marks and pre-existing marks or the surface, nor is it solely a matter of adhering to something other (a surface, an-other person's mark, an-other process' mark), or of suspending one's decision-making or of any one of the sub-aspects of making. Rather, it is a combination of all of these.

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[34] In *Machine in the Studio*, Caroline Jones distinguishes between iconic references to the mechanical, when an image is somehow "indexed to technology," and performative machine-ness, when a mode of production aspires to a mechanical process. Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, 55. The works I am discussing partake of the performative machine-ness as well as sometimes of the iconic.

Ultimately, however, I think there are two aspects that allow this becoming to be initiated, that allow the "sweeping up" or "drawing into" of the artists to start happening. These are the limiting of the self and the attentiveness directed to an other. The processes of making involve the artists letting go of full control over mark making. The artists place limits on their actions, firstly, by working *with* pre-existing marks and surfaces and, secondly, by *approaching* those marks and surfaces in different ways. Alongside this letting go, there is intense involvement with and increased attuning to the other. Both the letting go and attentiveness involved in the encounter with the found marks and surfaces indicate what Luce Irigaray might call a practice of listening. She writes:

> I am listening to you: I perceive what you are saying, I am attentive to it, I am attempting to understand and hear your intention. Which does not mean: I comprehend you, I know you, so I do not need to listen to you and I can even plan a future for you. No, I am listening to you as someone and something I do not know yet, on the basis of a freedom and an openness put aside for this moment. I am listening to you: I encourage something unexpected to emerge, some becoming, some growth, some new dawn, perhaps. I am listening to you prepares the way for the not-yet-coded, for silence, for a space for existence, initiative, free intentionality, and support for your becoming.[35]

Irigaray is referring to the relationship between two subjects that are capable of silence and of listening to each other. What if her words are applied to a process of making, to an encounter between a subject and something other? In that case, the artist-subject listens to the materials she encounters, partially silences herself, and responds to something other, thus, allowing "something unexpected to emerge, some becoming." The figure of the artist, as someone who is in charge of the making, who composes the work, and whose agency is evident through the work, is partially undone. After all, becoming is not so much doing but undoing—undoing things, undoing oneself,

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[35] Irigaray, *I Love To You*, 116–117.

undoing the subject.[36] And this undoing or becoming of the artist, as Irigaray suggests, offers support for the becoming of the other.[37]

<div style="text-align:center">BECOMINGS AND ALTERATIONS OF THE "OTHERS"</div>

Before developing the issue of the undoing of the artist, I turn to the becoming of the "other." As discussed in chapter 3, according to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming is always double with both terms of the becoming moving towards a shared space between them and changing asymmetrically. If the artist is becoming-surface/object/other, and if we take Deleuze and Guattari's claim that becoming is always double at face value, then what is the surface/object/other becoming?

The becoming of the surface has also been addressed in part II. The surface is assigned increased importance since decisions are, in a sense, being deferred to it. The surface is not treated as "inert 'stuff'" that "needs to have form imposed upon it by a creator god or a god-like artist," the typical conceptualisation of matter in Western philosophy.[38] Rather, agency and decision-making status are shared with the surface. As discussed in chapter 3, the surface is becoming-active. In fact, it may be possible to suggest that the object/surface is becoming-subject, given its increased participation in the making of the marks and works.[39] In addition, pre-existing marks found on the surface or on other similar surfaces are treated as something to be observed. I use the word "observe" in both Jacques Derrida's sense, where to observe involves a "look that also knows how to look after," and in Bracha L. Ettinger's sense as an inner process of comprehending.[40] Thus, both surface and pre-existing marks—the marks of other

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[36] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 442; Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 104.

[37] I should point out that many of the sub-aspects discussed in this section, such as repetition and close looking, can apply to several types of practices and not only the ones I have been focusing on. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari imply that all art (or, at least, all art they consider good or not a failure) involves a becoming of both artist and subject matter. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 336; Hallward, *Out of this World*, 108–109. My discussion looks at becoming beginning from the level of the marks. That is, I am focusing on how specific sub-aspects arise through an approaching towards the surface.

[38] Jones, "On the Value of Not Knowing," 27–28.

[39] Here I am diverging from Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation of becoming, which is always minoritarian.

[40] Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 60; Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 27.

processes or other people—contribute to the making of the works in substantial ways, right from the beginning of the making process.

In the process of making, the surface and sometimes the pre-existing marks are altered. This is only ever a partial alteration. As the artist's marks approach the surface, they partially transform it by introducing a difference. This difference is both visual and conceptual and is sometimes almost indiscernible, especially in my work. This transforms the surface from an everyday object to an artwork.

The pre-existing marks are altered in several ways. In Collis' works, there are usually no pre-existing marks on the objects she marks. She transfers marks found elsewhere onto each object. In the process, she transforms the found marks by turning them into semi-precious stones or time-consuming embroidery in an effort to draw attention to them. In the case of works involving marking over pre-existing marks on the surface, such as works by Hopkins, Ettinger, and myself, the marks are partially concealed and partially remade—a process of re-covering—sometimes emphasised or partially captured, and sometimes partially reorganised. The pre-existing marks are never changed completely nor recreated exactly but are partially altered by the artists' interventions. The artists do not completely disrupt what was already there but observe it and try to work with it.[41] As such, the pre-existing marks share in the artists' marks. Thus, the surface and its pre-existing marks play a role during the making process and are also retained in the finished works. Rather than the surface and its marks receding to the background, they remain partially present, are becoming-present, within each work.

I argued earlier that the artists are becoming-other yet this becoming is a movement. One does not actually turn into something other but rather is constantly becoming-other—there is no beginning or end but an in-between as "becoming produces nothing other than itself."[42] The artists never become entirely other and their marks never fully become other marks. A human touch is always introduced on the surfaces, whether it involves a careful remaking of accidental marks or the imperfect

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[41] Even so, as I mentioned in chapter 1, these interventions may be seen as partially damaging the surface. This "damage" is only partial as the artist's marks also partially recreate what was there, as I discussed in detail in chapter 4.

[42] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 262.

remaking of printed lines. What this situation means is that the artists' hand is both

suppressed and retained at the same time. It is, in fact, possible to at least glimpse the

different types of marks and different making processes through attentive viewing.

This suggests a process Ettinger calls individualising. She describes the process thus:

"To love the anonymous elements, to individualise them, to create specific links and

recognise the borderlinking to them."[43] The individualising involves reaching out and

paying and drawing attention to the surface and its pre-existing marks, to the "others,"

via the artist's humanising mark which carefully remakes, re-covers, follows, and

partially alters what it touches.[44] And what the mark touches—the surface and the

marks of "others"—is precisely what it is touched by.

COPOIESIS IN THE MAKING

As the last two sections demonstrate, it becomes rather difficult to think of the

various elements separately, to discuss the marks and the surfaces, the artists and the

others, disjointedly. I can only think of them together since they share in the work. I,

thus, turn to Ettinger's concept of copoiesis. I have waited till now to introduce this

term because it allows me to bring together all the elements participating in the works,

including both the artist and her "others." Copoiesis offers a way of rethinking the

relationship between the artist and the materials she works with as well as a way of

thinking through the making process of the works.

In discussing the "aesthetical and ethical creative potentiality of borderlinking

and of metramorphic weaving," Ettinger conceives of the term copoiesis.[45] Copoiesis is

an adaptation of Francisco Varela's and Humberto Maturana's autopoiesis.[46] Both

terms are based on the Greek word poiesis, which means to produce, to bring into

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[43] Ettinger, "Uncanny Awe," 17.

[44] Ettinger has discussed how reaching out to the other makes the other's anonymity individuated without, however, making the other any more known—the other remains anonymous. Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 56.

[45] Ettinger, "Copoiesis," 705.

[46] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 110; Ettinger, "Trans-Subjective Transferential Borderspace," 237n6.

being.[47] Both autopoiesis and copoiesis involve production: autopoiesis is self-production whereas copoiesis is joint and mutual production *with* an other or several others. An autopoietic machine, as described by Varela and Maturana, is a network of processes of production that in interacting with each other can regenerate the network of processes that produced them, a process of self-creation and self-preservation. This results in the creation of a "concrete unity," a closed self-referential and autonomous system.[48] Unlike autopoiesis, copoiesis involves open-ended borderlinking which inaugurates a space "of transformation and differentiation in-between the several."[49] Ettinger continues: "In the matrixial co-poietic borderspace, *I* and an extimate—intimate-unknown—*non-I* share an ephemeral, unpredictable and singular alliance, in which each participant . . . is partial and relational in differentiating jointness."[50] The participants become partial by their own "reattunement and attention."[51] Through a borderlinking of several participants, each a partial-object and partial-subject, something emerges. The participants of copoiesis are not found in oppositional or hierarchical relations with each other. Rather, a process of partialisation permeates the borderspace so that an encounter involving co-emergence, co-changing and co-fading of the several participants becomes possible.[52] Moreover, copoiesis is not guided by the aim of preserving itself and its processes, like autopoiesis.[53] Instead, copoiesis is a risky process that may lead to "a catastrophe of identity," a danger I return to later.[54]

Both autopoiesis and copoiesis depend on connectivity. Ettinger draws on Varela's discussion of connectivity as a dynamic network of interactions that creates

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[47] Agamben, "Poiesis and Praxis," 68. As Agamben discusses, poiesis for the Greeks involved pro-duction, bringing something into presence, from non-being to being, unveiling the truth, and opening a world. Ibid., 68–69. In the modern era, the term came to emphasise more the actual process of production rather than the bringing into presence of something. Ibid., 69–70. This modern understanding conflates the Greek poiesis with praxis (doing, action), as Agamben argues.

[48] Maturana and Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition*, 78–79.

[49] Ettinger, "Trans-Subjective Transferential Borderspace," 223.

[50] Ibid., 236.

[51] Ettinger, "Copoiesis," 704.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ettinger, "The *Heimlich*," 160.

[54] Ibid.

transformation and meaning—"meaning is not carried *inside* symbols" but is inseparable from the transformations that occur along and through connections.[55] That is, "beyond the *symbolic* and beyond representation, living systems 'make sense' which is inseparable from the history of their transformation, and the transformation itself is inseparable from this making sense."[56] Where autopoietic connectivity, however, "is conceived of as linkages of *I*-elements within a closed system, at the service of a closed-system's self," copoietic connectivity includes "both self and not-self together, and its borderlinks connect to both inside and outside."[57] All participants, *I*s and *non-I*s, contribute differently to the creation of meaning and change asymmetrically. Thus, a "matrixial 'making sense' in which *subject* is not opposed to *object* becomes possible, operating a transformation by transgression of the borderlinks between *I* and *non-I*."[58] This matrixial meaning is co-meaning and emerges *between* and *with* several others.

The fact that copoiesis involves both internal and external elements has implications for art practice, as Ettinger clarifies when she discusses the relationship between original and readymade elements in artworks. From a phallic angle, "original" and "readymade" belong to opposite aesthetic poles—one comes from within the subject, stemming from the self as source/origin, and the other comes from without.[59] From a matrixial angle, both "original" and "readymade" elements contribute to borderlinking and metramorphic weaving. It makes no difference where they come from. As such, "through the metramorphic processes, the contradiction between an 'original' and a 'ready-made' fades away."[60] This does not mean that they become the same: "In the Matrix, you cannot smooth over the difference between the two, but neither can you elaborate or entirely lose one at the expense of the other."[61] A borderline difference remains but it is not a contrasting or absolute difference since

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[55] Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 134.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 71.

[59] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 118; Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 72–73.

[60] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 75.

[61] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 118.

the borders between elements have become thresholds making it impossible, to a certain extent, not to share. According to Ettinger, the fading away of the contradiction between original and readymade has both aesthetic and ethical implications.[62] She writes,

> Beyond the field of aesthetics, the matrix has ethical implications. In the phallus, we confront the impossibility of sharing trauma and phantasy, whereas in the matrix, to a certain extent, there is *an impossibility of not sharing* them. This obliges us, in our post-Duchamp era, to dissolve the opposition between the ready-made viewed as a textual appropriation and materials originating from the self and imagined to be in my possession from the start. It is art that leads us to discover our share of response-ability in transmissible events whose source is not inside One-self.[63]

According to Griselda Pollock, this destabilises the typical conceptions of meaning and communication in art history, where the artist is assumed to create "meaning from within him/herself" and transmit it to the viewer through the artwork.[64] Instead, within copoiesis, the artist is "working-through traces coming from others to whom she is borderlinked."[65] This foregrounds the response-ability of the artist towards these traces, her "others," and her materials.

In fact, according to Ettinger "co-poietic differentiation-in-coemergence is possible only with-in compassionate hospitality and with fascinance."[66] Compassionate hospitality involves being in besidedness with a partial-other.[67] This besidedness requires a degree of fragilising self-relinquishment on the part of the artist.[68] Self-relinquishment is "an actively-passive surrender to the world" or to the "other" through which external elements "get attuned and reattuned" with internal elements.[69] This allows the artist "to find the opening to the metramorphic

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[62] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 75.

[63] Ibid., 90.

[64] Pollock, "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma," 859.

[65] Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 197.

[66] Ettinger, "Copoiesis," 707.

[67] Ettinger, "From Proto-Ethical Compassion to Responsibility," 103.

[68] Ibid., 105.

[69] Ettinger, "Com-Passionate Co-Response-Ability," 30.

connectivity with-in the world and the Other."[70] In terms of artistic making processes, the attuning to the other leads to active passivity.[71] Elsewhere, Ettinger has discussed a form of self-relinquishment as withdrawal or *retirance*.[72] Withdrawal is not a "disconnection" or "demolition" but a "contraction and gradual disappearance" of the *I*, allowing space for the other/*non-I* to appear.[73] Thus, withdrawal has the potential to become a metramorphosis—a transgression of borderlines and a co-transformation of co-emerging and co-fading *I* and *non-I*.[74]

Fascinance, the other essential aspect of copoiesis, is an aesthetic affect that "operates in the prolongation and delaying of the duration of encounter-event and . . . allows a working-through of matrixial differentiating-in-jointness and copoiesis."[75] It calls for "re-spect and con-templation" through time so as to enable "a matrixial potentiality for borderlinking, be it via gaze, touch, movement, voice, breathing, gaze-and-touching, move-and-breathing, but also beyond the senses, by joint trans-sensing in beauty."[76] For my purposes here, I understand fascinance during the making process as a close and prolonged engagement with materials and traces—an engagement that involves touching, observation, consideration, and fragilisation on behalf of the artist. This process may have the potential to enable borderlinking with the other—initially, the traces and materials with which the artist works. Within this process, the artist becomes a "participatory witness" or a "wit(h)ness in fascinance."[77]

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[70] Ettinger, "The Art-and-Healing Oeuvre," 224, 225.

[71] Ettinger, "Uncanny Awe," 8; Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 117.

[72] Ettinger, "Woman as *objet a*," 75. She writes: "From the matrixial network, an *I* may disappear in a traumatic or subtle way, in what I have called *retirance* (withdrawal inside, contracting) as in the cabbalistic principle of creation: *tzimtzoum* [Hebrew]." Ibid.

[73] Horsfield and Ettinger, "Working-Through," 56; Ettinger, "Woman as *objet a*," 75.

[74] Ettinger, "Woman as *objet a*," 75.

[75] Ettinger, "Com-Passionate Co-Response-Ability," 11. Fascinance is presented as different from Lacan's fascinum, which freezes movement and kills life. Ettinger discusses fascinance in relation to fascinum in "*Fascinance* and the Girl-to-m/Other Matrixial Feminine Difference."

[76] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 3; Ibid., 2.

[77] Ettinger, "The Art-and-Healing Oeuvre," 221; Ettinger, "Copoiesis," 710.

The resulting artwork then "doesn't only represent something" but also "presents new events," starting with the copoietic encounter between the artist and her "others."[78]

Viewing the process of making of the works I have been discussing through the lens of copoiesis, helps bring all the elements together. The artist, surface, marks and "others" all encounter each other through the work. As I discussed earlier, the artists place limits on their actions by basing their marks on the surface—a process of partial self-relinquishment or authorial withdrawal. This withdrawal occurs in different ways for each artist. As discussed in chapter 4, Ettinger adopts a non-conscious way of working—a withdrawal "before the light of consciousness [that] leads to meeting with an unknown other."[79] For my part, I have specifically set out to approach the surface through my marks and this has led to works that involve closely following aspects of each surface. This withdrawal is accompanied by attuning and reattuning to the "others"—the surfaces, spaces, pre-existing marks and processes. Spending time observing surfaces, coming up with marks that approach each surface, and then carefully making them—that is, observing and remaking marks, tracing over pre-existing marks, cutting around images, placing collaged pieces over exact locations—can all be seen as part of this attuning. The extended immersion into each surface that I described earlier resonates with fascinance—a prolongation and delay in the encounter with each surface so as to allow a becoming-surface/object/other as well as processes of borderlinking and borderspacing to emerge. Thus, the process of making is partially active *and* partially passive.

This process may allow for something akin to a matrixial web to begin unfolding. The artist/subject effaces to some extent herself, thus, tending towards partial-subject and partial-object, and "transfers" agency to the surface/object, its pre-existing marks, and the others behind those marks. The surface, marks, and others may also be seen as tending towards partial-objects and partial-subjects. The several partialised participants all share in the work. The surfaces and pre-existing marks

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[78] Ettinger, "Com-Passionate Co-Response-Ability," 30. Griselda Pollock expounds on the notion of artworks as encounter-events in "Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma," 859.

[79] Levinas and Lichtenberg-Ettinger, *What Would Eurydice Say*? 26. Ettinger is referring to a general movement of disappearance within the Matrix but I see her words as an apt description of her working process.

participate in the making in more substantial ways rather than by just being part of the finished work. The artist's mark is no longer the sole privileged element but exists in relation to others. The artist, artist's marks, surface, space, pre-existing marks, others' traces, original mark-maker (anonymous designer, worker, other artist . . .) and mark-making processes (printing, photocopying, accidental dripping, drawing . . .) contribute as partial participants and co-affect, co-emerge and co-fade together through their encounter. Activity and passivity, presence and absence, originality and readymade-ness, subject-ness and object-ness, self-ness and other-ness are distributed, partialised, and shared among all participants. It, thus, becomes possible to speak of active passivity or presence-in-absence or distance-in-proximity—in-between positions, typically seen as paradoxical. It also becomes possible to view the participants as partial-others found in non-oppositional and non-hierarchical relations. This does not mean that the participants are turned into the same or collapse into each other. A non-oppositional, and sometimes minimal, difference is retained. This emerges through the copoietic encounter between mark and surface within each completed work, an issue I attend to next.

WITNESSING COPOIESIS IN THE WORKS

The copoietic encounter between partial-others initiated during the making continues within each completed work. It reveals itself through the partial indiscernibility between mark and surface which, in turn, leads to partial indiscernibility between mark-makers, marking processes, and traces—the traces of the artist enter into a zone of indiscernibility with the traces of others. The partial-others not only co-participate in the making of the work but sometimes also become visually and conceptually confused (which further affirms their partial otherness).

As the artist's mark approaches the surface, it may become difficult to differentiate between mark and surface, or to differentiate the artist's mark from other pre-existing marks found on the surface or marks that could be found on that surface under certain conditions. If mark and surface are taken to be two extreme positions, as in mark being not-surface and surface being not-mark, then the works discussed here access a state between the two extremes. This state is not a singular fixed position but

rather a zone which is itself multiple and varied. Movement in this zone can occur in two directions: towards the mark, transforming the surface and pulling it towards the mark, and towards the surface, letting the mark become partially absorbed by the surface. The works I have discussed occupy different positions within this zone of indiscernibility.

Louise Hopkins' paintings on furnishing fabrics and many of her paintings on maps pull the surfaces into the sphere of painting. Initially, when looking at the fabric works from a distance they appear to be paintings of flowers. That is, the printed marks seem to be painted marks. This confusion has a lot to do with how these works are displayed, that is, as stretched paintings hanging on walls. Similarly, when looking at many of the works on maps, which are framed and hanging on walls, they may appear to be monochrome or abstract paintings. Thus, with these works the printed marks and the surfaces temporarily enter into a process of becoming-painting.

The marks in Ettinger's works occupy a more ambiguous position. In contrast to many of Hopkins' works on fabric, all of Ettinger's works are relatively small, ranging from approximately twenty by twenty-two to thirty by fifty-four centimetres. They are framed and usually hanging on walls. As such, they register as paintings. Because of their small size, they invite a closer looking to begin with. It is at a distance of approximately seventy to one hundred centimetres, depending on the size of each work and the magnification of each photocopied image, that the difference between the marks begins to unfold before my eyes. The smudged grains of the photocopy register as something different to the painted lines. The small dots are typical of a photocopying process so they come across as such rather faster than the printed image on the fabric in Hopkins' works. Even when looking at Ettinger's works closely, some confusion may still linger, especially in areas of dense black. In those parts, it is sometimes unclear whether a mark is a photocopied area or whether the artist's brush intervened. It is possible that it is both; the two types of marks work together so that it is not always clear where one begins and the other ends.

Collis' works move the other way. On first seeing her work, we see dirty used objects and accidental marks. Her marks, as constructed marks, are initially indiscernible. The artworks themselves partially disappear within the gallery spaces

Image 7.1:   *Louise Hopkins: Freedom of
Information* (installation view), 2005
The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh,
UK
Image courtesy of the artist
© Louise Hopkins

Image 7.2:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the Freudian
Space of Memory and Migration* (installation view)*,* 2009
Freud Museum, London, UK
Image published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay,
Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory and
Migration*
Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

Image 7.3:   Susan Collis, *Forever Young*, 2009
Embroidery linen, thread; Pine plank, ebony, white holly,
walnut, birds-eye maple and walnut sapwood veneers, silver,
platinum; laminated chipboard, garnets; cedar of Lebanon
wood, ebony, white holly and cedar of Lebanon veneers, smoky
quartz, black diamonds, oxidised silver, Dimensions variable
Image published in *Susan Collis: Since I Fell for You,* 19.
Reproduced with the artist's permission. © Susan Collis

since they may be seen as tools used in those spaces. On approaching the work, the

marks become visible, as discussed in chapter 3. Hopkins' works on graph paper and

sheet music operate in a similar way. At a first viewing, they may appear to be

unchanged or damaged surfaces. The artist's interventions only become apparent

upon closer viewing. The works on song sheets involving painting over the printed

information with white paint may operate in two ways. They may register as pieces of

plain paper or as monochrome paintings.

In the works by these artists, the copoietic encounter emerges when the

relationships between marks and surfaces and different kinds of marks begin to

emerge. These are relationships of interdependence and difference-in-proximity. At

the same time that the artists' marks depend on aspects of the surface, they also

differentiate themselves upon close viewing.

My work operates somewhere between Collis' and Hopkins' and Ettinger's.

Like Collis, it is indiscernible to start with, and like Hopkins' and Ettinger's, it creates

uncertainty between mark and surface, delaying, perhaps infinitely, the moment of

recognition. In fact, my focus is on *approaching* each surface through my marks and

on exploring *degrees* of distance-in-proximity—that is, degrees of partial

differentiation and partial assimilation between mark and surface. The marks partially

signal, albeit subtly, the "presence" of the artist through interventions on the surface *and* hide that presence through partial assimilation. The operations of signalling and hiding are, thus, brought very close together, approximating perhaps presence-with-absence and appearance-in-disappearance of the artist's mark, always in relation to the surface. These operations extend to the relationship between work and space. Instead of presenting my works framed and hanging on walls, I place them in a copoietic relationship with space. My specific interest in the indiscernibility between mark and surface—their in-between space/state—differentiates my practice, while keeping it in proximity with other practices, and allows me to contribute to the discussion surrounding the relationship between mark and surface.

Image 7.4:   *Stain Painting*, 2008–2009
                      Acrylic on found vinyl flooring, 62 x 48 cm

In approaching the surface, my marks do not announce themselves as carefully made painted, drawn, or collaged marks but rather tend towards something other. Instead of standing out and asserting their difference from the surface, the

marks seem to be "asserting" a degree of similarity, thus, becoming absorbed by the surface. Thus, the withdrawal of the artist that is initiated during the process of making extends into a visual withdrawal of marks in each completed work. The becoming-object/other of the artist persists in the near assimilation between her marks and the surface. If my marks are seen as indexical, then they usually point more towards something other than towards me. In other words, the artist is no longer, or not only, someone who asserts her marks/actions, differentiating them from the surface, but rather is someone who borderlinks with the surface/other through her marks, engaging in a copoietic process.

When the works are observed closely, marks may begin to emerge and attention may be drawn to the relationships between the various participants. The artist's mark is not placed at the centre of attention but begins to recede bringing forward the relationship between mark and surface. The "ground" or surface is somehow "retrieved" in both the making and viewing of these works. That is, the surface reveals the marks during the process of making, and the marks, in turn, reveal the surface during the process of viewing. The artwork as distinct object also starts to recede and awareness is redirected to the relationships between artworks and space. Passages, or zones, are opened between marks, surfaces, works and spaces, and characteristics or pre-conceived ideas about each of these elements are partially shared, unsettling strict distinctions and hierarchies.

Ultimately, the self/other binary is destabilised from the ground up—from the operations of the marks and their relationship to the surface, to the relationship between the artist, her materials, and others. The destabilisation occurs through a sharing, which again takes place at several levels and arises through the making processes. The resulting artist's marks—as mimetic, *retrait*/re-covering, and indexical—are constituted by, share and co-exist with something other. Thus, absolute "othering" is denied or challenged, both during the making process and when viewing each work. Moreover, meaning is not to be found with any one of the participants within the work but rather arises through their co-transformations, always as co-meaning in-between the several. This copoietic process continues with the viewer, the final participant I consider in this text, whose role is discussed in the next chapter.

WHOSE MARK IS IT ANYWAY?
KNOWING, OWNING, BECOMING, OR VANISHING?

In June 2013, I presented a paper on Louise Hopkins' fabric paintings at a philosophy and literary theory conference focusing on the notion of traces.[80] At the end of my presentation, an audience member asked me the following unexpected question: Are Hopkins' works her works? I asked her what she meant and she clarified her question: If Hopkins' marks are based on other marks then are they *her* marks and, by extension, are the paintings, which are made on a fabric designed and made by others, *her* works? In some ways, this question of ownership of the marks was brought up in chapter 4 in my discussion of Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*. Derrida argued that while the mark acts as a border between the inside and the outside of a figure, it can belong neither inside nor outside and nothing can belong to it. The mark belongs nowhere because it withdraws into representation, writing, and language. In turn, I argued that when the mark acts as a borderlink rather than a border, it opens up to the surface/other becoming partially continuous with it. If mark and surface and self and other are partially continuous with each other, then potentially what belongs to one belongs to the other as well. I did not directly address, however, the question of who "owns" the marks.

On the surface of things, there are two plausible and apparently simple answers. The marks belong to the artist or they belong to the other, the original mark-maker in Hopkins' case. The implications of either of these answers are troubling. If the marks belong to the artist then has she taken them from the other and made them hers? Has she assimilated the other into herself? Does she now own the other? If the marks belong to the other then has that other assimilated the artist? Is the artist lost? Does the other now own the artist?[81]

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[80] "The Artist's Trace or The Trace of the Trace of the Other," *Tracing and Erasing*, panelist, TRACES Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Research Conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK, June 14, 2013. The abstract of this paper, as well as of all other papers I presented at conferences, is given in Appendix D.

[81] Some of these questions may potentially shift depending on the nature of the pre-existing marks, an issue Rebecca Fortnum brought to my attention. In cases where those marks have been deliberately designed by someone else, as in the fabrics Hopkins works with, the question of ownership may perhaps be foregrounded. In cases where the marks are accidental or natural, such as paint drips on a wall or raindrop traces on a window, the question of ownership may not be immediately

The questions pertaining to ownership are difficult and uncomfortable, especially as I am myself engaged in this kind of work. I have to ask them because if my motivation through making this work is to approach the surface and to destabilise the mark/surface binary, which is ultimately a power relation, then am I simply creating more power relations? Am I taking someone else's marks and making them my own? Are my marks claiming the traces of others, while partially erasing and potentially destroying them? Am I appropriating the surface or the space of the other, as Tisseron's account of marking describes? Conversely, am I losing myself in what I am doing? Are my marks becoming assimilated into the surface? Is the work futile if it ends up going unseen? Am I, ultimately, still working within a phallic logic of assimilation or rejection?

Viewing the process of making of the works I have been discussing through a matrixial lens and through the concept of copoiesis makes any questions relating to ownership inapplicable. It does not completely erase such questions but rather puts them off so as to allow something else to appear, perhaps temporarily. In the Matrix, *I* and *non-I* share and exchange traces. Moreover, "originals" and "readymades" are not opposed:

> From the matrixial angle, the *ready-made* borrowing of the other's myths and inanimate objects, and the *originals* stemming from the self, are not on opposite aesthetic poles. They are in the same basket: both suckle on the mythic prediscursive zone in which, however, from the phallic angle, the Other and the inanimate object appear as *my* strangers, and *self* and *not-self* are either the same or the opposite.[82]

Thus, in the Matrix *I* and *non-I* are *already* in an encounter with each other and *already* share traces. Differentiation-in-transgression stands for a *different* creative principle that does not fall under phallic law but does not replace it either. For the

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pertinent or may not be something someone would consider asking. In fact, at the conference, I also presented my work *Wall Drawing I* and nobody asked about the "ownership" of those marks. So far in this text, I have been looking at the various pre-existing marks as *non-Is*—a non-absolute alterity or *otherity* (defined by Ettinger as "*a partial alterity that infiltrates the I*" in "Weaving a Woman Artist," 190). As such, I consider these questions with respect to all of the different marks together, as well as with respect to the surfaces, the original mark makers, and the others whose traces I have worked with.

[82] Ettinger, "The Matrixial Gaze," 90.

Matrix, creation "is in the im-pure zone of *neither* day *nor* night, of *both* light *and* darkness."[83] In the matrixial sphere there can exist "*between*-instants." Ettinger explains that, "these are not either/or, between the oppositions that the phallus represents, but rather they are conjoint instants of and-and or neither/nor, ever so paradoxical in terms of the phallic dimension."[84] Something of these "impossible positions of the *and-and* and the *in-ter-with* the Other is exposed in art."[85]

Through my work, I have tried to access such "impossible positions" and "between-instants," beginning with my marks and their relationship to the surface. The marks attempt to maintain equivocal positions—approaching the surface yet maintaining a minimal difference-in-proximity, repeating and withdrawing, and indicating several things or "others" at once. This potentially places the artist in an "impossible position" with respect to her "others." Perhaps the works form between-instants—between self and other. Thus, the answer to any questions requiring an either/or answer, in a way, has to be neither-nor, both-and.[86]

Questions pertaining to ownership may be irrelevant within the matrixial sphere but they are relevant within the phallic sphere. I cannot ignore them since a matrixial mode of thinking does not replace phallic thinking but operates beside it, by providing openings for other possibilities. Moreover, engaging with and attempting to operate within a matrixial position is a risky situation. Working with traces of others potentially places the artist in a difficult situation, something the question about ownership highlights. Trying to hold onto and remain within the in-between may be a fragile and delicate position. The attempt to find an in-between space that *almost* eliminates oppositional distinction, but not completely, *almost* suggests a sense of failure or impossibility. This in-between state is elusive and problematic, partly because it depends on distance and distance is a continuity that can change.[87]

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[83] Ettinger, "The With-In-Visible Screen," 109.

[84] Ibid., 112.

[85] Ibid.

[86] In an attempt to remain within this in-between zone while writing about and with the works, I have been cautious throughout my account to refer to the various movements that occur in the works as partial.

[87] I am referring to both the distance between mark and surface and between viewer and work. Approaching implies continuous movement towards something and making

There is also the risk that this approaching and partial confusion may result in or may be understood as fusion—either appropriation of the other into the self or assimilation of the self into the other. This relates to the fragility of the process of copoiesis. Copoiesis, as Ettinger explains, "is not subordinated to the maintenance of its own organism and identity."[88] Instead, it is a "vulnerable and risk-taking" process that may result in "a catastrophe of identity" or even to the collapse of the fragile matrixial relationships.[89] Partialisation requests fragilisation.[90] Lingering in the partial dimension occurs "at the risk of regression, fragmentation, and dispersal" on the psychoanalytic plane.[91] The collapse of the matrixial relationships may lead to assimilation, a collapse of the self into the other, and to a crumbling of the matrixial borderspace itself. That is, total assimilation "wounds the matrix, or forces a retreat beyond the scope of shareability."[92]

The works I have made as part of this research fall more on the side of disappearance of the artist's marks so I focus on this issue and on my works for the remainder of the chapter. Fragility, within the context of this research, may be understood as the possibility of becoming indiscernible, which, within visual art, may not be immediately considered something positive or desirable. In fact, as I have discovered throughout this project, the work has the potential of not being seen at all. Other than being ignored, this opens it up to actual damage since it can be (and has been) thrown away and stepped on.[93]

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a mark could mean making a decision about where and how that movement may temporarily pause. Moreover, the distance between viewer and works also changes and this affects how the in-between is perceived. In short, the in-between is an unstable state.

[88] Ettinger, "The *Heimlich*," 160.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ettinger, "Copoiesis," 704.

[91] Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze," 146.

[92] Ettinger, "Woman as *objet a*," 75.

[93] A small *Light Capture* collage shown at the exhibition *Plans and Renovations* was thrown away, probably by the cleaning lady. It was displayed on a table but it must have fallen on the floor and was swept away. Moreover, on several occasions where I showed *Wrinklegrams I* and *II* and *Monuments*, installed on the floor, people stepped on them accidentally.

MUCH ADO ABOUT "NOTHING"?

When the marks the artist makes on a surface and the placement of those surfaces in space lead to partial indiscernibility then what of the artist who made those marks? Recognition is delayed since the artist's interventions/marks may not be seen or identified, at least initially. They recede visually and conceptually into something else. When the marks as indications of the artist's actions are indiscernible, the artist's actions and the artist herself are also indiscernible.[94]

In approaching the surface, all of my marks move away from an intentional, human, or expressive artist's mark. In fact, at times the marks tend towards the non-human, that is the naturally occurring or mechanically produced, or towards the unintentional. By seeing the marks as natural, mechanical or unintentional, the artist's actions are "lost" to the eye of the viewer. The marks, as indications of the artist's bodily movements partially disappear. Since the traces of her body are partially indiscernible, that body itself is, initially at least, inaccessible to the audience. When the marks are taken to be non-human, again the body of the artist is partially effaced. Seeing the marks as unintentional, also effaces the agency of the artist—whatever can be seen was not performed intentionally but rather happened. As such, there is a possibility that it may be seen as meaningless or unimportant, not meant to be seen as art, or even not meant to be seen at all. Marks performed actively and carefully are partially turned into passive matter—they become part of the surface, as if they appeared by themselves or were always there—and the artist, "the very paragon of agency in the modern world" and even today, is partially eclipsed.[95]

The result is that the time of making is partially effaced, an issue introduced in chapter 4. Traditionally, there is a clear sense of before and after—that is, before the encounter with the artist, the surface was unmarked and after its encounter with the artist, it became marked. In my works, the artist's marks assume the character of the "already there." They become part of the surface rather than something that was subsequently added to it. Conversely, when the artist's marks emulate things such as

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[94] This is not to suggest some kind of conflation or identification between artist and work but, quite simply, that the marks act as evidence of the artist's actions. When the marks are partially indiscernible, the artist's actions remain unclear or unrecognised.

[95] Preziosi, "Collecting/Museums," 409.

light and shadow, they may appear to be happening at the moment of viewing instead of being seen as something that was constructed by the artist in a past moment. In both cases, the time of making is partially eclipsed. It is not clear what was added by the artist to the surface and at which moment that addition took place—or even if it took place at all.

The eclipsing of the artist's work is a paradoxical situation since the artist actually does perform a lot of work. The artist is not indiscernible because she has added no marks at all or because her actions have resulted in invisible outcomes, such as, for example, Gianni Motti's *Magic Ink* drawings that were made with invisible ink. The work is not literally invisible but it strives towards indiscernibility. It took a long time to make my works and yet the marks, at least from afar, are not fully visible. Even when they are, they may register as something else, an accident or an error. Despite the physical effort and time involved in making the works, the resulting fugitive marks almost eclipse the artist's actions. The artist's hand is, thereby, simultaneously retained *and* eclipsed. The following paradoxical situation, thus, arises: instead of striving to be seen, the work strives to remain indiscernible. In a move that borders on the futile, the artist is *working* to be effaced.[96] She strives to keep her marks from surfacing fully or from surfacing too quickly, that is from achieving a complete differentiation from everything else and becoming definitively identified as what they really are. Thus, the artist's actions are delayed in becoming identified. Initially, it may look like the artist actually did nothing.

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[96] According to Rosalind Krauss, self-effacement is actually implicit in all marks. Krauss draws on Derrida's discussion of the trace to argue that marking implies the effacement of the marker. In a sense, leaving one's mark implies cutting the marker away from herself and bringing absence into presence. Krauss, "Olympia," 151–152; Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, 259–260. Michael Newman suggests something similar when he writes, again drawing on Derrida, that "the possibility of effacement constitutes the trace." Newman, "Derrida and the Scene of Drawing," 226. The self-effacement I am discussing here goes even further since the artist's mark—her trace—approaches the surface and partially disappears into it.

DISAPPEARING ACTS: "ARTIST O-O-O-O!"

Given the artist's self-effacement, how may the works be understood? What subjectivity might be constructed or enacted through them?[97] Before I consider the theorisations of Ettinger and Deleuze and Guattari in relation to this issue, I take a step back to some earlier texts I have drawn on which suggest ways of understanding this partial disappearance.

In part II, I referred to the essay "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia" by Roger Caillois while discussing the notion of camouflage. In this essay, Caillois discusses organisms that resemble their surroundings through mimicry. I used this text while discussing works where the marks of the artist disappear into the surface. I now turn to the reasons Caillois gives for the organisms' mimetic behaviour as they can be used to consider the artist's marks even further. He argues that mimicry is not a process of defence. The resemblance the organisms achieve with their environment is visual and, as Caillois notes, most predators hunt by smell.[98] Thus, visual camouflage would not protect the potential prey. On the contrary, it might place the organism in a dangerous situation resulting in tragic outcomes. For example, Phyllia mimic leaves so well that they end up getting eaten by other insects of the same kind.[99]

Eventually, the explanation Caillois gives is that this mimicry is actually a process of assimilation into the surroundings—its end result *is* assimilation. The organisms take on aspects of the surroundings and position themselves accordingly. The Kallima, for example, which resembles a leaf, positions itself on a real leaf, "the appendage on its hind wings in the place that a real petiole would occupy."[100] Given this behaviour, Caillois concludes that mimicry results from "a real *temptation by*

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[97] Again, I am not referring here to a conflation between artist and work. I am also not thinking of the enactment of subjectivity through art in the modernist sense of self-expression, that is, art being an unmediated expression of the artist's interiority. Rather, elements or models of subjectivity can be constructed or generated through art—through the encounter between a producing subject and materials or others in the course of a working process, and through the encounter between audience and artworks in the course of a viewing process (in the case of visual art).

[98] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 23–24.

[99] Ibid., 25.

[100] Ibid., 27.

space," involving "a disturbance in the perception of space."[101] This disturbance has to do with an inability to differentiate between oneself and the surroundings. The organism cannot conceive itself as the origin of vision, looking out towards points in space, and instead becomes "one point among others" in space. As Elizabeth Grosz writes, the organism renounces its right to occupy a perspectival point, to be the focal point around which space is organised.[102] Without the privilege of point of origin, the organism "*no longer knows where to place itself.*"[103]

Caillois moves the discussion into the human sphere when he compares this behaviour with legendary psychasthenia, which involves the disturbance between personality and space.[104] Schizophrenics may see space as a "devouring force" which "pursues them, encircles them, digests them" and, eventually, replaces them.[105] This "replacement" results in the person feeling herself or himself "becoming space." As Caillois writes, "he is similar, not similar to something, but just *similar.*"[106] Krauss notes that this "becoming space" leads to the erosion of the figure/ground distinction.[107] The patient has gone from seeing him or herself as a figure in space to becoming assimilated to ground—everything is then ground, everything is similar.

Caillois calls this process "*depersonalisation by assimilation to space.*"[108] Depersonalisation involves a divesting of personality or individuality along with a feeling that the body is no longer controlled by the self.[109] It also involves the subject's

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[101] Ibid., 28.

[102] Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, 90.

[103] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 28.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid., 30.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, 155. Bouman briefly discusses experiments investigating the disturbance caused to the figure/ground structure by schizophrenia. Schizophrenic patients become unable to distinguish between the essential and the unessential. Bouman, *The Figure-Ground Phenomenon*, 162. Zerubavel also addresses the inability of psychotic patients to separate figure from ground. Zerubavel, *The Fine Line*, 84–85.

[108] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 30.

[109] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 43. Depersonalisation is "an alteration in the perception of the self, such that the usual sense of one's reality is temporarily lost or changed." This alteration involves the splitting of one's perception of oneself in two: "a detached, observing self and a participating or experiencing self, together with a feeling of self-

withdrawal from the pleasure of seeing, "so that seeing no longer has any value," both in terms of seeing and of being seen.[110] In Caillois' text, depersonalisation occurs through assimilation to space, which is necessarily accompanied by a decline in the feeling of personality and life since the animate moves towards the inanimate.[111] This is a one-way movement, thus, "*life takes a step backwards.*" The body as a living being starts to conceptually disappear. Assimilation then implies loss of interest in vision and loss of self.

Caillois concludes his essay by summarising what he has been suggesting throughout, which is that "alongside the instinct of self-preservation, which in some way orients the creature toward life, there is generally speaking a sort of *instinct of renunciation* that orients it toward a mode of reduced existence, which in the end would no longer know either consciousness or feeling—the *inertia of the élan vital* so to speak."[112]

In many ways, this instinct of renunciation reiterates Sigmund Freud's discussion of the death instinct in the essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a text which Caillois draws on while thinking through mimicry.[113] Freud proposed the notion of the death instinct after studying patients who tended to repeat past traumatic experiences, either through their dreams or by somehow reliving them in their current life. He explained this "compulsion to repeat" as an urge in organic life to restore an

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estrangement or unreality about the latter." Moore and Fine, *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts*, 52.

[110] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 77.

[111] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 30. Both Yve-Alain Bois and Briony Fer point out that Caillois' argument is essentially anti-anthropocentric. According to Bois, Caillois' comparison between insects and human patients attacks "the anthropocentrism of Western metaphysics by breaching the alleged frontier between man and animal." Bois, "Water Closet," 206. Fer argues that the model of mimicry Caillois describes suggests a conceptualisation of anthropomorphism that "is the very antithesis of anthropocentrism, which is the presumption of the individual and the centrality of man." Fer, *The Infinite Line*, 108.

[112] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 32. The instinct Caillois identifies, "instinct d'abandon" in the original French, has also been translated as "instinct of letting go." Frank, Introduction to *The Edge of Surrealism*, 9.

[113] Frank, Introduction to "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 89. Caillois makes a brief reference to "the death instinct of the psychoanalysts" in a footnote but writes that, in his brief account, he has had to leave out any discussion of the relation between the instinct of renunciation and the death instinct. Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 32n44.

earlier state of things.[114] The final goal of this urge must, according to Freud, be "an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return."[115] This initial state is the inorganic state from which life originally emerged. Freud called the urge to return to this initial state the death instinct (Thanatos), a pressure towards death, self-destruction, and the return to the inorganic. He related this to the Nirvana principle—a state of zero excitation or tension.[116] According to Salman Akhtar, the Nirvana principle and its connection with the death instinct may suggest "the human striving for non-existence" or an "extinction of the self."[117] The death instinct in Freud's account is placed opposite the life and sexual instincts (Eros), the drive towards survival, preservation and creation.[118]

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[114] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 30.

[115] Ibid., 32.

[116] Ibid., 50.

[117] Akhtar, *Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, 189.

[118] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 55. Or, at least that is what Freud seems to intend. He states that he regards his account as a dualistic structure with a "sharp distinction" between instincts. There are doubts, however, as to whether he manages to prove this. There are also doubts as to whether he manages to show that there is indeed something *beyond* the pleasure principle. In fact, many argue that his account remains ambivalent on both issues. Leo Bersani argues that what Freud provides is not something beyond the pleasure principle but rather a redefinition of the pleasure principle that involves self-destruction. Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 59. Bersani also argues that the life/death dualism is actually quite fragile within Freud's text and that there exist connections between life and death that are hidden within the opposition Freud tries to maintain. Ibid., 63. Jacques Derrida (in "To Speculate—On 'Freud'") and Catherine Malabou (in "Plasticity and Elasticity in Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'") raise similar points. On the contrary, in "Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis," Robert Trumbull argues that Freud is actually aware of the fact that there is an irreducible complication in the relationship between the life drives and death drives that does not resolve to a simple opposition. Freud, himself, attempts to clarify the relationship between the death instinct and the life instincts in *The Ego and the Id*. He suggests that both Eros and the death instinct endeavour to "re-establish a state of things that was disturbed by the emergence of life. The appearance of life would thus be regarded as the cause of the continuance of life and also as the cause of the striving towards death; and life would be a conflict and compromise between these two trends." Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 55–56. Thus, following the emergence of life, Eros strives to maintain life at a constant level while the death instinct strives to return back to an inorganic state, before the emergence of life. Ibid., 55. In terms of the instincts' effects on the ego and the relationship between the death instinct and the pleasure principle, Margaret Iversen clarifies: "While pleasure as satisfaction diminishes tension to protect the ego from being overwhelmed by stimulation, the death drive aims to eliminate tension to the point of abolishing an individual's sense of separate existence—Nirvana." Iversen, *Beyond Pleasure*, 75. In *The Ego and the Id,* Freud also suggests that the two classes of instincts, Eros and death, "are fused, blended, and mingled with each other" and that this "takes place regularly and very

Caillois rethinks the death instinct in terms of organisms and their relationship to space. The compulsion to repeat is recast as mimicry and camouflage. In Caillois' account, the death instinct appears in the organisms' visual assimilation into space, resulting in confusion or undifferentiation between the organisms and the surroundings. It is through this undifferentiation or assimilation that "life *takes a step backwards,*" from the organic to the inorganic.[119]

Both the instinct of renunciation and the death instinct are regressive moves to a previous state and they both involve reduction in existence. As Margaret Iversen writes, Eros "generally has to do with establishing greater unities and binding together, while the death drive endeavours to undo connections, to disassimilate and to destroy, eventually reducing complex organic things back to their original, molecular, inorganic state."[120] Moreover, this regressive move has been tied to a return to the assumed undifferentiated pre-natal and early post-natal state.[121] This undifferentiated state relates to an assumed fusion with the mother which is lost when the subject becomes aware of "his" separation from her. This links the pre-maternal and maternal feminine with symbiosis/death.[122]

Looking at the works I have been discussing through the texts of Caillois and Freud, the partial disappearance of the artist's marks within the surface can be seen as an assimilation into space, a tendency towards undifferentiation or self-effacement. The artist, probably unlike the schizophrenic patient, proceeds intently and carefully. The goal is to approximate something and the artist works diligently to achieve that. The artist's work involves repetitive actions—observing, marking, tracing the mark, transferring the trace on another surface, cutting, placing the surface over the first

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extensively." Freud, *The Ego and the Id,* 56. He insists, however, on holding a predominantly "dualistic point of view" when it comes to instincts. Ibid., 66.

[119] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 30.

[120] Iversen, *Beyond Pleasure*, 26.

[121] The connection between undifferentiation and the relationship of the foetus/infant with the mother has been addressed in chapter 1.

[122] The connection between the death drive and the maternal feminine is discussed and criticised by Ettinger in several texts, including "Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma." Caillois himself connects mimicry with "the human desire to recover its original insensate condition, a desire comparable to the pantheistic idea of becoming one with nature, which is itself the common literary and philosophical translation of returning to prenatal unconsciousness." Caillois, "The Praying Mantis," 79.

mark, and repeat. It also sometimes involves an attempt to accurately capture a situation in the world, much like a camera or a sensor. Instead of separating and joining artist and surface or instead of appropriating the space of the surface, like the marks Tisseron discusses do, the partially disappearing and depersonalised artist's marks tend towards assimilation with the surface. The action of separation is, thus, subdued. Moreover, the installation of works in space enacts a partial disappearance since the works blend into the surroundings. The artist's approaching towards the surface and space, enacted through the disappearing marks, can be seen through the death drive—a tendency towards an inanimate state, undifferentiation, and loss of self. The artist enacts a self-disappearance, much like the child's "baby-o-o-o-o!" game, another version of fort/da that involves the child crouching down so as to make the reflection of his body disappear from a mirror.[123]

I should mention here that the works of other artists that involve a partial disappearance of the body, such as works by Ana Mendieta, have been interpreted in terms of negation and of the death drive. Mendieta's images are often discussed in terms of absence and disappearance of the subject. As Abigail Solomon-Godeau writes, "the lady indeed vanishes"—she does not assert an "individualised and authentic self able to affirm unambivalently its distinctive selfhood."[124] The emphasis of such interpretations is on absence, withdrawal, erasure, negation and death.[125]

ALTERNATIVE PASSAGES:
APPROACHING NON-LIFE IN LIFE AND BECOMING-IMPERCEPTIBLE

The death drive and the emphasis on renunciation, absence, and negation are rather grim scenarios as they suggest loss of self and utter depersonalisation. They do present a possible interpretation but, as I argue here, not the only one. In fact, I find

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[123] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 9n1.

[124] Solomon-Godeau, "The Woman Who Never Was," 344.

[125] This issue of seeing Mendieta's work predominantly as disappearance is pointed out and criticised by Susan Best in "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta." Other texts that interpret Mendieta's work in terms of disappearance and which are mentioned by Best include Kwon, "Bloody Valentines" and Blocker, *Where is Ana Mendieta*? The essay "Embodied Geographies" by Anne Raine, also mentioned by Best, connects Mendieta's repetitive work with fort/da and the death drive but acknowledges and develops a more ambiguous relationship between them as "the obsessive repetition of Mendieta's silhouettes both resists and points to absence and death." Raine, "Embodied Geographies," 244.

these conceptualisations in relation to the works I have been discussing to be rather problematic for various reasons.

The death drive scenario is problematic in this case partly because it continues the alignment between the feminine and death. This alignment, as Ettinger argues, is at play in the work of both Freud and Lacan.[126] Ettinger expands on this:

> The foreclusion of the feminine is vital for the phallic subject because it stands for the split from [the] death drive in many intricate ways. The idea of death is closely connected to the feminine in western culture and is very strongly embedded inside Freudian psychoanalysis in general and in the Lacanian theory in particular, where the feminine is closely assimilated to fusion, undifferentiation, autism and psychosis, all manifestations of deep regression and of the activity of the death drive.[127]

The body I am referring to in this text is indeed a female body, thus, the question emerges as to whether "erasing" that female body is in any way productive. Moreover, as female artists have been traditionally effaced from art history or may encounter discrimination in the art world, I have to ask just how useful it is to enact a self-effacement through one's work. These issues point to the need to rethink indiscernibility in art.

Returning to the works under discussion, I believe that the death drive and renunciation scenarios ignore the specific processes of the works' making, processes which I have been looking at through the concept of copoiesis. That is, the process of partialisation, when seen through a phallic lens, is collapsed into assimilation and the subtleties of minimal differences, which are there but may require time to emerge, are ignored. There is actually no total fusion in the works but processes of approaching, distance-in-proximity, and transgression of borderlines. The artist does not exactly let go and disappear but rather partially withdraws while practicing active passivity. As discussed earlier, the works involve a rather intense and demanding process of making that requires manual labour, time, and effort. This work is related to the fundamental

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[126] Ettinger has discussed this in several writings, such as "Weaving a Woman Artist," "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine," and "Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma."

[127] Ettinger, "Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma," 93.

human activities identified by Hannah Arendt as vita activa, an active life.[128] The work involved in making the artworks leads to the production of things that become part of the human condition, completing human life, and, thus, points to activity, vitality, life.[129] And yet, paradoxically the artist's marks/actions work against being seen and towards remaining partially hidden, towards reaching a state of partial indiscernibility by approaching an inanimate surface or space. Crucially, this partial disappearance is performed in relation to an other—the marks do not just vanish but rather attempt to approach the surface. In other words, the artist reaches towards something other and her partial withdrawal allows a borderlinking to that other. I would argue that precisely this paradox of *working* towards indiscernibility, of performing activities— where an active body implies vitality—that tend towards apparent inactivity, and doing this *in relation to an other*, point towards different possibilities for rethinking indiscernibility, beyond the death drive. In addition, unlike the death drive, the works do not involve a one-way movement towards the surface but a co-becoming that transforms both the surface and the artist's mark, accessing an in-between. Moreover, this co-becoming has the potential of gradually being glimpsed. That is, the artist's hand/work is simultaneously partially retained and partially effaced—a retaining-in-effacing.

I cannot deny that these works do indeed tend towards approaching partial indiscernibility through following something other. I believe, however, that taking into

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[128] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7. Work, action and labour, are the three fundamental human activities forming part of vita activa. Arendt considers these activities fundamental "because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man." Ibid. The term "labour," "corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labour." Labour is, thus, linked to life itself. The term "work" is what produces "an 'artificial' world of things." People are "housed" within this world, which "is meant to outlast and transcend them all." Work is, thus, linked to "worldliness." Finally, the term "action" is "the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter" and "corresponds to the human condition of plurality." Ibid. According to Arendt, all three activities, labour, work and action, "are intimately connected with the most general condition of human existence: birth and death, natality and mortality." Ibid., 8. Labour assures human survival, work and its products "bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time," and action founds political bodies, creating "the condition for remembrance, that is, for history." Ibid., 8, 9. Making a work of art falls within the activity of "work." Ibid., 9.

[129] Ibid., 9.

account the precise processes of making prevents the works from being understood solely within the realm of the death drive. In fact, both Ettinger and Deleuze and Guattari offer concepts that allow a rethinking of the partial disappearance underway in the works. I end the chapter by briefly turning to these alternative paths.

One such alternative is suggested by Tina Kinsella and involves using Ettinger's concept of non-life to reconsider situations in art that have been hitherto associated with the death drive.[130] Ettinger argues that matrixial borderlinks, considered in terms of the relationships between the unborn becoming-subject and the becoming-archaic-m/Other, "allow the articulation of a meaningful space between living and nonliving, which has nothing to do with the notion of the abject and with the binary opposition between life and death."[131] According to Ettinger, the death drive (Thanatos) and its opposition to the life drives (Eros) belong to a phallic sphere. She suggests the possibility, within the matrixial sphere, of "a certain hybridisation of the margins of these two domains, Eros and Thanatos."[132] She differentiates between phallic Eros and phallic Thanatos, two opposing drives, and matrixial maternal Eros and matrixial Thanatos, two non-oppositional and non-aggressive life drives coexisting with the phallic drives. Maternal Eros involves compassionate hospitality.[133] Through compassionate Eros, "a non-aggressive thanatos is revealed," a thanatos which is "not death, but the *non-life* as the *not yet emerged*, the *not yet becoming alive*."[134] This non-life or not-yet-life or becoming-life is theorised as the emergence-into-life of the unborn foetus, the becoming-subject, which happens in co-emergence-

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[130] Kinsella has discussed the concept of non-life in an unpublished PhD thesis and here I draw extensively on her analysis of the concept. Kinsella, "Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial Theory and Aesthetics," 79–84, 214–226, 343–352. As with the other matrixial concepts I have worked with, my interest lies in the structure and processes proposed by non-life and in how that can allow for a different interpretation of the works. While the discussion of the concept of non-life can be enriched by considering its affective dimensions in relation to jouissance, something Kinsella discusses in detail in her thesis, I do not address these dimensions here. I am introducing the concept of non-life as a different way of conceptualising partial disappearance. Any discussion of jouissance, desire, and affect in relation to these works and in relation to indiscernibility remains to be undertaken in the future.

[131] Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 180.

[132] Ibid., 177.

[133] Ettinger, "Copoiesis," 709.

[134] Ibid.

in-differentiation with the becoming-mother. Kinsella clarifies that "non-life is informed by a certain kind of life drives and the death drive, which are not in opposition to each other, but rather are interlaced with each other: informing each other, transforming each other and mitigating each other."[135] Even though "maternal Eros, matrixial Thanatos and non-life signal a languishing-longing, languishing-withdrawal," this "does not collapse into a vacillation between competing states of activity or passivity: actively moving towards the other or passively being intruded upon by the other."[136] Rather, "languishing is a being-with the other that is not a vacillation but a differentiating in co-emergence."[137]

> The implications of this non-life state are crucial. As Kinsella writes,
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> Ettinger offers a means by which we can re-think the very formation of ourselves as subjects who are not only ordered in accordance with the destructive death drive but who are formed within an affective, compassionate and hospitable co-emergent partnership where otherness (the partial otherness of the co-emergent partner/becoming-mother) is not rejected or abjected. The primary vulnerability which is constitutive of life is, on this primordial level, underwritten by an affective, compassionate and hospitable economy which can be reactivated and accessed in life.[138]

The passage through non-life leaves the becoming-subject with the capacity to self-fragilise and to "resist, revolt and rebel even against the subject itself and against its selfhood as it begets a self-endangering desire to join an-other."[139] This "disturbing desire for jointness *with* a foreign world, with the unknown other, the uncognised, with a stranger who by definition is never a total stranger in the feminine when

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[135] Kinsella, "Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial Theory and Aesthetics," 216.

[136] Ibid., 310.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" 5. Kinsella's discussion is based on the differences she sees between Lacan's reconceptualisation of the death drive and Ettinger's conceptualisation of non-life. As Kinsella explains, Lacan associated all drives with the death drive and also conceptualised a relationship between the death drive and jouissance. Kinsella, "Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial Theory and Aesthetics," 80, 193–194.

[139] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 19–20.

unthinkingly known in a non conceptual way," is not a death wish in the sense of "return to homeostasis" but "a wish to transgress."[140]

As discussed in chapter 1, in the late intrauterine encounter, as theorised by Ettinger, the becoming-subject and the becoming-mother are partial-subjects and partial-objects to and for each other. This partial objectness, or "objectality," of each partner may be experienced later on in life.[141] With no appropriate conceptual framework to understand such experiences, however, as both Ettinger and Kinsella discuss, they may be seen as a desire for death, belonging to the phallic death drives.[142] After all, non-life, the desire for transgression, and self-fragilisation exist "in strange proximity to the death drive."[143] Such experiences can, however, be theorised as the partial objectality the becoming-subject encounters in the emergence into life. In other words, experiences that break down the subject/object divide and lead to a partial becoming-object of a subject may be seen as belonging to a matrixial sphere of co-emergence-in-difference that transforms borders into borderlinks allowing exchanges between others.

Kinsella has drawn on Ettinger's concept of non-life when discussing the photographs of Francesca Woodman in which the female body sometimes blends into its surroundings.[144] Instead of discussing the photographs in terms of the death drive or in terms of a desired unification with or return to the maternal body, Kinsella suggests looking at the photographs through a matrixial lens.[145] The vulnerability and anonymity of the body and the "desire to connect with objects as . . . anonymous

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[140] Ettinger, "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine," 197; Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 19–20.

[141] Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" 2. Ettinger uses the term "objectality" in "Uncanny Awe," 1.

[142] Ettinger, "Demeter-Persephone Complex," 13, 20–21; Kinsella, "Bracha L. Ettinger's Matrixial Theory and Aesthetics," 16.

[143] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 19–20.

[144] Between 1970 and 1984, Francesca Woodman produced a series of photographs depicting her body in various locations. In many of these images, her body is in a process of hiding within a space either through movement, which results in a blurry image of the body, or through physical camouflage, which involves covering parts of the body with various materials.

[145] Kinsella discusses Peggy Phelan's essay "Francesca Woodman's Photography," which interprets Woodman's work in terms of the death drive, and Jui-Ch'i Liu's essay "Woodman's Self Images," which interprets the work in terms of unification with the maternal body. Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" 3–4.

elements" that Kinsella sees in the photographs, leads her to suggest that there may exist in the images an indication of transgression of boundaries and partialisation.[146] Woodman's photographs may offer a way of "working-through objectality and non-life *in life*: the nuanced interweaving of the phallic death drive and matrixial life drives in our post-Oedipal subjectivity."[147] They may offer the potential of experiencing the emergence into life and viewing/sensing the self as a partial-subject *and* partial-object.

Following Ettinger and Kinsella, I propose that artworks that involve a simultaneous effacing and retaining of the artist's hand—through the use of detailed and laborious marks that approach the surface and that may initially remain indiscernible—be seen through the matrixial prism of non-life in life. In other words, instead of viewing the artist's partial assimilation into the environment/surface and her partial disappearance as another instance of the death drive, or "depersonalisation by assimilation to space" as Caillois calls it, it may be possible to view it as an instance of experiencing non-life in life. By physically and conceptually attempting to approach the surface and by partially relinquishing agency, through depending on the surface for the marks and through making marks that become part of the surface, the artist may be transgressing the subject/object border. The becoming-object/other of the artist suggests experiencing a situation of becoming a partial-object to/for an-other that may approximate the matrixial emergence into life. This matrixial coming-into-life is the in-between of "not-yet-life *and* life, the encounter of not-being with becoming," a creative act, potentially leading to something new.[148]

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[146] Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" 6. In both her PhD thesis and in this essay on Woodman, Kinsella pays particular attention to the issue of jouissance. She argues that there may be some kind of jouissance associated with partialisation and non-life. Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" 7. As noted earlier, I do not address this issue here but I do not deny its relevance to the works I have been discussing.

[147] Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" 2–3.

[148] Ettinger, "*Fascinance* and the Girl-to-m/Other Matrixial Feminine Difference," 88. I should point out that when Ettinger discusses what she calls the "woman" artist, which she differentiates from the "male" heroic artist/genius, she argues that the role of this artist is to transgress borders and access the dimension of non-life in life. Ettinger, "Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma," 114–115; Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist." The role of the artist and art are also extensively discussed in Ettinger's essay "Uncanny Awe." For my purposes here, I am drawing on non-life in order to discuss my specific works, that is, works that involve an approaching of the artist towards the surface and indiscernibility of the artist's marks.

Another possibility for understanding the partial disappearance of the artist comes from Deleuze and Guattari and their concept of becoming-imperceptible. They consider becoming-imperceptible to be "the immanent end of becoming," with all becomings tending towards it.[149] Becoming-imperceptible can mean "to be like everybody else"—becoming-everybody/everything—to "world," or to make a world.[150] To make a world one must undergo a reduction in the self—start becoming an abstract line or trait—such that zones of connection, proximity, or continuity with others can be found or created.[151] When both self and others are reduced to abstract lines, then they can conjugate and continue with other lines, thus, "mak[ing] a world that can overlay the first one."[152] Deleuze and Guattari discuss the example of a fish, which "is crisscrossed by abstract lines that resemble nothing, that do not even follow its organic divisions; but thus disorganised, disarticulated, it worlds with the lines of a rock, sand and plants, becoming imperceptible."[153] The metaphor of visual camouflage in Deleuze and Guattari does not lead to destructive undifferentiation, as in Caillois, but to creation and "worlding." Moreover, the notion of becoming-everybody/everything in some ways echoes Caillois' description of the schizophrenic patient: "He is similar, not similar to something, but just *similar*."[154] Being "just *similar*" suggests that somehow everything is becoming similar. When seen through the lens of becoming-imperceptible, a different logic opens up, a logic in which distinctions dissolve while proximities are formed.[155]

As stated already, this worlding involves a kind of reduction. It involves challenging the boundaries of the body and questioning conventional understandings

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[149] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 308.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., 308–309.

[152] Ibid., 308.

[153] Ibid., 308–309.

[154] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 30.

[155] Deleuze and Guattari have been accused of romanticising mental illness. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 163. Braidotti disagrees with this and argues that Deleuze and Guattari perform a "qualitative leap" as a way of revealing "untapped possibilities" for the subject. Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 147. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge schizophrenia as an illness and as a potentially destructive becoming. They also point out the dangers of becomings when these tend too close to annihilation. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 180, 252–255.

of the self, the other, and the world.[156] This may lead to the risk of "becoming indiscernible as a social subject, and unsettling a coherent sense of personal self."[157] In fact, Deleuze and Guattari connect imperceptibility with indiscernibility (the asignifying) and impersonality (the asubjective).[158] That is, becoming-imperceptible, finding zones of indiscernibility with others, leads to impersonality and defamiliarisation and challenges notions of both subjectivity and signification.[159] Moreover, as Rosi Braidotti points out, becoming-imperceptible implies a certain infinity, which might bring it close to the oceanic feeling associated with fusion that Freud discusses.[160] Like matrixial copoiesis and experiences of non-life in life, becoming-imperceptible is a risky process of fragilisation.

The reduction involved in becoming-imperceptible is not the reduction of the death instinct, which leads to the undoing of connections and to non-existence. Rather, when becoming-imperceptible, the reduction of the self is necessary so as to allow that self to resonate and connect with the world.[161] Moreover, given that becomings are conceptualised as double, becoming-imperceptible and becoming-everybody/everything call for a change in both the notion of the imperceptible and in everybody/everything. In other words, becoming-imperceptible is not a vanishing into something pre-existing—a mere "blend[ing] in with the walls"—but a transformation of both the self and the pre-existing—the wall is becoming-other just as much as the body blending into it.[162] The notion of imperceptibility also undergoes a becoming—it does not, or not only, involve the literally invisible but rather a destabilisation of "the

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[156] Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze*, 189.

[157] Ibid., 183. Elizabeth Grosz is critical of precisely this possibility of becoming-imperceptible with respect to women, as she sees it as a movement which could result in "political obliteration or marginalisation of women's struggles." Grosz, "A Thousand Tiny Sexes," 209.

[158] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 309.

[159] This is also discussed in Hallward, *Out of this World*, 108–109.

[160] Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 147. The combination of a type of invisibility and fusion has been explored, for example, in the work of Yayoi Kusama in more positive terms. As Claire Bishop notes, drawing on Kusama's own statements, self-obliteration in Kusama's work is in the service of erotic fusion with the eternal. Bishop, *Installation Art*, 91. While Kusama views this fusion in positive and productive terms, in my discussion I diverge from either of the two extremes of self-effacement, loving fusion or destructive death, in search for an in-between state.

[161] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 179.

[162] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 308.

perception of 'things' and the 'world'."[163] This is an alternative imperceptibility that allows openness and partial jointness. As Tamsin Lorraine writes, when becoming-imperceptible "instead of excluding the world in order to maintain a determinate organisation of self," one opens up to the world, transforming the world as well as becoming transformed by it.[164] This participation *with* the world could result in radical change and new forms of living.[165] Thus, instead of disconnection and non-existence, becoming-imperceptible could lead to intensification and to "increasing one's *potentia* and with it, one's freedom and understanding of complexities."[166]

When thinking about the works and processes I have been discussing, I do not take the world to literally mean the entire world but rather the specific others I as an artist work with: the materials, surfaces, objects and marks I encounter as well as the processes and people behind those. In other words, I view Deleuze and Guattari's more expansive articulation through Ettinger's insistence on an encounter between several and not infinitely many participants.[167] I am discussing, after all, a very specific, situated, and embodied encounter between artist and materials. The artist's marks/actions in the works can be seen as entering into a becoming-imperceptible by becoming a partial continuation of the surface/space and its pre-existing marks—the

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[163] Bertelsen, "Francesca Woodman," 18. In this article, Bertelsen views Woodman's work through the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari arguing, like Kinsella, for alternative interpretations that move beyond disappearance and death, or disappearance as death.

[164] Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze*, 183.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 148. Thomas Phillips argues for a similar interpretation when using becoming-imperceptible to discuss writing, reading, and music. Phillips, *The Subject of Minimalism*.

[167] As noted earlier, the infinity and reduction associated with becoming-imperceptible has been criticised by feminist thinkers as leading to the obliteration of women as subjects (since all becomings pass through becoming-woman according to Deleuze and Guattari). Moreover, the concept of becoming, in general, has been criticised as not taking into account sexual difference. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 179–180. Finally, the association with infinity brings becoming-imperceptible very close to fusion and Freud's oceanic feeling. Braidotti, *Metamorphoses*, 147. This fusion, as Ettinger has pointed out, is associated with an assumed pre-natal undifferentiation and represents two extreme phallic positions: total paradise and total annihilation. Ettinger, "Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace," 132. By looking at becoming-imperceptible alongside Matrixial theory, I am sidestepping, in a sense, the issue of infinity since I am locating becoming-imperceptible in specific encounters between several participants. A full comparison of becoming-imperceptible with concepts from Ettinger, such as *retirance* for example, is beyond the scope of this research.

artist's marks "world" with the surface. This happens through approaching and following the surface during the making process, as discussed earlier, and through the resulting partial visual imperceptibility of the marks in the completed works. The artist's attuning to the surface could also amount to a form of becoming-imperceptible—the artist partially renounces authority and instead shares in the making of the work with others.[168]

Where the death drive involves one-way movement, reduced existence leading to non-existence, and dissolution of connections, non-life in life and becoming-imperceptible allow the thinking of borderline states in-between non-being and becoming that encompass connecting-in-withdrawing and appearing-in-disappearing. Such states give different meanings to the partial disappearance of the artist's marks— borderline meanings that approach "the eclipse of meaning."[169] Thus, meaning becomes a threshold and emerges through the encounter between artist and others. By situating this encounter in the proximity of Ettinger's copoiesis and non-life and Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-imperceptible, it may become possible to glimpse different ways of approaching and conceptualising making that involve opening up, attending to the others, allowing them in, and, eventually, co-transforming *with* them.

If art can generate elements or models of subjectivity—both through making and viewing processes—then works involving the artist's self-effacement through approaching an other may construct and enact something that resonates with what Ettinger calls subjectivity-as-encounter. Just as the marks come into being *with* the surface, the artist/subject constructed through the works is constituted *with* several others—not "in relation to an other-as-an-object, but in relation to the trembling experience of oscillation between *I* and *non-I* in the encounter."[170] The subject emerges as partialised—a partial-subject—and fragilised; transgressing borders, interweaving, sharing, co-transforming, co-emerging and co-fading with several others

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[168] As noted earlier, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise all art (all non-failed art) as becoming and, thus, as becoming-imperceptible. Hallward, *Out of this World*, 108– 109. Here I am addressing becoming-imperceptible in relation to specific works and do not attempt to make such general claims.

[169] I am taking the phrase from one of Ettinger's notes: "Give meaning to the eclipse of meaning." Ettinger, "Matrix. Halal(a)-Lapsus," 68.

[170] Ettinger, "Weaving a Woman Artist," 198.

who can no longer be seen as absolute and oppositional "others" but as partial-others. The partial-subject is becoming sub-subjective, is dispersed, and "*appear[s] by disappearing*."[171] That is, disappearance is not absolute loss, negation or non-existence but a different form of existence alongside that which is other. It is precisely through partial withdrawal and opening up and attending to an-other that the encounter becomes possible and that the artworks materialise.[172] Subjectivity then emerges as an encounter between partial-subjects, partial-objects, partial-others. As Ettinger suggests, this sub-subjectivity may also be trans-subjectivity, involving "no more only partial-objects and partial-subjects but also transubjects and transjects," transconnected in a specific and unique web.[173] The encounter initiated through making continues into the viewing of the work, inviting the audience to become an-other co-participant.

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[171] Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze," 147. Italics added.

[172] Bracha L. Ettinger has suggested that I look at the relationship between artist and materials in terms of *carriance*, a concept she has developed in more recent papers, such as "Demeter-Persephone Complex," and to consider "who is looking after whom" as the pre-existing surfaces and marks I work with may be "taking care of me" as an artist. Bracha L. Ettinger, in conversation with author, October 11, 2014. That is, I am constituted as an artist/subject in relation to pre-existing surfaces and marks and my practice depends on them. This juxtaposition of my practice with the concept of *carriance* does not form part of the current text.

[173] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 10.

8

THE AUDIENCE AND THEIR "OTHERS"

In this final revisiting of the works completed as part of the research, as well as works by Susan Collis, Bracha L. Ettinger, and Louise Hopkins, I focus on the activity of viewing and the potential relationships between viewers, works, and artist. The chapter unfolds the discussion once more by incorporating the viewers as an additional layer to those discussed in previous chapters. In fact, the audience forms the final entity in my discussion: the encounters between artist and materials, marks and surfaces, and works and spaces, are followed by the encounters between the audience and the works, spaces, and artist. This is a necessary unfolding as the works are eventually placed in a space *for* someone else to see. Moreover, given the work's specific characteristics and the marks' partial indiscernibility, it is necessary to consider the implications for the viewers and how partial indiscernibility may affect their experience of a work and their relationship with it. This consideration in its present form remains preliminary, provisional, and partial. I have not attempted to present a full discussion of all issues relating to viewing that the works may elicit.[1] Due to my focus on the process of making, this chapter functions as a series of openings onto potential areas of investigation on the experience of viewing the works.

According to Norman Bryson, viewing is itself a practice. Moreover, it is a practice connected to the practice of making. Any distinction between the two is fictional since "the production of meaning is continuous within practice across both the painting and the viewing subject."[2] Viewing becomes problematic when dealing with indiscernible marks and works. Indiscernible works may in fact emphasise viewing as a practice since the audience can only see them by practicing a specific type

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[1] Parveen Adams states that the viewing of art must be thought through a series of spaces of representation: physical, architectural, institutional, and psychical. She suggests, moreover, following Lacan, that perception is linked with both vision and desire, including the artist's and viewer's desire. Adams, *The Emptiness of the Image*, 2, 111. Such a fuller consideration of the viewing of works that resist viewing, which would require drawing extensively upon phenomenology and psychoanalytic theory, as well as possibly affect theory, is beyond the scope of the chapter and remains to be undertaken in the future.

[2] Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, 149. Bryson is discussing painting specifically but I believe the same applies to visual art in general.

of viewing—walking close, engaging in attentive looking, and participating in the production of meaning, something the works initially may seem to deny. I have referred to the viewing of my works previously and have given examples of viewers' reactions. In fact, observing viewers' responses affected the making of future works. Thus, viewing did not only follow the practice of making but led right back to it.

In this chapter, I come even further away from the process of making, positioning myself on the "other" side/site. This is a problematic position since, as the artist, I am both inside and outside that side/site. I am definitely not attempting to speak on the audience's behalf. It is virtually impossible to place myself exactly in their position. I am of course the first viewer of the finished work and also a maker-viewer during the making of each work.[3] I believe that my viewing experiences are valid and through them I may approximate the position of the audience.[4] My experiences, however, can never be the same as those of another viewer simply because, having made the work, I have knowledge of certain things. I know, for example, that something is painted on a surface even though I may not always be able to see it. As the audience becomes familiar with the work, they come closer to my position, as I suggest later. Again, however, not having made the work, the audience can never probably experience it the way I do. At the same time, viewers bring their own specificity and alterity to bear on the encounter with the work and may see things that I did not consider whilst making. Moreover, the audience is not simply one audience and attempting to speak on behalf of all the audience would undermine their diversity.[5] Using my own observations and discussions with willing audience members, I can try to approximate how some viewers may approach the work. I can also use my position as viewer of other artists' work to inform my knowledge of how

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[3] In my practice, viewing is inextricably linked with making. Aspects of the artist's experience as the first viewer of her work have been explored in previous chapters, particularly in part II.

[4] My experiences are always situated as those of the artist and it is this specificity that I believe makes them legitimate. I draw here on Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" that I discussed in chapter 2.

[5] As Miwon Kwon discusses, the audience of a work is heterogeneous and non-universal. Kwon, "One Place After Another," 87–88.

someone may view my work.[6] Thus, the position I am attempting to hold in this chapter, though not unproblematic, is tenable. In fact, what I suggest by the end of the chapter is that a sharing takes place between the two sides/sites—the making and the viewing—such that they are not wholly "other."

"WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR? WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?": THE VIEWER-UNDER-ERASURE

The partial indiscernibility of my marks/actions/works can make it quite challenging for the viewers, when first entering a space, to discern what the work is. In fact, the role of the viewers *as* viewers, that is, as those who look at something, is questioned. Initially, at least, they cannot fully see or identify the actual work performed by the artist. Here, I briefly address the challenges faced by viewers when coming to see my works, as well as the challenges posed by Hopkins', Ettinger's, and Collis' works. I focus on two aspects: determining where or what to look for within a space, and then determining what is being looked at.

Hopkins' works are presented in a more conventional way, framed or on stretchers and hanging on walls. They display themselves as artworks to be looked at, like most paintings and drawings normally do. On entering the space, viewers know where the work is. They know to stand before the works and to move from one to the other. It may not be immediately apparent what Hopkins did to each surface, but the viewers know where to look and, if they are willing to take the time, know what to approach. Something similar occurs with Ettinger's paintings, when they are displayed in a regular gallery setting—the viewers can see where the work is and can position themselves accordingly.

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[6] Through this chapter, I am not trying to tell the audience how they are supposed to respond to the work, a tendency I find highly troubling and which, unfortunately, seems to be perpetuated lately in museums and galleries in the UK and USA. The text that accompanies the artwork (the label), in addition to containing information about the work and possibly some information about the artist's working process, now seems to be telling audience what they are supposed to see and think. This, in my view, undermines the artwork, the audience and the audience's experience with the work. Note that I am not referring to catalogue essays, reviews or texts in books that discuss an artist's work in depth. I am referring to the text that accompanies the work during the viewing.

This positioning becomes problematic in the case of Collis' work where it is not always clear where the work is. Some of the pieces installed directly on the floor or walls, such as the mother of pearl paint drips, do not announce themselves as something to be looked at. The objects, placed as they are within a narrative, can also be confusing at first since they may not register as part of the work. Of course, when entering a gallery, viewers expect to encounter artworks and this may encourage viewing these objects as such, a point I return to later. In Ettinger's 2009 installation in Anna Freud's study, the artist's works intermingled with pre-existing objects and furniture, making it challenging for viewers specifically interested in seeing Ettinger's work to know precisely where to look. Given the room's setting within a museum, every object there was on display so eventually the paintings were seen. They could not, however, be seen alone without also observing everything else within the space.

My work poses similar challenges. Sometimes it is not clear where the work is, as in the case of the wall drawings and floor collages. Other times, it is not clear whether the objects present are part of the work. Several incidents that occurred throughout this research, many of which I have described in earlier chapters, point to the challenges posed to viewing. During my three-week residency at Stonehouse, other artists would occasionally visit my studio to see what I was doing.[7] Since they did not know that I was working on a wall drawing, they thought I was not doing anything. When they eventually voiced their confusion, I told them about the wall drawing. This led to them occasionally checking all the studio walls looking for other drawings.[8] During the open studio event, several viewers initially assumed that nothing was shown in the space. The drawing was perceived, within the context of the studio, to be merely a stained wall. Others walked around in an attempt to find or discover the work.

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[7] They would usually go in the studio when I was not there. This was something I discovered towards the end of the residency. It was also quite normal since the studio spaces were joined together. I also sometimes went into the other artists' studios to see what they were working on.

[8] Lexygius Calip and Anné Klint, in conversations with author, June 21–July 4, 2010.

Image 8.1:   *Louise Hopkins: Freedom of Information* (installation view),
             2005
             The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, UK
             Image published on Fruitmarket Gallery web site
             (http://www.fruitmarket.co.uk/archive/louise-hopkins/).
             Reproduced with the artist's permission.

Image 8.2:   Susan Collis, *Rock Bottom Riser*, 2007
             Mother of pearl gemstones, 10 m (installed length)
             Seventeen Gallery, London, UK
             Image published in *Susan Collis: Don't Get Your Hopes Up.*
             Reproduced with the artist's permission.

Image 8.3:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/Interweave in the
             Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation view)*,*
             2009
             Desk in Anna Freud's room, Freud Museum, London, UK
             Image published in Ettinger, *Resonance, Overlay, Interweave*
             Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

Image 8.4:   *Wall Drawing I*, 2010
               Coloured pencils on wall, 220 x
               270 cm (wall size)

Image 8.5:   *Vice Versa*, 2010
               Graphite on found wooden box,
               46 x 30.5 x 14 cm

Image 8.6:   Objects in studio, Stonehouse, June–July, 2010

Image 8.7:   *Minor Fix*, 2011
               Adhesive vinyl on floor, 426 x 376 cm (floor size)

Those that happened to walk very close to the wall eventually noticed the drawn marks. Once again, this led to several people studying all the other walls closely to find any remaining drawings.[9] The work *Vice Versa* was shown on the floor next to the wall drawing. Admittedly, this placement made it very challenging for anyone to discern the drawn marks. The box was also surrounded by other old objects—chairs, a table, and a stool. It, thus, became just another object in space.[10] Tellingly, one viewer, on first seeing it, took it for a makeshift stool and tried to sit on it. In the case of the floor collage at Tenderpixel Gallery, which was shown as part of a group exhibition, viewers walked around the space looking at the other works, usually without noticing the floor collage. A number on the exhibition plan handout, which showed where works were displayed, indicated the presence of something on the floor.[11] That something was not easily visible at first, a fact that became clear during the private view with several people asking where my work was. For many, it took a few moments before they could actually see the work, even after I had pointed it out. For others, the collage eventually became all they could see since it spread over the entire floor.[12]

This situation of not knowing where to place one's self and where to look, resonates in some ways with Roger Caillois' discussion in "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia." The organisms Caillois discusses can no longer conceive of themselves as the origin of the coordinates of vision, the central point in space from which vision emanates. Instead, each organism becomes one point among others; it loses its point of view, "it is dispossessed of its privilege and literally *no longer knows where to place itself.*"[13] It not only loses its separation from the environment, as a figure distinct from

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[9] Visitors to Stonehouse, in conversation with author, July 3, 2010.

[10] The works were presented as part of an open studio event. I removed some studio furniture from the space and I included the rest in my installation, which spread over the entire studio. For example, I placed a round table in the centre of the space and showed a series of *Dotted Lines* collages on it. I also placed a chair next to the table. A stool was placed close to a series of shadow drawings installed on the wall.

[11] This plan is included in Appendix B.

[12] Visitors to *Minor Revisions*, in conversation with author, August 11, 2011. A review of the exhibition described my work as "so site-specific it's a challenge to find it without referring to the gallery notes." Bushell, "Minor Revisions at Tenderpixel."

[13] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 28. The way I understand it, this not knowing has to do with the role of the organisms as living creatures, separate from their environment, and as viewers. Earlier in the article, Caillois describes organisms that position themselves very precisely on leaves, branches and stalks so as to appear

the ground, but it also loses its separation as a *viewer*, someone separate from what is being viewed. I am not suggesting that the viewers of the works lose themselves in space, in the sense of being unable to separate themselves from space, but rather that they partially lose themselves *as viewers* in that they do not always know what to look at. Their role or function within the space is partially questioned—they become viewers-under-erasure.[14] This partial questioning/erasure transpires because the works partially disappear rather than present themselves for viewing. The viewers are still the origin of coordinates—looking, within an exhibition context, for something to direct their attention to. It may be unclear, however, where or what that something is.

In cases where the viewers identify objects in space and position themselves before those objects, it may still be challenging to determine what it is they are looking at or what to look for on those objects. In Hopkins' case, the viewers know where the works are but may not recognise immediately the artist's actions. For instance, the works on fabrics may appear as representational paintings. In Collis' case, the objects may be seen as an installation of found used objects and her marks, as carefully crafted marks, may go unseen. This can occur with my work as well. For example, most of the times I have shown the *Dotted Lines* collages and *Wrinklegrams*, the initial assumption is that the pieces of paper are unmarked.[15] The partially indiscernible marks do not allow the viewers immediate access to a clear image, which is what viewers may expect when facing a drawing, painting, or collage. This may prevent the viewers from realising what it is they are looking at and from identifying something as a drawing, painting or collage.

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to be parts of plants. Thus, the positioning is very precise when it comes to assimilating into space.

[14] I am taking the phrase "viewers-under-erasure" from Giffney, Mulhall and O'Rourke's paper "Seduction into Reading," which discusses the work of Bracha L. Ettinger. As I noted in chapter 4, placing a term under erasure indicates that the term is inadequate yet necessary within a specific context.

[15] Resident artists at Ragdale Foundation, in conversation with author, June 1, 2010; Resident artists at Virginia Centre for Creative Arts, in conversation with author, July 25, 2012; Resident artists at Hambidge Centre for Creative Arts and Sciences, in conversation with author, August 11, 2012; Resident artists at Ragdale Foundation, in conversation with author, September 2, 2012; Visitors to *Errors Allowed*, in conversation with author, June 7, 2013.

Image 8.8:   *Paperwork* (installation view), 2013
Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK
Works shown: *Dotted Lines*, *Light Captures*

Given that the audience are there to observe something, they may eventually approach for a closer view, and, hence, become aware of the artist's marks. This may be facilitated through the installation of work in space. Susan Collis has discussed the importance of the distance between the entrance to a space and the first work encountered.[16] For example, the floor work *Rock Bottom Riser* (2007) began close to the gallery entrance so viewers would walk towards it, and potentially notice it, on entering the space. In *Plans and Renovations*, I placed a group of *Faulty Samples* works on the wall, between a floor collage found right below them, and a wall drawing found above and next to them. By approaching to look at *Faulty Samples*, which presented themselves in a more conventional manner, the viewers might also see the other works.[17]

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[16] Susan Collis, in discussion with author, London, July 5, 2013, transcript, Appendix A.

[17] There is a difference in how the viewers position themselves in space, depending on whether the work is presented in a group or in a solo exhibition. In group exhibitions, as I have found, these juxtapositions of works which encourage specific kinds of looking are difficult to achieve. In fact, in such settings the works may disappear even more. In the group exhibition *Tradition Today: Exploring Conditions to Recreate It*, I showed the work *Monuments* (2010–2013), a series of drawings on crumpled up index cards. The work was shown on the floor. With the exception of one other work—a work on marble by the artist Christos Vagiatas—all other works were placed on the walls or on plinths. They could all be seen at eye level. During the private view, I counted five people who stepped on my work accidentally, not having seen it at all as they were focusing higher up on the other works. At the same time, because all works were

Image 8.9:   *Plans and Renovations* (installation views), 2014
Centre for Drawing, London, UK
Works shown: *Faulty Samples*, *Renovation*, *Arches*

I do not consider the challenges posed to viewing to be a failure on the part of

the viewers or a weakness on the part of the works, although it does mean that the

installation of the works must be carefully considered.[18] The need for readjustment in

viewing is precisely part of the works, which operate within a paradoxical situation:

accompanied by a label listing title and medium, most people read the label close to
my work, which claimed that the work was made using watercolour pencils on index
cards. This encouraged several people to squat down and look at the work closely, thus,
seeing the drawn lines.

[18] For example, on two occasions when I showed a selection of *Dotted Lines* taped on a
wall, the audience assumed that I had put up unmarked sheets of lined paper and did
not approach to observe them more closely. This eventually led me to begin using a
bulletin board as part of the installation of *Dotted Lines* to suggest to the audience that
the works could be "read" somehow.

both partially disappearing and yet still offered for viewing. With my works, standing at a distance, at least initially, may mean that the viewers see nothing or nothing that can be immediately identified as an artist's mark. The notion that a "disembodied" distant view gives the viewer mastery over the artwork is disrupted since a distant view may result in no view.[19] By placing the viewers in a position where they cannot fully see and definitively identify everything at any given moment, their role as viewers is challenged. They may not be receiving what they expected from a drawing or painting—a clearly visible image. Their position as viewers is not confirmed by the artwork but rather it is questioned. This places them in an unstable position where they need to reconsider their physical relationship to the artworks, as I discuss next.

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APPROACHING THE WORK:
VIEWING AS A SPATIOTEMPORAL PROCESS/PRACTICE OF ATTENTIVENESS

</div>

The actual viewing of the works cannot happen from a distance or from a fixed position but requires the viewers to move around the space and approach the surfaces. The viewers need to employ close observation to fulfil, as much as possible, their role as viewers, becoming perhaps, as I suggest here, more active and attentive participants in their encounter with the work—*practicing* a specific kind of viewing.[20]

The viewing of these works is intertwined with movement, not just of the eyes but of the whole body.[21] That is, the work needs "an embodied presence, rather than a

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[19] I am thinking here of two dominant modes of conceptualising the viewer's relationship to an image (traditionally a painted image): the image as a window to the world, through which the viewer looks out on or imagines entering that world (the mode exemplified by the perspectival view), and the image as a purely optical field presented to the eyes alone (the mode championed by modernist critics and theorists such as Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried). Calling either of these modes "disembodied" is problematic. Norman Bryson argues that the perspectival view actually creates a relationship between the viewer's body and the work since the viewer is physically positioned at a specific place. Bryson associates this type of viewing with what he calls the gaze. Bryson, *Vision and Painting*, 104. In *The Optical Unconscious*, Rosalind Krauss criticises the issue of disembodied and instantaneous vision and shows it to be quite problematic and very often inapplicable. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious,* 7, 246–248.

[20] As Ralph Rugoff writes, works that are difficult to see because they are invisible or nearly imperceptible, may involve the viewers in processes of discovery, with viewers having to "surrender the aloofness of gallery *flâneurs* and instead publicly declare [their] desire to look." Rugoff, "Homeopathic Strategies," 14.

[21] As Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes, the body is "an intertwining of vision and movement." It is also immersed in the visible—the "moving body makes a difference in

disembodied eye to complete it."[22] Marks may slowly begin to emerge as the viewer moves towards the work, thus, perception varies with the distance from the work.[23] Sometimes being physically near the artist's marks is enough to allow them to become discernible. In Collis' works, the constructed marks usually become discernible as such when the viewers are standing close. The same applies to some of Hopkins' fabric paintings. Standing close to the works makes the difference between painted and printed marks apparent. What appeared to be a representational painting reveals itself to be a copoietic work consisting of both pre-existing images and painted marks.

In Ettinger's case, movement works in at least two ways. There is a need to come close in order to begin to differentiate between painted marks and photocopic traces. There is also a need to move along and back and forth between works presented as a group. This happens because the works call to each other, as I discussed in chapter 6. Traces of images recur from work to work thereby creating connections between the paintings. By visually and mentally bringing the various works together, the viewer begins to construct an image that can never be captured in full— after all, she is only looking at traces—but can become quietly amplified and intensified as those traces accumulate.[24] The accumulated traces form permeable layers, leaving the viewer with something that is more and less than one, more and less than one fixed image, one self-enclosed work or one singular person's traces.[25] This viewing-moving allows for the layering of traces to occur, a layering that resonates with that within each painting.

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the visible world," allowing us to "steer through the visible." Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 124.

[22] Betterton, "A Matter of Paint," 288.

[23] Merleau-Ponty in fact suggests that all perceptions are fragile and can change. They are mere possibilities, "mutable and only probable." Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 40–41.

[24] The accumulation I have in mind is more like a slow subterranean buildup rather than a pile of things.

[25] As discussed in chapter 1, the more-than-one and less-than-one is how Ettinger describes the matrixial encounter and stratum of subjectivisation. It is a "subject(ivity) that is neither one nor necessarily double, but more-than-one and/or less-than-one." Ettinger, "Matrix and Metramorphosis," 195.

Image 8.10:   Susan Collis, *100% cotton* (detail), 2002
Boiler suit, embroidery threads, 160 x 45.7 cm
Image courtesy of the artist. © Susan Collis

Image 8.11:   Louise Hopkins, *Retaliator* (detail), 2010
Oil on reverse of furnishing fabric, diptych 61 x 25 cm
Image courtesy of the artist. © Louise Hopkins

Image 8.12:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Eurydice*, No. 17 (detail), 1994–1996
Oil, xerography with photocopic dust, pigment and ashes on
paper mounted on canvas, 52 x 26 cm
Image published in Ettinger, *The Installation: Resonance, Overlay,
Interweave. Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freudian Space of Memory
and Migration*. Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

Image 8.13:   Bracha L. Ettinger, *Resonance/Overlay/ Interweave in the Freudian Space of Memory and Migration* (installation view), 2009
Painting wall in bedroom/exhibition room, Freud Museum, London, UK
Image courtesy of the artist. © B. L. E.

In many of my works, as well as in some works by Hopkins and Ettinger, coming close is not sufficient to reveal the marks. Rather, an attentive viewing is requested that allows the eyes time to scan over the surface, to become sensitised to it, and to begin recognising individual marks. When looking at Hopkins' pencil drawing on sheet music, it takes a while for the hand-drawn marks to emerge, even when standing close to the work. Once I recognise some of them, I can begin to follow the small gestures of the artist's hand, line by line, in an intimate move. A similar situation occurs with some of Ettinger's paintings where time is required for the difference between painted and photocopic traces to arise. Sometimes, and in some parts of a few works, this does not happen. The different types of marks blend into each other making it impossible to definitively locate the border that separates them. In the case of my stain paintings on vinyl flooring, time and attention are required before the differences between printed and painted marks appear. The viewer needs to shift her position, while standing close to the work, so as to see the paint marks, which

sometimes stand out against the semi-shiny vinyl. With several marks, the border is

difficult to locate and they cannot be classified as either one kind of mark or another.

Recognition may be infinitely postponed. Moreover, with some of my works, the

viewer is asked to sit and look at a work placed horizontally. In a sense, the work asks

to be "read," in that it requests time before some of the marks even begin to emerge.[26]

Image 8.14:   Louise Hopkins, *Untitled (138)* (detail)*, 2003
Pencil on partly erased sheet music, 45 x 30.5 cm
Image courtesy of the artist
© Louise Hopkins

When looking at the works so closely, there is no "entering" into their space

but rather a hovering of the embodied eye on the surface.[27] In fact, in many of the

works I have discussed, there is no suggestion of depth.[28] At that moment, when

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[26] This may be similar to how some monochrome paintings with slight nuances or changes in colour request to be seen. Fer, *On Abstract Art*, 117–119.

[27] I qualify the eye as embodied, as ridiculous as that may sound, in order to differentiate my analysis from modernist criticism. Again, I am thinking here of Greenberg and Fried. As already mentioned, movement through space and time is a key aspect of the viewing of the works I am discussing. Moreover, as I argue later, the works call upon the sensation of touch as well as vision, thus, involving the body of the viewer in multiple ways.

[28] This is the case with my works, where the marks do not suggest depth. Neither is there a suggestion of depth in many of Hopkins' works. Her fabric paintings do suggest a sense of space but it is not a perspectival space that recedes infinitely. Rather, it is a space consisting of a few layers. A similar situation occurs with Ettinger's paintings which suggest a layering of traces. Again, this is not a space that recedes infinitely but a restrained expansion that allows for the coexistence of several layers. As Pollock writes, Ettinger's colours float on a surface that spreads "like an invisible membrane" across the surface of the paper. Pollock, *One Painting Opens*

observing the works closely, the marks are just that—marks made by someone's hand or marks created through a mechanical or natural process or an accident. They are no longer flowers or faces, or something else. They are traces of printed dots or pencil lines or tiny brushstrokes. They are pieces of collaged vinyl or clear tape or printed grains. The physical closeness between viewers and works and the increased familiarity with the surface and its marks over space and time, suggest an intimate encounter, a coming closer to an other. The more time is spent with each surface, the more the viewers can begin to discern minor differences between marks and try and determine who or what brought them into being and how they might relate to each other.

The closeness required for the viewing of the works may draw the viewers' attention to pre-existing elements on the surface. The drawing at the Stonehouse studio directs attention to the wall's surface. In order to see the drawing, the viewers find themselves so close to the wall that they cannot help but notice aspects that are usually ignored: the slightly bumpy texture of the wall, small holes created from pins and nails, old paint marks, someone's fingerprint, a leftover piece of masking tape and so on. Similarly, the floor collage at Tenderpixel Gallery once seen draws the viewers' attention to the floor. The wooden planks, the scratches, areas where planks have been replaced, all become more visible. In these cases, the usually overlooked, such as stains and scratches or the texture of an ordinary wall, becomes partially visible through the works. The viewers are drawn to the surface, close to the artist's marks and the pre-existing marks, and cannot help but observe all of them.

Onto the Many, 1. The vibrations of colour create "breathing space" within the paintings, allowing for the interweave of the layers. Ibid., 2.

Image 8.15:   *Wall Drawing I* (detail), 2010
Coloured pencils on wall, 220 x 270 cm (wall size)

As I suggested earlier, this visibility may only ever be partial. Identification and recognition of some marks may be infinitely postponed as the viewers cannot make a definitive distinction. Moreover, some marks remain partially inaccessible. Pre-existing marks partially covered by the artist's marks can never be seen on their own. Ettinger's marks forever hide parts of the already disintegrating images making it impossible to capture each image in its entirety. In my wall drawings, the other artists' accidental marks are re-covered, simultaneously made slightly more visible and partially hidden from full view. However much the viewers may try, these marks remain partially beyond reach.

In many cases, the viewers may find themselves within touching distance of the works. Several of the pieces I have made actually invite the sensation of touch, if not literally touching. In the collages, the added pieces of material extrude from the surface. In the adhesive vinyl collages, the collaged pieces extrude ever so slightly, needing perhaps someone to touch them in order to confirm their presence. Some of my works, such as the floor collages, can literally be touched. Sometimes touching them may be the only way of differentiating between an actual scratch and a collaged scratch, as in the case of the work *Years Later* on the marble floor of Museo Memoria de Andalucía. The works *Faulty Samples* can also be touched when displayed as sample books that viewers can look through. This was a decision I arrived at after

realising how important the sense of touch appeared to be with these works.

Moreover, by having some works be accessible to a literal touch, the sense of touch

may be more readily activated with the remaining works. Even without touching

them, it might be possible to imagine doing so and feeling the texture created by the

artist's marks.
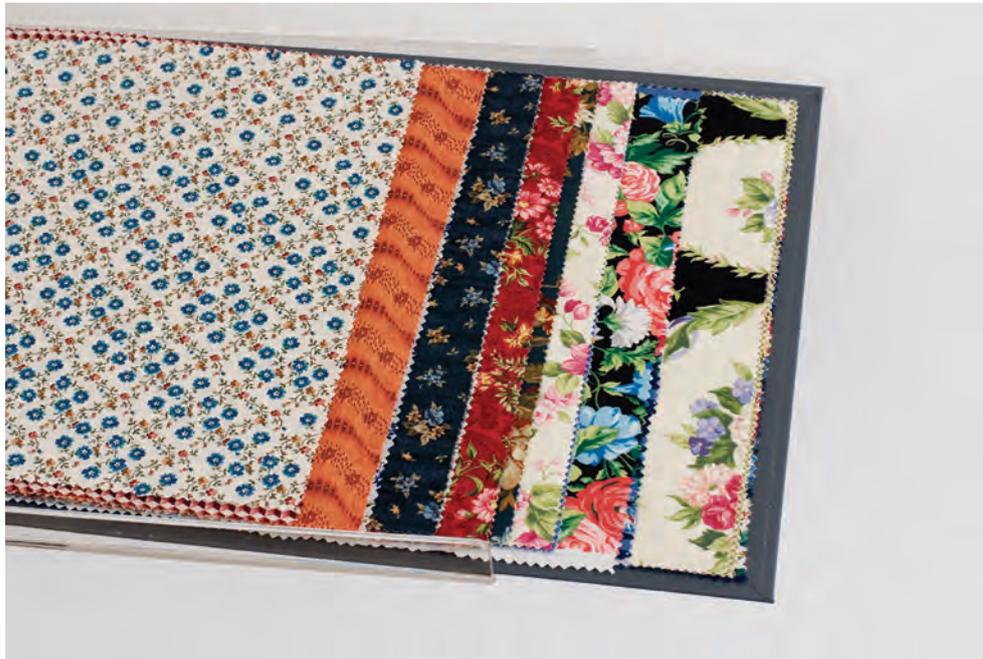
Image 8.16:   *Faulty Samples I* (detail), 2012–2014
                Bound book of works on fabric samples, 48 x 32 cm

The sense of touch does not have to be quite so literal, that is, involving the

feeling of texture. It is also invoked by small identifiable marks. When I look at

Hopkins' or at Ettinger's paintings closely, I can see the individual brushstrokes and

can imagine the artist's hand putting those marks on the surface. In imagining this

process, I mimetically place myself within it.[29] I consider a hand—including my hand—

touching the surface repeatedly with a marking tool. Through the printed and

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[29] The mimetic relationship between audience and work has been discussed in several
contexts. In his book *Mimesis*, Erich Auerbach suggests that stories are mimetically
remade in the bodies of their readers. Similarly, Gebauer and Wulf discuss
conceptualisations of mimesis with respect to readers who, when experiencing a work,
imitate the process of its production. Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 190–191. Adorno
views mimesis as adaptive behaviour in the sense that viewers need to somehow
imitate artworks in order to understand them. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 166. More
recently, Laura Marks has conceptualised a mimetic relationship between viewers and
film that operates precisely through the sensation of touch. Marks, *The Skin of the
Film*, 138–145.

photocopic traces, I consider a different kind of touch, a non-human touch that involves the mechanical deposition of matter on a surface. I no longer see only an image but a process of making, "the temporal process of making, unmaking and remaking work which remains deictically in the work itself," as Rosemary Betterton writes.[30] As I follow the marks with my eyes, I retouch the parts the artists have touched and I retouch the parts the machines have touched but my touching is carried out with/through the eyes.[31]

This intertwining of seeing and touching resonates with how Deleuze and Guattari discuss the haptic space, which they differentiate from an optical space.[32] They consider haptic to be a better word than tactile because "it does not establish an opposition between two sense organs but rather invites the assumption that the eye itself may fulfil this nonoptical function."[33] The sensation of vision combined with touch produces haptic visuality, where the "touching" is done with the eyes.[34] Deleuze and Guattari associate the haptic with close looking and the optical with distant looking. As Laura Marks argues, optical visuality places greater distance between viewer and object and enables the viewer "to imaginatively project him/herself into or onto the object."[35] Haptic visuality, on the other hand, works through closeness and engagement with the physical presence of an other.[36] The closeness of the viewers to

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[30] Betterton, "A Matter of Paint," 294.

[31] The relationship between touch and vision has been a recurring theme in Luce Irigaray's work. She argues for the primacy of touch over vision and criticises Western philosophy for its emphasis on vision, without, however, rejecting vision altogether. Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*; Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*; Irigaray, "To Paint the Invisible"; Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 493–542.

[32] The use of the term "haptic" in art, from the Greek haptos (απτός) meaning something that can be touched, originates from the art historian Alois Riegl. Riegl differentiates between a tactile or haptic vision in which the role of touch is emphasised, and an optic vision in which the role of vision is emphasised. Deleuze and Guattari situate their discussion with respect to Riegl's analysis as well as Wilhelm Worringer's and Henri Maldiney's. Deleuze and Guattari's discussion on the haptic appears in section 14, "1440: The Smooth and the Striated," in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Laura Marks also situates her discussion of haptic visuality with respect to Riegl. Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 335–336.

[33] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 543. Alternatively, we can conceptualise the haptic as the in-between of touch and vision.

[34] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 162.

[35] Ibid., 166.

[36] Ibid., 190.

the works enables this haptic looking since the viewers can touch the surface with their eyes.[37]

Deleuze and Guattari also associate haptic space and close looking with what they call a smooth space. A smooth space is amorphous, non-hierarchical, non-organised, can grow infinitely in all directions, and consists of continuous variations. It is differentiated from a striated space, which Deleuze and Guattari associate with an optical space and distant looking. A striated space is delimited, organised, measurable, and consists of forms that can be identified from a distance.[38] Works where the artist's marks are partially confused with pre-existing marks on a surface ask to be approached as smooth spaces. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, smooth spaces cannot be seen from a distance, cannot be seen as being "in front of" someone and cannot be entered. Rather, the viewers are asked to distribute themselves *on* the surface.[39] That is, the viewers are asked to practice close looking, to become involved, and to take time and move along the surface, even without knowing what it is they are looking at or for.[40] When they start differentiating between marks, the surface may start to move towards a striated space, providing points for the viewers' eyes to focus on.[41]

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[37] Christine Buci-Glucksmann has referenced the haptic when discussing Ettinger's works. She describes the veil of paint marks as "a touch-see more haptic than optical, a second skin as lining, where the original symbiosis of the infant-mother corporeality proper to the 'Me-skin' becomes here symbolisable 'coexistence,' experimentation breaking all fusional identitary space in search of lost and originary envelopes." Buci-Glucksmann, "Eurydice and her Doubles," 88.

[38] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 524–551.

[39] Ibid., 544, 530.

[40] Marks identifies this as another characteristic of haptic works, that is, they request a look that moves on the surface "for some time before the viewer realises what she or he is beholding." Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 163. She identifies weaving, embroidery, and decoration as examples of such detailed and intimate images "that invite a small, caressing gaze." Ibid., 169.

[41] As Rosemary Betterton notes, this process of closely looking and of trying to identify details "is more akin to the traditional practice of the connoisseur who inspects a picture minutely and then stands back to see it as a whole." Betterton, "A Matter of Paint," 287. The connoisseur, the discerning viewer par excellence, studies images closely in search for signs of "mastery," usually used to attribute works to artists or as evidence of superiority. Tummers, "'By His Hand'," 51. While there is a connection between the close looking I have been describing and the close looking of the connoisseur, the motivation, aims, and results differ. The close looking I have been discussing does not aim at distinguishing quality. It is more concerned with perceiving minor differences that show that something has actually happened on the surface or that reveal a process of making that *involves an other*. There is always something else there that the viewers will look at, just as closely as at the marks of the artist—the marks of an-other process or of an-other person. The close looking applies

Moreover, the gradual emergence of works and marks may lead the viewers to look elsewhere in space for more indiscernible works and marks. Every shadow or change in colour that the viewers see becomes a potential painted or drawn area. At the Stonehouse studio, the viewers started searching on other walls for more drawings. During the exhibition *Re-Surface*, the placement of a stain painting on a corner of the floor encouraged viewers to see other elements in space, such as a scratched and stained fireplace base on another corner of the floor, as one of my works. A degree of confusion arose as viewers looked at a mark and were not immediately certain whether it was already there or whether it was painted or drawn. In other words, there was no visual clarity or mastery at all times. This confusion is sustained as the viewers move in space and marks and works emerge or recede. The viewers may see drawn marks and take them to be stains or they may see stains and think that they are drawn marks. There is almost a perpetual feeling that something is being missed, a feeling that people who came to my exhibitions voiced.[42]

As discussed thus far, viewing these works becomes a spatiotemporal process, involving movement and attentiveness. The necessity for movement in space implies greater bodily involvement on the part of the viewer. Moreover, haptic visuality "involves the body more than is the case with optical visuality" precisely because it combines vision with touch.[43] As Betterton writes, "this kind of viewing is neither disinterested nor instantaneous, as Greenberg suggested, but is directly dependent upon the embodiment of the viewer."[44] The closeness to the works and the ability to recognise the artist's marks/actions creates links between looking and touching,

just as much to these other marks as it does to the marks of the artist since the two work together copoietically. What the close looking reveals is precisely this relationship.

[42] Eric Stevens, Sarah Wilson, Zena Hadjivasiliou, in conversation with author, August 13, 2009; Nicole Parcher, Scott Hart, in conversation with author, July 25, 2012.

[43] Marks, *The Skin of the Film,* 163. It is worth pointing out that the word "haptic" embodies within it connection and involvement. The Greek verb "hapto" means "connect, attach, bring into contact, touch, turn on." The transitive verb "haptome" means "I connect myself with" and the adjective "haptos" refers to "someone or something that can be touched, someone or something specific." Γ. Μπαμπινιώτης [G. Mbambiniotis], *Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* [Dictionary of Modern Greek], 2nd ed., s. vv. "άπτομαι," "απτός," "άπτω." Haptic, then, has to do with connection, with involvement.

[44] Betterton, "Susan Hiller's Painted Work," 83.

looking through touching, and/or touching through looking, all of which involve the viewer with the work in different ways.[45] The need for a close and attentive looking also draws attention to the body, according to Luce Irigaray. As she writes, "the training of the senses for accurate, rewarding and concentrated perception" forms one of the practices gradually leading to a rebirth of the body.[46] When viewing these works, the viewer's body is requested to be more actively involved in the looking, otherwise the artist's work will be missed. Viewing necessarily involves movement, physical closeness, attentiveness, close and sustained looking, and an intermingling of senses rather than only a more distant optical view.[47] All of these also involve time—the viewer is asked to spend time getting to know the work. These characteristics make the actual words I have been using, "looking," "viewing," and "viewers," problematic. The viewers of these works are asked to engage in something more than viewing. They are asked to engage in a practice of attentiveness that unfolds over space and time.[48]

Hilary Robinson proposes the phrase "attentive audience" instead of viewers.[49] She arrives at this phrase while discussing Irigaray's writings on attentive practices of listening, viewing and touching. Irigaray calls for a reconstitution of the subject which entails "becoming capable of giving and receiving, of being active and passive, of having an intention that stays attuned to interactions, that is, of seeking a new economy of existence or being which is neither that of mastery nor that of slavery but rather of exchange with no preconstituted object—vital exchange, cultural exchange, of words, gestures, etc., an exchange thus able to communicate at times, to

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[45] Ettinger uses the phrase "gaze-and-touching" to describe the engagement of an artist with a work, the creation of borderlinks to the viewer, and the engagement of a viewer with a work. Ettinger, "Gaze-And-Touching the Not Enough Mother."

[46] Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 24.

[47] This does not mean that some of the works cannot also be experienced from a distance, albeit differently. Hopkins' fabric paintings are a case in point since they can be seen both from a distance, as paintings, and from close up, as interventions on a furnishing fabric. With these works, the viewing experience involves both close-haptic and distant-optical looking. Marks clarifies that the difference between haptic and optical visuality when viewing artworks "is a matter of degree." That is, "in most processes of seeing, both are involved, in a dialectical movement from far to near." Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, 163.

[48] Arguably, this is what viewing artworks may need to be anyway, regardless of the relative visibility or invisibility of the artist's marks. Works that involve indiscernible marks make this viewing a necessity.

[49] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 78.

commune . . . beyond any exchange of objects."[50] For this to happen, each subject needs to recognise that the other cannot be reduced to an object or to one's self and that communication with this other occurs via "reciprocal listening," which requires attentiveness and concentration.[51] This attentive listening is "a subjective and bodily practice," which allows for an inter-engagement of the senses.[52] Robinson points out Irigaray's example of Buddha contemplating a flower.[53] This contemplation involves thinking, listening, viewing and respecting.[54] Using Irigaray's writings, Robinson calls for an "attentive audience" in visual art.[55] The attentive audience engage in a viewing that suggests proximity rather than distance and utilises more than one sense when experiencing a work so as to get to know the work. This is something that works involving indiscernible marks specifically request. Going back to Tisseron's theorisation on marking discussed in chapter 1, the "page" in these works does not answer back to the viewer as directly and as clearly as Tisseron implies. The page whispers back and the audience need to step closer and take the time to listen.

Admittedly, this means more work for the viewers. The attentive viewers I have been describing are willing to take time and come close to the works, squat down and look at the floor, look around corners, and stand with their face almost touching a seemingly empty wall. They are willing to let their perceptions change as they move and observe. They are willing to give the work a chance and to work *with* the work. They do not assume that they know or recognise the work from the beginning of the encounter but are willing to approach and enter into a process of getting-to-know.[56]

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[50] Irigaray, *I Love To You*, 45.

[51] Ibid., 46, 118.

[52] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 78.

[53] Ibid., 78, 92.

[54] Irigaray, *I Love To You*, 139–140.

[55] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 75–88. Robinson opts for "audience" rather than "viewer" because the term "viewer" is too tied to sight alone and also because the term "audience" retains traces of Irigaray's interest in listening. Ibid., 78. For me, the term "audience" still remains tied to one sense (listening). I have contemplated using the term "perceiver" but that too alludes more to sight. I have also considered using the term "participant" but that seems to downplay the senses' involvement. Rather than try to find the "best" term, I have decided to use all the various terms on the understanding that they all fall within a practice of attentiveness.

[56] Perhaps this may be asking for too much in a time saturated with fast images. We are being trained to look at things fast—images on the street as we drive by and

This process involves an approaching on several levels. The audience approaches the works physically, placing themselves very close to the surfaces. They also approach the surfaces and marks through attentiveness. By attending to them they begin to get to know them, in a sense. This approaching expands on more levels, as I discuss in the next section.

I am not claiming that the need to approach the work or practise attentive looking is something specific to my practice. The experience of viewing any visual artwork is enriched or otherwise transformed when the viewer comes close and attends to the work.[57] Moreover, movement in space, as Betterton notes, is a condition of viewing today and several people, including myself, tend to move close and far when looking at paintings or drawings in a gallery.[58] While most visual artworks can be experienced differently when viewed closely, with works such as mine, a close viewing is requested, invited or entreated—it might be the only way in which the audience can actually see the artist's work and discern the relationship between the artist's marks and the surface. A distant and/or disengaged viewing may tell the viewer that she is looking at installations of found objects or at a nearly empty space but it will not reveal the precise actions of the artist and the relationship her marks have to their specific surface.

The artist's marks do not go out towards the viewer nor do they open up a space before the viewer but rather they partially withdraw into the surface. As they approach the surface, they ask—and potentially need—the viewer to also approach.

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scrolling text and pictures in football stadiums or in underground railway stations next to the escalators. We move, the images move, and the time devoted to looking is restricted to a few seconds. This is a problematic situation for visual art in general and for work that deals with indiscernible marks in particular.

[57] There are several detailed and nuanced texts that attend to the issue of close and embodied looking. Alison Rowley's discussion of Jenny Saville's paintings, in "On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville," demonstrates how close and distant looking affects perception and understanding. Rosemary Betterton discusses how attentive and embodied viewing changes her experience of artworks in her essays "A Matter of Paint" and "Susan Hiller's Painted Work." In "Seeing and Feeling," Rebecca Fortnum provides a detailed discussion of "the choreography of the viewer" before works by Jane Harris, Sam Taylor-Wood and Fortnum herself. Fortnum emphasises viewing as a spatiotemporal process through which viewers participate in meaning creation.

[58] Betterton, "A Matter of Paint," 287. Fortnum's discussion of the choreography of the viewer, in the essay "Seeing and Feeling," also emphasises aspects of movement and their importance to meaning construction.

This spatiotemporal process of approaching is, in a way, a crucial part of the artworks—of the *work* of the artworks—as it may bring about a shift from viewing to a practice of attentiveness. The gradual perceptual and conceptual changes that occur as the viewers engage in this practice of attentiveness are potentially more radical than with other types of artworks as they reveal a relationship to something other. What the viewer thought she was looking at is something else entirely. It is not a singular thing—a painting, drawing, found object, or accidental stain—but an encounter between "others." By approaching these "others," the audience becomes another entity in the encounter, another "other" to participate in borderlinking and borderspacing.

AUDIENCE-ARTWORK-ARTIST

The practice of attentiveness described above has important implications for the relationships between audience, works, and artist. In this final section I present some preliminary propositions for how these relationships may shift and for how they may be conceptualised.

The traditional relationship between viewer and artwork posits one as the subject and the other as the object. Within phallic logic, they are placed on opposite sides.[59] That is, phallocentric gaze assumes the existence of a "subject" who looks at an external and separate "object."[60] The work—the "object" or "other"—is to be assimilated as the same or rejected as wholly "other."[61] Artworks involving indiscernible marks have the potential to challenge this oppositional relationship. The artworks and artist's marks are not presented as "other" for the viewing pleasure of the viewer. The viewer cannot define herself as such when faced with these works. Instead, the viewer needs to recognise that "the other as other remains invisible for me and that the first gesture with respect to him, or her, is to accept and respect this invisibility."[62] If for the viewer the other is the artwork, then this other cannot initially be retrieved in

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[59] Pollock, "Oeuvres Autistes," 15.

[60] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 65.

[61] Pollock, "Oeuvres Autistes," 15.

[62] Irigaray, "To Paint the Invisible," 395.

full but only partially. That is, the confirmation of boundaries and, thus, identifications is delayed.

The viewer needs to practice attentiveness and *work* towards viewing the artworks. By attending to the artwork, the possibility may open for it to be viewed as something more/other than an object. As Irigaray writes, attentive looking suggests attending to something other without owning it or mastering it.[63] In order to be viewed, the works request that the viewers adjust their position and viewing and become attuned to the marks on each surface. Through this involvement, the viewers' perception of the works gradually alters as the artist's marks and their relationship with the surface begin to emerge. The work asks to be approached as something the viewers can engage with and get to know, rather than as something they already know and own or reject, or as something they only look at and consume from afar.

Moreover, through attentive looking, the viewers actively participate in their encounter with the work. There is a shift from looking at the works as singular objects to experiencing processes of engagement.[64] The viewers have to work to constitute the work of the artist and its relationship with the surface and pre-existing marks. As the viewers adjust themselves and attend to the works, practicing attentive viewing, the works begin to unfold. As a result, both viewers and works change through their encounter. There is a mutual relation of recognition through which viewers and works constitute each other. In the specific works I have been discussing, this two-way change is made possible through the indiscernibility of the marks and works. As the marks and works partially withdraw, they allow space for the viewers to approach. The viewers need to come close in order to witness the copoiesis underway between marks and surfaces and works and spaces. This witnessing, however, may be closer to what Ettinger calls wit(h)nessing because it is by approaching and spending time with the work that the viewers allow the copoiesis to emerge. By approaching and engaging

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[63] Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 24.

[64] As Rugoff points out, this emphasis on process is something that invisible or nearly invisible art can bring about. That is, invisible art has the potential to remind us that "the meaning of art is not framed by physical objects, but develops through our responses to a given work, our feelings and thoughts and all that we make of them." Rugoff, "How to Look at Invisible Art," 27. This invisible process of engagement is "the actuality of art" and we may find ourselves closer to it through engaging with invisible works. Ibid.

with the work, the viewers *give it* the possibility of emerging and existing.[65] In a sense, the viewers participate in the copoietic making of the work. They may not have physically made the work but by engaging with it they continue and share in its copoiesis, in the encounter between "others" that was initiated through the making. As such, viewers and works co-constitute each other, co-emerging through their encounter.[66]

Within phallic logic, the artist forms, in some ways, another "other" for the viewer—simply put, the artist makes something that the viewer subsequently sees. This seeing could lead to the objectification of the artist, that is, seeing the work as somehow standing in for the artist.[67] The participation of the audience in copoiesis that I have referred to above may suggest a sharing with the artist, who also participates in the copoiesis. This sharing, which can happen on several levels, may challenge the relationship subject/object between viewer and artist.

To start with, by approaching the works, the viewers begin to observe the artist's marks and their relationship to the surface. Thus, they begin to approach the making process of the works. To some extent, this can be seen as a mimetic re-enactment of the marking process, which is something that happens with many paintings and drawings. The marks on a surface reveal the movements of the artist, enabling the viewers to re-create the process of making in their heads and bodies. The

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[65] As Louise Hopkins' work *Songsheet 3 (ii)* states, "*you're nobody 'til somebody loves you.*"

[66] This co-emergence goes beyond the viewing experience and into meaning construction and affective responses, what Ettinger calls feeling-thinking and feeling-knowing. Rebecca Fortnum argues that "meaning is something constructed by both artist and viewer in the collaborative venture of making and looking" and that viewers do not "passively uncover meaning, but . . . actively construct interpretations." Fortnum, "Seeing and Feeling," 142. Ettinger argues that aesthetic encounters with artworks have the potential to open up trajectories of "affective and effective participation-transformation within a subjectivising instant," an instant that invokes the matrixial trans-subjective stratum. During the aesthetic encounter "affects and psychic strings are reattuned, and each viewer gives the artwork a new possibility of life." Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 23. Finally, Ralph Rugoff suggests that invisible artworks "underscore the role of our own responses in forging meaning from our encounter with both art and the social and physical scaffolding that shapes its presentation." Rugoff, "A Brief History of Invisible Art," 8. My discussion in this chapter focuses on the viewing experience and does not develop the issues of meaning construction or affective response.

[67] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 82–84.

approaching/sharing I am suggesting coexists with and, simultaneously, goes beyond this re-enactment.

Aspects of the process of attentively viewing the works resonate in many ways with aspects of the making of the works. The audience physically comes very close to the work, as close as the artist was whilst making the work.[68] They then spend time with the surface, following it with their eyes, becoming sensitised to and familiarised with it. Again, this resonates with the experience of making which involves the artist studying the surface, becoming familiarised with it over time and then following it with her marks. Just as the artist is absorbed and spends time at work, so is the audience asked to take time and be attentive. As discussed in earlier chapters, confusion was an important aspect of the experience of making many of the works. My marks would intermingle with pre-existing marks and I would temporarily lose sight of them. Moreover, coming back to a work after not seeing it for some time means that I can no longer immediately see my interventions. I know that something is there but it takes some time to locate it. This confusion is translated into the uncertainty the audience may feel when encountering the work—the not knowing where to look or what to look for.

I discussed in the previous chapter the shift from subject to object or from self to other that the artist may experience while making—the artist's becoming-surface/object/other. This shift emerges through the works themselves as the artist's marks recede into the inanimate surface, becoming partially confused with pre-existing marks and features of the surface. I would suggest that a similar shift may be experienced by the audience as they approach the works in order to see as much as they can of the artist's marks. By approaching the work and artist's marks they are also approaching the surface with its pre-existing marks as well as all the "others" associated with that surface and those marks. The increased sensitisation to the

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[68] Betterton has also drawn attention to the fact that a viewing experience that alternately involves close and distant looking is "more like that of the artist as he made the painting, as he tried to figure out the world by moving in and out from the surface of the canvas." Betterton, "A Matter of Paint," 287. Betterton is discussing a painting by Titian hence the use of "he."

surface and their increased awareness of details and nuances on each work, may allow for a move towards each surface/object/other.

As the artist relinquishes the position of having full control over the work, the audience is asked to let go of a fixed viewing position and of the expectation or assumption of knowing what it is they are looking at. The audience is asked to accept the limitations of their position since they may not be able to see everything from the start. This acceptance resonates with what Ettinger calls fragilisation. The viewers are asked to temporarily suspend judgement and take time to explore the space and the works, engaging in a process of discovery similar to the one that the artist engaged in whilst working. They are asked to practice attentiveness towards an other and engage in a process of close and sustained looking, much like that practiced by the artist during the making. They are asked to move towards a state of fascinance.[69]

I am not suggesting that the two experiences are the same but that some aspects of the experience of making are somehow partially transferred to the experience of viewing—in other words, something is shared between artist and audience, something that goes beyond communicating an idea or a process of making. That is, as the audience approaches the work, they are approaching the artist in the sense of sharing a space and process with the artist. They are not approaching the artist as an object to be viewed through her marks on a surface but rather as an embodied subject that engaged with the work. The work is not meant to be seen "as a stand-in for the objectness of the other, as phallocentric man does with his production of objects."[70] Certainly, this issue is made more complex by the fact that the artist is in fact in a process of becoming-object/other, as discussed in chapter 7, a process in which the viewers share, as I have suggested here. It is, in part, this sharing that I

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[69] As discussed in chapter 7, I view fascinance as a prolongation of the duration of an aesthetic encounter and a deep engagement with a work. I am not suggesting that the viewers will necessarily feel drawn to the works and be somehow fascinated with them but rather that the works request this kind of involvement in order to emerge as such. I return to this issue later.

[70] Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, 84. Or, I suppose, not only as a stand-in for the artist as I am not sure that an artwork, especially one involving handmade marks, can entirely avoid the risk of being seen as standing in for the artist. For example, in "Artists-in-Progress," Linda Sandino discusses how artists and their artworks are usually fused together, signifying each other.

believe has the potential to prevent the objectification of the artist.[71] Instead of objectification, there may be an acknowledgement of both the embodied artist and embodied audience at work, whether that work is making or attentive viewing.

The sharing between artist and audience also becomes a shared offering. The artist offers her work to be seen. Unless the viewers, however, engage in attentive viewing, the works may well go unseen. It is a two-way offering—the artist offers something to be seen and the audience enable it to be seen by engaging with it. They, thus, offer something back to the work and the artist. Attending also means looking after and, to some extent, this is what attentive viewing implies—that the viewers will somehow look after the work. A great deal of responsibility and faith is placed in the audience. There is always the possibility that the audience may not engage with the work at all, thus, mistaking what they see for something else or even not actually seeing the work. This is one of the risks taken when engaging in this kind of practice.[72]

The type of viewing and the relationship between audience, artwork and artist that I have been describing, bear an affinity with Ettinger's conceptualisation of art. In the works I have been discussing, due to the indiscernibility of the artist's marks, there is a delay in identification and recognition. This allows space for the viewer to practice attentiveness and engage with the work. Through attentive viewing, the duration of the encounter with the artwork—what Ettinger calls encounter-event—is prolonged. This depends on the viewer's generosity and willingness to engage with, re-spect, and con-template the work. The viewer may then become attuned to the work and partially share a space with the artist. Perhaps this attuning to the other—to both work and artist—can allow the viewer to borderlink with the work and the artist, enabling processes of wit(h)nessing and co-participation "in a time-space-encounter-event" to emerge.[73] That is, the prolongation of the encounter-event may allow for the working-

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[71] By objectification here I am referring to a process that would be opposed to subjectification within a phallic logic and not to the processes discussed in chapter 7 that involved becoming, copoiesis, and non-life in life.

[72] Admittedly, with nothing or little to see right from the beginning, especially in the case of my work and Collis' work, there is the possibility that the viewer may feel excluded and decide not to engage with the work.

[73] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 4; Ibid., 16.

through of matrixial relationships—borderlinking and borderspacing, co-emerging and co-fading, and copoiesis.[74]

According to Ettinger, borderlinking with an art object may lead to a subjectiving instant through which aesthetic affects of fascinance, com-passion, re-spect and con-templation arise.[75] Within the matrixial field of vision, the artwork/other is re-spected as a transject and not as an object.[76] Art becomes

> a time-space offered for coemerging and cofading, borderlinking and borderspacing, over different times and different places . . . a space-time-encounter, a space-time of Encounter-Event, which allows the opening up of a spiral time-place of encounter. Not inter-subjective but trans-subjective and transjective encounter-events take place by way of subjectivising experiencing with an artobject or art-process, an other or an event, others, alive or not, met and unmet, that continue to induce and transmit.[77]

That is, in the encounter between viewer-artwork-artist, a subjectivising instant of subjectivity-as-encounter may emerge through which participants form partial-subjects and partial-objects, or even trans-subjects and transjects, and share in the creation of a unique copoietic web.[78]

I am not suggesting that the works I have been discussing will in fact lead to this type of an aesthetic and subjectivising experience or that the viewers will engage in fascinance, com-passion or re-spect. As Ettinger points out, there exists no content,

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[74] Ibid., 3.

[75] Ibid., 2.

[76] Ibid. Elsewhere, Ettinger explains: "The subjective-object, like the foetus between living and not-living-yet, carrying the in-between possibility of future-living and of not-living-anymore, is a trans-subjective-object for another subject who relates to it." Ettinger, "Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma," 114.

[77] Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 8.

[78] Ettinger conceptualises the body as body-psyche, thus, psychical structures, effects, and affects play a crucial role in her discussion of art. She suggests that something within the psychic borderspace of the artist is transported to the viewer through the artwork, affecting the viewer's psychic borderspace and shedding light "on an archaic trans-subjective rapport between *I* and *non-I* and on a possible transmission between different subjects and objects, beyond time and space, in a potential in-between zone of object-and-subject borne and yielded by painting." Ettinger, "Trans-Subjective Tranferential Borderspace," 215. My current discussion, as I have already said, does not deal with the psychic and affective dimensions of the encounter between viewer and artwork but rather with the actual structure and processes that may occur within the encounter in terms of viewing.

form, or image that can guarantee that this subjectivising instant will arise.[79] Art can only provide an opening through which it *may* arise.[80] What I am suggesting is that the viewing requested by these specific works stages and may open the way to such a copoietic encounter. That is, the work does not exist (as an artwork) unless the audience open themselves to this kind of encounter. Specifically in my work, the intent is precisely to stage this encounter—an encounter which begins in the making process with the relationships between mark and surface and between the artist and her "others," and continues into the viewing process with the relationships between the audience and their "others." In every one of these relationships, the various participants are asked to *approach* each other and share in an in-between space/state. During viewing, the viewers are requested to adopt copoiesis as their *point of view* so as to open a space for sharing and co-emergence to occur.[81] The status of viewers and artworks is not fully determined right from the beginning of the encounter but is shifting, allowing the participants to enter a continuum of relationships that develop over time and space and to catch glimpses of something different, something more, an in-between-instant perhaps. As to whether such glimpses may or may not occur, the artist can only hope.

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[79] Ettinger, "Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma," 115. Moreover, Ettinger points out that these aesthetic processes and subjectivising instances are nonconscious.

[80] Ibid.

[81] I am drawing on Ettinger's phrase that compassion, awe and fascinance "can reach the ethical when they turn into respect, non-abandonment and copoiesis as values or points of view: acting-thinking values." Ettinger, "Fragilisation and Resistance," 1.

CONCLUSION:
THE POTENTIAL OF BECOMING AN-OTHER

One discovers through the other the potential to be an-other.

Bracha L. Ettinger, "Working-Through"

In the closing pages of this text, I would like to revisit the questions and aims of this project, both those I began with and those that emerged while engaging in research. I discuss conclusions and propositions as well as the implications and contributions of the research. I also summarise some alternative paths I could have taken through this journey and some potential future developments. Finally, I unfold my discussion on self/other relationships when reconsidering the methodological framework of the research and I briefly address the implications of this research for my practice as an artist.

This research began by looking at the relationship between mark and surface in the fields of painting and drawing. Exploring this relationship in depth was important for two reasons. Firstly, it is one of the main relationships that I, as an artist working within painting and drawing, encounter through my work daily. Secondly, as I have shown in earlier chapters, this relationship has implications for thinking about subjectivity and the self's relationship to an other. This self/other relationship can initially be conceptualised in terms of the artist's mark and the surface being marked. These two reasons, that is, the centrality of the mark/surface relationship in many painting and drawing practices, including my own, and its wider implications when considering questions of subjectivity, led me to this research.

Specifically, the research sought to access and articulate the in-between state/space of mark and surface. The questions I began with were: How can the relationship between the artist's marks and the surface move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state/space can be accessed? As an extension of that, how can the relationship between work and space be shifted in a similar manner? How does accessing this in-between change the relationship between subject and object and self and other (understood in the first place in terms of mark and surface and artist and materials)? As the research progressed, additional questions arose:

What are the implications for the artist when her marks become nearly indiscernible from the surface? What are the implications for the audience when they cannot immediately see or identify a work of art? These new questions can be placed under the initial third question since they can be seen as expanding the possible meanings of the subject/object and self/other relationships.

As discussed in chapter 2, the methodological framework for the research emerged *through* the research and involved the interweaving of three spaces: my own practice, other artists' practices, and theory. Questions regarding the in-between of mark and surface were explored through studio experimentation and through making artworks. These artworks are also presented as an output of the research. Determining how relationships between mark and surface shifted required a close consideration of making processes and works, alongside particular theoretical concepts and specific processes and works by other artists. Studying the work of other artists enabled me to contextualise this research and to demonstrate its contribution to existing discussions surrounding marks and surfaces within art practice. Finally, identifying and understanding the implications of the practical work when considering relationships between subject and object and self and other necessitated looking towards pre-existing theorisations of subjectivity.

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS:
RETURN TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Here, I consider each of my questions in turn, summarising my "answers" and "findings." My conclusions and propositions emerge through this discussion.

The first question involved finding ways through which the relationship between the artist's marks and the surface could move beyond an opposition or clear overlay such that an in-between state could be accessed. I initially approached this question by trying to come up with marks that responded to each specific surface I was working with. Over time, it became clear that the response was in fact an *approaching* towards the surface on several levels: visual, material, and conceptual. I developed three methods of marking that allowed me to approach the surface and access an in-between state: making marks that took on features of the surface as well as features of

marks that might be found on that surface; tracing over pre-existing marks on the surface and re-covering them in the process; and using small parts of the surface as marks in order to alter, remake, or reorganise the surface. I have argued that the resulting marks—analysed through the concepts of mimesis, *retrait*, and index—enter into a becoming-surface. As a result of this proximity, processes of borderlinking and borderspacing emerge between mark and surface, allowing a sharing. As I have discussed, this sharing is not only visual as the marks depend on several aspects of the surface: its appearance, pre-existing marks, everyday use, and history. The artist's mark is constituted, to a great extent, by the surface right from the beginning of the making process.

The concepts I chose through which to discuss these marks are precisely concepts that involve an in-between, thus, allowing me to retain the role of the surface even when discussing marks. That is, mimesis implies that something else is mimicked, *retrait* involves repetition of something else, and the index points to something else—in all these cases, the surface enters the discussion as it occupies the place of that "something else." Therefore, the artist's mark is considered *in relation* to the surface. I tried, in a sense, to write with the works and to approximate the in-between in conceptual terms. Thus, the in-between state/space I set out to access is explored both through the practice and through this text.

I am not claiming that the marking processes I developed are exhaustive nor was this my aim. There are other ways of responding to surfaces. The methods I have discussed developed through my encounter with *specific* surfaces and, thus, correspond to them. This is a result of my overall methodology in the studio: *approach* the surface through marking. It is likely that if I encountered very different types of surfaces, I would develop different methods. Moreover, in my experimentations I focused on processes of marking that involve depositing matter on a surface. This boundary emerged through the studio as most of the work I was making that approached an in-between involved additive processes. I, thus, adopted this as a boundary to my research. At the same time, my analysis of the methods can be brought to bear on works that follow similar methods, as my discussion of other artists' works has shown. Thus, even though there is definitely specificity in the

development of my processes, their analysis can extend to other artists' works. I believe this is one area in which I can claim to have made a contribution.

Indeed, there are other artists using the marking processes I have used or similar processes. Susan Collis, Louise Hopkins, and Bracha L. Ettinger are three particularly relevant examples. I have used these processes, however, with the specific aim of *approaching* each particular surface and accessing an in-between. That is, the processes emerged from the surfaces I used and they attempted to return to those surfaces, so to speak. This eventually resulted in marks that became confused with the surface to greater extents than in the works by the artists I have discussed, thus, making the issue of indiscernibility an important part of the discussion surrounding the in-between of mark and surface.

This brings me to the partial disappearance of my marks, perhaps the most obvious result of my approach. My marks' dependence on the surface right from the beginning of the making process manifested itself as indiscernibility in each completed work. That is, the in-between and indiscernibility (understood as both visual imperceptibility and conceptual proximity in Deleuze and Guattari's sense) are inextricable in my work. Even though the centrality of indiscernibility became clear early on in the research, I did not realise how much it affected the viewing of the work until I actually began exhibiting some of this work. The "answering back" of the marks was reduced to a whisper that some viewers missed. This led me to studying the issue of indiscernibility and its paradoxes in more depth.

Before discussing the results of that study, I turn to the second question or aim of the research. This involved devising ways in which the relationship between work and space could be shifted in a similar manner as that between mark and surface—that is, extending the mark/surface destabilisation to the relationship between work and space. As I discussed in chapter 6, the spaces in which I worked proved important as they determined, to some extent, the surfaces I turned to. This interdependence between surfaces and spaces, as well as my interest in the issue of indiscernibility, foregrounded the importance of installation. Again, engaging with this aspect of the research required extensive experimentation and the methods I utilised depended on each space. These methods included placing work according to a

narrative of use relating to the space, placing work next to features of the space, and making work that recreated parts of the space. I have argued that these placements succeeded in approaching the space and creating a sense of besidedness, with-insertion and continuation between work and space, something that became apparent during exhibitions and open studio events. The in-between state within each work was, thus, extended to the relationship work/space.

Again, I am not claiming that these installation methods are exhaustive. They emerged through my encounter with specific types of spaces, surfaces, and marks. In fact, there was a certain amount of serendipity involved in these encounters as I did not always know the types of spaces I would be working in. On the one hand, it is possible that working with specific types of spaces more systematically would allow me to explore themes relating to those spaces, an issue I return to later. On the other hand, being more open to the types of spaces I ended up in, allowed me to "apply," in a sense, my methodology of approaching a space in more varied circumstances. Of course, there is a certain continuity in most of the spaces I worked within, which allowed me to return to similar surfaces and eventually choose specific spaces in which to exhibit work. This interaction between surfaces and spaces became an important part of my practice. As with my analysis of marking methods, I believe that my analysis of installation approaches can productively interact with other artists' works, works that aim for a different relationship to space, beyond overlay or clear differentiation.

At this point, I want to briefly address the notion of "success" in relation to my works. Within the context of this research, success is defined in relation to the research questions. That is, my aim was to access what I considered to be an in-between space/state so I "judged" works based on that. Through my marks, I attempted to get close to each surface without, however, completely losing the marks. I tried, in other words, to approximate distance-in-proximity. This required extensive experimentation with marking and installation approaches. It also entailed observing viewers' reactions to the works. At the same time, the works are artworks and cannot be confined within specific research questions, even if those questions are one of the things that allowed the works to emerge. That is, the works may operate as research

methods and outputs but they *are* artworks. It is my hope that, as artworks, they move beyond this project and initiate their own conversations with their "others"—spaces, viewers, other artists' works, other theorisations and concepts.

I now come to my third question: How does accessing this in-between change the relationship between subject and object and self and other? Subject and object and self and other can be understood in several ways. In fact, one of the aims of this text was precisely to unfold these terms, linking them to both the making and viewing of the works. At the level of the making, they can be understood in terms of mark and surface, work and space, and artist and materials. These relationships can be unfolded further since the surface may have pre-existing marks on it, marks or traces which were made or left by other people or processes, other "others." At the level of viewing, subject and object and self and other can be understood in terms of viewer and artwork (including all the "others" behind the work, or rather with-in it), and viewer and artist.

Throughout this text, I have argued that by accessing an in-between—an in-between linked to indiscernibilty—these relationships are destabilised. That is, the distinctions subject/object and self/other, however they may be understood, partially dissolve allowing for a shared space to emerge. This is something that occurred from the bottom up as it were. That is, it began in the making with the destabilisation between mark and surface. It then flowed into the relationship between work and space. It is through the mark-surface and work-space in-betweens that I then considered the relationships of the artist to her "others." When the artist's mark becomes partially indiscernible from the surface and her works become partially indiscernible from space, then the status of the artist as agent, author, exhibitor (in the sense of *showing* her work), subject, and self-possessing individual is challenged. Through her marks and installation approaches, the artist comes close to the surface, the space, the marks or traces of others, and other marking processes. This closeness results in partial confusion between others. In fact, I suggest that these others can no longer be understood as only "others," in the sense of absolute or oppositional alterity, but as partial-others that co-exist, co-share, and co-mean. I further suggest that this is something that emerges from the specific marking processes the artist works with.

That is, partialisation is there from the beginning since the artist's marks are partially constituted by the "other," the surface. There is no mark—this specific mark—without the specific surface. There is no work—this specific work—without the specific surfaces, spaces, and traces left by others. There is, in fact, no artistic practice—this specific practice—without these others. The works are copoietic, made through encounters between partial-others.

This brings up two potential problems in terms of the relationship of the artist to these others. The two extreme positions of this relationship involve assimilation: of the other into the self and of the self into the other. Assimilating the other involves appropriating or owning the other. Assimilating into the other involves losing the self. I am not sure that there exists a definitive "solution" or "answer" to these problems. They remain two possible ways of looking at the work, perhaps through phallic logic. In other words, this tension between extremes is in the work itself. As I have discussed, my work tends towards one of the two extremes: assimilation of the self into the other.

This brings me to the question of the implications of indiscernibility for the artist. When the artist's marks become nearly indiscernible, the artist's presence is almost lost. This can be seen as regression or reduction and can be related to the death drive, as theorised by Freud, and the instinct of renunciation, as theorised by Caillois. Again, I am not sure there is a way of completely refuting such interpretations. They remain very close to the work, possibly closer to some specific works than to others. I propose, however, a move beyond this extreme position. This proposition arises from a close consideration of the making processes and the relationships between mark and surface in the works, alongside concepts from Ettinger and Deleuze and Guattari.

Rather than viewing indiscernibility as reduction, I propose to view it as complexification and connection. In other words, instead of seeing it only as a giving up and a form of non-being, I think it is possible to see it as a working-towards sharing with an other and a different form of becoming.[1] The artist's marks are never exactly

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[1] In this respect, there are some commonalities between this research and the recent book by Thomas Phillips, *The Subject of Minimalism*. In the book, Phillips draws on becoming-imperceptible to argue that minimal music (almost silent or noise-like music) can lead to greater levels of intensification, an experiencing of the margins

the same as the surface. The possibility remains that they can emerge, even if only through close viewing. When (and if) they emerge, they reveal the detailed and time-consuming work of the artist. That is, the approach towards the surface is something that is slowly constructed. This may reveal, I think, a desire to connect and to become different. I have argued that this approximates what Ettinger calls experiences of non-life in life rather than a move towards complete disappearance, which may be linked to the death drive. I have also related the works to Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-imperceptible. This is a movement towards imperceptibility that is not seen as reduction but as worlding. It may involve letting go of some aspects of being a stable and separate subject, a giving up of fixed borders, but in order to become more and different than one is and not in order to vanish into thin air.

Neither copoiesis nor becoming is a one-way movement, like the death drive and the instinct of renunciation. Copoiesis involves co-transformation of the participants and becoming is double, pulling both terms into a zone of proximity or indiscernibility. In the works, the artist's marks may tend towards the surface but, in the process, the surface is also altered. It, along with its marks and the others involved with those marks, becomes a partner in the making and an integral part of the work. In other words, instead of seeing two oppositional movements—an assimilation of the other into the self or an assimilation of the self into the other—it is possible to see a movement from two extremes towards each other and the emergence of an in-between. This is not meant to be a midpoint as the participants change asymmetrically and in different ways. I believe this copoietic making and sharing has the potential to arise when looking at the works closely. At the same time, there is always the possibility that the work (the marks of the artist on the surface) may be missed.

This brings me to the work of the viewer, the other "other" of the encounter. If conventionally the viewer/subject encounters the artwork as "object" or "other," then when the mark/surface and work/space relationships are destabilised, this encounter is problematized. There may not be a clear "other" to look at or, if there is something,

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beyond ordinary life. Phillips also discusses what he considers to be minimal texts and films but I think the discussion on music and on becoming-silence is that which is closer to my project.

it may at first appear as something different to what it actually is. The question I asked

was: What are the implications for the audience when they cannot immediately see or

identify a work of art (thinking specifically of some of the works I have made)? In this

case, the audience is requested to approach and observe the work closely in order to

allow it to emerge and exist as an artwork. That is, the viewer is asked to take part in

the copoietic encounter underway within each work and between the work and the

space.

According to Ettinger, any encounter between viewer and work has the

potential to result in a copoietic encounter. The viewer brings her own subjectivity to

bear on the work, which, in turn, affects the viewer, leading to the emergence of

something. Works that involve almost indiscernible marks stage precisely this

possibility. The viewer is constituted as viewer when the work is seen as such—there is

a mutual co-transformation. I am not claiming that my works will affect viewers or

that there will be some kind of an aesthetic encounter—this depends on each viewer

and their experience with the work. What I am claiming is that for this even to have a

chance of happening, the viewers are requested to approach and observe the work,

that is, to adopt a position of non-knowing and to open themselves up to the

possibility of copoiesis in viewing.

As explained in chapter 8, given my focus on the process of making, my

discussion on the viewing experience remains in provisional form. I have tried to point

out the sharing that occurs between artist and viewer. That is, some aspects of the

making process—close looking, time, proximity to surfaces, temporary confusion—are

transferred to the viewing and the viewers are requested to somehow place themselves

close to the position of the artist, the "other." It is through this sharing of positions

that copoiesis can be activated, that the viewers can *see*, and that the works can

emerge. As such, the process of viewing presents another possibility for the self/other

relationship to be destabilised and for a shared space to surface.

This is a process that requires time. I believe the indiscernibility of the artist's

marks prolongs the viewing, allowing for this process to occur by giving it space and

time. It might be that the process occurs while the viewer is approaching the work and

while she observes the surface looking for something. Perhaps the moment the marks

begin to arise—the moment of recognition—is when the viewer moves into "the phallic register of knowing."[2] This confirmation of boundaries and identification, however, is delayed. Moreover, it may not be possible to always keep the marks in sight. Moving away from the works may result in confusion between marks and between marks and surface. A possible way of viewing this is as another game of fort/da—the viewer playing fort/da with the works so that the marks are seen, then they are not, then they are, and so on. This is something that needs to be addressed in more depth, however, the temporal delay in viewing and the gradual change in perception suggest a different experience. The delay in recognition and the recurring confusion may allow for the becomings of the viewer. Artist, artworks and viewers may then form partial-subjects/objects in a continuum of shifting relationships that develop over time and space.

If painting and drawing, or marking in general, depend on the distinction mark/surface, then when that distinction begins to destabilise, so do other elements surrounding the practices of marking. I have argued that the destabilisation of the mark/surface relationship and the emergence of an in-between lead to the destabilisation of a series of other relationships, which also fall within a subject/object and self/other distinction within phallic logic.

More generally, I suggest that through the making and viewing of the works, a different relation to the other may begin to emerge, one that is not solely based on complete assimilation or differentiation. There is an approaching towards or an opening up to the other on various levels. It starts with the approaching of the artist's mark towards the surface and its pre-existing marks (which, in turn, may relate to another person/process), continues to the approaching of the works towards the surrounding space (with its specificities), and finally, filters into the experience of viewing with the viewer approaching the artist via the work.[3] At every level, the self is constituted by an other, is becoming-other, while still maintaining a minimal difference-in-proximity. It may, thus, be possible to glimpse a different kind of

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[2] Pollock, "Oeuvres Autistes," 17.

[3] I am not suggesting that no other works enable this movement but, for this research, I have been exploring how this movement comes about through indiscernibility and, simultaneously, the potential of indiscernibility to bringing about this movement.

relationship between the various elements—a constantly shifting relationship in which partial-others co-emerge and co-fade through continual re-adjustments. Thinking about models of subjectivity, perhaps this series of encounters approximates what Ettinger calls subjectivity-as-encounter between partial-others. More generally, these glimpses may point towards art's potential for engendering different ways of thinking about and experiencing subjectivity, otherness, and the spaces between them.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND SIDEWAYS SHIFTS

In so far as this research aspires to make a "new contribution to knowledge," this contribution is located within the field of art practice. My overall contribution lies in adding to the "discussion" surrounding the perceptual and conceptual destabilisation between mark and surface in visual art and its implications when considering subjectivity and otherness. This addition occurs by making work that specifically explores the in-between of mark and surface and by initiating ways of theorising about this relationship, using concepts from Ettinger and Deleuze and Guattari. I have identified three areas to which this research specifically contributes.

The first area is that of the in-between of mark and surface and indiscernibility within fine art practice. I have developed and closely considered methods of marking that approach a surface. Other artists have used the same or similar methods but I have used them with the specific aim of destabilising the relationship between my mark and the surface so as to take it beyond an overlay or opposition. Moreover, I have tried to explore the notion of indiscernibility—as both visual imperceptibility and conceptual proximity—alongside or as inextricable from this in-between. Comparing my works with works by Louise Hopkins, Susan Collis and Bracha L. Ettinger, I would place my practice between Hopkins' and Ettinger's, on the one hand, and Collis' on the other. That is, my work brings together the in-between of mark and surface and indiscernibility. Furthermore, my work is framed within a rethinking of subject/object and self/other relationships within art practice. That is, I bring together the in-between, indiscernibility, and ways of thinking about subjectivity and otherness, specifically Ettinger's Matrixial theory and Deleuze and Guattari's zones of indiscernibility and becoming. These specific juxtapositions and

interweaving, which as far as I know have not been extensively explored, lead to new understandings.[4]

In this text, I have analysed the in-between and indiscernibility primarily in relation to my practice but also in relation to other practices. Through proposing existing concepts that can be reworked to approach the marking methods other artists and myself utilise, I am adding to the theorisation of practices that explore the in-between of mark and surface (especially in cases where the surface is an everyday object or is already marked in some way). Even though my analysis and interpretation are based on my own practice, I think that they can be brought to bear on other practices that share similar characteristics.

Finally, this research can be considered to be a contribution to research on the relationship between artistic practice and the matrixial from an artist's point of view. Even though there are many writings on Ettinger's theory and artworks by theorists, and even though her theoretical work has been used to analyse other artists' works, there are much fewer examples of artists-researchers working with Ettinger's writings in order to both develop and think through their artistic practices.[5] This research adds to that discussion by indicating how Matrixial theory can be used to develop an approach to artistic practice as well as how to think about that practice. I am looking at

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[4] I am aware of the following texts that discuss indiscernibility in art in relation to Ettinger or Deleuze and Guattari: Thomas Phillips, *The Subject of Minimalism*, which draws on becoming-imperceptible to discuss minimalist music; Tina Kinsella, "Enjoying Liminal Pleasures?" which uses Ettinger's concept of non-life to discuss the disappearance of the body in Francesca Woodman's photographs; Lone Bertelsen, "Francesca Woodman," which discusses the disappearance of the artist's body using Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-imperceptible. In all these cases, indiscernibility or imperceptibility is discussed in productive and affirmative terms, offering alternatives to theorisations that focus on absence, negation, and the death drive.

[5] I have found the following practice-based PhD theses that draw on Ettinger's theoretical work: Paula Georgina Farrance, "Transgenerational Dialogues with Jo Spence about Class and Gender in the Mother-Daughter Sphere: Drawing as the Site of Transformation from Feminist Generation to Genealogy" (University of Leeds, 2011), Elena Marchevska, "The Screen as a Site of Division and Encounter" (University of Northampton, 2012), Clare Amelia Mulvey, "Art and the Divine" (Loughborough University, 2012), Pat Paxson, "Reflections on, and Refractions in, Painting Practices" (Goldsmiths College, 2004). These theses are listed in the British Library database. I have also found the following theses, not listed in the database or not submitted in the UK: Deborah Robinson, "The Materiality of Text and Body in Painting and Darkroom Processes: An Investigation Through Practice" (University of Plymouth, 2003), Laura Wild, "Becoming Invisible: Art and Day-to-Day Life" (Loughborough University, 2011), Deborah Wood, "Frida's Moustache: Making Faces in Women's Self-Portraiture: An Exegesis" (Victoria University, 2001).

Matrixial theory as a structure that reveals different possibilities and I am approaching it as a way of undoing and rethinking a series of relationships within my practice.

THE ARTIST-RESEARCHER AND HER "OTHERS"

As discussed in chapter 2, the research moved through and between three spaces. Here I reflect on the encounters between these spaces: between artistic practice and theoretical concepts and between my practice and other artists' practices.

The theoretical concepts I chose to work with were indicated by my practice and, in turn, affected that practice—both in how I approached and in how I understood it. I, thus, do not see the two spaces—practice and theory—as oppositional or irreconcilable. Rather, a shared space opened between them through which I was able to bring concepts and practice in proximity. The discussion of concepts was performed alongside the practice. I addressed the specifics of each concept to the extent that it could help me understand or articulate an aspect of the practice. This means I did not engage in full theoretical discussion of each concept nor did I attempt to fully locate each concept within the discipline I extracted it from, whether that was philosophy or psychoanalytic theory.[6] Instead, I rethought and reworked the concepts alongside the practice. An example is the concept of *retrait* from Jacques Derrida which was almost redefined through its encounter with specific practices. Ettinger writes that when theory and visual art collide, they may "transform the borderline between the two domains so that art is momentarily touched by theory while theory takes on a new meaning."[7] I am hoping that the specific encounters between works and concepts that I focused on in this text indicate at least some of this potential. I am definitely not claiming that this research transforms the philosophical or psychoanalytic theories I drew on—that would require extremely close and careful consideration of those theories—but I am suggesting that the research offers glimpses of the transformations that might occur within the art-theory borderspace.

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[6] I invoke here Rosi Braidotti and nomadic methodologies that are more focused on building connections between seemingly unconnected things rather than remaining still and firmly located within a discipline. My aim was to travel around and bring relevant concepts to practice rather than remain in other disciplines for too long.

[7] Ettinger, "Woman-Other-Thing," 11.

The next encounter I address is that between my practice and the practices of other artists: Louise Hopkins, Susan Collis, and Bracha L. Ettinger. My goal from the beginning of the research, as discussed in chapter 2, was not to treat these artists and their practices as "objects" of investigation or as purely "others" against whom I define my practice and artistic identity. I aimed to construct a space akin to a matrixial borderspace through which my practice and the other artists' practices would coexist and converse as companions, even within the context of academic research that follows a reference, deference, difference structure.[8] To some degree, I believe I succeeded. In this text, I focused on encounters—instances of besidedness where works were placed next to each other and considered together. I think this besidedness allowed both similarities and nuanced differences to emerge. In fact, the relationship between the various practices was not fixed but shifted, depending on which works were juxtaposed. Sometimes the works counterpointed each other, without turning into absolute opposites, and sometimes they supported each other, without being the same. There were both points of convergence and points of digression, which I believe made the encounter between our works, within the context of this research, productive. Moreover, I would argue that a process of co-transformation emerged. On the one hand, my conversations with these artists—actual and virtual through art and writing—affected this research in various ways. On the other hand, this research offers new understandings of the artists' works, particularly in the case of Hopkins and Collis.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS, FUTURE PATHS

One development that has emerged out of this research, and that I am currently exploring, involves an even further minimisation of the marks by returning the works back to surfaces so to speak. Currently, this involves scanning my paper collages, manipulating the images digitally, and then printing the result on paper—a similar kind of paper as that used for the original collage. That is, recreating the flat pieces of paper with my mark now incorporated in the printed image. I have already

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[8] This structure, proposed by Griselda Pollock as a way of understanding avant-gardism as well as academic research, is discussed in chapter 2.

completed several experiments with the paper collages. The digital manipulation so far involves the fading out of the marks. I am considering working in a similar way with the fabric collages—that is, scanning them and printing the image on fabric. I have not determined yet how these works might be displayed or what their relationship with the collages might be. What I am interested in, is seeing how the mark will interact with the surface when they are both remade and whether the resulting images will still be able to function within the mark/surface relationship.

A second development moves in almost the opposite direction and involves exploring a simultaneous emptiness and fullness. This emerged out of my fabric collages. I saw in these works the possibility of repeating various interventions on the same surface so as to reach a point of nearly breaking the pattern and almost revealing the artist's actions. This situation would aspire to the creation of an infinitely proliferating surface.[9] My interest here lies in exploring this almost endless repetition in relation to indiscernibility. Again, I am interested in seeing up to which point the mark/surface relationship can be sustained and whether, despite the repeating marks, the work will register as a surface.

I consider both of these developments to be continuations of this research, although they will likely diverge from the questions I focused on for this project.

As I worked on the research, two alternative points of view emerged through which the works could be discussed: the relationship between difference and repetition, and the relationship between repetition and representation. Both of these are relevant to the work and they briefly appear in this text. I opted not to follow them here as my interest was the relationship between mark and surface. In fact, they relate to that but perhaps not in the sense of approaching the surface that I was focusing on. They are viable future paths, however, in terms of rethinking the work and considering the relationship between mark and surface in terms of difference. That is, interrogating the notion of difference-in-proximity further.

Finally, due to my focus on the relationship between mark and surface, I did not consider in depth from the start of the research the types of marks or the types of

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[9] As mentioned in chapter 5, this is a condition Briony Fer identifies in some of the collages of Yayoi Kusama, which are based on photographs of her work.

spaces I worked within. As the research progressed, it became clear that both were important elements of my practice.[10] As such, future research will involve a more focused investigation of specific types of marks, and how these change the notion of indiscernibility, and of specific types of spaces. Working with specific types of spaces systematically will allow me to explore themes relating to those spaces. For example, office spaces or spaces within educational institutions provide possibilities for interventions that might explore self/other relationships on levels directly related to those institutions. This might present an opportunity for further unfolding the mark/surface relationship within a very specific context.

On Developing an Artistic Practice As Research and on Becoming An-Other

An artistic practice does not exactly conclude, especially in my case where this research did not involve a separate project but came out of and fed into my practice as an artist. I conclude this text by briefly considering the implications of this research for my artistic practice.

This research project gave me the opportunity to not only develop my practice but to rethink my relationship to painting and drawing. The focused examination of specific aspects of the practice "forced" me, in a sense, to rethink my working processes. It was almost like learning how to be an artist again by considering more closely my relationships with pre-existing materials and my interventions in the world, and what types of meanings they gave rise to. The encounter with theoretical concepts led to a much deeper consideration of these meanings while the sustained encounter with other artists' practices led to conversations between works and to finding ways in which to enrich those conversations. These encounters radically transformed the types of work I make and the type of artist I consider myself to be.

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[10] In this text, I have usually grouped the different types of marks together rather than consider them separately. This is because my focus was the relationship between mark and surface. This also explains why I have been dealing with a range of pre-existing marks: accidental (human and non-human), printed/mechanical, and natural.

Ultimately, the research itself turned out to be a copoietic encounter between others, a transformative conversation through which I have indeed learned how to become an-other.

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APPENDICES

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Appendix A includes transcripts of my discussions with artists Louise Hopkins and Susan Collis, as well as excerpts and scanned pages from the notebooks of artist Bracha L. Ettinger.

Appendix B provides a list of all exhibitions and presentations of artworks completed as part of this research. The list is followed by invitations, press releases, image lists, and texts associated with my solo exhibitions and a group exhibition I curated. I have not included any additional information on solo exhibitions that involved work made near the beginning of this project and which is not discussed in the thesis.

Appendix C provides a list of all publications that emerged out of this project. The list is followed by the actual publications.

Appendix D provides a list of all conference presentations, talks, and seminars I gave relating to this research. The list is followed by the abstracts of all the conference papers.

Appendix E provides a list of artist residencies I attended while working on this project. Artworks completed at these residencies form part of the thesis.

APPENDIX A

CONVERSATIONS

CONVERSATION WITH LOUISE HOPKINS
ARTIST'S STUDIO, GLASGOW, UK
MAY 14, 2011, 12:00–2:00 PM

TRANSCRIPT

MARINA KASSIANIDOU: Let's start with your process of working. Can you talk a bit about what kinds of surfaces you prefer to work with and how you choose to mark them?

LOUISE HOPKINS: A lot of my choices have to do with doubt. I quite often find myself working on surfaces that in some ways fascinate me from a visual point of view, in terms of the information contained within the surface, but at the same time they are often things I am quite uncertain about or feel doubtful about. So, for instance, a map of the world . . . I might recognise there are many different perspectives from which to make maps. Of course there isn't one true map. All maps have political or social or some other kind of bias. So there might be a kind of doubt or discomfort on that level. Or with patterned furnishing fabric, I've been selecting fabric where . . . for instance, the early works I made on fabric where I was fascinated by how much like still life painting they were, how much they referred back to where they came from in terms of the depth, the field. Also they have these incredibly strong associations for me with Englishness and class. They are also about bringing the outside in, bringing the garden into the living room. I think I've got mixed feelings about that. All this I sometimes find quite oppressive but quite exciting as well.

MK: Do you not mind all the kinds of social connotations or values associated with those surfaces coming into the work? Like furnishing fabrics relating to domestic spaces and the idea of the home or maps relating to organisation of territories and colonisation. A lot of other things can come into the work. Are you interested in those sorts of things?

LH: I like it that I can't avoid the associations. But what I do initially is make a formal decision and it's often to do with something visual. And what I find happens is that once I've made that selection, based on something on a visual level, working on the surface allows me to then explore all aspects of that surface whether it might be something territorial and political or again still something purely formal. But I'm not trying to make work directly *about* maps or, for instance, *about* territory or consumerism (in terms of the magazine pages). It's not about that and it's not even the starting point. But it's something that does come into the work gradually, and I sometimes simultaneously deny it and make it work for me at the same time.

MK: Relating to that, how do you decide what kinds of marks to use for each surface, how to respond to each surface?

LH: There are many answers to that question. One of the things that I've tried to do is to break into the surface. So I'm very interested in all-overness and in many ways about maintaining or bringing about an all-overness and that may require a certain kind of mark. In a way, sometimes I find a mark that will bring everything together, everything within the picture frame or within the space but at the same time it's also often very very close to what's already there. So, in a sense, the marks are about finding an empathy. It's almost like pulling what's already there through the mark or in the mark. What I'm specifically not interested in is finding a mark that's a very long way away from what's already in the surface. I noticed in your notes you were saying about getting away from a polarity, a sort of figure/ground polarity, and I relate to that very much. That polarity is exactly what I want to avoid. What I'm interested in is getting inside the surface. That's how I see surface. I see it as this thing that you can get inside. That's what I'm interested in with painting and, in a sense, making a mark that becomes enmeshed within the surface. So for instance . . . here [*looking at* Louise Hopkins: Freedom of Information *catalogue*] . . . for instance, with this map that I've painted on, *Europe and the Middle East 2001*, it's about finding a mark that somehow works with what's already there so that the surface becomes almost . . . as well as having an over-allness it also becomes almost like woven, a woven area of paint and print. How can I find a way for the painted and the printed to sit together, how can I find a mark that makes that happen? That's often to do with the scale of the mark and, to some extent, anonymity of mark. So I'm not adding specifics, I'm not making things up. In a sense, I'm not inventing a new country. I'm just copying more of the same.

MK: Were you trying to make your marks look as if they were printed?

LH: No, I don't want it to look like it's printed. I think that what I'm interested in is the contrast between painted and printed. I think it's also to do with distance, in a way. So what I want and some of the decisions I'm making about marks are to do with it looking like a seamless whole from a long way off, in this particular work. But then when you get close to it I want that contrast between the painted and the printed. That's one of the things that really fascinates me, being able to put those two things side by side or one on top of another. This map is . . . the starting point is a map of Europe and the Middle East and it's the sea that I got rid of. So all the

bits of paint are on top of the sea. In a sense I kind of brought about a drought but initially, I didn't make a conscious decision to bring about a drought. I started off wanting to make an over-allness, and the "drought" started to come about as part of the process of exploration. And at some stage I made a decision to continue to develop this consciously.

MK: What about the piece that you have in the group show in London [*Raft* 2007 in *What If It's All True, What Then?* Mummery and Schnelle, April–May, 2011]? I'm not sure what logic you used to mark that one but most of it is covered in a grey brown paint so the viewer probably won't realise it is a map until she moves very close to it and starts seeing the names of cities.

LH: Yes that's right. Which is true of a lot of my work. You don't know it's a map until you examine it.

MK: Well with this one [*Europe and the Middle East*, 2001] if I looked at it from far away it would probably look like a map and then your marks would emerge when I looked at it from close by whereas the other one in the show [*Raft*, 2007] seems to work the other way. It looks like a painting and then you realise it's on a map.

LH: I think they all look like paintings, from a long way off. But I know what you mean. There is a difference. The information reveals itself in a different way. I mean, you see it from a long way off and it looks vaguely like a map but you don't know what's going on. But with the brown painting [*Raft,* 2007] the map is so buried. What happened with that was I decided to paint around all the yellow areas. I decided to keep all the yellow areas (which were major cities). It's a map of Europe with some further places added on. One of the things I started to do was circling around the yellow areas with brown paint . . . so the paint became this kind of agent of power. There's almost a kind of . . . strangely difficult to deal with . . . to be circling around Paris, and the marks developed this significance that really fascinated me where, depending on how expressive they were, certain things were suggested or a certain kind of turmoil was suggested which might connect to the map underneath. It might also not be connected to the map underneath. Also, I found that the way that I was developing the marks enabled me to push the map from being this flat diagram into another landscape, adding to it enough kind of space or form that I could travel around the place through making marks.

MK: How do you decide what to do with each map? You've come up with a number of ways of marking maps, like going around the yellow bits or covering the sea or land. How do you decide what to do each time?

LH: Like I've mentioned already my practice is initially—at the early stages of a work—very visual and quite formal. It's very hard to generalise but I would say that the primary level on which I work is through experimentation. I try out many different things. Could this work? Could this work? What happens if I do this with this? Or, what happens if I do this with this? I've got boxes and boxes of experimental drawings. Just trying out loads and loads of different things all the time, trying out lots of marks and finding if something works or if something doesn't work. Often what I find out is that something I am trying just has no relationship with the surface whatsoever or that I need to continue and push further a certain kind of way of working, to challenge myself and push myself to find a way of making that close relationship with the marks that are already there. I think that that is partly to do with developing an empathy but it's quite a cold empathy. Actually, a good example is this [*Untitled (282)*, 1999]. In order to do that I just spent such a long time with that fabric trying to kind of work out a way that gave marks an empathy and I didn't even know . . . at the beginning I didn't know whether or not it was black marks that were going to work. I needed to actually do it in order to find out. So, this is different fabric [*showing a small fabric work at the studio*] but it sort of gives you a good idea of how I'm trying, at the moment unsuccessfully, loads and loads of different marks around the fabric, just seeing the effect that they have, and that's the same with pretty much everything I'll do. For instance, with these works on folded paper [*pointing at works on wall of studio*] I've been trying for ages to make something that is on paper which I fold up and then unfold again, trying to make a mark that somehow corresponds to the shape within each folded area and I've just done loads of tests.

MK: With the fabric piece you brought up [*Untitled (282)*, 1999], it's interesting that you ended up choosing a mark that mimics, in a sense, the marks that are already there on the fabric. Are you interested in that idea of mimicry?

LH: Absolutely. That is part of what I was trying to do. What I had to do was find something that was not too expressive. Somehow the level of expression seemed like this thing that I had to balance very finely. I ended up using a brush like this [*points to a very fine brush*] and if I used a brush like this [*points to a slightly bigger brush*] it just didn't work at all. I think it was to do with almost getting close to something that happened before the printed fabric was made. Initially there was a drawing and an artist/designer made that drawing and I'm getting close to that.

MK: I'm quite interested in this idea that your mark, which is a unique mark that you painted, co-exists with this other mark that has been mass-produced and that the two marks are trying to get as close to each other as possible.

LH: Yes that's right.

MK: Would you say that that's the idea–trying to get as close to that initial mass-produced mark as possible?

LH: Partly. It's partly to do with trying to get as close as possible but there's an antagonism there as well. I think it's more about trying to make a relationship with that mark. It's kind of very different for each work. I think with these works [*pointing to images of blue and brown fabric pieces from 1996*] there's a sort of extreme empathy, which I think is bordering on devotion. It's occurred to me that I've painted this design so many times or repainted it more than perhaps the person who designed it ever painted it so I think there is something there that's very close but at the same time it's still my marks and there's a sort of strange balance, in a way, between dominance . . . kind of dominating and also smothering what's already there and at the same time kind of re-growing it or re-enlivening it.

MK: For these specific ones [*Aurora 13*, 1996] why did you choose to work on the back of the fabric?

LH: I really liked the back of the fabric. I was fascinated by the way the ink was coming through from the front to the back. The other side of the fabric is so incredibly different, it's really bright. So, in a sense, I think there was a wish to . . . I liked the contrast between the back and the front and then choosing the back I think there was this choice to kind of . . . it's almost like sort of repress or suppress what was in the fabric, first of all by turning it over and secondly by painting on it. I think the word suppress comes up quite a lot. There's hardly ever a deletion but it's often a sort of suppression. So you still know it's there. It's not a repression, it's not totally . . . it's not dead. It's not squashed forever. And, I suppose, as I experimented I found the relationship, on a formal level, between this blue and the brown I was using.

MK: This issue of suppression seems to relate to the issue of erasure. I was thinking about the works where you used white paint to erase information. Is that another example of suppression? I can still see what was there before if I step close to the work even though it has been covered.

LH: Yes.

MK: You talked a little bit before about being interested in the painted mark and how it differentiates itself from the printed mark. Can you talk more about that? What kinds of aspects of the materiality of the painted mark are you interested in and how do you use that with the surface you are working with?

LH: Often I don't know how I want to use it. Particularly with the watercolours that I'm making at the moment, the painted mark is so revealing in a way and it's so personalising. I guess I want to explore that dynamic in a way.

MK: Are you interested in setting up a contrast between them or what's the relationship you are after between the more painterly mark and the printed mark?

LH: I don't think I can easily define that relationship. It is different in every work and it's different within each work. One way of answering that is partly to go back to what I was saying about paint in relation to the painting *Raft*, about paint being a kind of agent of power and I guess I'm trying to allow that to happen. Even though paint is of course a powerful medium it doesn't always happen that something gets activated between the painted and the printed area

MK: In terms of the images that are already there on the surface, I'm interested in the disruptions, how you go about disrupting it but not quite. Can you talk about the balance between empathy and disruption that goes on?

LH: I think that partly is to do with letting something have its own life. Sometimes the surface underneath goes dead. It's like it's been forgotten. Then the painting doesn't work. And I think there's something about staying continually active, something continually moving between what's underneath and what's on top.

MK: Relating to that, I think one of the essays in here [*Louise Hopkins: Freedom of Information* catalogue] talks about there being in your work a degree of care and aggression that are balanced. How much are you trying to disrupt or destroy and how much are you trying to, I suppose, improve the surface?

LH: I don't think I'm ever trying to improve it but just to change it. I'm just trying to make something that I can move around and engage with and break the picture plane. There

isn't a conscious planned intention on the level that I think you might be suggesting. It's different with each work. It's not a plan within my practice to have a certain type of intervention but I do observe nevertheless with each work that there are different qualities that bring about success or failure.

MK: For example, in this one [*Untitled (282)*, 1999] you painted your marks through all the white areas. This achieves a degree of all-overness but it also makes it very hard to see the original image. Was that part of your intention?

LH: Absolutely. It was to do with changing the time within the surface so that there isn't this clear figure/ground relationship. You can work out eventually what the 'original' image is, but before I painted on it there was this clear figure/ground relationship between the courting couples and horses and foxes and so on in the landscape and, in a sense, what I did was I put substance in the air, if you like, and that changed the people and the animals' relationship with each other and with the space they're in and that meant that movement meant a completely different thing on lots of different levels. Because of bringing about that all-overness, I think time means something different . . . in the way that I'm very interested in cubism and for me cubism was to do with time. I often see figure/ground as talking about linear time and, in many ways, by removing that figure/ground relationship then time takes on a different form. There's also the time in the marks. They took such a long time. It adds another dimension to that.

MK: The fabric works reveal a very slow and careful way of working. Can you talk about the experience of making this kind of work, which I guess can get quite obsessive? The marks are very small and the process seems to be very time consuming. What's the experience like for you when you are making them?

LH: It's lots of things. It's this really really long process of trying to re-mold the picture plane. This particular work [*Relief (739)*, 2005], the process of doing that was very much about trying to push and pull things back. I felt that it was very much like doing a carving, and I had to be mindful of both each little mark and the work as a whole. I was very conscious again of trying to get the balance right between the mark being neutral and expressive. It's a big painting, it's about 3 meters wide, and it was a demanding and intense process, very physically demanding. On the one hand, it's wonderful being lost in something like that but of course it's obsessive and it does really take a toll and I think, when you are asking me what's that like for me, I think that . . . I mean, I've made all these works on catalogue pages since then and one of the things that struck me about making them maybe 3 or 4 years after making this painting [*Relief (739)*, 2005] was that I felt that they were underneath this painting, in a sense, that they already existed, and they're almost within that painting and I've simply chosen to peel off a layer, in order to be able to make those paintings. But I think also they were very much a reaction to this painting, you know. After making *Relief (739)* (2005) I really needed to do something differently and the thing about these paintings on the catalogue pages is that I can begin one very quickly and easily, by literally taking a catalogue, rip out a page and start painting. With these catalogue page marks it became possible to make a small painting in a day. I've been kind of still making sense of the contrasts between different ways of working and reflecting on that . . . Some of the works I have made were very labour intensive and I got to, in a sense, a point of intolerance of that. I needed to counterbalance it with something else. To me that does open up quite an interesting reflection on what happens within an artist's lifetime and how one aspect of their practice leads on to another aspect, what makes one thing possible and in a sense some of these paintings [*fabric paintings*] made those paintings possible [*paintings on magazines*]. As you saw at Mummery and Schnelle, I'm still making paintings of the same kind on furnishing fabric but at the moment they are smaller and they're actually more intense than the large ones in some ways.

MK: Relating to this notion, I want to talk a little bit about repetition. Within a painting the same mark gets repeated but also within your whole practice you do many paintings on furnishing fabric, many on maps, many on advertising pages etc. How do you think about this idea of repetition?

LH: It's a good question. I mean, do you have that within your practice?

MK: I do.

LH: So you will work on a similar surface a lot of different times?

MK: Yes.

LH: And what's that like for you? Why do you do that? Is there a why? Is there an answer to that?

MK: I think it has to exhaust itself out. I'll keep going until I feel that I don't want to go anymore with that kind of thing. But I think while I'm interested in it, I'll keep doing more and more of the same thing.

LH: And do you find that it does exhaust itself?

MK: Well it's a little bit hard to say now because I was doing different types of work up to about 2 or 3 years ago so I'm only talking about work I've been doing for the last couple of years. So some of the things I started doing 2 years ago I'm still doing today. I don't think I've got to the point where . . . I'm doing them with less frequency now but still doing them.

LH: I think one of the things I've noticed is that sometimes I think I've exhausted something . . . like the first painting on fabric that I made and was happy with . . . this here . . . and I thought that was it. And then I had a gap of a year and then I made another 7 in the same series. So sometimes it takes a while for that potential to reveal itself. For me, partly the reason I think for working on the same surface a lot of times is just to try and go into something in a bit more depth rather than moving onto the next thing. I think there's an element of testing it and testing myself. Testing it to the breaking point, how far can it be pushed, and often I found, that it's almost like I've broken it. I've pushed it further than it can be pushed in terms of the marks that I used or the time that I'm prepared to spend on it. But then paradoxically it's once that's happened that I can then come back and do something more with it. It's almost like I've found the extreme so I know where to position myself in relation to that. You know, there are so many choices with painting which is why I like it and why I do it but sometimes the choice is too much, too much to handle. So I think I need to set some limits. One of those limits is working on the same surface a lot of times. Another limit is to work on something found, to work on a found surface, because that limits the possibilities as well because if I want to make a dialogue with what's found, with what already exists, with something that somebody else has made, then that limits my possibilities.

MK: I know what you mean. I haven't seen your earlier shows. When you showed the fabric paintings, did you just show fabric paintings in one show?

LH: I don't think I've ever shown just fabric pieces but for the first show I had in the UK, I showed these series of paintings on furnishing fabric and works on songsheets. And before that I showed paintings on furnishing fabric but they were also along with paintings and paintings on canvas of . . . blue paintings on canvas.

MK: So it's usually a combination of works together.

LH: Yes it does tend to be.

MK: Going back to the issue of mark making, one of the other artists I interviewed, Katie Pratt, was really interested in this idea of hierarchies between marks. She was trying to get to a democratisation of marks, as she called it. Do you think at all about these sorts of ideas with your work, in terms of the relationship between your mark and the printed mark? Or, in the advertisement pieces, between what you did and what was already there?

LH: I think that's a good question and I think democratisation is a very interesting word in relation to painting. I mean, in a way, the answer has to be yes because of what we were talking about earlier, that I'm trying to achieve an all-overness and in order to achieve an all-overness there has to be a democratisation. The other thing is that, for instance, with this work [*pointing to drawing on folded paper*] which I did a couple of days ago, and one of the things that occurred to me was that a kind of all-overness from about this distance, from about 2 meters, was quite important. So to make it work as a whole . . . you know, you can see a difference but there's a kind of unity but at the same time, especially closer, you see difference but there's still unity and there's still a balance. In a way . . . is balance democratisation?

MK: I'm very interested in the words you used . . . the difference. I'm very interested in this idea of having some things on the brink of differentiating themselves but still at that unstable point where they could be the same or they are just coming apart.

LH: That's what I was thinking about. Is that also the same as that [*pointing to different marks on the drawing*]? And then maybe it has a different psychological import. Essentially being equivalent, balancing each other out, becoming equal. I think that there's a psychological or expressive impact marked and how that can be equal. But then, there's another thing. I don't know how relevant this is to what you are asking but I find that there are some marks that are just way too expressive for what I'm trying to do. I think it's because they go too far from the printed and they can no longer make a relationship with it. So, for instance, this painting [*showing a new painting on a map*] . . . I don't know if it works yet but it is very expressive compared to other works. The other thing with democratisation, I think really all my marks are the same pretty much anyway. All this work in here has been made with the same size brush pretty much and all the marks look the same. It's almost like the same mark is used in a different way over and over again. With *Raft* (2007) some people commented that it is very expressive . . . it's much more expressive than the earlier work. In a way it is but in a way it's the same thing, the same mark really. It's just extended a little bit. You know if you magnified those marks [*marks on fabric paintings*] they are just as expressive.

MK: That's very similar to something Katie Pratt said. She made a similar point because she uses the very big expressive gestures first and then tiny marks around them. And she made a similar point . . . why can't the small marks have the same sort of expressive power as the big one? Why does it make a difference in terms of expressiveness?

LH: Yes.

MK: One last thing about process. At the beginning you talked about doubt. Are the decisions you make when you are marking a way of working through the doubt, in a sense? Are you trying to "fix" the things that make you uncomfortable with it?

LH: Yes, kind of. But in order to fix it I have to break it. So a good example is this work [*World Events (4)*, 2002], pen on book page. It's a history book and that's a listing of world events chronologically from many thousands of years BC onwards. I almost had to destroy the text by mimicking it and by burying it. That's the only way I can kind of deal with the doubt, it's to sort of make friends with it but kind of really mess it up. But I think there then has to be a transformation that goes on in the messing up. I find that if something is simply destroyed, as a work it doesn't seem to function or doesn't seem to be engaging. It has to be transformed into something else.

MK: I want to talk a little bit about the works on graph paper and music sheets where you erased parts of the paper and then redrew the lines on top. Can you talk about that, especially the idea of erasing something and then remaking it?

LH: Well on these [*Untitled (138)*, 2003] I erased the notes but rather than remaking the notes and so on that were there I remade the lines. There's actually quite a lot of colour in there. I used colour to remake the lines. I think it's partly about investigating silence but it's also to do with what a human being is physically capable of and the fact that I couldn't remake it is what was interesting. The struggle, the difficulty with making a straight line and the contrast . . . again we're back to hierarchies and so on. The kind of contrast is what's hopefully beginning to mean something.

MK: I am interested in the idea of not being able to draw a straight line and yet trying to. I do that in my practice sometimes where I set myself an impossible task that I know I won't be able to do but still try to do and it does fail at some point. Were you interested at all in this idea of doing something you couldn't do basically, of failure in a sense?

LH: Yes, I was but just to see what it looked like. But also because I knew that it would give me this field of activity. It would give me this picture plane, this space to kind of play around with and to make and kind of push forward. I knew that I would be able to literally pull things forward and push things back depending on how I made the marks and how much I repainted or not. Of course, even though I knew that I would be able to explore that, exactly how that would manifest itself was completely unexpected. I mean, I think there's a kind of relief that comes with setting a task that you know you can't do. But it's always . . . It's kind of continually also about asserting one's presence as well, isn't it. It's about asserting a human presence.

MK: Is that something you are trying to do with your other work as well, where there is this printed image that was mechanically mass-produced? Are you trying to assert your own presence as a human with a different type of mark?

LH: Yes, I think I am. I think it's that humanising all the time, on all sorts of levels. And it's partly about trying to assert a human presence, for instance, on a map of the world, as a way of trying to deal with being in the world. I'm often struck by being in my studio at home, hearing the news on the radio about these world events going on, all sorts of things happening, and at the same time here I am painting on top of maps of the world, taking only a few seconds to travel across continents via my paintbrush. And then sometimes the act of painting is briefly almost like being a dictator, crossing things out, and at the same time it's this kind of humanising process, it's like I'm asking "can I fit into this world?" or "can I find a way of traveling in the world?" Not me personally but wondering about how human beings fit into or exist in the world, and how they change it. Also, related to that I think there's a kind of annoyance, a frustration with what I am choosing to work with. Even though printing is like a miracle in a way, there's a sort of annoyance with it as well.

MK: Does that have to do with the perfection of the printed mark?

LH: No, I think it's about the fact that there's so much printed stuff in the world.

MK: Overload of information?

LH: Yes. Depersonalised information.

MK: Relating a bit to that, I had something in my notes about the relationship of the artist to the work. With some pieces your mark becomes this very subtle thing so that one has to

move very close to the work to actually see it. How do you feel about that? You talked about asserting your own presence but sometimes that's done in a very subtle way.

LH: Yes that's how it is. I think what you're saying is that you have to see the work. In other words, you have to be in the space with the work and I think that really matters. That interests me. It's what I do and how it is and it means I make work that is very difficult to reproduce. In that sense, it's not particularly friendly to the digital world. I think what matters is seeing something, being with it, being physically with it. That is what interests me with painting and drawing. You have to see it. You have to sit with it. It has physical presence. Do you know what I mean?

MK: Yes, I know what you mean and I find it very interesting that you talked first about you asserting your presence in a certain way and then the viewer having to be present with the work. There's this idea of physical presence throughout, continuing from making to viewing.

LH: Absolutely. You know the word "image" or "images" interests me but paintings aren't usually images. If you're wrestling with a picture plane you don't have an image, you have painting.

MK: A slightly different question. Regarding the drawings and paintings on catalogue and magazine pages, some of them are, to me at least, quite funny. I'm thinking about a work I saw at Mummery and Schnelle where a group of tables was turned into animals. Can you talk about those decisions that seem to be more humorous? Were you still making purely formal decisions or did something else come into it?

LH: I didn't initially think that I would turn the furniture or half turn the furniture into animals. I began experimenting in lots of different ways and those are the ones that worked and I think it was partly to do with the question about how far can I push something really? One extreme, one end of my practice in a sense, is something as controlled as the fabric paintings, and then the other extreme is something like the drawings on magazines. Partly I felt a real need to bring in another kind of humour . . . although actually I think there's humour in a lot of my work but it's much more overt in the magazine page paintings and maybe I also felt that that's what was needed in relation to something as extreme as a mass produced catalogue page with all these very similar bits of furniture and it felt like maybe the only way I could make a relationship with it or do something with it was to bring in humour. I think it also comes from what I was saying earlier . . . I think there are different phases within people's practice and I think it is also a reaction to some of the other work I've made. It's underneath some of the other work I've made but also not that far from my comic book paintings. I think it's also something to do with the speed. Somehow the faster speed of making that work was needed in relation to the nature of the catalogue pages, which wasn't right for the fabric paintings.

MK: Are you still doing work on catalogue pages?

LH: Yes, I'm working on all the surfaces I've talked about. I'm still making work on furnishing fabrics, still making work on crumpled paper and maps and folded paper.

MK: There's one work on crumpled paper in the catalogue [*Louise Hopkins: Freedom of Information* catalogue]. Did you do others as well?

LH: Yes, there's a whole series. There's about 12 to 15 works on crumpled paper. Some are slightly different, some very different to the one that is reproduced. Varying degrees of expression. In some of them the marks are much more open than others.

MK: It'd be interesting to show them all together.

LH: Yes, I know. It would be interesting. It's something we talked about with the Fruitmarket exhibition and in the end we just had one or two, so they've never been brought together. Sometimes it really surprises me when I haven't seen a work for quite a few years, the quality of marks or what the marks are like.

MK: It interests me to see pieces that appear to be similar and then try to pick out the differentiations between them when you see them all together.

LH: Yes, absolutely. Is there a lot of work that you're interested in that is like that?

MK: Yes. Even some of the work I do. I often work in series so I do many pieces following the same process and then show them together so there is continuity in terms of the process but then the little differences start coming out in terms of how I marked it with the pencil and so on. So I'm very interested in that idea . . . slight differentiation.

LH: It also interests me . . . I think that's one of the reasons why sometimes work starts to feel like a stranger. When I've not seen a work for a long time, when I see it again I realise there has been a slippage between what I remember about the marks and what the marks are like. It's quite nice.

MK: It's like they are getting away from you . . . get a life of their own.

LH: That's good that they're getting away from me. Out of the studio, you know.

MK: When you work, or as part of your practice in general, do you ever use any texts, readings, films and so on? Anything really outside the studio that has somehow affected your practice?

LH: Everything affects my practice all the time. But specifically, I think that John Berger is for me one of the most important writers. Particularly *The Shape of a Pocket* written in 2001. I think that he's incredible. The way he talks about the physical or the way that he uses the physical presence of painting is really exciting and important and rare. We don't seem to actually talk about what things look like very much. The essay he wrote about cubism . . . I think that's really exciting to me and other things he's written about for instance Bonnard and Durer.

MK: Are there other artists whose work you feel might relate to what you are doing in some ways?

LH: Yes and no. I look at artists not for the reasons that we've talked about here a lot of the time. Louise Bourgeois is someone whose work I really admire and I look at her work a lot but you wouldn't necessarily guess that by looking at my work. I think for me there's a connection in terms of the work on a psychological level and in terms of the weight of mark, not really in terms of what we've been talking about with democratisation of marks or the painted and printed . . . not to do with that but to do with how much psychological weight can be hung on a mark or can be revealed through mark. Her work doesn't send me to sleep. That's good. And the exhibition *Beyond Reason: Art and Psychosis*, which had works from the Prinzhorn collection. It was a touring show at the Hayward Gallery, I think about 1995-96, and the drawings in there were really revealing. I think the Prinzhorn collection now has its own building that's opened in Germany. Apart from that, there are lots of artists, and there are lots of specific works really that interest me. It is hard to know where to start. Cubism. Most of Braque's paintings. I've looked a lot at Francis Alÿs, particularly his paintings but all of his work over the years partly to do with travel. I think there's an element of travel with a paintbrush or a mark in all of my work so his work with moving a block of ice around a city springs to mind and also what he does with painting and also how he moves painting. There's an exhibition of his I saw a few years ago in London. I don't remember exactly what happened but a painting I think was made available to leave the exhibition maybe at the end of the day and travel with somebody through the city and then come back to the exhibition in the morning. That interested me. The piece that Ulay and Abramovic made, perhaps with some other people working together, I'm not sure exactly how it happened, but they stole a painting, I think it was thought to be Hitler's favourite painting, from a gallery in Berlin. Where they ran into a gallery, stole a painting, ran out with it, took it to a friend's apartment and then phoned the police from the apartment.

MK: One final thing. Some of the work requires time to see and you have to stand close to it to see all the details. So, there is this idea of seeing but it's not in your face in a sense. It's not "here it is and you can look at it from 20 meters away" kind of thing. It's kind of inhibited viewing I suppose where you have to put a lot of effort into it. Does that resonate with your ideas about your work?

LH: Yes. Did you say inhibited viewing? You could say that it's not inhibited viewing. You could say that it's what viewing is meant to be. However, yes, there is an element of my work that it is quite concealed or indirect. I don't consciously ever try to inhibit but it does take time to see and I think that's what I like. I think painting does . . . I think most paintings need a long time.

MK: It's very interesting that with some of your work the time it takes to make the work somehow transfers to the time it takes to see the work fully. You have to take the time and move very close to the work, which I imagine you were very close to when you were making it. I quite like the parallel between the two experiences.

LH: Yes, absolutely. I saw in perhaps around 1993, a big exhibition of Robert Ryman's work at the Hayward. It was a retrospective and I spent a lot of time in that exhibition looking at the works, being very conscious of reliving the paintings, kind of unraveling the paintings, working out how each one had come into being, working out the speed of the marks. I think that influenced me quite a lot.

MK: Thank you very much for your time.

CONVERSATION WITH SUSAN COLLIS
ARTIST'S STUDIO, LONDON, UK
JULY 5, 2013, 9:30 AM–12:00 PM

TRANSCRIPT

MARINA KASSIANIDOU: I wanted to start by looking at your process of working, starting from some earlier work and then coming to your later work. So, starting with work that you did with objects, like the broom and the stepladder. How did you choose each object?

SUSAN COLLIS: Can I answer that in a really longwinded way? I am not very good at being succinct, I have to say. I studied at Chelsea for my BA and when I was there, which was in the mid nineties, the dominant aesthetic was very very minimalist. So that was the kind of work I was making at Chelsea. I was really interested in Lucy Lippard and the idea of the dematerialised objects and I was doing things like walks and action-based artwork a lot of the time. And then suddenly, in my second year I think it was at Chelsea, I made this piece that was a bit of an aberration from everything else I had done there. It was quite sculptural. I won't go into what it was because it's not something that I followed on but, funnily enough, that was the work that got me my place at the Royal College because the aesthetic there was completely different. It was incredibly materials based. They have a foundry there and they have a strange course running alongside the MA course in sculpture. I don't know if they still do it. They call it the foundry route. They take five students every year who work in a foundry and they do the MA at the same time. It's really hard for them I think because it's almost like a full time job and an MA at the same time. But it makes the course even more materials based because you've got students there who are working with bronze, because that's their medium. That's how they got on the foundry course in the first place. It's such a different environment. People were walking around carrying great big vats of molten bronze. Suddenly I felt very out of my depth there, to be honest, and I thought, god I slightly got here by default, because I was trying to make all this work that did not necessarily result in an object and I ended up on an MA that, incredibly, was object based. Things may have changed at both of those colleges now because that was in the nineties. I did my MA in 2000 to 2002, ten or eleven years ago. So I think what happened at the Royal College is that I merged those two practices. I wanted to make something that was heavily object based and process based but also somehow became invisible at the same time. That's where I began thinking about these objects that were just lying around the college, something like a stepladder, a boiler suit. That's [*the boiler suit*] the first piece of work that I made in that genre. One of these students who worked in the foundry had thrown her boiler suit away in a skip and I took it out. It was going to be a completely different piece of work. I was going to make two replicas actually. Maybe they were going to be done in paint and they would be hanging up next to each other. I don't quite know. I can't remember what made me do that instead [*the embroidery*], but somehow I realised that I had something there—this disparity between something that was a very random mark that had been made with no care whatsoever and was the by-product of something else, and then a mark that was effected with real concentration and care and a work ethic in a way. Almost putting so much more into it than was necessary. So I started picking things that were just around the college anywhere and then I replicated them. Like with the boiler suit and the embroidery. The first thing I made was an old stool that someone had in the painting department with loads and loads of drops of multi-coloured paint all over it. And I sourced a lot of semiprecious stones. I went to the jewellery department and learned how to cut those and inlaid them into the stool. It was quite crudely done actually because what was interesting was that I hadn't really thought at that time about the difference between craft and fine art sculpture. Nobody, none of the technicians, had any idea on what tools I should be using. Then, afterwards, I realised that you can get things like very fine drilling instruments for drilling out the holes in the wood. I started doing all that after I left college. But that's how it came about that I was using those objects because I thought that by their very nature . . . they were things that were hanging around in the college. When I left the college and I started doing my first shows in galleries, I made the shift to what would be invisible in the gallery situation, what would be ignorable, eminently ignorable, in a gallery situation. So it would be detritus that was left in the gallery between shows, when a gallery was being repainted. So I made another boiler suit then actually that had white and very pale marks on it that referenced not so much a painter or a sculptor but a worker.

MK: Going back to the first objects you were using, you said you replicated them. Just to clarify, did you mean you remade the whole object?

SC: Yes I did.

MK: So you were not working on the original.

SC: No, I would have the originals there as a reference. But then I would go and buy from an antique junk shop or something, something that looked as if it had been around the

block a few times, was old and beaten up, and then I would have to age it as well. The whole process became very trompe l'oeil really, even with the brooms. Take the first broom . . .this broom I've had in my studio ever since I had a studio [*pointing to broom in studio*]. Those marks appeared on quite a few of the brooms that I made. There were a few versions of them. I would have to go and buy a new broom from the shop and, of course, the wood would be completely white. So then I had to age that with stains and different waxes to make it look like that kind of beige colour [*pointing to old broom*]. And then I would start cutting these little . . . actually then I would copy these marks [*pointing to broom*] completely in turquoise. I think what I was interested in, with something like this and with the boiler suit, was the kind of archaeology of human use. You can see where someone held it there [*pointing to broom*] and the same with the boiler suit. You can see where there are lots and lots of marks on the back pocket, because the person was right handed and they obviously just kept wiping their hands on their back pocket. When I started making these works I definitely thought a lot more about work and labour. And then it shifted, especially with the kind of work I was making for gallery shows. And it started to talk about the people who worked in a gallery behind the scenes. Most galleries have cleaners who come in and sweep around the works with a broom like that [*pointing to broom*], or technicians, who come and paint the walls. It's been a really interesting journey. I am sure all artists are like this, where you make some work . . . and I always say this whenever I give artist's talks, I always say that, if you are really lucky, you will make a piece of work that will do so much more than you ever hoped for and it will take you in the beginning of a journey. And that's definitely what happened. You make this work and then it does a lot more than you expected it to. And then there were people talking to me about it, or the work being written about, and all these things started coming into play. The idea of labour that went unnoticed I think. In some ways I was quite interested in the objects themselves. It's so hard to go back and try to remember what your initial thought process is at the very beginning of what ended up being my kind of oeuvre I suppose, the main focus of all the work that I've made since. Sometimes I can't quite remember what I was trying to do. So even saying about the two different educations being quite opposed in a way . . . I thought that afterwards. I realised that in retrospect. I know that one of the things that I was very interested in was the idea of trying to get two opposing things in the same piece of work. And I was interested in something looking very messy but actually being very worked and considered. Do you know Charles Ray's work? He was given to me as a reference. All of his work has this principle where you are not seeing what you think you are seeing, in a way, and often there are two opposing . . . There is a piece of work and the title is just the dimensions of the cube but in actual fact it goes into the ground about half an inch [Piece discussed: *32x33x35=34x33x35*, 1989]. In this other work, all these things on the table just rotate really really slowly. There is a mechanism underneath [Piece discussed: *Tabletop*, 1988]. He has done an awful lot of work with images of himself, messing around with the idea of portraiture. In the front of this book he talks about a piece of work he just started, which was called *Self portrait in handmade clothes* and he wanted to learn how to make all the clothes that he wears. And it's a bit of a uniform for him because he sails and he tends to wear blue jeans, shirt and a jacket. Most of the time he wears glasses. And it was going to result in a film, a 10-minute film of him standing in these clothes. But then he needed all these years of research and work was put into learning how to make everything that he wore, his shoes, his belt, his glasses, everything. Interestingly, I think that's what made me do the boiler suits in stitch. Because I really liked that idea of using a process to try to understand how something is made. But, funnily enough, he couldn't complete that work. He just realised it was a lifetime project and he never finished it. I thought that was quite funny. I didn't realise that until five years later, when a student came up to me and said that he heard his talk somewhere and he said he just had to abandon that project. I thought it was a very lovely idea to try to work by process to understand how everything is made.

MK: In a way, you are putting yourself in the position of all the other workers and artists that were involved in the making of that thing.

SC: Yes. Exactly, yes.

MK: Going back to the yellow stains on the broom that you copied. Is that how it usually works with all the stains that you add to objects? Are they based on something?

SC: Yes, they tend to be. I'm quite interested in that. It's figurative work in a way. Or it's mimetic work anyway. But it ends up looking very random. I'm interested in different art movements, so I'd be looking at things like abstraction, disfiguration, or something like the splat, thinking of things like Pollock, just trying to reference some of those art historical movements in the work. The idea of abstract expressionism as well and being free. I think that definitely came into it. My marks are incredibly laboured yet they still look random as if they haven't been considered.

MK: Are you interested in playing with the idea of the subjective mark? You mentioned Pollock and there is all this literature around the mark representing the body or standing in for the artist's body in some way. All the marks that you are making are the stains and scratches

that you found but they are made in this very meticulous and very detailed way. How do you see your relationship to the mark?

SC: I think of the mark and the stain as being something to do with a degeneration or an aging or a kind of natural process. I think they are subjective in a way. I did my art education quite late. I was apparently the oldest female student to have gone through the Royal College at MA degree at that stage. I don't know whether that's still the case. I think I was 45 maybe when I graduated and I think I had that sense that women do have at middle age, that real sense of feeling that you are finding your place again in life. I don't have children . . . you don't quite know, you are redefining your role I think, actually. So that must have been one of the things going through my mind. And I do think I anthropomorphised things to give them a human quality, thinking of something that started out being very new and fresh. I think this is especially true of some of the pieces I made later. Thinking of somebody doing something to their house . . . . we've got the most modern kitchen, it's fantastic, and then ten years later it's kind of gone a bit umm and it's not fashionable anymore and we rip all that out. Picking all those pieces of wood out of skips . . . it's this idea of the old objects and interiors. But I think I don't ever talk about my work like that, as being a particularly subjective practice. But again when I think about it, I think of the age I was. Maybe there was some reasoning of things getting used up and not wanted anymore and just getting old I suppose, not looking as they did when they started their life, kind of like that broom. As I say, I have to age it because when you go and buy it from the shop it's a brand new object. There is definitely something to do with aging, but in terms of mark.

MK: The objects that you were using, did you remake any of them from scratch, where you had to buy the wood and actually make them?

SC: Well I have. All the wooden pieces that I've made, they all started out as being new. So I always find a piece of wood. I find something like that [*pointing to a piece of wood*] in a skip and that's exactly what that piece of wood would have looked like when it came out of the skip. And again the wood might have started off as something like new pine and it then becomes a lot darker as it gets older. So I would find some dark wood. I think this [*pointing to dark wood*] is called rosewood actually. Then I got a cabinetmaker to remake the piece of wood. So, I would give him the original and he would completely remake the original with this dark wood, and then we would use . . . I say "we" because I work with assistants as well . . . so we would use a kind of marquetry technique. We would cut out another piece of wood like that and stick it on the top, and this [*pointing to an image of work*] has actually layers and layers and layers of lapis lazuli pigment and medium, built up layers and then polished at the end. And these [*pointing at nails on wood*] were cast in precious metals.

MK: And they are all based on things you found?

SC: Exactly. I tried very early on in my career to make up the marks and they came out really cartoony. So it's definitely very mimetic. I don't do it 100% slavishly but on the whole it's mimetic. Say something like that [*pointing to a piece of old wood*] . . . I found that a while ago and I would just copy that then. So it is definitely a case of reproducing something and, in a way, that's what happened with the stepladder. I would find an old stepladder covered in paint and then go and buy one that was as similar as possible. But I think I am interested in the way that the marks fall, I suppose, from one surface to another and that's just how I've always done it.

MK: The use of semiprecious stones you were mentioning earlier, does that go back to the opposition you were talking about?

SC: Yes, definitely. Because I want them to operate in this way where they are invisible. It's quite a tricky thing because I don't want there to be a second act to it. I mean, my ideal viewer would be somebody who caught it out of the corner of their eye and suddenly thought, wow, ok. I am careful about how I place things in a gallery, and seeing something from a distance and then getting closer and closer to it and then it's that distance [*gesture indicating a distance of about 30 cm*]. If you have ok eyesight you do then see that this is mother of pearl, it's got a lustre to it. I rely on my materials list a lot. It does mean that if you don't see it, if you don't catch it out of the corner of your eye or just see it when you get up to a certain distance of it, usually you have things like a gallery map. That's why I always insist that there is a map of the works and that the materials list is quite crucial really. I think I've always tried to make my materials list as long as possible so that you have this thing that looks like nothing really and then you have the longest list of materials that you can possibly have of different precious metals and precious stones.

MK: And are the viewers given these, so that they have the map and the materials list?

SC: Well, again it relies upon somebody picking it up, but yes. That's the materials list for that one [*looking at catalogue of work*]: oak, diamond, topaz, agate, Brazilian oak, cultured pearl, white mother of pearl, gold mother of pearl. And some lists are longer than that. But I think everybody has their ideal kind of viewer and I suppose that mine is somebody who is

inquisitive anyway and would be interested enough or inquisitive enough to pick up the gallery handout. But no, it isn't forced upon them. I don't know whether anyone ever said that it's quite important that you pick up a handout. I think I would be ok with that really, I don't think I'd mind. Funnily enough, there is this solo show I did a few years ago for a gallery in Birmingham and they had this bad press. It was a crappy paper but somebody had gone and said, oh it's just old wood on the floor, and they just hadn't looked at all. It's difficult really. So the gallery weren't very happy about that.

MK: It's the danger I suppose of doing this type of work.

SC: Yes exactly. The gallery looked very empty and some journalist just went in and hadn't noticed anything. Probably just gave it a few minutes.

MK: It's part of the invisibility of the work. It does require the viewer to actually put some work into it.

SC: Yes and I don't think that's any different to any other artist's work really. Most of the time people think they can walk into an exhibition and see work and just instinctively like it. But I think most of the time it helps to do a bit of research to find out what that artist's theory is or their process or whatever. For me that always really helps. Especially with conceptual art, I think it's a prerequisite, to be honest. There are definitely people that would disagree with me for that but I just think that I definitely get more out of the work when I research it a little bit either before or afterwards. Because I've done the same, I've looked at work and thought that there is not much in it and then, when I read about the artist and their process, I understood it a lot better. I mean definitely there are some things that you can just go wow and just love it. And then sometimes, when you read about those works, you think, oh I don't know if I like it now [*laughing*].

MK: Perception is important, as you are describing it. It's not just the visual element, as people walk into a space, but it seems to be conceptual as well because you find out about the work and the materials.

SC: Yes. When I made that boiler suit the thing that really shocked me was that . . . Basically, at the Royal College it's a two-year course and when the second years are putting on their degree show, the first years get kicked out. I think that happens most of the time. And then you just have to go away and make some work at home. And then you come back and use the space for a summer show. So that's how I made that. It was table top work at home really and I just became quite obsessive about the mark-making and getting those marks to be really right. I did lots and lots of unpicking and I learned a lot through doing that, about how it really was about observation. It was observational drawing. That's what it was, seeing how paint fell across the seam. And the thing is, to me, because I had just spent so long on it, it was totally obvious that I'd made it with stitch. I just thought, oh it's quite interesting. I've made this piece of work that was meant to be random paint marks but I've made it with stitch and that was my thinking behind it. When I hung it up, and I did hang it in a very casual place in the college, it became obvious during the crit that nobody knew what the hell's name I was talking about when I was saying about the "work." And I thought, oh my god, I have actually made this thing that is completely fooling everybody's eyes. So I had to then say, oh okay I think perhaps you need to go and have a look. And then there was this series of people . . . In a way it's kind of gimmicky. It got me hooked watching people going, oh my god, when they got to that distance [*gesture showing short distance*], and then someone else saying "What? What?" and then going up. So I thought that was very interesting. I could see somebody's perception actually changing before my eyes, between them thinking that I just hung my boiler suit up as a conceptual art statement, which is fair enough, lots of artists would do that and that's okay. But then realising that I'd done exactly the opposite and that I'd spent a lot of hours carefully mimicking this original with a craft process. So I got really hooked on that perception-changing process that happens and that's why I think it's really important that the viewers do discover it for themselves. Because if you walked into a gallery and you think, this artist has made lots of things out of precious stones, you miss something then by not having that moment of discovery. But it's a hard thing to keep going, that's what I've realised. Because as my profile rose, I've then become known as somebody who makes that kind of work. It does become a different process. There are some people that still don't know my work, lots of people don't know it probably, but there are people that go, oh right what's she done this time then, which is really difficult.

MK: Yes, it changes the expectations.

SC: Definitely. But I've struggled with that and I went through a phase of saying, I am not making anymore that kind of work. And I don't always make work like that. I make other work but funnily enough it's still that trompe l'oeil work that tends to be the most popular.

MK: I guess because it has the shift in perception that many people find interesting. It kind of changes right before their eyes, which I think is very interesting as well. In an earlier

work you did you used a table and vinyl to recreate the stains on the table, if I understood correctly. Why did you choose vinyl for that one?

SC: Again because I find it very much a drawing process. I felt like I was drawing with the thread when I was making the boiler suit. I think that table was the second piece—yes, this table was in my degree show at the Royal College—and again it was based on a table that would be found around the college, based on an original table. So I went and bought a brand new table from like a crappy MFI. It's worse than Ikea. They're trying to do a country kitchen type thing, but very cheaply. And I got that [*pointing to image of the table*] from there and then aged it by the application of these vinyls that were all wood effect. So the table colour that you see is the original table and then I felt like I was drawing with the scissors. I really tried to replicate a lot of the marks that I saw around the college. Actually, funnily enough, they are often composite of lots and lots of different marks so it wouldn't necessarily be just one table. I would see a mark, think that's really nice, I'm going to use that, and I'd put them all on this thing. I became really obsessed with paint marks and some would be impossible to replicate really with a solid surface. I was looking for the ones that I could replicate with a solid surface.

MK: Do you document the original marks, photograph them?

SC: Yes, and trace them. Actually many of them were traced and copied and some of them were drawn and some of them, but very few, are drawn without seeing anything. But, on the whole, they are copies of originals. I did some teaching the first year and the college that I was teaching in had a library and I was taking a lot of the marks from the surfaces in there and from the floor. But I'd draw them. Sometimes they were just drawn and sometimes they were traced.

MK: And then, since they are transferred on different surfaces, are there decisions you make in terms of compositions?

SC: Yes, definitely. And I think I realised how important it was to have areas that didn't have anything on them because for me that worked better. There's a logic there and it's about usage, it's about the use. So, instead of trying to be as true as possible to the kind of thing that would go on the surface of a table like that, I'd imagine people putting paint brushes and pots down, and think, if someone were to put a pot down here and then painted from it would there be drips next to that? That's the idea of the invisible as well. I suppose it's like something being taken away . . . the process that had taken place there and then taken away. So, I felt that if I covered things uniformly they just didn't work as well. I kind of tweaked that probably a little bit.

MK: There seems to be a narrative element in the work then . . . thinking of someone working there and the leftovers they leave behind.

SC: Definitely. I think that's a really good point because my background . . . basically I studied literature. I did a degree in Culture Studies and I specialised in literature and that's the way that I thought my creative output would be effected. And I tried to write and I think I didn't really have the confidence. It was difficult in the early eighties. Now there are a lot of creative writing courses but there weren't really then. I think the thing I loved about going to art college is that there were people there you could talk about your work to. It felt that if you wanted to write you would just be in a bit of a vacuum. I was trying to write this novel for years and then I would just give it to people to read and I didn't have any really positive feedback from them and then it just got dropped. And I worked in publishing. I read a lot. I am very interested in literature. I used to write a lot of poetry. I like to read poetry, you know. Then I ended up going to art college, doing something I hadn't done before, not even at school. I just found a creative outlet then. But the narrative element is really really strong in my work. I think perhaps I am making up stories about objects, what they are doing, following their history.

MK: And I think in your installations that comes up as well, in terms of how the space is used, what might have been done with the leftovers, what things might be left there.

SC: Yes, definitely.

MK: You mentioned before that you gave a piece of wood to a cabinetmaker and he re-created it. Do you often work with other people?

SC: Yes I do. I work with fabricators. I work with assistants here as well. I came to realise that, with all those intensive craft processes I use, I could probably only make about three or four pieces a year. And then, as soon as I started working with Seventeen gallery, suddenly the pressure was on to create a lot more than that. What I like doing is quite small precise work and I like getting that thing [*pointing to piece of wood*] back from the wood worker made up, and then I can do my kind of thing that I like. The prep work, I don't love. It's really nice to give it to somebody else. Then I get to do the things that I like. I have a lot of control over what happens and nobody else who works here makes up any marks actually. Say, with the stepladder, my assistant would help me to cut out the mother of pearl, and another lot would

help with these bags [*pointing to image of drawn paper bags*]. A lot of students came and helped me do that. Actually, if you were going to make even one of those [the bags] on your own you probably [inaudible]. It's very nice actually. I like working with people, having other people in the studio helping. I really like it. I am quite sociable I suppose and I don't think I would like to come in here five days a week and work on my own. I like working on my own sometimes but I quite like having assistants. And actually they do come up with some really good ideas sometimes, on the practical implications, practical solutions. I find that it's really helpful to have them. And they are all artists as well. In the first year that I left college I just realised that I am not a person that can sit in a studio on my own five days a week.

MK: It sounds more like a kind of workshop, which has a nice connection to your process of working and your craft-based approach. It goes back to that kind of more collaborative idea of working.

SC: It's so funny because everybody who works here develops these skills that are absolutely pointless [*laughing*]. I mean not all of them. But even this embroidery that I do, it's not really embroidery. I mean a lot of it is just satin stitch, just a simple diagonal stitch, but then I do all these other things. It's just a way of trying to make something look like another mark. I find I've developed these really weird ways that aren't embroidery. I made an embroidered dustsheet and you can see a diagonal line there and then there were areas where you'd push a needle through that line with a coloured thread. So it's incredibly subtle because you just sew the thread through these gaps. But that's just something I did because I realised it did what I wanted it to really well. It's the same with the cutting out of that wood. I never properly worked out how to do marquetry and I know that really and truly you are supposed to use glue, which I don't want to use, and you probably have to have specialist equipment to clump things. So we developed this bizarre way of doing it. We cut it out with scalpels. So they [the assistants] have kind of learned these skills but they are not exactly . . . [*laughing*]

MK: This fits in with your idea of leftovers, useless things, but from a different point of view. But I think it's interesting that you are basically developing your own techniques. They have some affinity with more proper craft, but they are not exactly that. So I think that might go back to the idea of mimesis. It works on two levels: the mimesis of the marks and the scratches and objects, but also the mimesis of the technique.

SC: Quite possibly yes. I am doing this tapestry at the moment actually. Do you recognise these things here, have you seen these kinds of blankets?

MK: Is it felt?

SC: It's a packing blanket. They are used for packing artworks so you see them a lot in galleries and you see them a lot in art fairs. I am making a version of one of them for one of the art fairs I am doing. I am not even sure to be honest whether that's considered to be a tapestry stitch, but it works for my purpose. Interestingly enough, I do get a lot of textile students who want to come and do work experience with me. One of them, who was helping me work on one of those dustsheets, had a really good knowledge of embroidery technique and she wanted to put all those interesting stitches in. It's a lovely idea but we just had to unpick them because they announced themselves as stitch too much that when you saw the embroidered work you could immediately see that it was fancy embroidery stitching. I have made other tapestry and I have used proper needlepoint tapestry stitches, but I realised that for this one [*pointing to the blanket*] it was best to work this way. Hopefully it won't fall apart or anything [*laughing*].

MK: How long does it take to make one of your works?

SC: Most of my pretty big major pieces like that [*pointing to image in catalogue*], I'd say that, working quite consistently on it, about two months.

MK: You kind of have to work very intensely then.

SC: Yes. That would be if it was just me. Realistically, I'd say I could make about three biggish pieces a year on my own. You see, with this [the blanket], I will put all the coloured areas in . . . and then all the areas that are just filling in, I can get help with that.

MK: And is the work going to be as long as the actual blanket?

SC: It's going to be skilfully folded like that so I've only got to do the bits that show. I haven't ever done that before but I think it would be absolutely crazy to do the whole thing. But probably I'll end up doing the whole thing [*laughing*]. It depends how quickly it works. I think it will be quite slow because I only started doing that two days ago, from Wednesday. I am still working out how to do it, but that's not a lot of work for two days really [*laughing*].

MK: This is for the art fair in Miami?

SC: Yes. It'll be fine because it doesn't have to be ready till November.

MK: Good, so you have time. I wanted to ask you about a specific piece, again from 2002, I think it was. It was a replication of a painting area on a wall where a painting had been and there were all the splashes around the piece.

SC: Oh yes, that was 2002 actually. That was after I left college. I think that was a removed Pollock in a way. I know Pollock worked on the floor. I think this was, still is a popular kind of advertising culture, a popular conception of an artist as somebody who is free and paints around. I think there is a toothpaste advert here even at the moment and it's somebody in overalls doing an incredibly gestural piece of work. So I suppose that was my thinking with that. The other thing is, as somebody coming to making artworks quite late in life, I come with this questioning of what it is to be an artist. And having those kinds of ideas, you know, is the artist some incredibly romantic character, who is almost overtaken by some outside energy and they become a channel through which this kind of thing happens? I was thinking of two very different ways of making work. And I remember this quote . . . I've never been able to find it since and I think it's on the radio I heard it, so I hope it's true because I've never been able to verify it. But apparently it was Leonardo Da Vinci said something like, genius is the ability to take pains with your work. He was questioning the idea of a genius being something that makes the artist like a conduit, in a way, for some kind of creativity to rush through. And I like that idea. It's similar to that idea with writing. We always used to be told that it's ninety-nine percent perspiration and one per cent inspiration. And that's quite liberating for somebody who doesn't have lots of confidence that they can do something. Actually I do believe that. So much of it is about just starting something and giving yourself the space to try stuff out. And I feel lots of students, even now, can't seem to get to that stage. They are horrified that they might do something that's rubbish. So I think I was trying to put those two different types of artists in the same work . . . the idea that somebody was there painting away and then I came along. All those marks are cutouts, that sort of drawing process I really enjoyed. I recreated that piece for quite a few shows for two or three years after that.

MK: Was it the same every time? The same marks?

SC: Well no. It was quite schizophrenic in a way. I used to have a studio that's part of that complex further down the road. I used to go into the corridor space, get some paint and literally throw it up the wall. And I remember the first time I did it I was just like, god look at that, so, obviously, for me it was something that was scary almost.

MK: Something foreign I guess.

SC: Yes, exactly. And I remember I had this tiny cup of black ink and I didn't even think of how much I would need to protect myself. I just went woosh like that [*throwing gesture*] and it all splashed back and there was this amazingly huge mark from one little cup of ink. I can completely remember going, oh my god did I do that? I was always being told off when I was younger for making a mess and to be tidy. So it feels quite naughty in a way to do something like that. Then I would go away and let that dry and then come back and effectively trace that mark and cut that out of vinyl. And I had a residency, it was the second year I left college, I had a residency in another university. I found they had this big playground area and I would lay massive pieces of paper on it, because actually it's quite hard to find somewhere to do that kind of thing [throwing paint]. I asked at the gallery if I could do it and they said you have to put something down there. There's something very interesting really there. I mean, if you wanted to get a bucket of paint and throw it against the wall where would you do it? I can't do that anywhere here.

MK: So you were kind of playing two roles . . . the throwing of paint and the tracing over of what was left there. I think that's very interesting in terms of your whole practice, which involves miming and copying things. So now you are doing what another person would do and then applying your own specific technique on top of that.

SC: Yes and I know I was always happy doing the cutting out bit really. I used the motif of the splashing in loads and loads of work since and they are always mimetic. And I did always have to make that splash first, but yes, it's quite strange. I used to just go and use the corridor out here and I hate that bit because I still have to go and clean up afterwards because it's all over the floor [*laughing*].

MK: Do you use the same or a similar technique for your drawings of splashes? Do you do the splash first and make a drawing afterwards?

SC: Yes. I've been doing some lately that are kind of inverted drawing, where the splash is the paper. I've made some that are similar to that gesture or mark. I always make those marks. I know exactly the kind of mark that I want. I know the kind of mark that I can replicate and I know that I have to use a particular viscosity. I use acrylic paint and it's quite thick . . . not really thick, but if you use something like ink in water you would get so many marks and they'd be so tiny that it would be quite impossible to actually make that drawing and probably not look quite so interesting either. So I just know how to make the marks that I can then replicate.

MK: What do you think is the relationship between the more gestural mark that remains in the white space in your drawing and the little pencil marks around . . . is it cross-hatching?

SC: Yes, in the beginning I used cross-hatching and now I started making those drawings have a really dense background, really dense graphite. So I use a soft B pencil to get that. But it's still quite worked. With the cross-hatching I used to think, oh you've got to be able to see the marks, in a way that I didn't think you'd be able to really with the graphite. But I realised that I like that dense black background and, in some ways, it works better because you do have to get up close to see that it's drawn and you can still see the lines on it and the marks on it but not so much. Did you see the Malevich drawing that I did for the last show that I had at Seventeen?

MK: With the cracks?

SC: Yes. I used that technique on that so it's very very dense black and the cracks are the paper.

MK: Was it based on the actual Malevich painting?

SC: Yes it was. I actually thought I'd apply to get a nice R&D trip out of it . . . and got permission to photograph it with a medium format camera. So that was really again completely mimetic drawing based on the original Malevich. That interested me as well for a number of different reasons. The idea of copying an artwork . . . but what I was actually copying was the effect of time on the artwork and that, I guess, would only work with a monochrome. You know, you have this black background that time has ruined in a way. It ruined the initial idea behind it. But, yes, absence I suppose is still there, isn't it really? With all those pencil drawings and the big splash piece that you mentioned . . . it is the gestural, a romantic kind of gesture that has been replaced with obsessive marks.

MK: The drawings are interesting because they are almost framing the gesture or the mark whereas in the object based work the marks are kind of hidden within the object. I think there is a difference in the presentation. I don't know how you feel about it. The fact that the splash or the gesture is framed, it's on the wall, while the scratches and stains that are replicated hide themselves within objects.

SC: Yes. But I suppose with the framed drawings there's still a double take. And the double take has to do with the material being actually around the outside. I think from a distance it looks like white paint. Especially now with a dense background, I think that works better. I started doing pieces with those drawings now, where they become quite sculptural and they are not on the wall. If you go to the web site of this gallery that I just did the solo show with, Meessen De Clercq . . . I put some framed drawings on a table like this and there's one drawing with a dripped mark that's dripping down. The table is propped up at one corner and then there's another framed drawing on the floor with a splash drawn on it. And also in that show there are two drawings hung like that. The splash mark starts on one drawing and then it sort of follows on a drawing underneath. So I think I was maybe doing more experiments and playing with the idea of framing and containment as well.

MK: What about the drawings of time that you did?

SC: That's an ongoing project that I have to admit it's been put on the back burner. I think it might be my Charles Ray piece that'll never get finished. I'm not sure. But, yes, I was a bit horrified about how long that took. It was going to be made for a show and then we could only show about three hours or something at the show. Every now and then we do do some work on it.

MK: And it was animated, right?

SC: Yes it was.

MK: How did you decide to do that?

SC: I suppose, wanting to have a living drawing. Have you actually seen any live footage? You know what happens with animated drawings, they're really moving around, so there were those cross-hatch drawings . . . But I can't remember even now how . . . 24 frames a second, so we were doing 24 drawings per second. So I started doing some of that digitally as well. I started cheating a bit, but with Photoshop. I wanted every drawing to be completely different so we devised a method with Photoshop for changing them. A certain amount of them could be made from just one drawing. But it still needs to be done. I am not sure whether it will ever get finished.

MK: Is it supposed to cover 24 hours?

SC: Yes, the idea was it would be on in the corner of the room, like a drawn digital clock ticking all the time, which I really like the idea of. I think it really is my Charles Ray thing that never gets made because I would never make anything else if I was making that. The amount of man-hours in it . . . even if you had assistants helping you, it would cost a fortune. When I run out of ideas maybe I'll finish it [*laughing*].

MK: Going back to something you mentioned earlier, you were talking about the objects you were making as part of your MA and then you moved into the gallery space and they turned into this pile of leftovers left after a show. Was this shift related to the actual gallery space?

SC: Yes, yes.

MK: And then you did a piece where you added a wall? Can you talk about it?

SC: Yes. It was to make an archway really, and that wall that I made . . . I'll show you the wall right here actually because I copied it. They have slightly changed it now [*walking outside the studio and into the corridor*]. But this is the wall here. So you see they've added a door and frame here. So what I did was that I copied the marks on this wall. The paint splashes you see here . . . some of them are my own actually. And scratches . . . old nails. So I copied these . . . and staples. For the exhibition these were made in various kinds of metals. So it was different from the objects I made. I made the whole wall in the gallery. And I like the fact that you would walk through the work really without knowing it. It was a different thing. Instead of seeing it from a distance you walk right through it [*walking back to the studio*]. But, yes, this is the show that got written about in terms of I hadn't done anything [*laughing*]. I actually thought it was quite funny when I saw it but the gallery didn't find it very amusing unfortunately. I suppose it was a public art space and you know...

MK: Did they have to respond?

SC: I don't know if they did, I'm not sure. I think they did actually online.

MK: I wanted to ask about the water bucket piece you did.

SC: I made that for this show as well . . . remade it actually.

MK: I didn't see the show but the impression I got from the catalogue was that with that piece the whole process of working was literally hidden. You weren't able to see the mechanism but just the drops.

SC: It didn't fill up either, that's the thing. It was a pump that dropped the water and then another pump took it from underneath so the water dripped all the time but the bucket didn't ever fill up.

MK: I see, so that would be an indication of the artificiality . . .

SC: Yes, you would just need to be there for a long time to realise. I think there was always a little bit of water in the bottom but it didn't ever get any higher than that.

MK: With this piece, you are left in doubt as to whether it is constructed or just in the gallery, as if something had happened to the gallery. With the visual pieces, I think the construction of them slowly emerges when you come close but the bucket piece is much more subtle.

SC: Yes, you have to take it on trust I guess. It still had to do with time because the only way you'd be guaranteed to know that it was what it was would be to stay there for an hour or two to see that the bucket hadn't filled up at all. But I think I'll have a similar thing with this [blanket piece], funnily enough. Because I was looking at it yesterday thinking, bloody hell, they're so similar [the original blanket and the new work]. If I put more stitches over it, it's going to be another thing that you'll have to take on trust. I was even wondering whether to put the stitches down the middle. I mean now, when it's like that, you can see that it's tapestry canvas, but as soon as you put those stitches on it's the same as the blanket. So I have to make that decision . . . whether I want to give a little hint. The only way you'd know what it is would be to actually look at the back of it but then you wouldn't be allowed to do that. But with the bucket piece all the pump work was completely hidden.

MK: So there's this decision then about how close to get to your original. When making the stains on the objects, you use different materials. You stick very closely to shape and colour but the materials are different and that creates a change in perception. With other work I guess you have to negotiate how close to come to the original, how different or similar the original and your work will be.

SC: Yes, and I think there have been more works like that lately where you'd have to almost take things on trust a little bit. I did a piece for the last solo show that I had at Seventeen gallery where this stuff . . . it's called Formica and you can commission them to make your own

pattern. So mostly it's just a wood sort of background. So I commissioned them to make me a piece that had a splash mark running down it and that was made to look like a piece of normal chipboard. You had the fake wood front and then you could see the chipboard on the top but it had these splash marks integrated into it. The black splash mark was first drawn. We drew it all, it's all drawn in the studio and we provided the artwork for them and they printed that onto the lamina before it was pressed. Because basically this [Formica] is paper and then it gets laminated on top. But, you know, you couldn't really see, there wasn't a way into that, you had to just believe that that process had taken place and that the mark had been made and then it had been drawn and then it had been printed and then it had been laminated. If you wanted to, I guess, you could see by going round to the side and then you could see that it was a completely continuous surface with no paint on it. So I think maybe the work is going that way, not giving or giving even less away.

MK: I think it's interesting in terms of how the viewers then negotiate their relationship with the work.

SC: Eventually I'll just be able to put that up [the original] and say, no, it really is a replica, and save myself a lot of work [*laughing*].

MK: Another thing I wanted to ask is the relationship between the intentional and the accidental or the non-intentional. A lot of the marks you are using are leftovers from another activity and were made with no intention of making them. You are changing that around and you are making them in a very meticulous way and very intentionally. I wanted to ask what the relationship is between the two processes, what relationships you want to set up in your work. What is the relationship between the accidental and the very intentional?

SC: There are definitely those two different types of work. There are the types where it's accidental and then there are the things, like that drawing that you mentioned, where maybe it talks much more about the gestural. But I suppose in all the work I've always tried to do that, to have these two opposing features in it. So you could say that with the gestural mark it's the romantic genius versus the meticulous craftsperson, and then the other things it's like dirty and clean or intentional and accidental. There might be something there about carelessness and care I guess. But I think . . . that is definitely something I remember from my childhood, my mom was really very [inaudible] . . . quite working class background, I think very culturally specific. Her generation had this cleanliness is next to godliness thing. We didn't have much money but you made up for it by everything being absolutely spotless. You spend all your weekends cleaning. And then I came into that and was quite clumsy. I don't know if I was clumsy but obviously, like any child, I would just knock things over so I used to get told off so much. I can remember spilling ink in my bedroom on the carpet—I probably was quite careless actually [*laughing*]—and was thinking, shit this is just like the biggest deal in the world now and I've got to try and hide this somehow. So, definitely, there was that personal background there, of how when you are a child you unquestioningly accept that received knowledge that, yes I really have to be pristine. And then, suddenly, coming from a really different generation, I just thought, do I really have to do this, you know, do I have to? I am absolutely my mother's daughter and I like my house being clean but I am this strange combination of being somebody who is very untidy and wants a tidy house. Because I am not particularly tidy. So I think there is this personal autobiographical reasoning maybe behind that work. It's my questioning as I got older . . . is there a morality involved in this then? Really? If you have a dirty house or if you are untidy it doesn't mean you are a bad person. So I think that's where it comes from. So for me there is an appeal in being able to make something look untidy. It's about being good I think, as well. Because I'm bad . . . I've got a show and all I've done is chucked a piece of wood on the floor. I haven't made any effort whatsoever, but really I then want people to go: She has! She is good, really! [*laughing*] And I think there's a Cinderella story about this. They look unfinished, they look unglamorous, they look . . . not worthless exactly but scruffy, grotty and it's that idea that that Cinderella kind of moment can happen just by looking and understanding. Maybe there is something very basic about scratching under the surface and seeing that there is actually something beautiful there, if you care to look and try to take a bit of time to understand. That's a popular story I think, the idea that somebody doesn't look . . . you know, if it's all to do with looks but they don't look at something that's not worth that much.

MK: There is also a thing about value as well which I find interesting because all these semiprecious materials are used to mime something useless, like a stain or a scratch. It's a very literal idea about value.

SC: That's definitely part of what I was just talking about, the idea of surface holding truth and questioning that.

MK: I think there is also the suggestion that the value lies elsewhere, in the sense that there is a lot of time and effort and investment being placed into the work. I don't know if that's part of your thinking or process.

SC: Yes I think they are either very overt, where I have used precious metals or precious woods or precious stones, or there are pieces, like the boiler suit, where I think it is the investment of time and care that put the value on the surface of that work for me.

MK: And the piece that you made with the paper bags and the volunteers that were working on that, the kind of more performative piece [*Sweat*, September–October 2008, Seventeen Gallery] . . . was that a way of making the process of all of your other pieces come to the fore in some sense?

SC: I think what I was interested in foregrounding was this idea of working with assistants actually. So, again it's talking about this idea of the artist and what the artist is and how the artist works and I was trying to debunk that romantic myth of the artist as being somebody who works on their own in their studio. Artists are still quite coy about admitting that they work with assistants, and most do. Anyone who is making a living out of their practice or has a practice where they are being asked to provide a certain amount of work a year works with assistants. Galleries are also incredibly coy about admitting to collectors that their artists work with assistants because collectors want to think that they are buying something that only the artist handled. So I just thought that was all very interesting. You know the first things anyone else ever made for me were the gold and silver screws. I contacted a jeweller that I saw online, she was a craft jeweller, and I had a meeting with her, and I felt quite uncomfortable about asking her to make this work for me. All sorts of things come into play. Because one of the major differences between crafts and fine art are the prices that you can get for the work. And yes, there are some craftspeople that command very high prices for their work, they are at the top of their game. But lots of craftspeople will make maybe a series of the same thing and there is a massive disparity between the prices that they can command and the prices an artist working through a gallery or dealer can command. So I said to her, how would you feel about the fact that you are going to make this work for me and it's going to have my name on it? Will that make you feel odd? And it's going to be my work then. And she said, well no, that's how we work . . . we work all the time to commission . . . and she's made stuff for big fashion houses. So it was a big learning curve for me but I remember thinking it was really odd. So I think with making those bags, it was making the process, that element of art production bare because, as I said, it's something that's glossed over a lot. Even now probably my gallery wouldn't love me to advertise the fact that I work with assistants. It's really strange but the way that art is priced is based on a bit of a weird mythical system, but then lots of other things are as well. [For the show with the bags] The gallery was made to look a bit like a workshop and they were all in there making these bags. That was the idea anyway. I don't know how successful that was visually because one thing that was odd was that it was nearly all women. There were a couple of guys that came.

MK: It was volunteers, right?

SC: Yes, they were. I don't know how I could have done it differently. I wanted people who would be able to draw and had an affinity with that work but of course then everybody just looked like a student. So, I don't know, perhaps I should have just put a general advertisement. But then who, who wasn't an artist or a student, would be interested in working on something like that? What would it have been like if it had . . . like this artist, what's his name, I can't remember his name, who uses lots of refugees . . . Santiago I think his name is, I can't remember.

MK: Alighiero Boetti has done something like that.

SC: I know Boetti sent lots of work abroad to be done and then was happy to have his workers put their input into it. I really like that idea. This other artist . . . very controversial work . . . he had volunteer refugees and they just stood up in a gallery. But there are other things to explore in this work [*Sweat*] because I think it did look like lots of student volunteers sitting there in their trendy clothes [*laughing*].

MK: It occurred to me that time works in a very interesting way in your process and in the finished pieces. A lot of the marks that you are interested in can be instantaneous marks, like a splash, but then they get converted into these very time consuming things and I think it's similar to the drawings of time where just a second or a minute is converted into a time consuming thing. Is that something you are interested in, this kind of stretching of time?

SC: I suppose it was just a by-product of the way I work so it's something that I've had to look at and understand. I don't think conceptually the notion of stretching time informed the work I made but it is what's happened with the work. It's like stretching out that moment. But I do keep coming back to that idea of carelessness and carefulness and I think they are really crucial, that something that maybe was an accident, something that wasn't meant to happen or was not thought about, and then reproducing that, and you make it considerate, and you make it careful, you make it meant to be. But also it comes back to the pleasure, I guess, in making and in making something that is a very meditative drawing of something. I mean, I'm always drawn to work that isn't about grand themes . . . it could be about quite quotidian occurrences I

suppose. That's across the board for me, with the literature I would enjoy, all the films I would enjoy . . . not 100% but I really do like that kind of work. I definitely definitely have a beef about romanticism. I don't really like overblown overly romantic subject matter so that's one way to counterpose that really.

MK: I find an interesting gender component coming into the work. You may not be interested in that but I wanted to ask you about it. Some of the gestures, like the Pollock gestures, have these gender connotations. And then they are converted into these careful and meticulous thing. And you mentioned cleaning and carefulness, which have other more traditional connotations relating to the domestic perhaps, the more stereotypically feminine, so I was wondering if you are interested in that at all.

SC: I think it's definitely there. It is domesticising all those marks really. Maybe it is actually making them something that becomes at home. You know, you are allowing one of my pieces into your home because of the way it's been worked on, whereas you wouldn't want to leave your horribly looking ladder standing up in your room. So, yes, all of those things are almost tamed and domesticated, aren't they really? The work does get talked about quite a lot in terms of the gender elements of it. Again, it's something that's a by-product rather than an original impetus, but I'd question some of it because I think a lot of people think, oh it's women's work that I am doing with sewing, but that's not all the work at all. And there are lots and lots of men who sew, so I don't know how strong the gender specific thing is for me. But I can see that and I do think there is something there for me . . . very specific ideas, I guess, that associate femininity and beauty. I mean I am bound to take that stand because I am a woman. I'm just bound to understand what that's like, to be judged by surface, and yes, it's definitely that romanticism . . . the overblown romanticism I was talking about, I think, isn't gender specific at all. Not so much maybe . . . but maybe more for my generation and my parents' generation. It would have been unusual, wouldn't it, to have a female Jackson Pollock, I think. Maybe not so much though . . . I can think of some quite aggressive female artists.

MK: The very categorisation of the work was very stereotypical and artificial.

SC: Yes, yes.

MK: I have a quick question about repetition, because some of the pieces have been repeated, like the dust clothes, so I wanted to ask about that. What is the motivation behind repeating the work?

SC: One motivation is that by the time you've made a piece you maybe realise that you could have done it in another way. There's a refining process with a lot of these, like with the broom. Part of it is purely practical, where I've been asked for that particular piece of work again for a show or for a collector, but it's been a useful thing to do because when I look at the first in a series of them . . . apart from that boiler suit funnily enough. The boiler suit I made first of all is the best one I made I think. When I made the second and third one I sort of underestimated the time that I'd spent [on the first one]. Funnily enough, Paul Smith bought that first boiler suit from my degree show. And I don't know if he bought it because he wanted it for his collection or if he thought about replicating some of the marks for clothes, I don't know really, but I was really delighted as a student to sell some work and to him as well. But I didn't see it for ages because he had it in his personal collection. And then I was asked for another one . . .I think someone had wanted to buy it at the same time and then Paul Smith bought it so they said, we really really want one, will you make us one. I probably made three or four of those and when I got the Paul Smith one back [borrowed it for a show]...I think I underestimated how much time and care I put into those stitches and I thought, oh my god that's the best one. But with most of the other pieces of work they definitely got better as I went along and I've developed that craft technique better. As I say, the technique is usually something that I've made up myself. And it's the same with the stepladders and the brooms. I mean that's not really a craft process that I know of, hollowing out a surface to add another piece. When you see these things in the V&A that have precious stones, like on a table, they are usually sitting on the surface of the table, it's more like a marquetry process. What I do, the name for it is intarsia actually, which is more of an Italianate process that was done with marbles, where you'd have a marble surface and then you'd have this inlaying going on with other marble into that surface and that would be done with a grinding tool. So, as I say, I made these odd things up and I've gotten much much better at them on the whole as I go along.

MK: Are the pieces repeated exactly or . . .

SC: No. If you repeat something exactly that's an addition but if you make a few pieces in a very similar ilk then that's called a series. So there's a series of stepladders and a series of brooms, a series of dustsheets, maybe three or four of those. And it becomes a practical thing about selling really, because if there is something and then two people wanted to buy it the gallery would usually encourage you to make another one [*laughing*].

MK: Practical considerations then.

SC: Yes.

MK: I have one last question about your relationship to the work. I am very much interested in artists whose actions become imperceptible and I have the same sense with your work because it does look like something else initially. So your actions kind of disappear within the work.

SC: That's interesting. Maybe it goes back to that idea of the gestural. I think I'll have to think about that really. I think maybe that's the craft process. Not all craft but definitely hobby craft. I've just found that really fascinating, and I've done it myself . . . to be given this design for a cushion or something . . . and working with your hands. People love the idea . . . you have pre-prescribed patterns, especially with tapestry, and you just make that into something else. You are given a picture, two kittens or something, and you say that colour goes there, and you are given all the colours and everything. So I think I am interested in that idea of hobby craft and what is that drive to just be able to do something totally pre-prescribed but so you can have the pleasure of . . . it's called handiwork, that thing. You can have the pleasure of using your hands, making something but it's totally totally different . . . Where does the creative process begin with something like that? And definitely I've always liked working with my hands. I remember at school I loved needlework, it was one of my favourite subjects. And I have made or attempted to make cushion covers. I don't think I ever finished any of them. But I think it's a fascinating area for research, like what's that all about really? I guess that's exactly what I am doing. That's exactly what I am doing because by virtually always copying the marks . . . and, yes ok, I guess it's a composition, I am in control of the final pieces. But I am doing that pre-prescribed, you know, following a pattern and then just doing this thing with my hands. I mean in the end you always do the kind of work that you love and I am never happier than when I have a project like that [the blanket]. Now I know that's several months of me just sitting there and doing that sewing with the radio on, listening to audio books or whatever, here. That's how I like to work. That's my ideal way to work. And the bit I absolutely hate is the setting up in the gallery. I hate when you have to make all those decisions and I wish someone could do it for me, about how to place things in that space . . . and there's loads of lifting things up. I think I'm lazy. I am perhaps physically lazy [*laughing*].

MK: But look at all the work you are doing?

SC: [*laughing*] I know, I know exactly. But I can do it all sort of sitting down. I do quite like working on a table top.

MK: You mentioned Charles Ray. I was wondering if there are any other artists or texts that inform your practice.

SC: I do like Alighiero Boetti as well. Did you see the show of his at the Tate? It was fantastic.

MK: I did.

SC: I also like Francis Alÿs. Francis Alÿs is probably like god basically.

MK: He had a really good show at the MOMA in New York.

SC: He had a great show at the Tate. I wonder if it's the same one.

MK: Probably. It was something about deception in the title.

SC: Yes it was the same show. I was introduced to his work by friends who live in Mexico City. He had a big retrospective in a gallery there at a time that I went to visit them in Mexico City. I didn't know his work really and being there . . . it was just so powerful, and things like the piece with the photograph and the drawing of the square with the flagpole in the middle and everybody just moving around that little bit of shadow. Everything is there for me in his work . . . like the pieces where it's more of a documented action, things like the green line. I think he is my favourite artist. And I do like Arturo Herrera as well. That was from a show in Berlin a couple of years ago, that poster. I like the way he is using those quite random brush marks but there's lots of craftsmanship and work. Texts, I suppose, the Lucy Lippard was really seminal. When I did my literature degree I studied metafiction so very much looking at the form of the novel and lots of artists who played with that, people like Richard Brautigan and Kurt Vonnegut even and Raymond Queneau. One of his books, which was his seminal tome, was called *Exercises in Style*. It's basically a way of describing one very mundane occurrence in lots of different ways. The story or narrative is something like, I was standing outside the metro station and two men came along, one had a hat on, and they were talking very animatedly to each other and we ended up being in the same carriage and they had an argument and one of them knocked the other one's hat off and that's basically it. It's this little scenario. And the next page is just like that but in a hysterical kind of romantic style, and the next page is all to do with colours, and the next page is where it's . . . you know. I just love that book so much because basically what it does is it just says that there is no one way of looking at a situation or judging

something. And what is amazing about that book is that you just realise that, in terms of reality, the more you describe something the more slippery it becomes as a concept. The more ways you can find to describe something the more you realise you can't pin it down. That was my MA thesis, I don't think I did very well with it, but it was talking about reality and is there such a thing, the idea that the more you try to understand the reality of something the more it slips away because there are so many different concepts.

MK: I think this seems to work well with your practice . . . the more you try to approach things the more issues come up.

SC: Yes. It's always quite useful doing these kinds of interviews because you think, oh yeah, that's right [*laughing*]. Do you make work as well and what is your kind of medium?

MK: It's mostly drawing and collage. I am interested in the idea of the mark being imperceptible so I use found surfaces and I try to find a way of working on them that is not very obvious, kind of losing the mark in a way. I'm doing some work with fablon which is why I was interested in your early work.

SC: Yes, I love it, don't you? I love it. I have quite a collection of fablons. I suppose there must be some nice ones in Greece because I found some really good ones in Spain. I actually also found some good ones in Ireland years ago. Ireland has changed now . . . but I realised that there is an economic thing going on there where these fablons are used for surfaces in places where maybe there are people there who can't afford real things, you know. I got some really good ones in Spain like basket weave . . . really great.

MK: We have lots of flowery ones in Cyprus, lots of flowers, lots of wood and some other strange ones, sort of a little flower in the centre and some kind of swirly thing around it.

SC: Have you used any of those?

MK: I mostly use the wood ones for now. In most of the other ones the background is white so that's just too much white for me to work with. I prefer something more full in terms of an image. I am also using fabric samples now because they are full of information so whatever I do kind of gets lost in there.

SC: I really like fablons because they lend themselves very well to drawing. It's great stuff. It's a very nice material to work with, isn't it? It's very nice to cut into.

MK: It's very easy to cut through, it sticks on its own, no glue required. I made some floor collages using that. It works well with the floor.

SC: It's always very temporary though, isn't it?

MK: Yes, it lasts for the show so when people walk on it it's fine but then it starts to disintegrate after a while, which I also find interesting, to see traces of my work.

SC: It's so crazy because that piece you were talking about with the blank space in the middle . . . I made that, funnily enough, for a show here in these studios. I had the studio as part of a residency and they had a gallery downstairs, which they don't have anymore. It was a great residency because you had a studio for a year and a show at the end of it and that's just what you need when you leave college. You need a studio and a sense of purpose, that you are making something towards a show. It was absolutely fantastic. Anyway, I made that piece and put it in the show downstairs and it was very successful and then some people from another gallery came to that show and said, oh will you come and do this in our gallery, and then someone else wanted it, and then I went to Ireland and did it. But of course every single time I would sit there for months, and I worked on my own then, cutting out all those really complicated splash marks, putting them up on the wall and that was it. I just had to leave them there and at the end of the show they'd pull them all down. You think, this is really good fun but, maybe I need to think about doing something that I can sell [*laughing*]. Yes, it's good to have both.

MK: I really enjoy doing site-specific temporary things but I also like having some objects as well, like actual drawings around.

SC: And do you also teach?

MK: I used to last year. This year I did some seminars for MA students but I think I will be doing them again next year for BA students. Do you teach now?

SC: Yes, I do. I had a one day a week teaching post for a year a couple of years ago. It was filling in for somebody else. That was in Nottingham University. But I do a lot of just a day somewhere for an artist talk and then for an afternoon of tutorials or something and I do really enjoy that because you don't tend to get any paper work to do. I enjoyed it but the problem is, being based in London, getting a job at London colleges . . . I must admit I've never tried but I hear it's really difficult and so you end up having to get up and get on a train at 7 in the morning. I was asked to teach at Nottingham, I never actually applied. It is something I am thinking of

doing because it's actually quite good for me, I must admit. It's good to get out of the studio and I find that I learn loads from the students. Now I teach about three or four days per year. I was a secondary advisor for a PhD student in [inaudible] University and I enjoyed that. As I say, my work is time consuming. I get into it and I really don't want to do anything else . . . and I have to watch myself because I just don't want to leave my studio. I'm going to try to get out of the studio today actually. It looks very nice outside [*laughing*].

MK: Thank you very much again for your time.

CONVERSATION WITH BRACHA L. ETTINGER
ARTIST'S STUDIO, TEL AVIV, ISRAEL
JULY 8–13, 2013
MAY 26, 2014

My meeting with Bracha L. Ettinger did not involve an "interview" in the traditional sense. Instead, it occurred through her written notes.

Ettinger gave me access to her notebooks in which she has been recording her thoughts over the years. I spent seven days working in her studio, from July 8 to 13, 2013, and May 26, 2014. I looked at a total of forty-three notebooks dated from 1996 to 2012, some of which have not been published. I looked for notes that, to some extent, addressed my questions. Through this process, I gathered a selection of excerpts, a few of which are made public for the first time.

After reading through the notebooks, I had the opportunity to discuss a few points with the artist. Ettinger also looked through the excerpts I selected, translating French text into English.

A selection of excerpts I drew on for my research, along with the corresponding pages from the notebooks, are given here.

All images: courtesy the artist © B. L. E.
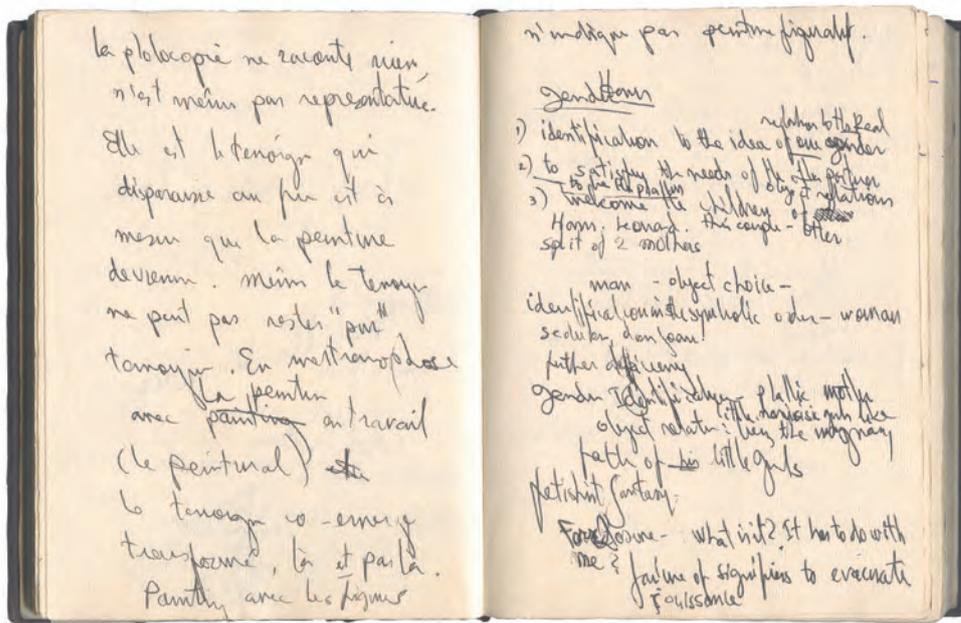
Notebook, 1996–1997

la photocopie ne raconte rien,
n'est même pas représentative.
Elle est le témoin qui
disparaît au fur est à
mesure que la peinture
devienne. Même le témoin
ne peut pas rester "pur"
témoin. En metramorphoses
avec la peintre en travail
(le peintural)
le témoin co-emerge
transformé, là et par là.
Painting avec les figures
n'indique pas peinture figuratif.

the photocopy doesn't narrate anything
and neither represents anything.
It is the witness that
disappears gradually,
that which painting becomes. Even the witness
cannot remain "pure"
witness. In metramorphosis
with the painter at work
(le peintural)
the witness co-emerges
transformed, there and through this.
Painting with the figures
doesn't indicate figurative painting.

[Translation by Bracha L. Ettinger]
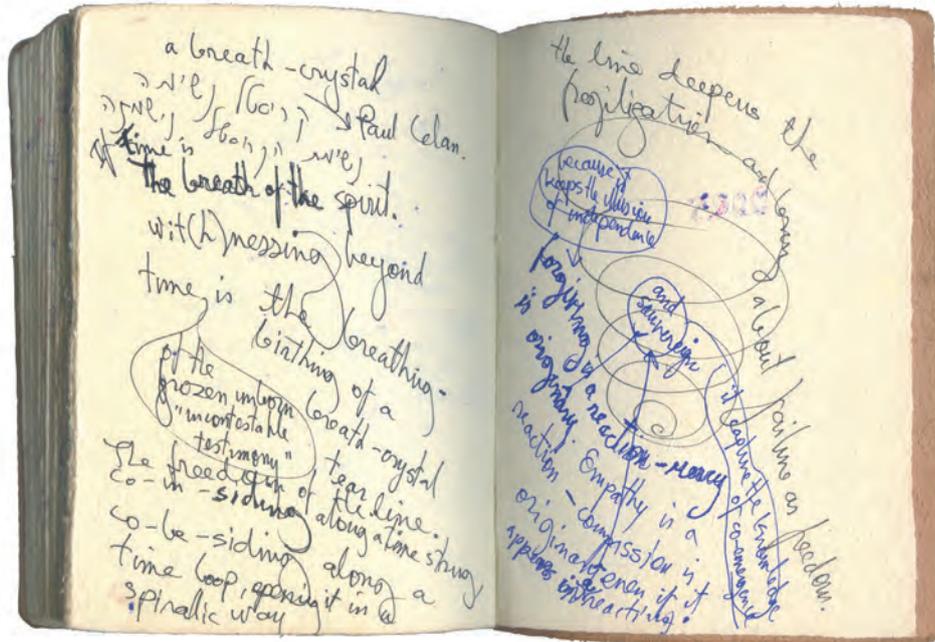
Notebook, September 2005

a breath-crystal

→ Paul Celan

If time is the breath of the spirit
wit(h)nessing beyond
time
(of the
frozen unborn
"incontestable
testimony")
is the breathing –
birthing of a breath-crystal
tear

The freedom of the line.
Co-in-siding along a time string,
co-be-siding along a
time loop, opening it in a
spirallic way

the line deepens the
fragilization and brings about failure as freedom.

it is not a trace
any more, it
records nothing!
it doesn't
express something —
it is now a
new something in
the world, a something
that will be recorded
and traced on the way
to further transform...

I begin with traces
of an image (or of
combined images)
as it makes no sense
to begin without an image
— but only in order
to erase as rebirth
and to arrive
at the end to the
image that is born
for the first time.

The daughter's drama in
the drama of betrayal!
But the inside is
sharable —
Leonardo shows
this already
and challenges our
capacity to
realise thi...
we can heal this (???!)
trauma only in
jointness.

life and art, art and
life, and the life of
the other, of "my"
"others" transformed
into art and transporing
the art-lines —
matrixial
borderspace —
we must share — there
is freedom in sharing — a new...

Notebook, 2005–2006

I begin with traces
of an image (or of
combined images)
as it makes no sense
to begin without an image
—but only in order
to erase as rebirthing
and to arrive
at the end to the
image that is born
for the first time.

It is not a trace
anymore, it
records nothing,
it doesn't
express something.
It is now a
new something in
the world, a something
that will be recorded
and traced on the way
for the transformation

life and art, art and
life, and the life of
the other, of "my"
"others" transformed
into art and transforming
the art—lines in
matrixial borderspace.
We must share—there
is freedom in sharing—a new

kind of freedom
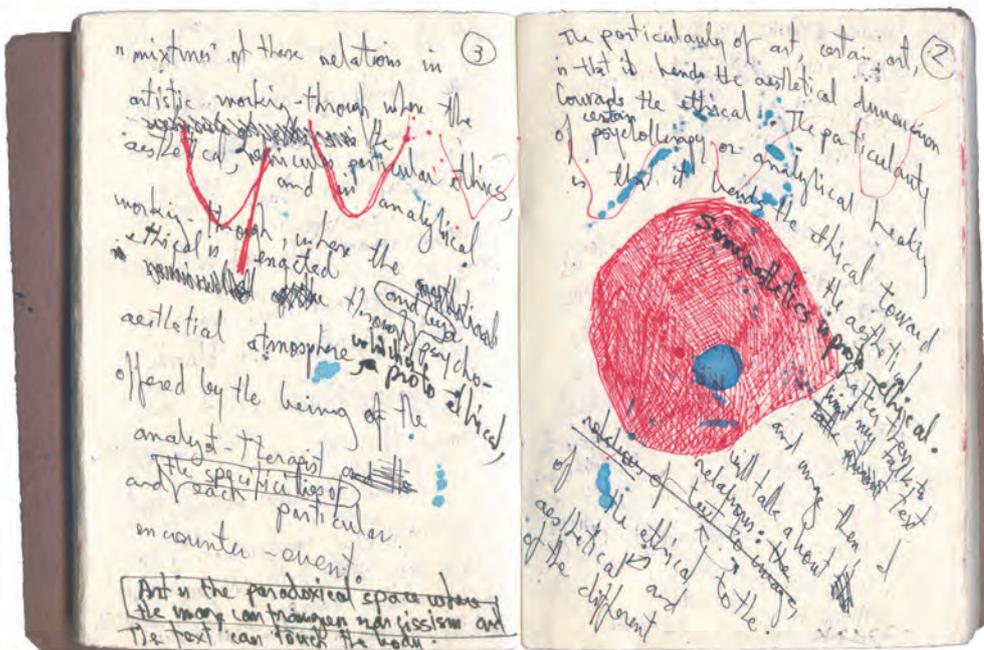
Notebook, 2005–2007

Art is the paradoxical space where
the many can transgress narcissism and
the text can touch the body.
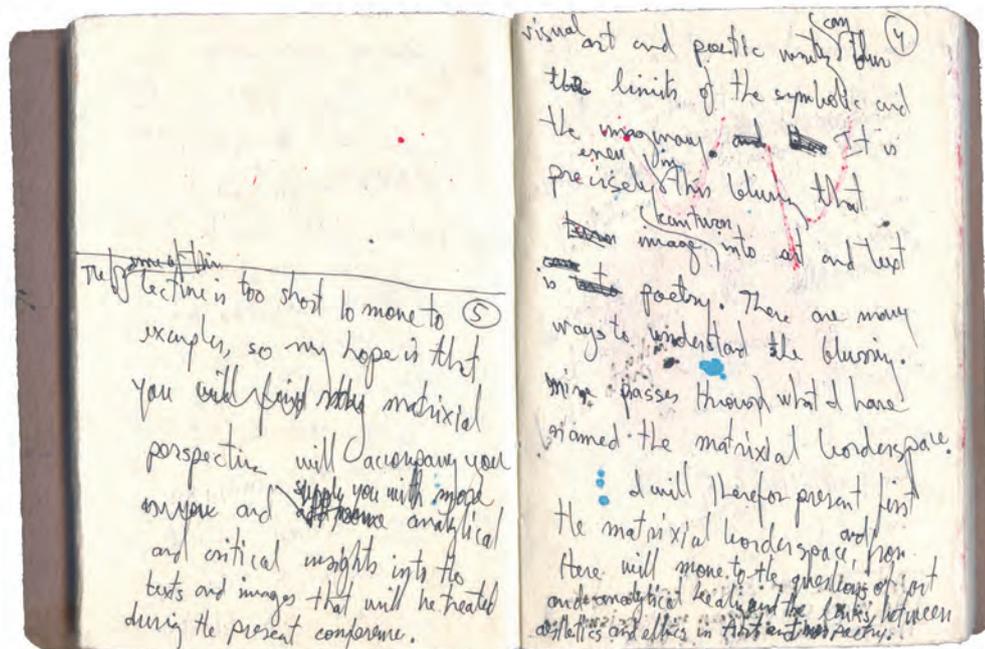
Notebook, 2005–2007

Visual art and poetic writing can blur
the limits of the symbolic and
the imaginary. It is
precisely even in this blurring that
image can turn into art and text
is poetry. There are many
ways to understand this blurring.
Mine passes through what I have
named the matrixial borderspace
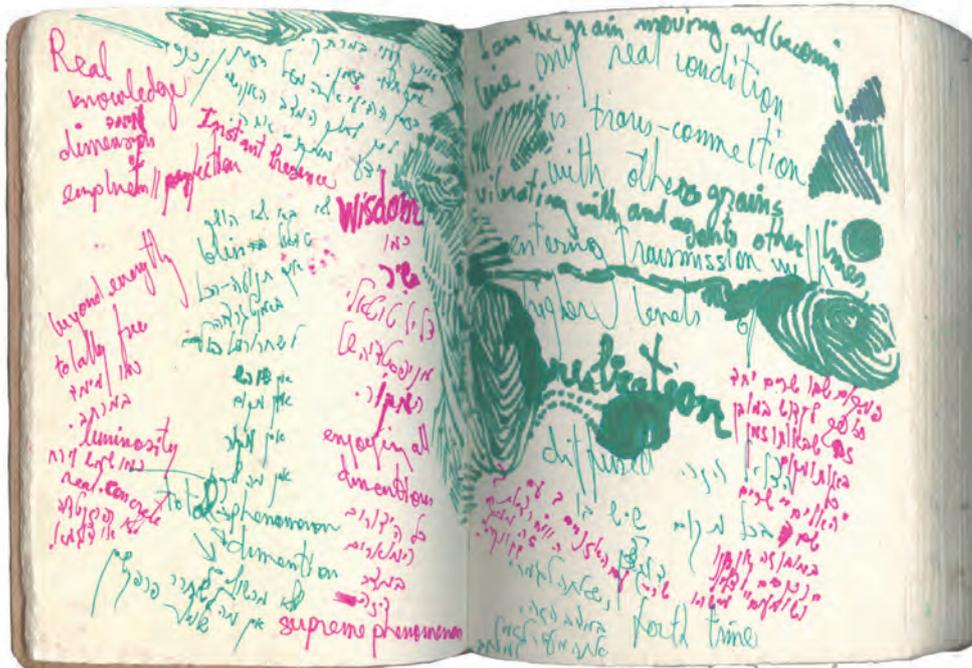
Notebook, January–February 2006

I am the grain moving and becoming
line. My real condition
is trans-connection
with other grains
vibrating with and against other lines,
entering transmission with
higher levels of
realization

diffused
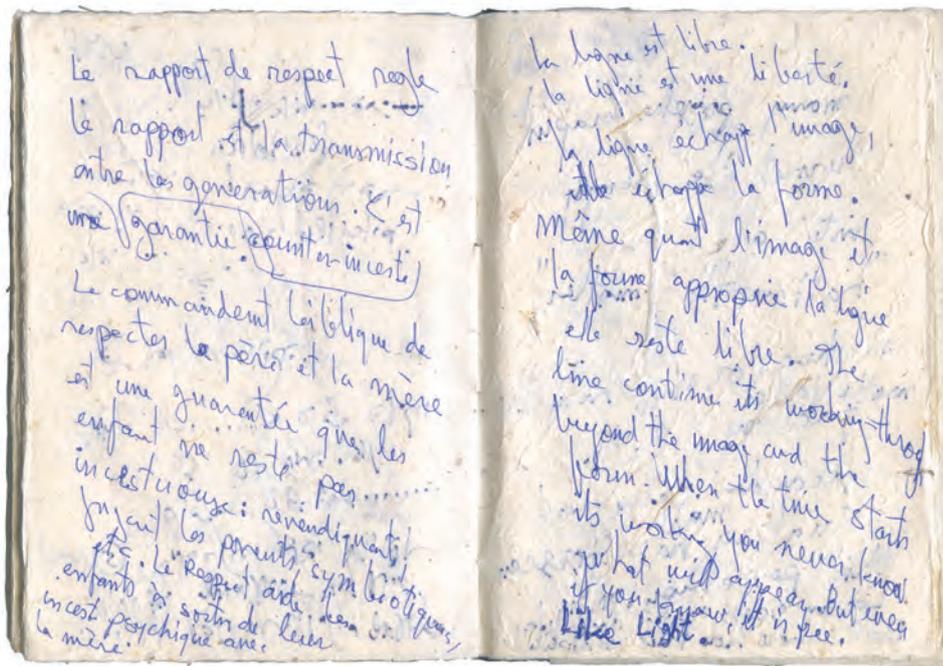
Notebook, 23.08.2006

La ligne est libre.
La ligne est une liberté.
La ligne échappe l'image,
elle échappe la forme.
Même quant l'image et
la forme approprie la ligne
elle reste libre. The
line continues its working-through
beyond the image and the
form. When the line starts
its working you never know
what will appear. But even
if you know, it is free.
Like light.

The line is free.
The line is a freedom.
The line escapes the image, it escapes form.
Even when the image and
the form appropriate the line
it remains free.

[Translation by Bracha L. Ettinger]

Notebook, 23.08.2006

When a line is a string it is both
free and connected. Free by its
movement and direction and
connected by resonance and
intensity and vibration
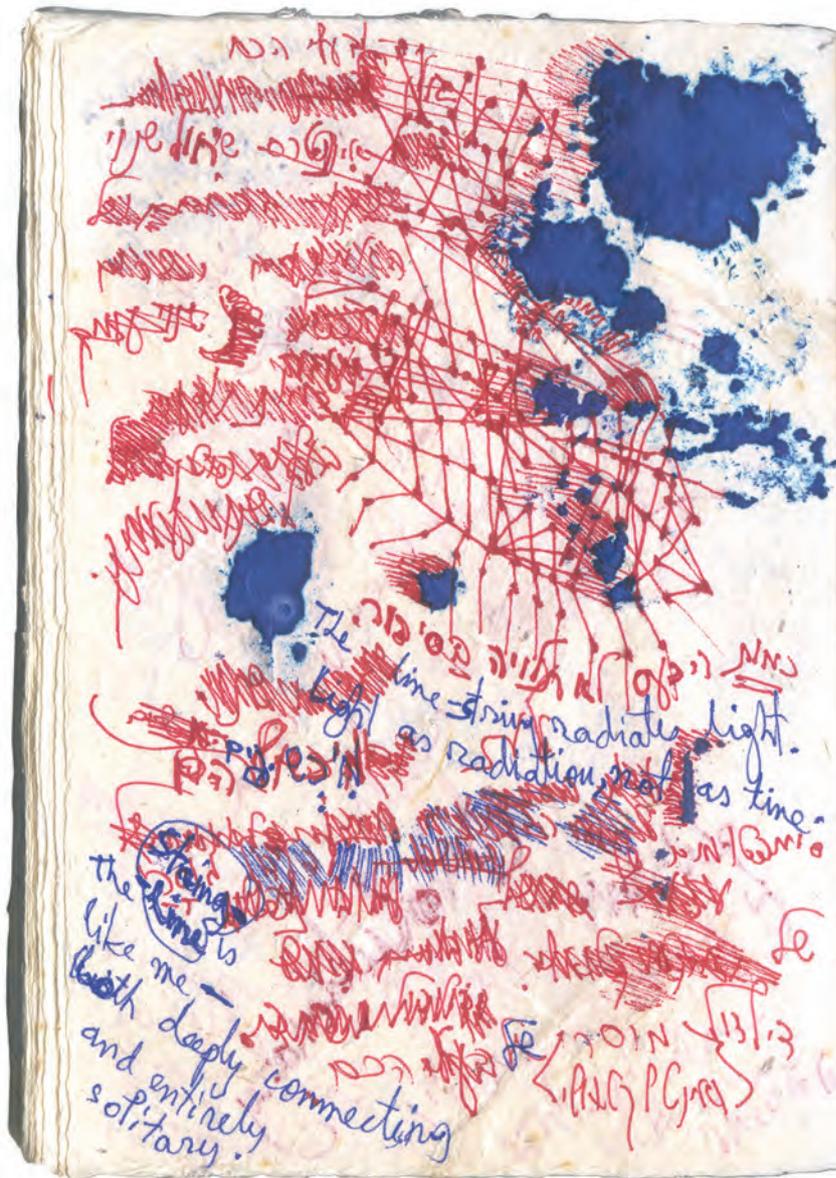
Notebook, 23.08.2006

The line-string radiates light.
Light as radiation, not as time.

The string-line is
like me—
both deeply connecting
and entirely
solitary.
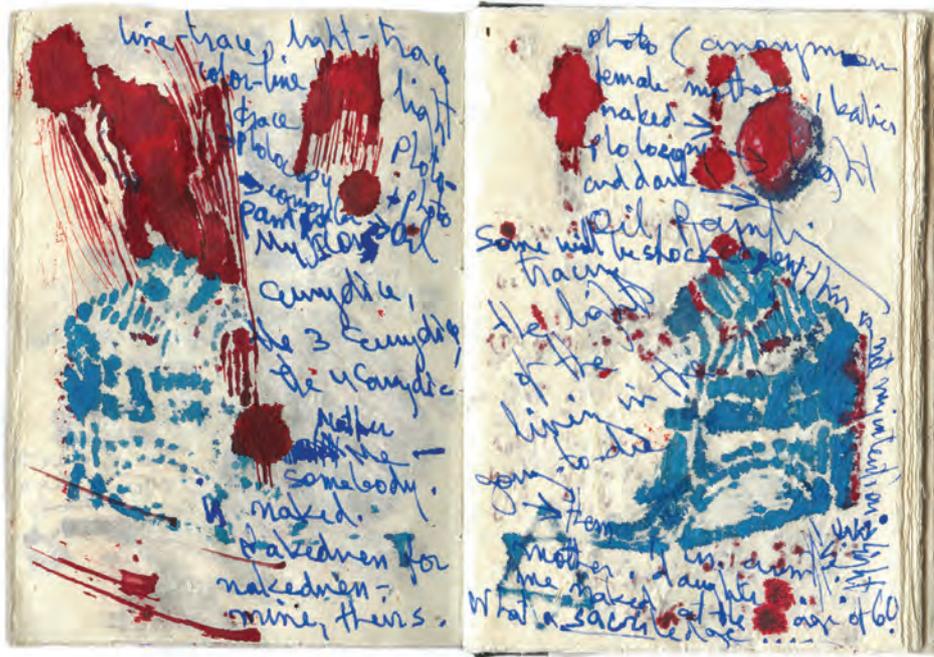
Notebook, June–August 2008

line-trace, light-trace
color-line
light
trace
Photo
→photocopy-photo→computer→oil
painting
my Icons

Eurydice
The 3 Eurydice
The 4 Eurydice

Mother
Me—
somebody

naked
Nakedness for
nakedness—
mine, theirs.

Notebook, June–August 2008

colorlight
lightcolor
the heart of
color is light
and the
heart of
light is
color.
color plus violet/purple→light
colorlight→violet/purple

"Complementary colors" is not interesting
Red+green etc—not interesting
color is the heart of light
in Leonardo da Vinci
4 last Monet
Vermeer

Notebook, June–August 2008

not light <u>on</u> things,
not light versus shadow
nobody
understands
this
light
except
Monet
(the late)
and
Leonardo da Vinci
and the
<u>late</u>
Ernst
and
Vermeer.
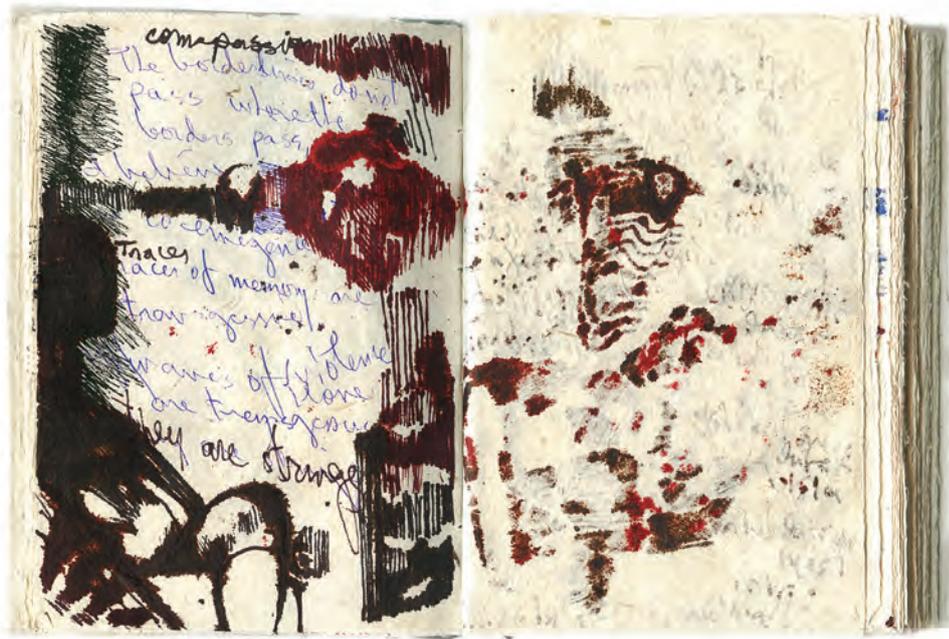
Notebook, June–August 2008

The borderlines do not
pass where the
borders pass
I believe
in co-emergence
Traces
Traces of memory are
transgressive
waves of
       violence
       love
are transgressive
they are stronger
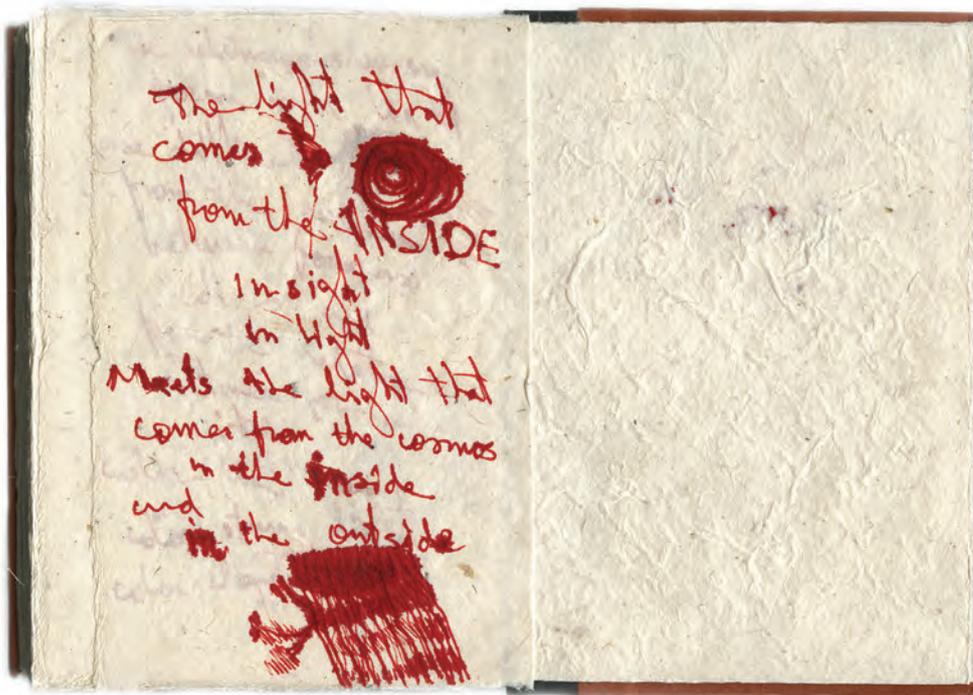
Notebook, 2008

The light that
comes
from the INSIDE
    insight
    in light
Meets the light that
comes from the cosmos
in the inside
and
in the outside
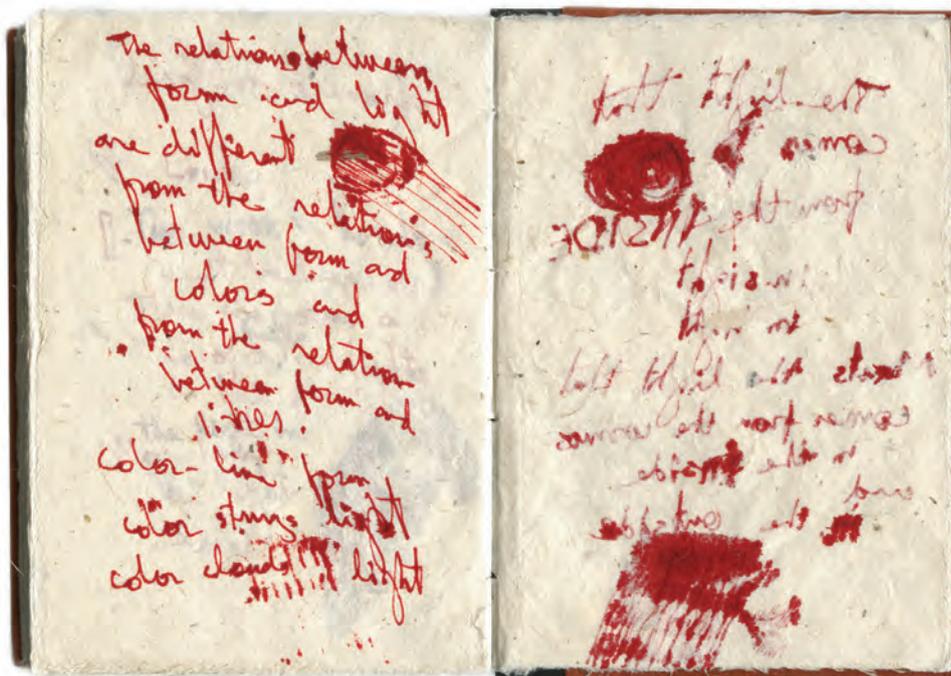
Notebook, 2008

The relations between
form and light
are different
from the relations
between form and
colors and
from the relations
between form and lines.
Color-line form
Color strings light
Color clouds light
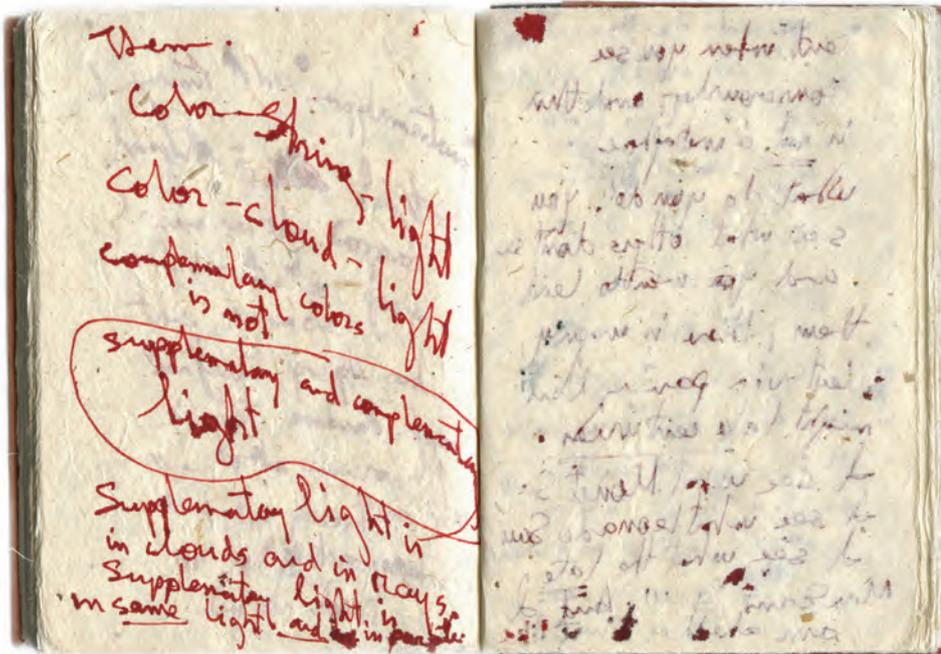
Notebook, 2008

color-string-light
color-cloud-light
complementary colors
is not
supplementary and complementary
light
Supplementary light is
in clouds and in rays.
Supplementary light is
in <u>same</u> light <u>and</u> in purple.
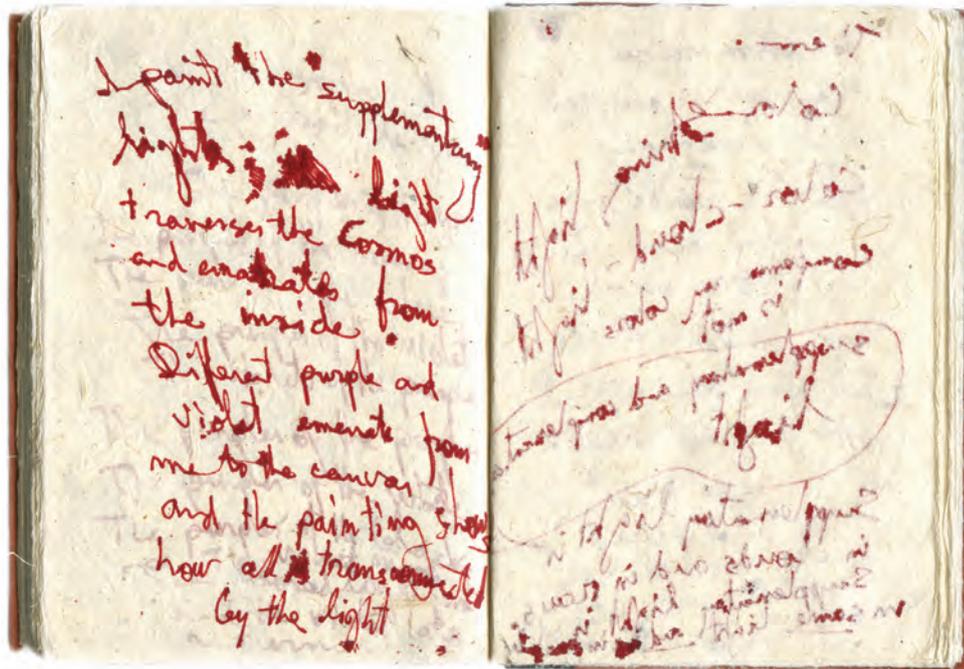
Notebook, 2008

I paint the supplementary
Light   light
traverses the Cosmos
and emanates from
the inside.
Different purple and
violet emanate from
me to the canvas
and the painting shows
how all is transconnected
by the light
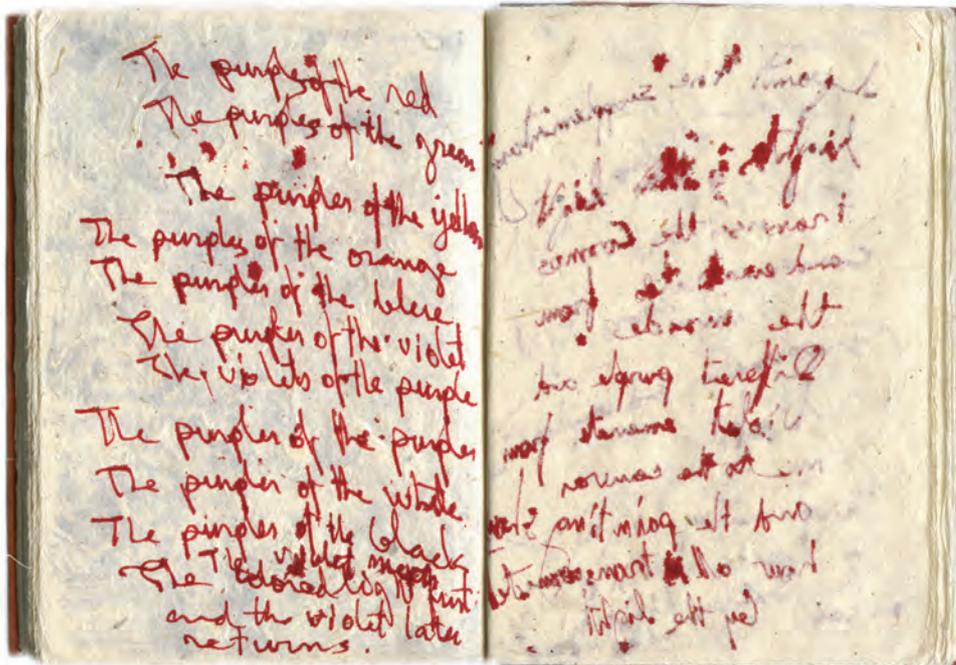
Notebook, 2008

The purples of the red
The purples of the green
The purples of the yellow
The purples of the orange
The purples of the blue
The purples of the violet
The violets of the purple
The purples of the purples
The purples of the white
The purples of the black
The violet meets
The colored light first
and the violet later
returns.
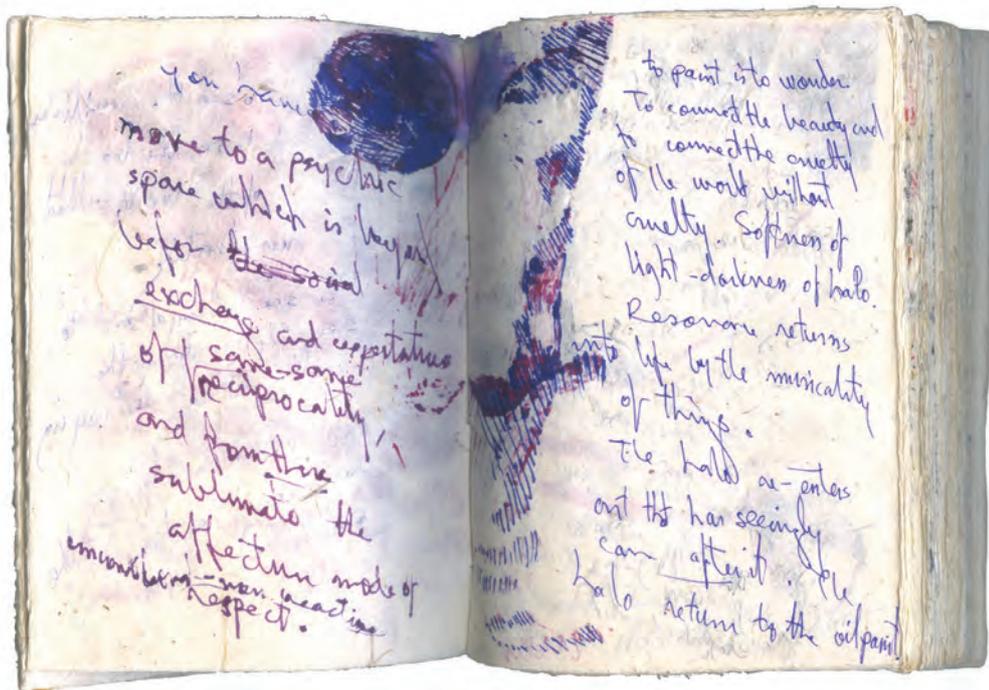
Notebook, 2010

to paint is to wonder.
To connect the beauty and
to connect the cruelty
of the world without
cruelty. Softness of
light—darkness of halo.
Resonance returns
into life by the musicality
of things.
The halo re-enters
art that has seemingly
come after it. The
halo returns to the oil paint.

APPENDIX B

EXHIBITIONS

LIST OF EXHIBITIONS

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2006
- *Marina Kassianidou–Paintings*, Gloria Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus

2008
- *Facts and Fictions*, Gloria Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus

2009
- *Re-Surface*, Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK

2013
- *The Time of Day*, North Branch Projects, Chicago, Illinois, USA

2014
- *Plans and Renovations*, The Centre for Drawing UAL, Wimbledon College of Arts, London, UK

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006
- *Para-dox*, Malchei Israel Pet Clinic, Tel Aviv, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)
- *Another Product*, Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK, invitational exhibition

2007
- *Small is Beautiful*, Flowers Central Gallery, London, UK, invitational exhibition
- *Blank Expression*, Zion Arts Centre, Manchester, UK (curated by Blank Media Collective, artist-led non-profit organization, Manchester, UK)
- *Future Reflections*, Triangle Gallery, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK
- *Young Cypriot Artists*, British Council, Nicosia, Cyprus, national juried exhibition

2008
- *Small is Beautiful*, Flowers East Gallery, London, UK, invitational exhibition
- *The Art of Research: Research Narratives*, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK (curated by Dr Hana Sakuma, artist)
- *Transparent*, Century Tower, Tel Aviv, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)

2009
- *Anonymous Drawing*, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (curated by Anke Becker, artist, and blütenweiss, artist-run non-profit organization, Berlin, Germany) (Catalogue)
- *Lemesos 2009: Recent Visual Trends and Perspectives*, Evagoras Lanitis Centre, Limassol, Cyprus (curated by Dr Nadia Anaxagorou, Head of Cultural Services, Municipality of Limassol, Cyprus) (Catalogue)
- *Smoking*, Darling Chicken Restaurant, Tel Aviv, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)

2010
- *Chypre 2010, L'Art au Présent*, Espace Commines, Paris, France (curated by Yiannis Toumazis, Director, Nicosia Municipal Arts Center, Cyprus, and Andri Michael, Professor, School of Fine Arts, University of Amiens, France) (Catalogue)

- *Anonymous Drawing/Archive*, Uferhallen, Berlin, Germany (curated by Anke Becker, artist, and blütenweiss, artist-run non-profit organization, Berlin, Germany)
- *4th Annual Exhibition of Young Cypriot Artists*, Akamantis Conference and Exhibition Centre, Nicosia, Cyprus (curated by Dr Sophia Hadjipapa-Gee, Assistant Professor in Fine Art, European University Cyprus) (Catalogue)
- *Visual Arts Rhythms*, Myloi Kaimakliou, Nicosia, Cyprus (curated by Marina Schiza, writer and arts journalist, Nicosia, Cyprus) (Catalogue)
- *North Branch Projects Opening*, North Branch Projects, Chicago, Illinois, USA (curated by Regin Igloria, artist, Director of Artists-In-Residence at The Ragdale Foundation, Illinois, USA)
- *Forgive me Father for I have Sinned*, Lev Cinema, Dizengoff Centre, Tel Aviv, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)

2011
- *Minor Revisions*, Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK (curated by Marina Kassianidou)
- *An Exchange with Sol LeWitt*, MASS MoCa (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art), Massachusetts, USA (curated by Regine Basha, curator and writer, Brooklyn, New York, USA) (Catalogue)

2012
- *Lunchbox*, Water Institute Gallery, Givatayim, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)
- *Palimpsest*, The Art Space, Düsseldorf, Germany
- *1st International Biennale of Santorini*, Santorini, Greece (Drawing section curated by Anneca York, independent curator and artist)
- *In the night they used to take off*, FishnDag, Tel Aviv, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)
- *Palimpsest*, The Art Space, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Participation in the *London Art Fair* with Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK

2013
- *The Everyday Image*, Chicago Art Department, Chicago, Illinois, USA, international juried exhibition
- *ArtLacuna Prize*, ArtLacuna Space, London, UK, international juried exhibition (Jurors: Julia Alvarez, Director, BEARSPACE Gallery, London, UK, Sonia Boyce, Jamie Shovlin, artists)
- *Paradox Fabric 2013*, Museo Memoria de Andalucía, Granada, Spain (curated by Isidro López Aparicio, artist, Professor, Facultad de Bellas Artes, University of Granada, Spain)
- *Errors Allowed*, Mediterranea 16 Young Artists Biennial (Biennale des Jeunes Créateurs de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée), Ancona, Italy (curated by Charlotte Bank, Alessandro Castiglioni, Nadira Laggoune, Delphine Leccas, Slobodne Veze/Loose Associations, Marco Trulli and Claudio Zecchi) (Catalogue)

2014
- *Topologies of Sexual Difference,* George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, Australia, international juried exhibition (Catalogue)
- *Caution! Men Working Overhead,* Zur Materials and DIY Shop, Tel Aviv, Israel (curated by Gali Timen, artist and curator, Tel Aviv, Israel)
- *Tradition Today: Exploring Conditions to Recreate It*, House of Cyprus, Athens, Greece (curated by Stavros Kavalaris, curator, Athens, Greece) (Catalogue)
- *Alter Ego*, Phytorio, Nicosia, Cyprus (curated by Andri Michael, Art Historian, Amiens, France) (Catalogue)

ONE-DAY POP-UP PRESENTATIONS AND OPEN STUDIO EVENTS

2009
- RNUAL Presentation, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, February 13
- Confirmation Presentation, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, May 5

2010
- *Leftovers I*, Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK, February 18
- Open Studio, Ragdale Foundation Residency, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA, June 1
- Open Studio, Ragdale Foundation Residency, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA, June 13
- Open Studio, Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts, Miramonte, California, USA, July 3
- *Leftovers III*, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, December 9

2012
- Open Studio, Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts (VCCA) Fellowship, Amherst, Virginia, USA, July 25
- Open Studio, Hambidge Centre for the Creative Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA, August 11
- Open Studio, Ragdale Foundation Residency, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA, September 2

2013
- *Paperwork,* Card Room, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, July 5

CURATED EXHIBITIONS

2011
- *Minor Revisions*, Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK

2015
- *Seven Types of Camouflage*, Phytorio, Nicosia, Cyprus (Proposal selected after open call) (To be scheduled) (Please note that because the full proposal is in Greek I have not included a copy of it here. I have included a summary.)

Re-Surface
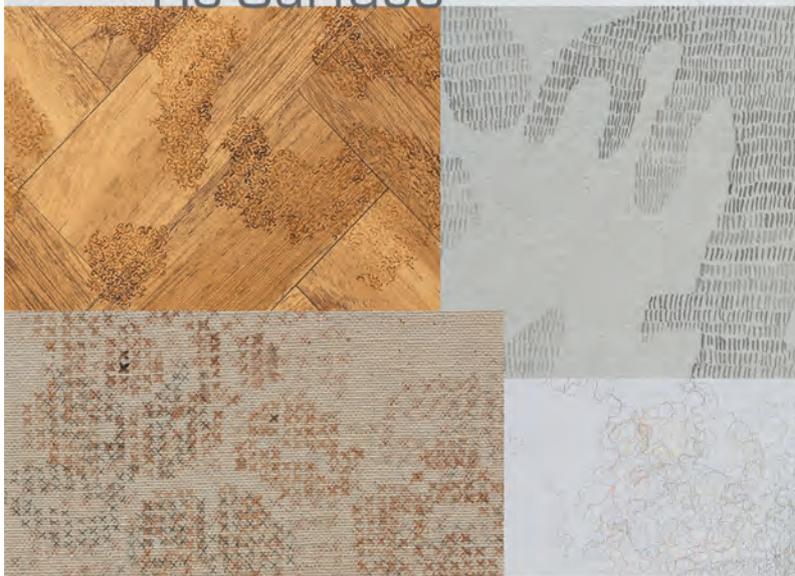
Marina Kassianidou

AUGUST 13 - SEPTEMBER 5

PRIVATE VIEW AUGUST 13 6-9PM

TENDERPIXEL GALLERY

10 CECIL COURT LONDON WC2N 4HE 020 7379 6467
MAIL@TENDERPIXEL.COM WWW.TENDERPIXEL.COM

Re-Surface
Marina Kassianidou

Private View: Thursday, August 13, 6 – 9 PM
Exhibition: August 13 – September 5, 2009

PRESS RELEASE

Tenderpixel is pleased to present *Re-Surface,* the first solo London exhibition of Marina Kassianidou.

Re-Surface comprises of paintings and drawings on various surfaces that explore ways of thinking around relationships and hierarchies between mark/material/surface. The artist paints and draws marks in response to each surface she uses, referencing patterns and echoing scratches, dirt and stains in the actual gallery space. The play between mark and surface within each work continues in the placement of the work, with the walls and floors of the gallery acting as surfaces on which to compose an installation.

The placement of the works reactivates elements already existing in the gallery space – galvanizing their historicity as palimpsests are revitalized and elements are reconfigured and reinterpreted. Investigating notions of texture and surface, Marina's installation includes "pseudo-hidden art," such as the placement of linoleum pieces on a similar floor – oscillating between being a piece of art or a piece of floor, between presence and absence. By partially blending into its surroundings, the work relates to the notion of a "fugitive" image/artwork and offers an alternative discourse. As Andrew Smaldone writes in an essay that accompanies the exhibition, "Kassianidou's work functions in a space where patterns and references to banal domestic environments begin to take on political/social overtones; where a healthy dialectical tension between opposites and a blurring of boundaries invite us to look again at things, forms, and spaces that at first glance we often think of as useless or easy to ignore."

Marina Kassianidou is an artist and writer based in Limassol and London. She graduated from Stanford University, CA, USA, in 2002 with a BA in Studio Art (with Distinction) and a BS in Computer Science (with Distinction). In 2005, she obtained a Master in Fine Art degree at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design and is currently pursuing a PhD in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art & Design. Her work has been exhibited internationally and her writings have appeared in journals in the USA and Europe.

Front wall and window

1. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic and watercolour pencils on cotton, 21 x 20.5 cm

2. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on linoleum, 62 x 48 cm

3. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic and pencil on cotton, 28.5 x 28.5 cm

Left wall
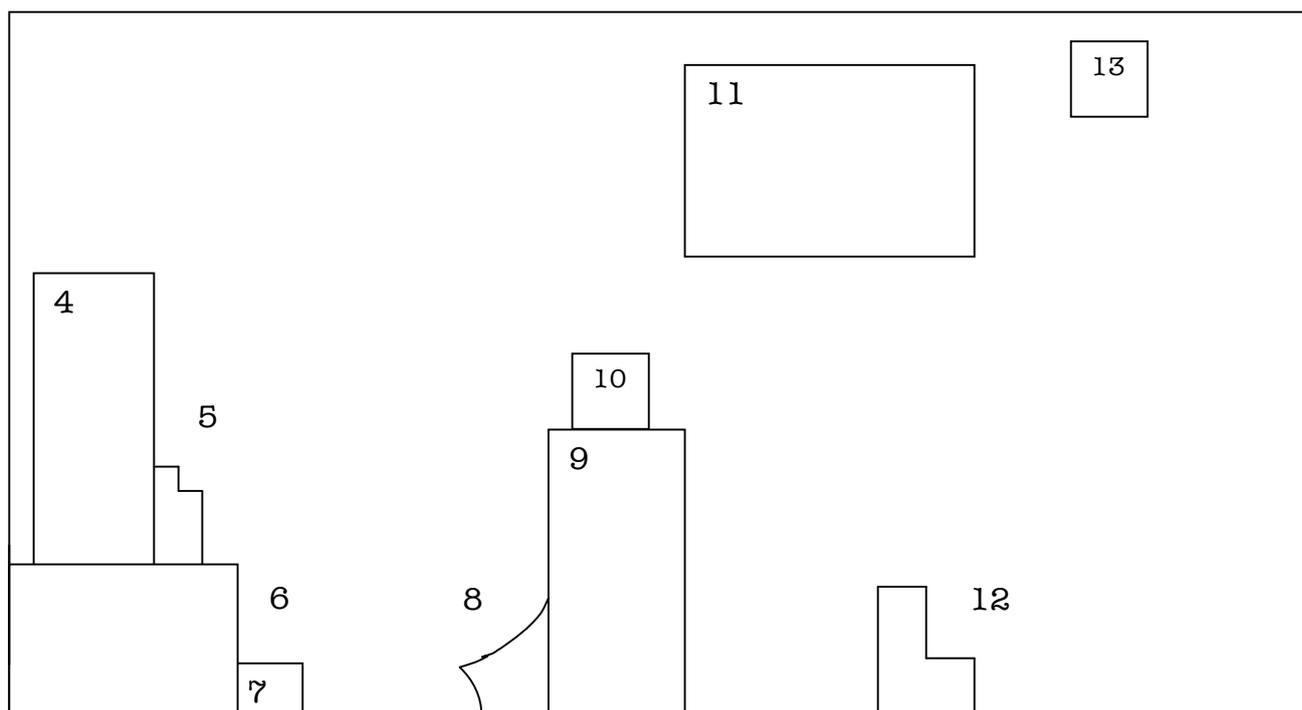
4. *Untitled*, 2009
Watercolour pencils on found cardboard box, 61 x 100.5 cm

5. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on found linoleum, 38 x 38 cm

6. Untitled, 2009
Acrylic on linoleum, 31.5 x 55.5 cm

7. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on found linoleum, 31.5 x 20 cm

8. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on linoleum, 33.5 x 47.5 cm

9. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on cardboard, 53 x 85.5 cm

10. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on canvas, 28.5 x 28.5 cm

11. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on paper, 74.5 x 54.5 cm

12. *Untitled*, 2009
Watercolour pencils on found cardboard, 17 x 31.5 cm

13. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on linoleum, 19.5 x 23 cm

Back left wall
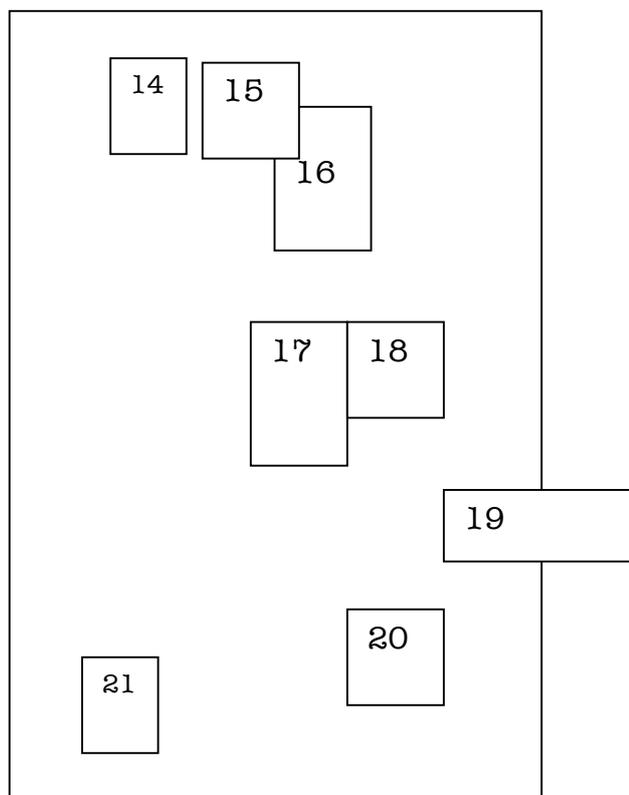
14. *Untitled*, 2009
India ink on paper, 15 x 21 cm

15. *Untitled*, 2009
Watercolour pencils and pencil on canvas, 20.5 x 21 cm

16. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on found cardboard, 23 x 30 cm

17. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on paper, 30 x 41.5 cm

18. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on paper, 30 x 30 cm

19. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on found cardboard, 48 x 19.5 cm

20. *Untitled*, 2009
Watercolour pencils on paper, 21.5 x 21 cm

21. *Untitled*, 2009
India ink on paper, 15 x 21 cm

Back wall

22

23 24

25 26 27

28
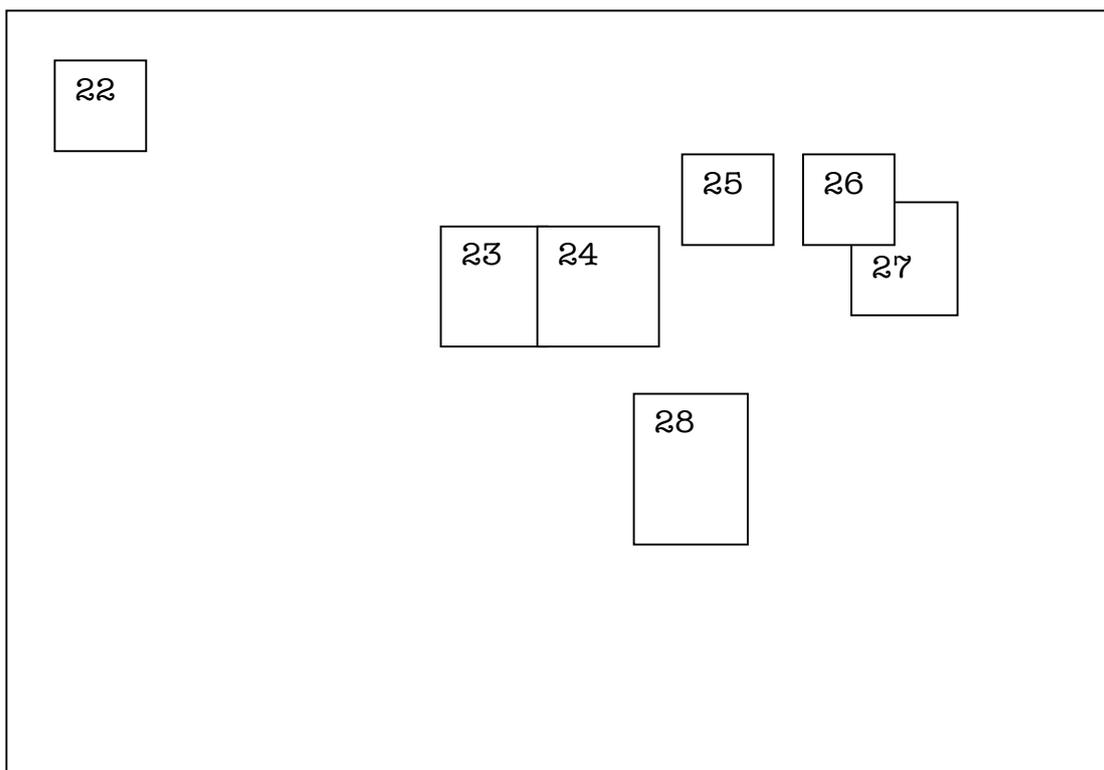
22. Untitled, 2009
Watercolour pencils on paper, 21.5 x 21 cm

23. *Untitled*, 2009
Watercolour pencils on cardboard, 28 x 35.5 cm

24. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic, watercolour pencils and pencil on canvas, 35 x 35 cm

25. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic and pencil on cotton, 20.5 x 21 cm

26. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic, pencil and watercolour pencils on canvas, 20.5 x 21 cm

27. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on found cardboard, 25 x 30 cm

28. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on linoleum, 31.7 x 48.5 cm

Right wall

31

33

34

35 36

32

30

29
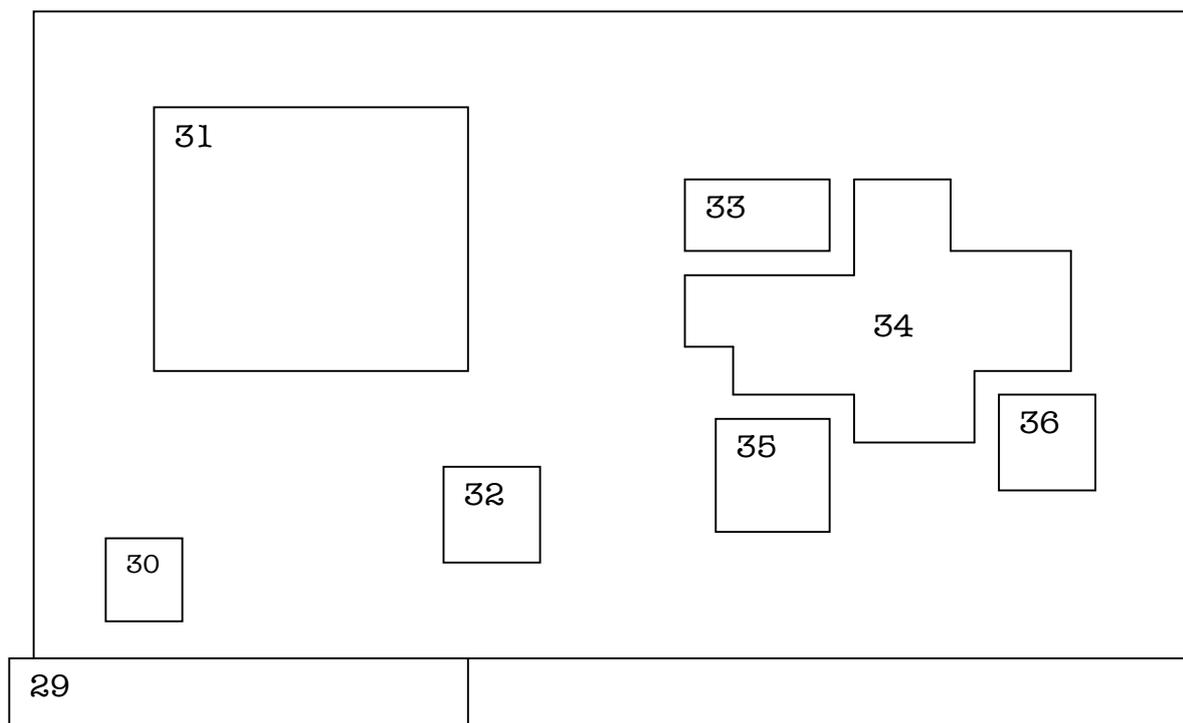
29. *Untitled*, 2009
Acrylic on linoleum, 100 x 100 cm

30. *Untitled*, 2009
India ink on paper, 15 x 21 cm

31. *Untitled*, 2009
India ink on paper, 68.5 x 68 cm

32. *Untitled*, 2009
India ink on paper, 21.5 x 21.5 cm

33. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on paper, 29.3 x 21.5 cm

34. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on found cardboard box, 83 x 70 cm

35. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on cotton, 28.5 x 28.5 cm

36. *Untitled*, 2009
Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 21.5 cm

ON MARINA KASSIANIDOU'S RECENT WORK

The recent installations of Marina Kassianidou are the result of eight years of research, study, work and travel. The artist began her travels and studies in California, where she first came into contact with West Coast painting from the likes of Monique Prieto and Michelle Fierro, while an undergraduate at Stanford. Such American artists would prove highly influential to Kassianidou's formation as an artist, firstly for the historical challenge posed by being a female painter in an artistic landscape traditionally dominated by men and, secondly, through an interest in surface(s) and paint application.

London was her next destination and it was here that she began to come more fully into herself as a practising artist, initially as an MA student at Central Saint Martins College of Art and then at Chelsea College of Art and Design as a PhD candidate. In the meantime, she returned to Limassol, Cyprus, and set up a studio practice while making monthly trips to London for continued research. As a result, her process gradually moved away from a strict fascination with surface and West Coast painting's materiality, and began to function more in the spaces-in-between mark/material/figure/surface as well as with ideas concerning the presence and absence of images.

Kassianidou's drawings on linoleum are strong examples of her more recent work. Perhaps it is better to call them paintings, as she is using acrylic, but this indecision in naming demonstrates that the works are no longer traditionally painting or drawing as such, but a hybrid of both. In one work, she has taken floral motifs and painted them on linoleum to look like wallpaper, which is significant for it shifts the way in which it shifts usual notions of...

NOTES

...different "materialities"... repetitive or obsessive accumulation of material in small shapes/marks/gestures...image materialized through time, during the process of painting or drawing...the partial breaking down of an image through repetition...disappearing marks and surfaces that are already marked, a previously applied marks so that only a trace remains...an ambiguous relationship between mark and surface...a close interaction between mark and surface sometimes leads to confusion between the two...the uneven texture of the paper suggests to me the small lines that follow how the curves and shadows of the surface...the canvas, a fabric, or reminds me of other patterned fabrics...

...material/mark/surface can interact together in different ways, potentially producing meaning...canvases, various types of paper, found surfaces (cardboard boxes and floor covers) and surfaces that are already marked...what happens when all these are juxtaposed, placed together in the same space?...a stretched canvas, traditionally relating more to painting, next to a piece of found cardboard or linoleum...this coming together does something to its status as an "art object"...surfaces start interacting with each other...each becoming one of a group of possible surfaces that can be used...

The image or pattern is difficult to make out – it hovers in a sort of limbo between emerging from the faux wood grain surface and being completely overburdened by that surface.

In a recent installation, an equally proportionate section of a wood grain patterned work has been installed simultaneously on the wall and on the floor. The floor surrounding the piece is also wooden but the different wood pattern of the piece creates a partial interruption across the surface of the floor. Nearby and on the wall is a small drawing and off to one side is a cluster of paintings and drawings all with the same floral motif, a device that invites the spectator to consider what is similar and different about each work, whether it be a work on canvas, paper, or linoleum. What is perhaps most significant about this recent installation (and others similar to it) is that the painting is less about paint on a surface and more concerned with how surface results from the passing of time and lived-in space. So the things and surfaces of the past do not represent history per se but rather the energy of life in the present.

The artist is, thus, moving away from art that is about other art and towards processes such as ageing and weathering that eventually give a surface its character. It is enough to consider another work, where coloured pencil has been applied directly to a wall, to fully comprehend this aspect of her process. The pencil marks from a distance are virtually impossible to make out, whereas up close they become more distinct. What is intriguing is now such drawn marks simultaneously point to the creation and erasure of traces. The artist's marks make more evident the traces left on the wall from people's movements through space, such as fingerprints or smudges. The drawn marks also bring...

...seeing painting: from the wall to the floor and vice versa, instead of strictly wall based.

...where does one work end and another begin?...edges bring to mind interstices – fixed borders across which opposing pairs are found, the end of something and the start of something else...don't edges determine, to a certain extent, how the work is placed in space and how it is viewed or experienced?...how might one disturb the clarity of the border and the kind of interrelates it implies?...the border or hierarchy between mark/surface begins to destabilize, the edges demarcating or separating works become uncertain.

Marina Kassianidou
July 2009

At this point it is worth considering Clement Greenberg's observation – in relation to Kassianidou's work – that flatness and two-dimensionality were the only aspects that modernist painting shared with no other artistic medium. On the one hand, this observation has almost nothing to do with what the artist has achieved, but, on the other hand, it can provide a point of reference from which to turn these ideas about painting inside out. Flatness in Kassianidou's hands becomes not so much a point of separation from other artistic practices, but rather a link to the "minor" arts, such as craftwork and design, and to "feminine" activities like sewing. The point, then, is that history, as well as the history of painting, is anything but fixed.

Ultimately, Kassianidou's work functions in a space where patterns and references to banal domestic environments begin to take on political/social overtones, where a healthy dialectical tension between opposites invite us to look again at things, forms, and spaces that at first glance we often think of as useless or easy to ignore.

(Andrew Smaldone is an artist and art critic based in Florence. He writes on contemporary art and has contributed several reviews for Art Review as well as other publications. He is also a lecturer and helps the Zurich based architecture and art platform number_5 bring project ideas into physical form.)

Andrew Smaldone
July 2009

...our attention to the cancellation of any human activity in a space (such as happens when walls are cleaned and repainted in a gallery after a show goes down).

Marina Kassianidou

Born 1979

EDUCATION

2012 PhD Fine Art, Chelsea College of Art & Design, London, UK
2005 MA Fine Art, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK
2004 MS Computer Science, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA
2002 BA Studio Art (with Distinction), BS Computer Science (with Distinction), Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2008 *Facts and Fictions*, Gloria Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus
2006 *Marina Kassianidou - Paintings*, Gloria Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus

RECENT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2008 *Small is Beautiful*, Flowers East, London, UK
     Transparent, Century Tower, Tel Aviv, Israel
2007 *Small is Beautiful*, Flowers Central, London, UK
     Young Artists Awards 2007, Brio Expressions, Limassol, Cyprus
     Blank Expression, Zion Arts Centre, Manchester, UK
2006 *Small is Beautiful - Portraits*, Flowers Central, London, UK
     Para-dox, Malchei Israel Pet Clinic, Tel Aviv, Israel
2005 *Small is Beautiful*, Flowers Central, London, UK
     MA Show, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London, UK
     XHIBIT05, The Arts Gallery, University of the Arts, London, UK

SELECTED AWARDS

2007 Shortlisted for Brio Expressions Young Artists Awards, Limassol, Cyprus
2002 Arthur Giese Memorial Award for Excellence in Painting, Stanford University Department of Art and Art History, CA, USA
1999 Stanford University President's Award, Stanford University, CA, USA
1998 CASP/AMIDEAST scholarship to study in the USA

Image details:
Untitled (detail), 2009, acrylic on linoleum, 62 x 48 cm
Untitled (detail), 2009, India ink on paper, 15 x 21 cm
Untitled (detail), 2008, pencil and colour pencils on cardboard, 28 x 36 cm
*Untitled*, 2009, acrylic, pencil and colour pencils on canvas, 35 x 35 cm

RE-SURFACE
MARINA KASSIANIDOU

The time of day
Works by Marina Kassianidou
October 19 - November 22, 2013

Statement

How can an artist make work without asserting "full presence"? How much is "enough"? The exhibition comprises of collages and drawings on different types of surfaces: regular A4 lined paper, used packing paper, handmade paper, and fabric samples. All of these works center on activities of marking. I conceptualize marking as a way of relating to an "other," be that a surface, a space or a viewer. While working with each surface, I try to come up with marks or ways of "marking" that somehow relate to the surface—its appearance, everyday use or history. These responsive marks or interventions usually require a long time and involve meticulous processes of making. At the same time, they quite often operate in almost indiscernible ways, hiding within natural marks, such as shadows and highlights, or within preexisting printed marks, such as the lines of a sheet of writing paper.

Biography

Marina Kassianidou is an artist and academic whose practice combines painting, drawing, collage, installation, site-specific art, and found objects. She graduated from Stanford University, where she was a CASP/Fulbright scholar, with degrees in Studio Art and Computer Science (both with Distinction). She obtained an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. She is currently a PhD candidate in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, UK. She has exhibited her work in group exhibitions in the UK, USA, Cyprus, Israel, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain and France, and she has had solo exhibitions in Nicosia, Cyprus (Gloria Gallery, 2006, 2008) and London, UK (Tenderpixel Gallery, 2009). She has been a resident artist at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences, Ragdale Foundation, and at the Stonehouse Center for the Contemporary Arts. She has participated in conferences in Europe and the USA and her writings and work have appeared in the journals *Arteri* (Cyprus, UK), *ArtSEEN* (Florence, London, New York) and *The International Journal of the Image*. Her work is currently featured in the book *Beyond Contemporary Art* by Etan Ilfeld.

Exhibition List

1.   ***Light capture*** *(Attempt #3)*, 2012–present (ongoing piece)
        Clear tape on packing paper roll
        60 x 150 cm (23.6 x 59 inches)

        This is part of a series of clear tape collages on packing paper. I first identify and trace over any highlights I can see on the piece of paper, as it is placed on my desk. I then cut pieces of clear tape, by hand, to match these highlighted areas and I place them over the corresponding areas on the packing paper.

2.   ***Faulty Samples***, 2013
        Fabric collages
        Dimensions variable

        The work *Faulty Samples* consists of a range of interventions, using collage, on fabric samples obtained from fabric and home furnishing stores. In some works, the preexisting pattern has been disrupted or a new pattern has been created by adding pieces of the same kind of fabric on top of the printed image.

3.   ***Dotted lines***, 2010–present (ongoing series)
        Paper collages
        21 x 29.7 cm each collage (8.3 x 11.7 inches)

        This is an ongoing series of collages. I punch holes out of lined A4 paper and glue the punched out chads on other sheets of the same type of paper. The choice of a hole puncher directly relates to the paper, its use, and its existing holes. When gluing the chads on lined paper, I try to either recreate the existing lines, even if imperfectly, or disrupt and redirect them.

4.   ***Diary*** *(Shadow Pieces), 2010-2012*
        Pencil on paper
        21.5 x 21.5 cm each drawing (8.5 x 8.5 inches)

        The drawings capture the shadows formed on the paper due to the light in the studio. Each drawing corresponds to a different morning.

Plans &
Renovations

Marina Kassianidou
Artist-in-Residence
The Centre for Drawing

Opening:
April 2, 3 - 5 pm

Open days:
April 3, 10 am - 5 pm
April 4, 10 am - 4 pm

The Centre for Drawing
Wimbledon College of Art
Merton Hall Road
London SW19 3QA

The residency is supported by the Cyprus
Ministry of Education and Culture

With thanks to the Wimbledon MA Drawing
students and staff

PLANS AND RENOVATIONS

Marina Kassianidou

Artist-in-Residence
The Centre for Drawing
March 24–April 4, 2014

Between April 2 and 4, Marina Kassianidou will present the work she has been making as artist-in-residence at The Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon College of Art. The exhibition will consist of site-specific works as well as ongoing pieces.

Kassianidou's work focuses on the relationships between mark and surface in drawing, painting, and collage. During her residency, Kassianidou has been working on a range of interventions that "subtly amplify" aspects of the space: cracks on the walls, marks and stains on the floor and windows, and decorative patterns that form part of the floor. Moreover, taking the concept of "renovation" as her starting point, Kassianidou has completed two sample books, consisting of "modified" fabric samples, as well as a series of collages that recreate, reorganize and disrupt a range of wood patterns.

Opening:
April 2, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Open days:
April 3, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
April 4, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Location:
The Centre for Drawing
Wimbledon College of Art
Merton Hall Road, London SW19 3QA

PLANS AND RENOVATIONS

Marina Kassianidou

Artist-in-Residence
The Centre for Drawing
March 24–April 4, 2014

WORKS

Project Space

Masquetry (III, IV, V, VI, VIII), 2014
Adhesive vinyl collages on board and wood

Rain (March 26, 2014, 3:00–4:30 pm), 2014
Acrylic medium on glass

Light Grains (I, II), 2014
Light on wood

Faulty Samples, 2012–present
Acrylic on found fabric samples; Fabric collages on found fabric samples
(The *Faulty Samples* series is shown in book format and on the wall)

Light Capture (Attempt #2), 2014
Clear tape collage on used packing paper

Light Capture (Attempt #3), 2012–present
Clear tape collage on packing paper roll

Renovation, 2014 (floor pieces)
Adhesive vinyl collages on floor; Acrylic on vinyl flooring; Adhesive vinyl on vinyl flooring

Arches, 2014 (wall drawing)
Pencil on wall

Hallway

Wrinklegrams, 2012–present
Acrylic on writing paper

Dotted Lines, 2014
Paper collages on cork sheets

MINOR REVISIONS
CURATED MARINA KASSIANIDOU
11 AUG - 3 SEPT | PV 11 AUG 6-8PM

REBECCA CHALMERS
CADI FROEHLICH
CRISTINA GARRIDO
ANDREA MUENDELEIN
LOIZOS OLYMPIOS
GALI TIMEN
MARINA KASSIANIDOU
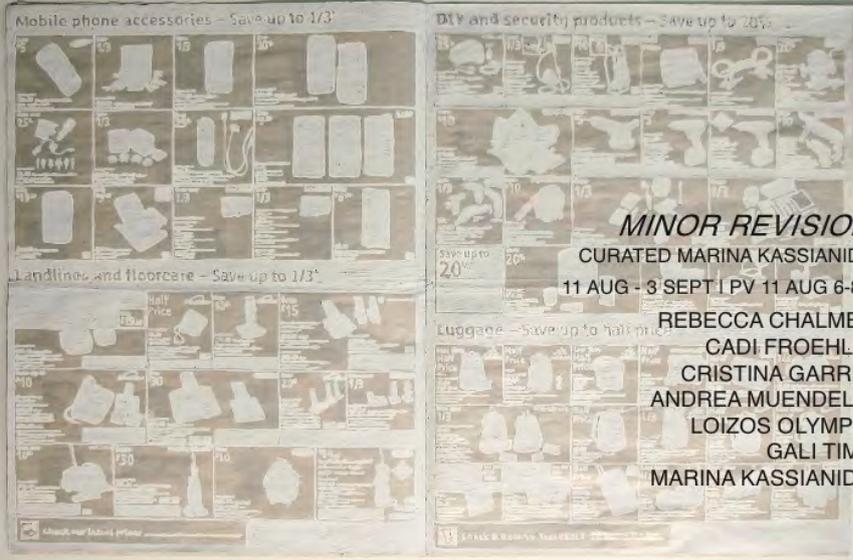
TENDERPIXEL.   WWW.TENDERPIXEL.COM   WED- SAT 1-7PM

T E N D E R P I X E L .

MINOR REVISIONS
CURATED BY MARINA KASSIANIDOU

REBECCA CHALMERS
CADI FROEHLICH
CRISTINA GARRIDO
ANDREA MUENDELEIN
LOIZOS OLYMPIOS
GALI TIMEN
MARINA KASSIANIDOU

PV THURSDAY 11 AUGUST 6-8 PM
11 AUGUST - 3 SEPT 2011
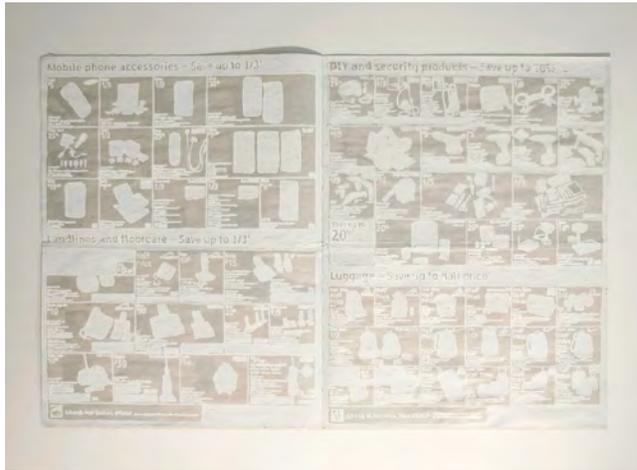
Cristina Garrido, 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being' 2011. Correction fluid on paper.

Tenderpixel is pleased to present the group exhibition 'Minor Revisions', curated by the artist Marina Kassianidou. The exhibition focuses on the use of found objects or images. Each artist presents work that results from the layering of the original object or image, with all its previous history and meanings, with the artist's action. The artistic intervention, or whatever the artist does to each object, does not completely erase the object but rather revises it. In a sense, the found object and the artistic gesture come to work together. As such, meaning in these works is not produced in isolation from the world. Rather, the meanings produced are a combination of what was there with what was added, emphasizing overlaps and interconnectedness. The viewers are asked to look at the works closely and reconsider how they may be understood as both everyday objects/images and artworks.

The artists participating in the exhibition include Rebecca Chalmers, Cadi Froehlich, Cristina Garrido, Andrea Muendelein, Loizos Olympios, Gali Timen and Marina Kassianidou.

Chalmers makes intricate drawings on the inner surface of found envelopes. These drawings are informed by the existing patterns and colours on each envelope. As a result, the drawings sometimes partially blend in with the printed design. Froehlich presents a different type of drawing on a found side table. Her intervention, which is based on the passage of time, evokes past moments as well as potential future moments in which this side table might participate.

Garrido's work focuses on 'erasing' existing information from found or purchased printed material. Her labour-intensive process of working raises questions concerning value and worthlessness. Muendelein presents a photography installation based on a collection of found photographs from 1900 depicting landscapes, travel encounters and street scenes. By revisiting fragments from these private histories today, Muendelein's work explores their resonance in the present.

Olympios photographs found footage, capturing the response of his digital camera to the TV monitor or the demise of scrambled low-resolution trailers from the Internet. The resulting captured image is transformed, leading to the undoing of film genres, the destruction of images, and the concealment or deconstruction of the depicted body. Timen has performed very simple and humorous actions to alter two found toys. Despite their simplicity, her actions manage to effectively revise the narrative associated with each toy, resulting in double or multiple meanings. Finally, Kassianidou has used found surfaces to create collages that partially disrupt existing patterns in space.

Tenderpixel is a unique space for promoting critical and conceptual work by emerging and mid-career artists. An artist-run space in Central London, Tenderpixel showcases new work by individual artists, curators & collectives. Acting as a project platform, programming includes talks, performances, workshops and an annual experimental film festival, Tenderflix. Tenderpixel's programming generates an expansive network of international artists, & fosters opportunities for commissions, collections and museum acquisitions. Altering the way galleries conventionally represent via a roster of exclusive artists, Tenderpixel believes in constantly supporting new artists and projects.

TENDERPIXEL.

MINOR REVISIONS
REBECCA CHALMERS CADI FROEHLICH CRISTINA GARRIDO ANDREA MUENDELEIN
LOIZOS OLYMPIOS GALI TIMEN MARINA KASSIANIDOU

Minor Revisions, Major Implications?
Thoughts and questions

When submitting a paper for publication, mostly to academic journals, there are usually four possible outcomes: accept, minor revisions, major revisions, and reject. "Accept" is straightforward–there are no suggestions for improvement and the paper will, thus, be published as it. Similarly, "reject" means that the paper is deemed unsuitable and will not be published. "Minor" and "major" revisions might be somewhat harder to define. Minor revisions usually refer to small textual changes. Following these changes, the paper will be ready for publication. Major revisions imply that the majority of the paper should probably be rewritten.

The artists in the exhibition, while encountering the found objects or images, do not simply accept or reject them. Instead, they engage in a process of revising them. The revisions can, for the most part, be seen as minor: a small piece of paper with a couple of words; the rearranging and reprinting of old photographs and their presentation in a contemporary context; the photographing of images as they appear on the TV; the drawing of subtle images on envelopes; the careful repainting over postcards or leaflets; the layering of small pieces of fablon over scratches on the floor; the creation of hot drink rings on a side table. The structure of the found object or image is not fundamentally changed. The object or image is not exactly reconstructed. Or is it?

In fact, it may not be possible to precisely define what a minor or major revision is. Garrido removes artworks from postcards by painting over them. The revision, one might say, is a major one–the art object depicted on the postcard, the reason for the postcard's existence, is gone. The revisions that Chalmers, Froehlich, Muendelein and Timen engage in take everyday objects out of their usual contexts and convert them into art objects. A narrative or an additional meaning is added to the objects through the artists' actions. Olympios photographs found footage but the resulting image is almost completely transformed. How minor are these revisions then? Going back to the publication analogy, if the revised paper is ideally an improved version of the original paper, then what about the revised object or image? Is it, in some way, an improved version of the original?

The dictionary tells me that the origin of the word "revise" comes from the French "réviser," which means "look at," or from the Latin "revisere," which means "look at again." Just as the artists have revised the objects and images they found, perhaps the viewers can look at or "revise" these works again, in relation to the everyday objects and images they engage with and also in relation to the other works in the exhibition space. Perhaps a series of re-visions will be initiated, including those of the artists, curator and viewers.

Marina Kassianidou
London, August 2011

Floor plan with numbered positions: 10, 3, 4, 5, 2, 14, 6, 1, 15, 7, 8, 12 + 13, 9, 10, 11, 10, ENTRANCE
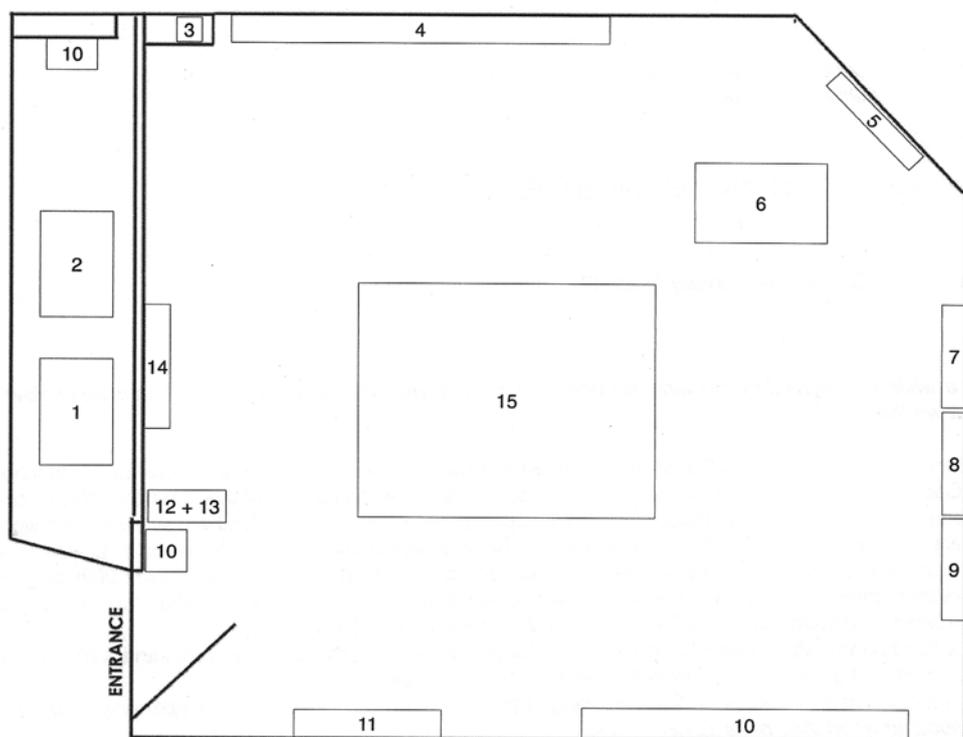
1- CRISTINA GARRIDO
'Our best new deals' 2011
The Unbearable Lightness of Being Series
correction fluid on paper
40 x 28 cm

2- CRISTINA GARRIDO
'Serious Savings!' 2011
The Unbearable Lightness of Being Series
correction fluid on paper
38 x 29 cm

3- ANDREA MUENDELEIN
'Lake Ephemera' 2011
C-Type, Archival Print, Edition of 50
297 mm x 420 mm

4- ANDREA MUENDELEIN
'Lake Ephemera' 2011
Installation of found photographs : Photo-
graphic silverprints, perspex frames, mirror
1) 103 mm x 62 mm, Lake Ephemera at
noon - from our back door
2) 130 mm x 106 mm, Untitled,
3) 130 mm x 106 mm, Untitled
4) 137 mm x 111 mm, Lake Co
5) 88 mm x 106 mm, Mt Hood
6) 130 mm x 106 mm, Untitled
7) 121 mm x 106 mm, Untitled
8) 130 mm x 106 mm, Untitled
9) 110 mm x 88 mm, My nephew Charlie

10) 122 mm x 88 mm, flood time
Dimensions variable

5- REBECCA CHALMERS
'Bradford 12th March' 2010
Ink on envelope
63.5 x 50 cm

6- CADI FROEHLICH
'Untitled (Tea Table)' 2010
Hot drink rings on side table
40 x 50 x 50 cm

7- LOIZOS OLYMPIOS
'This Unbearable Darkness' 2011
The Impressionable Retina Series
Inkjet Print
30cmx40cm

8- LOIZOS OLYMPIOS
'The Girl Has Eyes' 2011
The Impressionable Retina Series
Inkjet Print
30cmx40cm

9- LOIZOS OLYMPIOS
Untitled
The Impressionable Retina Series
2011
Inkjet Print
30cmx40cm

10- CRISTINA GARRIDO
'Untitled' 2011
Veil of Invisibility Series
mixed media on postcards
each 10 x 15 cm

11- REBECCA CHALMERS
'Edinburgh 5th May' 2010
Coloured pencil on envelope
51.5 x 43.5 cm

12- GALI TIMEN
'The Giraffe' 2011
Plastic giraffe and mixed media
18 x 10 x 3 cm

13- GALI TIMEN
'Just Married' 2010
Intervened found object, Edition 1/2
5.5 x 8 x 4 cm

14- MARINA KASSIANIDOU
'Untitled' 2011
Site-specific fablon collage
Dimensions variable

15- MARINA KASSIANIDOU
'Untitled' 2011
Site-specific fablon collage
Dimensions variable

CAMOUFLAGE

PROPOSAL FOR GROUP EXHIBITION AT PHYTORIO

Marina Kassianidou
Web: http://www.marinaek.com
Email: marinaek@gmail.com

Camouflage
Proposal for Group Exhibition

Marina Kassianidou
marinaek@gmail.com

TITLE (tentative)

Camouflage

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPT

> *Camouflage[1]*
> - *the disguising of military personnel, equipment, and installations by painting or covering them to make them blend in with their surroundings*
> - *clothing or materials used as camouflage*
> - *the natural coloring or form of an animal which enables it to blend in with its surroundings*
> - *actions or devices intended to disguise or mislead*

> *From whatever side one approaches things, the ultimate problem turns out in the final analysis to be that of distinction: distinctions between the real and the imaginary, between waking and sleeping, between ignorance and knowledge, etc.—all of them, in short, distinctions in which valid consideration must demonstrate a keen awareness and the demand for resolution. Among distinctions, there is assuredly none more clear-cut than that between the organism and its surroundings; at least there is none in which the tangible experience of separation is more immediate.[2]*

The concept of the exhibition is based on two stimuli: on the one hand, my own personal interests within arts theory, and specifically the issue of "camouflage" or the "disappearance" of the work of art and/or the artist; on the other hand, my encounter with the peculiar space at Phytorio, a greenhouse "disguised" as an exhibition space or, converesely, an exhibition space "disguised" as a greenhouse.

In the essay "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," the French theoretician Roger Caillois discusses various organisms that come to resemble their surroundings through mimicry. He focuses on insects which mimic their surroundings in order to protect themselves from predators. To some extent, Caillois challenges the notion that this camouflage is solely due to the need of the organism to protect itself and theorizes it instead as a kind of pathology. Caillois compares this biological phenomenon to psychological experiences of subjects who perceive themselves becoming absorbed into or devoured by the physical space surrounding them. He names this condition "legendary psychasthenia" and defines it as the disturbance between personality and space.[3] Caillois calls this process *"depersonalization by*

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[1] Definition from Oxford Dictionaries (http://oxforddictionaries.com/)
[2] Roger Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," *October* 31 (1984): 16.
[3] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 28.

Marina Kassianidou
marinaek@gmail.com

assimilation to space."[4] This absorption into the surrounding environment brings about a movement from the animate towards the inanimate.[5] Thus, the body as a living being starts to conceptually disappear.

      In a sense, the space of the gallery, as a partially transformed greenhouse located in a garden amidst trees and plants, is subjected to a similar condition of legendary psychasthenia, "lost" in its surroundings. Moreover, the concept of camouflage is intimately linked with the natural environment, in other words the environment surrounding the gallery.

THE EXHIBITION
      Each artist in the exhibition will present work that deals with the concept of camouflage, or what Caillois calls "depersonalization by assimilation to space," and its implications—disappearance, hiding, invisibility, blending in, covering, disguise, misleading, protection.

      Each work will deal with one or more of these ideas in a variety of ways, producing a number of "camouflages." Some of the proposed artists have already developed practices that make use of a kind of invisibility. In such practices, the artists' marks or actions partially disappear into the environment/surface/object. This partial disappearance challenges the agency and body of the artist, leading perhaps to her partial eclipsing. This eclipsing may lead to a rethinking of the relationships between artist-artwork-viewer, a proposition that will be explored through the exhibition.

      Some of the other proposed artists will make works specifically for the exhibition and space, responding to the topic of "camouflage" and to the specific features of the space, i.e. surfaces, textures, shapes, surroundings, histories etc.

      The concept of "camouflage" will operate on several levels. Firstly, it will operate within each piece presented. It will also operate in the relationship between the pieces and the actual space of the gallery. I would like to experiment with the installation of the pieces, utilizing the floor, glass, and surfaces of the walls in ways that push the idea of "camouflage" further. As a result of this concept, some of the art pieces may be quite subtle, requiring the viewer to spend time within the space. Consequently, the concept of "camouflage" will come into play in the interaction between viewers and artworks. What happens between viewer and artist when the artist's work borders on disappearance? What is the status of a visual artwork that does not "announce" its presence to the viewer but rather tries to remain invisible?

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[4] Ibid., 30.
[5] Ibid.

APPENDIX C

PUBLICATIONS

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

"Redefining Norms." *Arteri* 2 (Spring 2007).

Backstage. Nicosia: Gloria Gallery, 2008. (Limited edition text-based artist's multiple. 200 signed copies. Contains texts on art and a conversation between the artists Marina Kassianidou, Andrew Smaldone and Gali Timen.)

Kassianidou, Marina and Andrew Smaldone. *Re-Surface*. London: Tenderpixel Gallery, 2009. Exhibition pamphlet.

"In the Gap Between Visibility and Invisibility: The 'Fugitive' Image." *The International Journal of the Image* 2, no. 3 (2012): 65–84.

"A Matter of Surface." In *Fine Art Practice, Research and Education Across Europe: PARADOX Fine Art European Forum Conference Proceedings*, 61–74. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada; New York, NY: Downhill Publishing LTD, 2013. CD-ROM.

"Lost in Space? 'Invisible' Marks, Artworks and Artists." *RevistArquis, Journal of the School of Architecture, University of Costa Rica* 2, no. 4 (2013): 82–98.

Redefining norms

The history of painting, for better or for worse, has been full of dichotomies and oppositions. One such dichotomy concerns the terms "body" and "surface" and the issue of gender.

Historically, the body of the painter is associated with the male body and the surface of the canvas with the female body. A quick look at the history of painting shows it to be mostly his-story and the body of the painter is presumed to be mostly his body. In her essay "Painting, Feminism, History," Griselda Pollock argues that the "body of the painter" in western modernist discourse is a male body (Pollock, 2001). Man is the artist and woman is his material. Man is the body of the painter and woman is the surface on which he acts. This situation, Pollock states, is problematic for women due to the contradictory placements and significations of the "body of the painter" and the "feminine body" (Pollock, 2001). The constructed art history and art theory of the west, mainly since the 19th century, has turned the body of the painter and the feminine body into two contradictory and incompatible concepts. The feminine body, in contemporary art discourse, has had to settle for the surface.

In a sense, the surface of a painting is seen as feminine due to its presumed passivity and the fact that it is acted upon by the painter, who is typically seen as male. This body/surface gendered dichotomy implies several bipolar positions surrounding painting that are also gendered: activity/passivity, looking/being seen, subject/object. Historically, the first word in each pair is associated with masculinity and the second with femininity (Pollock, 1988; Jacobs, 1999).

These fixed and rigid oppositions, however, are something constructed in language and not in the actual medium. In other words, there is nothing inherent in painting that makes it a masculine activity. Unfortunately, all the rhetoric that has surrounded painting since the 16th century has sometimes been seen as part of the medium. This coupling of language/medium probably became even tighter in the 20th century due to modernism's emphasis on the medium of painting and its insistence on painting's purity and autonomy.

Given this situation, how can painting liberate itself from its history? How can it confront the rhetoric that once surrounded it to the point of suffocation? I think the answer can be found within the medium itself. The flexibility and plasticity of the actual paint can be used to challenge the rhetoric and history of painting and open up the discipline making it inclusive rather than exclusive.

Paint is a fluid, plastic medium, itself resisting any specific categorisation. It can be solid or liquid, thick or thin, flat or textured, transparent or opaque, matte or glossy. It can exist as blobs, drips, splashes or stains. It moves through physical boundaries with an ease particular to it. In whatever way the paint is applied it is always a body, a distinct mass of matter being applied on top of another distinct mass of matter. It is also always a surface, part of the picture plane. The interesting thing here is the overlap that occurs between body/surface. The subject of the painting might be a body in the physical world, that is a mass of matter distinct from other masses, but it is translated into a painted surface on the canvas. The paint that makes up the painted surface is the actual body of that surface. Moreover, paint points to an absence, the depicted/implied body that is not there, and a presence, the paint's own presence. Paint is both body and surface, presence and absence, itself and something else as well.

This undecidability of the body/surface dichotomy may be able to challenge the other dichotomies that have historically plagued painting and may ultimately lead to a situation where terms, such as body and surface, become irreducible and fluid, transformed into a flowing continuity rather than a fixed opposition.

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BACKSTAGE

MARINA

KASSIANIDOU

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COPY   /

WRITING PAINTING, PAINTING WRITING

What does it mean for a painter to write about her work? Whenever I have to write something about what I do, I find myself in an extremely difficult position. I actually enjoy writing but writing about my painting...I find that problematic.

Of course, there are many advantages to writing about my work. Writing enables me to have some say in how my work gets talked about and to participate in the theoretical discourse surrounding my paintings. It also enables me to create a verbal/written language that goes along with the visual language I create through painting. After all, painting, for me, is like building a language, coming up with my own visual vocabulary and then putting elements together to create unlikely connections and draw unresolved parallels.

Writing about painting, however, is like trying to translate between two languages that don't have a one-to-one correspondence. How do you translate color? What is the equivalent of paint's texture in language? And what about space? A painting's spaces, colors and textures can't be translated in words simply because they are other than words. They exist in the domain of painting

from which verbal explanations and words have withdrawn. To write about painting, one must try to turn things that almost resist naming into names.

That is not an easy thing to do. For me, writing and painting are different processes. When I paint, I think in paint. I start thinking in blobs and drips and splashes and stains. Paint does all sorts of strange unexpected things. It sticks, it wrinkles, it slides off the canvas. Based on what it does, I respond. When I paint, the painting is its own reality and the thinking is in paint. Having to re-think the same thing in words doesn't work as well. When I start writing about my painting, on the other hand, I start thinking in writing. The specificity of the process kicks in and I get into things like sentence structure, rhythm and flow of ideas. The thing becomes a piece in itself. It becomes its own reality, a creative act in its own right. By the end, I don't even know how much it says about the paintings. New ideas find their way into the writing, through the writing. I start seeing new connections and I arrive at new conclusions. The how, in a sense, starts to shape the what.

And, to be honest, I prefer that. I don't want to write something that explains my work. What would the point of that be? And, besides, what if I want to make paintings that resist description and explanation? I much prefer the written piece to be a work in its own right,

something that was initially generated from the painting but then took on a life of its own. I would like the two pieces, each in its own language, to start a dialogue with each other. In other words, when writing, I need to accept the untranslatability of the painting and, rather than explain the painting, try to discover something new through the writing. After all, both the painting and the writing will somehow end up being about the same thing: a question, a mystery.

LISTS

  I'm obsessed with writing lists. I write lists about pretty much anything...lists of paintings to send to a show...*Once or twice, Still stirring, From the top*...lists of changes I want to make to a painting...add more lines, change background color...lists of things I have to buy...raw umber acrylic paint, linseed oil, turpentine...lists of things I have to do...write paper, pay tuition fees, book plane ticket...lists of color combinations I'd like to try...black and beige, black and khaki, light pink and brown...lists of artists I should look at more closely...Katie Pratt, Marianna Uutinen, Alexis Harding, Michelle Fierro, Omar Chacon, Laura Godfrey-Isaacs...lists of authors I need to read and reread...Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Gilles Deleuze, Siri Hustvedt, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, Rosemary Betterton, Yves Alain Bois, Rosalind Krauss, Hilary Robinson, Mira Schor...

VIEW FROM THE STUDIO

The studio I worked in while living in the States didn't have any windows. It was a big room with glass on the roof. When you looked up all you could see was the sky and some tree branches. My studio in London was on the third floor of a building on Charing Cross road. It had one window looking down onto a narrow yet busy street. My studio now is an old house in downtown Limassol. All of its windows look out onto a hedge that surrounds and almost hides the entire house. When I look out any of the windows all I see is green. I am literally cut off from the neighborhood.

I actually requested that the hedge not be trimmed. I like hiding behind it while I'm working. I feel as if I'm living the myth of the lonely artist, isolated in the studio, frantically painting away. It's not really like that of course. I mean I like having my peace and quiet while I'm working, but can

anything really happen in complete isolation? Doesn't everything exist in a context? Don't things – people, thoughts, objects, whatever - need to interconnect? One of my teachers used to say that "that's what it's all about" – making connections, being able to relate things, even in strange ways.

She never specified what "it" was...maybe art, maybe life...who knows. But I agree with her.

IN CONVERSATION

Extract of an email conversation between three artists

MK: I've been thinking a lot lately about the issue of control during art making. How much can you (or should you) control the process or the outcome? Of course it depends on what you want to do...I realize that. But lately I've been preoccupied with the issue of control in my work. What if I let go of control and let paint do its thing...as a way of opening up my practice? Andrew, as a painter, you might be dealing with similar issues. Gali, I'm guessing your projects often depend on other people and resources so it's not clear how far you can control things.

AS: This issue of control in art making is definitely a rich topic and if my memory is correct Marina we might have talked about this in relation to Marcel Duchamp and his standard stoppages during the course at St Martins a few years back - although it might have been something else regarding Duchamp?

In any case -as far as painting goes, I've seen painters approach this issue in a variety of ways. The most obvious thing to say I guess is that some painters really do try to control the paint and others try to let the paint guide them. In my own process I'm using liquid paint and with my drawing, ink is my primary medium, so there's definitely an aspect of allowing the paint or medium to literally run freely. But I'm also using traditional tools like brushes so I don't see my process as completely letting go of control. There's definitely a balance going on between letting go completely and moving things around the way I want them.

One thing I do, however, which changes things up a bit is to paint my images upside down, but this perhaps has more to do with seeing than control. Although one of the primary reasons I paint and draw upside down is so I don't allow preconceived notions about what the painting should look like in the end to come in to play at the beginning. I'm trying to put off that moment where the painting is what I would consider a painting and let a bit of chance help me out so to speak.

Getting off of strictly painting for a moment...there's audience participation. What about that? It's definitely something we see quite a bit of... Here though it might be interesting to point out that with painting there is also audience participation as the viewer is the one who really finishes the work.

So what do you think of audience participation?

GT: My first response, without reading Andrew's one yet (even though I'm quite curious about it), is that there is

not such a thing as control in art. It is true that part of my pieces include events or projects that others take part in, but as you know that's not my only practice... Even in the pieces I make by myself (assemblages and others) - I can't account as 'control freak' pieces.

As a conceptual artist, I think 'control' is the image we have in our mind. The question is how close we reach that (the utopian thing) in our practice as artists (and it does not matter what the medium used is). There is also another question: do we really need to get close to the 'thing' (the image in our mind)?

If we are not reaching that (because of technical problems or others) do we really get a bad result? Can we see the quality of the result even if it is a bit far from the thing we meant to make?

OK, I've just read Andrew's email. It is true that you can find a technique that releases you, at least for a bit, from control. But if you use one of these techniques - doesn't it mean that you get another kind of control?

AS: Gali this question you ask is interesting about getting close to the thing we have in our mind - or trying to make something that resembles an idea we have in our mind.

I think something regarding the relationship between art and life is also relevant to this discussion. What attitude does one have to the separation to art and life? Rauschenberg's famous quote that he wanted to work in the gap between art and life to me implies that he was interested in both control and lack of control. Whereas someone like the photorealist painter Richard Estes' desire to keep a total control over the separation between art and life gives me the impression that he did indeed want to have control in his art or over his artistic process.

To me this art and life discussion is like a bad marriage. There's no happy ending but there's no divorce either. Different artists have different opinions about it but it's definitely worth thinking about. And even seeing how different people have approached the topic.

But getting back to Gali's idea - so what are the processes one uses to get to that vision of a utopia? And is it even possible to get there or even worthwhile to have such ideas in the first place?

Where does control or lack of control come into the picture?

MK: On the issue of audience participation: Definitely an interesting issue and I agree that even in the case of paintings the line of communication, so to speak, is completed when the viewer comes along...painter - painting - viewer. I recently read a book about this issue...the author placed a lot of emphasis on objects of

art as being intersubjective objects, things that enable some form of connection between artist and viewer. If I remember correctly, she insisted on calling the viewer "perceiver" instead of viewer because viewing implies a visual connection and the author suggested that there was more to the relationship between art object and "perceiver" other than just visual observation.

And as far as the issue of control goes, you can't exactly control how the viewer/perceiver will respond to an art object. But, going to Barthes for a minute, the different responses/interpretations/"readings" of a work of art could be seen as part of the work of art...the work of art as itself and all of its "readings," which of course the artist can't control.

Onto Gali's point of the utopian image: you know, I really try to get away from that when I'm in the studio but it's hard. There are cases when I have an "ideal" image in mind and of course it doesn't always turn out the way I want it or, if it does, it just doesn't look as good as when it was in my head. This is one of the reasons why I no longer make preparatory sketches for a painting - if the sketch is good then I get into the process of trying to make a painting just like the sketch and most of the times it doesn't happen. I mean, you can't really replicate the accidents that happened in the sketch that might have made it good. So instead of making preparatory sketches

I go straight for the painting...if it work's out, good, otherwise it just stays in my studio.

AS: As I'm looking at your response Marina it seems to make perfect sense what you write, or as it were what Barthes has to say.

But then it makes me think about the how and why we started this conversation in the first place, and I'm thinking well it might be true that we can't control the different responses or readings but should we try to imitate this type of lack of control in our own processes?

In other words given that we have no control over the viewer/perceiver do we then say ok well in my own work therefore I'll strive for lack of control (although I don't know if one can strive for lack of control!)

I suppose my 'answer' to this dilemma would be to say that I'll attempt to control things in my own process because I feel this is related to freedom within discipline i.e. clean brushes and clean studio even if the painting is 'messy' and just not worry about the viewer because that's impossible - I can't control their views or responses.

But in any case I think an idea that perhaps can relate to all of this is an idea about the quality of one's life. How can art improve one's quality of life? Or the quality of life for others?

I recently heard an artist say that there are many artists who dedicate their life to art but perhaps that the situation would be interesting if contemporary art was more dedicated to life.

I thought this very intriguing...

GT: Andrew, it is a true that even when we don't wish to, we get a kind of mix of life and art. It means that our life and background 'infect'/influence our vision and way of making things (art objects or others).

Barthes was right, in his way, when he accounted the viewer as one of the game's players --- which means the ball is in his/her court from time to time. But how does the 'reader' influence the artist and his/her way of working? Does it mean that we still live in a period of 'ordered art', like we know from 'darker' ages?

Oscar Wilde wrote about it in his preface to 'The Picture of Dorian Gray.'

As to the sketches - if it looks good why not account it as a final piece? I hope you understand what I mean by that.

AS: I think it's interesting to think about 'ordered art'. Primarily because out of that type of system where art was controlled (at least in Europe) by the church or perhaps the state or a combination of both there was an extremely rich amount of art that emerged. Not necessarily in the Middle Ages but perhaps right after around 1290 and then later in the renaissance.

My point being that each artist at the time was literally forced to work with certain subject matters. But in the end we can recognize certain last suppers as being art while others remain simple illustrations of a story.

Also on that point I feel that art from a thousand years ago greatly affected the quality of life of people within a community. It might be because art still functioned as a didactic tool. Whereas in my opinion I don't think the art of today has very much of an effect or affects us in any way. It's more like a party where people wish to be seen and heard. The quality of the art is questionable and its vibrations within the community are even less interesting.

And even when artists attempt to include the community in some way, all to often it resembles a sociological experiment.

My point with all of this is that I think our time is not represented by a direct overarching order but in a way young artists are clearly conforming to certain trends seen at art fairs and what they learn at school.

Just take our old school St. Martins as an example. I don' think the education at St Martins is all that different from Goldsmiths or for that matter Yale or

Columbia. So the 'good universities', high-end galleries, and art fairs in a way function as a type of new church. The differences are obvious but globalization does seem to influence art in ways that are mysteriously like dogmatic churches.

But then again out of this, art does indeed emerge, so perhaps ordered art is not such a bad thing both in the sense of the old way and the newer globalized way. Artists are good at being creative within systems... So ultimately I still think there will be good art and it won't completely turn into the music industry, which I feel is like a big wave that just crushes everything in its path forcing people to either conform or never get a record deal.

As for sketches I feel those can definitely be considered 'finished'.

MK: I actually think it's quite important for artists to be working within a system or context. In many ways, it's the system within which an artist works and the rules/issues/problems that surround his/her life that shape one's artistic practice. Imagine not having to face problems and being able to do absolutely anything? I think that kind of total freedom might turn out to be more restrictive in a sense. When you have to deal with solving problems (e.g. a studio that's not big enough, not enough money to buy the material you want, having to make a specific painting for a show, deadlines etc) I think you tend to get more creative. You look for ways to work around those problems. And I think this is what many of the Renaissance artists did - looked for ways to get around the system and possibly subvert some aspects of it through their art. In that way, some of that art manages to rise above its system and order.

And I agree that a lot of the art we see today seems to conform to some unspoken system set by schools, galleries, collectors etc. It can be frustrating...very often I get quite disappointed when I visit exhibitions. But, luckily, I still manage to find things that I like and that inspire me. And, interestingly enough, many of the things I like are considered "sketches." The last Laura Owens show I saw at the Camden Arts Center was great but the best room in the show was the one that had her "sketches" - lots of small paintings on which she just tried out different things that later made their appearance in her big paintings in the other rooms. So, why even differentiate between sketch and finished thing? Why not treat everything as one? I guess this is what I was trying to say in a previous email about not making sketches - why not see everything as a finished piece in its own right? In that sense, maybe I see all of my work as "sketches/finished paintings."

GT: As to the point of art as a didactic tool - it is true that it was used like that ages ago. But even now we can find a version of that: in any respectable museum you can find an education department that organizes walks around the museum and other programs, giving the museum's interpretation of the artworks. The museum became an institution that sentences the artist - artistic life or death - when it decides whether to include an artist's work in its collection or not. We return by that to the viewer and his/her access to art. Many times this causes the artist to take the fringe path. When we studied at CSM, a local person told me that in many cases you can find interesting art out in the big city. I'm not sure if it's true, but it sounds like an interesting idea.

As to your saying, Marina, about working within the system, you can - also - act against the system by resisting it. It doesn't mean we need the system and, anyway, if we have it then we can react – go either with it or against it.

MK: Gali what do you mean, "take the fringe path"?

GT: I mean alternative spaces (e.g. a vet clinic). A place in which you don't have the 'judgment' of the gallery owner or curator or anyone who has the power to decide

whether to show your work or not. It opens up for you a kind of direct line to the viewer, and the option to expose your artwork to the regular art public as well as an unexpected one.

AS: Gali your museum point is a very good one. Yes that's very true, isn't it, about the talks and explanations and all that other stuff that is sort of ridiculous. They really spell out what the artist was doing which is kind of silly because one never truly knows. Because as we have stated if the viewer helps complete the work then why on earth lead them to certain banal over simplistic conclusions.

Yes I think art is all over the city and everywhere like under a bridge. The Scottish artist Susan Philipsz is just great with this sort of thing. She brings our attention to things in the strangest places like her singing over the loud speaker at Tescos in the tube in London. So here is an example of an artist really creating awareness about many things - from beauty to intimacy to helping solve the question of what art is in contemporary society

As regarding sketches - I agree Marina that there is no reason to differentiate things and in fact it would have seemed that this issue was resolved in the first half of the 19th century with people like Delacroix (or going

back and seeing how brilliant Rembrandt's sketches were etc) but clearly we haven't resolved it.

Why are oil paintings so much more expensive than pencil sketches? Or photography for that matter. A big painting will always make the most money. So here there is a difference between the market and what artists, critics, curators, and many other people involved in the arts would agree and disagree over.

Although Richard Prince did make 1 million bucks on one of his cowboy photos a while back - but still a John Currin will go for more!

GT: I have one last (?) thing to say, after a small talk with two different people today: it can be a bit weird, but today, if you can be found on Google - you exist.

MK: In terms of art as well. The Internet can be another alternative space on which you can show your work, without depending on museums, galleries and curators.

Andrew Smaldone (AS) is an artist and writer who co-found ArtSEEN Journal in 2005 and has recently helped initiate a new platform called Number 5. Since 1999, he has lived and worked in the US, the UK, and Italy.

Gali Timen (GT) is a conceptual artist that lives in Tel Aviv and works in Tel Aviv and the UK.

AN AMBIGUOUS LANGUAGE

Painting for me is like building a language, coming up with my own vocabulary and then putting elements together to create connections and draw parallels. My language is a strange one. It touches on several things: paint, writing or calligraphy, magnified images of organic structures, stitches, embroidery, loose curly yarn, biological and geological diagrams, maps, landscapes, diagrams. It draws unlikely and perhaps unresolved parallels between all these things. The end result is, hopefully, a playful and convincing world, one that follows its own rules and logic. My language brings disparate things together and overlaps them, connects them, flexes them, transforms them into paintings.

My language is above all ambiguous since it is capable of being understood in several possible senses or ways. It hovers in-between the organic and the inorganic, the natural and the artificial, microcosms and macrocosms, damage and repair. I would like each of my paintings to be capable of being pulled apart, flexed and bended in more than one way and, perhaps, even in unexpected ways.

For instance, in one of the paintings something is being put together or, perhaps, taken apart. Or both. In another, something opens up or closes down, or perhaps it is stuck, caught up, trapped.

My visual/textural language can also be quite messy. Many young painters today, including myself, like to work with thick paint. They like to try various applications of paint that veer from the norm and from what viewers are used to seeing and possibly touching. New uses of paint evoke new sensations of touch. I think this emphasis on materiality and touching resists late modernism's emphasis on pure opticality. Whereas the sensation of viewing a painting was meant to be purely visual, different uses of paint tempt the viewer to try to experience a painting through touch, even if only in her imagination.

Maybe that's why I became a painter – to be able to touch paintings, at least my paintings. To be able to squeeze paint, move it around the canvas, push it in until it spurts, feel the smoothness of a flat glossy surface and the crevices and extrusions, and all the changes in-between, of a textured surface.

And there are many textures to feel. Paint is a fluid, plastic medium resisting any specific categorization. It can be solid or liquid, thick or thin, flat or textured, transparent or opaque, matte or glossy. It can exist as blobs, drips, splashes or stains. It moves through physical boundaries with an ease particular to it.

In whatever way the paint is applied it is always a body, a distinct mass of matter being applied on top of another distinct mass of matter. It is also always a surface, part of the picture plane, implying or referring to something else. Paint is not really one thing. Its ambiguous nature invites transformation and multiplication of meaning. It always exists both as itself and as something else. Maybe that's why I want to touch and change it.

Thank you:

Maro Kassianidou
Andrew Smaldone
Gali Timen

ON MARINA KASSIANIDOU'S RECENT WORK

The recent installations of Marina Kassianidou are the result of eight years of research, studio work and travel. The artist began her travels and studies in California, where she first came into contact with West Coast painting from the likes of Monique Prieto and Michelle Fierro, while an undergraduate at Stanford. Such American artists would prove highly influential to Kassianidou's formation as an artist, firstly for the historical challenge posed by being a female painter in an artistic landscape traditionally dominated by men and, secondly, through an interest in surface(s) and paint application.

London was her next destination and it was here that she began to come more fully into herself as a practicing artist, initially as an MA student at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design and then at Chelsea College of Art and Design as a PhD candidate. In the meantime, she returned to Limassol, Cyprus, and set up a studio practice while making monthly trips to London for continued research. As a result, her process gradually moved away from a strict fascination with surface and West Coast painting's materiality, and began to function more in the spaces-in-between mark/material/figure/surface as well as with ideas concerning the presence and absence of images.

Kassianidou's drawings on linoleum are strong examples of her more recent work. Perhaps it is better to call them paintings, as she is using acrylic, but this indecision in naming demonstrates that the works are no longer traditionally painting or drawing as such, but a hybrid of both. In one work, she has taken floral motifs and painted them on linoleum to look like wallpaper, which is significant for the way it shifts usual notions of seeing painting: from the wall to the floor and vice versa, instead of strictly wall based. The image or pattern is difficult to make out – it hovers in a sort of limbo between emerging from the faux wood grain surface and being completely overburdened by that surface.

In a recent installation, an equally proportionate section of a wood grain patterned work has been installed simultaneously on the wall and on the floor. The floor surrounding the piece is also wooden but the different wood pattern of the piece creates a partial interruption across the surface of the floor. Nearby and on the wall is a small drawing and off to one side is a cluster of paintings and drawings all with the same floral motif; a device that invites the spectator to consider what is similar and different about each work, whether it be a work on canvas, paper, or linoleum. What is perhaps most significant about this recent installation (and others similar to it) is that the painting is less about paint on a surface and more concerned with how surface results from the passing of time and lived-in space. So, the things and surfaces of the past do not represent history per se but rather the energy of life in the present.

The artist is, thus, moving away from art that is about other art and towards processes such as ageing and weathering that eventually give a surface its character. It is enough to consider another work, where coloured pencil has been applied directly to a wall, to fully comprehend this aspect of her process. The pencil marks from a distance are virtually impossible to make out, whereas up close they become more distinct. What is intriguing is how such drawn marks simultaneously point to the creation and erasure of traces. The artist's marks make more evident the traces left on the wall from people's movements

through space, such as fingerprints or smudges. The drawn marks also bring our attention to the cancellation of any suggestion of human activity in a space (such as happens when walls are cleaned and repainted in a gallery after a show goes down).

At this point it is worth considering Clement Greenberg's observation – in relation to Kassianidou's work – that flatness and two-dimensionality were the only aspects that modernist painting shared with no other artistic medium. On the one hand, this observation has almost nothing to do with what the artist has achieved, but, on the other hand, it can provide a point of reference from which to turn these ideas about painting inside out. Flatness in Kassianidou's hands becomes not so much a point of separation from other artistic practices, but rather a link to the "minor" arts, such as craftwork and design, and to "feminine" activities like sewing. The point, then, is that history, as well as the history of painting, is anything but fixed.

Ultimately, Kassianidou's work functions in a space where patterns and references to banal domestic environments begin to take on political/social overtones; where a healthy dialectical tension between opposites and a blurring of boundaries invite us to look again at things, forms, and spaces that at first glance we often think of as useless or easy to ignore.

Andrew Smaldone
July 2009

(Andrew Smaldone is an artist and art critic based in Florence. He writes on contemporary art frequently and has contributed several reviews for *Art Review* as well as other publications. He is also a lecturer and helps the Zurich based architecture and art platform *number_5* bring project ideas into physical form.)

NOTES

...different "materialities"... repetitive or obsessive accumulation of material in small shapes/marks/gestures...image materialized through time, during the process of painting or drawing...the partial breaking down of an image through repetition...disappearing marks and "fugitive" images... partially removing previously applied marks so that only a trace remains...an ambiguous relationship between mark and surface...

...a close interaction between mark and surface sometimes leads to confusion between the two...the uneven texture of the paper suggests to me small lines that follow the curves and shadows of the surface...the canvas, a fabric, reminds of other patterned fabrics...

... material/mark/surface can interact together in different ways, potentially producing meaning...canvases, various types of paper, found surfaces (cardboard boxes and floor covers) and surfaces that are already marked...what happens when all these are juxtaposed, placed together in the same space?...a stretched canvas, traditionally relating more to painting, next to a piece of found cardboard or linoleum...this coming together does something to its status as an "art object"...surfaces start interacting with each other...each becoming one of a group of possible surfaces that can be used...

...where does one work end and another begin?...edges bring to mind hierarchies – fixed borders across which opposing pairs are found, the end of something and the start of something else...don't edges determine, to a certain extent, how the work is placed in space and how it is viewed or experienced?...how might one disturb the clarity of the border and the kind of hierarchies it implies?...the border or hierarchy between mark/surface begins to destabilize...the edges demarcating or separating works become uncertain...

Marina Kassianidou
July 2009

In the Gap between Visibility and Invisibility: The "Fugitive" Image

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Abstract: In everyday life, the terms visibility and invisibility are presented as opposites. In visual art, visibility traditionally rests with the artist's marks—viewers are interested in seeing the image produced. This focus on visibility and vision in Western culture has been severely criticized by feminist theorists, such as Luce Irigaray. This paper will delve into the gap between visibility and invisibility, primarily through a discussion of my practice-based research in painting and drawing on various surfaces. This work explores the alternative(s) to a strict hierarchical antithesis between visibility and invisibility. The aim is to create moments of 'undecidability' between these terms. What kinds of relationships and meanings can be unravelled by exploring the in-between of visibility and invisibility? The methodology I have adopted for my practice-based research involves using marks that relate to the surface being marked—its appearance, use and history. This approach enables the conceptualization of complex relationships between mark and surface. Oftentimes, my marks are partially lost in the surface, either by being so subtle that they cannot be perceived from a distance, or by becoming confused with other marks. The faint traces create a 'fugitive' image that almost escapes vision. Through the discussion of my practice, as well as references to theories regarding visibility and invisibility, such as those of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I will explore how the visibility/invisibility duality can be problematized through the making, installing and viewing of artworks. Using the concepts of 'zones of indiscernibility,' developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and of partial subjects/objects, theorized by Bracha Ettinger, I will argue that the border between visibility and invisibility can be destabilized. Furthermore, I will propose that this destabilization challenges the status of artworks, viewers and artist.

Keywords: Visibility, Invisibility, Marking, Zones of Indiscernibility, Partial Subjects, Contemporary Art, Practice-Based Fine Art Research

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N EVERYDAY LIFE, the terms visibility and invisibility are presented as opposites. Something visible can be seen whereas something invisible cannot. If something is not visible then, by definition, it is invisible and vice versa. Historically, in painting and drawing visibility rests with the artist's marks. That is what the viewers are usually interested in seeing—the marks made on the surface with a pencil, brush or any other marking tool. These marks differentiate themselves from the surface and become visible as the marks of the artist. The surface, in turn, forms the "other" of the mark. This is especially the case, for example, with specific kinds of modernist painting. Several writers, such as Griselda Pollock, have argued that the structure of modernist painting depends on the presence or absence of a mark or on the opposition figure/ground.[1] Other theorists, such as Luce Irigaray and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, have attempted to discuss visibility and invisibility in terms that go beyond a straightforward antithetical and hierarchical relationship.[2] This article will

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[1] See, for example, Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," 253–261.
[2] See, for example, Irigaray, "To Paint the Invisible," and Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*.

COMMON GROUND

discuss three of my artworks that delve into the gap between visibility and invisibility as relating to the artist's mark. The works employ subtle drawn or painted marks that somehow relate to the appearance or character of the surface being marked. As a result, the artist's marks become confused with the surface or with other kinds of marks, such as accidental stains and shadows. The article will show that these works not only destabilize the mark/surface duality but also manage to destabilize the visibility/invisibility duality by creating moments of "undecidability" or "indiscernibility" between the two terms. That is, the artist's marks oscillate between being partially visible and partially invisible. Moreover, the article will argue that this destabilization between visibility and invisibility ultimately challenges the status of artworks, viewers and artist.

The primacy of visibility in Western culture has been criticized by the feminist theorist and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray. According to Irigaray, the invisible, as a general concept, has not been allowed a sufficient part in our culture and "has often been postponed or deferred onto a religious sphere."[3] The invisible, however, participates in our everyday life since the ways we relate with the world and other(s) remain invisible.[4] According to Irigaray, "this also implies recognizing that the other as other remains invisible for me and that the first gesture with respect to him, or her, is to accept and respect this invisibility; which then transforms my perception of the world."[5]

Rather than valuing invisibility over visibility, which simply reverses their relationship while maintaining its binary and hierarchical structure, this article argues for a destabilization of the culturally rigid border between the two. In *The Visible and the Invisible*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty suggests a situation "where the invisible is not only non-visible…but where its absence counts in the world (it is 'behind' the visible, imminent or eminent visibility…)."[6] The suggestion here is that the invisible is not only what is not seen, what is potentially absent, but, paradoxically, what is present as an absence. In other words, it is somehow still there—its invisibility affects the world. Moreover, the invisible can at some moment become visible and vice versa. This opens up a gap between visibility and invisibility, a space in which the straightforward antithetical relationship between the two can be questioned.

The methodology followed while working in the studio involved finding marks that somehow related to the surface—its colour, patterns, use and history. In an attempt to move away from binary relationships of figure versus ground, I actively sought to create a more substantial conversation between mark and surface. The process of making, thus, focused on the relationship between the two rather than on each one separately. This approach moves beyond a simple mark versus surface binary and enables more complex relationships between the two to emerge. The destabilization of the mark/surface binary has implications for the visibility/invisibility duality. The marks somehow become "intertwined" with the surface and may or may not differentiate themselves from it. As the degree of differentiation varies, the visibility of the marks also varies.

The shadow pieces (2008–2010) were made using handmade paper. The wrinkled edges of each piece of paper, along with its uneven texture, create several subtle shadows on the surface. I outlined all the apparent shadows with pencil and then "filled in" these areas by

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[3] Irigaray, "To Paint the Invisible," 395.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 227–228.

drawing soft continuous pencil lines, following the subtle curves and twists of the paper's texture. In the case of the linoleum pieces (2008–2010), I chose a colour that closely matched the colour of the surface. Using diluted paint, I painted small irregular marks matching, to an extent, the existing wood pattern on the linoleum. The shapes of the painted areas duplicated actual stains found on the floor, either of the studio or, in the case of exhibitions, of the gallery. In a site-specific work at the Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts in California (2010), I drew over existing marks on one of the walls of the studio. The walls had been freshly painted to remove the traces of previous artists. Past paint marks, however, were still partially visible. Using red and black coloured pencils, the same colours as the existing stains, I drew fine lines through these paint marks, following the texture of the wall. This process of re-marking the wall in subtle yet meticulous ways partially reversed the activity of painting the walls white.

Marina Kassianidou, *Untitled* (Shadow Pieces), 2010. Pencil on Paper, Dimensions Variable

Untitled (Shadow Pieces)*, 2010 (Detail)

Marina Kassianidou, *Untitled*, 2009 (Installation View). Acrylic on Found Linoleum, 62 x 48 cm

Marina Kassianidou, *Untitled*, 2009. Acrylic on Found Linoleum, 62 x 48 cm

Untitled, 2009 (Detail)

Marina Kassianidou, *Untitled*, 2010. Colour Pencils on Wall, Site-specific Drawing, Stone-house Residency for the Contemporary Arts, California, USA, June–July 2010

Untitled, 2010 (Detail)

Untitled, 2010 (Detail)

The Partially Visible/Invisible Mark

Due to the approach used when making these pieces, the marks are rather difficult to discern at first. In the shadow pieces and wall drawing some of the marks are so subtle that they can only be seen fully if one is standing very close to the work. The painted marks on linoleum stand out the most if seen at an angle, when light is reflected from the surface. Moreover, the marks "follow" each surface quite closely, resulting in their partial absorption by that surface. Instead of asserting their difference from the surface, the marks seem to be asserting a degree of sameness. The lines drawn on the paper follow its uneven texture. The painted marks on linoleum follow the colours of the surface, visually receding into the wood pattern, conflating figure and ground. In a way, the marks seem to be part of the surface—as if they just appeared by themselves or were always there.

Moreover, in some instances the marks start resembling other, pre-existing, accidental or more predictable marks. In the case of the shadow pieces, the drawn marks "impersonate" shadows well. Similarly, from afar, the marks on the linoleum may look like coffee stains or residual dirt. Given the nature of the linoleum and its use as flooring, one could potentially view them as such, especially when this work is displayed on the floor. The site-specific drawing at the Stonehouse studio has a direct relationship to the existing stains on the wall. Because of the limited time at the residency, I did not draw over every single stain. From a distance of about one and a half metres away, it was almost impossible to tell the difference

between the drawn marks and the actual stains, especially if one did not know that there was something drawn on the wall.

The marks on these works create a vanishing or "fugitive" image—an image that almost escapes vision by becoming one with the surface and its pre-existing marks. When looking at the works from a distance, it seems as if one can almost see something—a situation of presque vu.[7] At the same time, however, there is a feeling of uncertainty as to what it is, if anything, that one is looking at. The painted or drawn marks oscillate between visibility and invisibility, between being viewed as carefully made marks or as accidental stains. The artist's marks are, thus, situated somewhere between visibility and invisibility—they are partially visible/invisible either because they cannot be seen clearly or because, even when perceived, they may be thought to be part of the surface, a stain, a shadow or dirt.

The artist, as the first viewer of the work, is the first to experience this confusion. While working on the shadow pieces, I could not see all the marks clearly. Some subtle marks became visible under certain light conditions. I stumbled across them when I saw the paper in different light. Moreover, confusion arose between the drawn marks and the actual shadows. After making some marks on a piece of paper, I would put the work on the wall. From a distance, the marks and shadows were hard to differentiate. I saw what I thought was a shadow and approached to mark it with pencil only to realise that I had already drawn over that region. The process of making involved repeated "mistakes" stemming from not realising immediately what it was I was looking at. In addition, the more I looked at the paper, the more shadows I could discern. The eye got "trained" and started seeing nuances in shade, colour and texture. This meant that it also became harder to distinguish between marks. The following paradox, thus, occurred in the studio: the more I looked at the image on the surface, the more complex and ambiguous it became. Instead of finding more visual clarity and stability as I worked, I became more uncertain.

While making the wall drawing at Stonehouse, even if I could see my marks from close by, whenever I tried to step back and look at the whole piece, I would lose some of them. The attempt to get a complete view results in the image partially escaping. This is a rather strange situation to be in while working in the studio. As a visual artist, I am used to having a complete view of each piece. With these works, I could not see and definitively identify every single mark at any given moment. The marks made a moment ago, partially escaped my vision the next moment. This is a result of the process of making—the specific character of each surface determined the specific character of the marks. I worked with what was already there and my marks became, to some extent, part of that "already there."

When observed closely, the marks on all the pieces will eventually emerge. The marks start out as partially invisible, either because they cannot be seen clearly or because they are confused with other types of marks. Then, after close and sustained looking, they become visible but may disappear again when the viewers move away. This process is then repeated. There is an almost continual play involving disappearance and reappearance between mark and surface. What at one point appeared as a specific type of mark, at another point becomes something else. On the shadow pieces, the marks may initially appear to be shadows or smudges. The marks on the linoleum may appear to be stains or dirt or simply part of the design. The stains on the wall may appear to be just that—old stains. As the viewers move closer, the shadows, stains or dirt become intricate drawings and paintings. As the viewers

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[7] Presque vu is the almost seen (compared to déjà vu which is the already seen).

move away, the drawings and paintings become stains and shadows once again, visually confused with the actual stains and shadows.

Merleau-Ponty suggests that a perceptual appearance can "break up" only after "having been so well replaced by another that there remains no trace of it."[8] His example involves seeing on the sand a piece of wood polished by the sea and subsequently realising that, in fact, it is a clayey rock.[9] After this realization, the trace of the wood disappears and is replaced by the fact of the rock (which may in turn be replaced by another perception if one ends up realising that the rock is actually something else). It is interesting to consider, however, what might happen if the trace of a perception does not completely disappear. If the viewers are looking at many similar things, how can they be certain, at any given moment, which of those are pieces of wood and which are rocks? In the works discussed here, the possibilities for what the marks can be—shadows, smudges, stains, surface patterns or drawn or painted marks—seem to persist every time one looks at the pieces from a distance. Even if one knows that some marks are painted or drawn, it becomes very hard to fully differentiate them from the surface or from other pre-existing marks. The traces of the different possibilities are all partially visible/invisible. Consequently, the artist's marks, as drawn or painted marks, traverse from invisibility to visibility and back again.

Becoming Surface, Becoming Other

In *What is Philosophy?* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari develop the idea of zones of indiscernibility with respect to concepts. The components of each concept, which are potentially other concepts, are "distinct, heterogeneous, and yet not separable."[10] Each component "partially overlaps, has a zone of neighbourhood [*zone de voisinage*], or a threshold of indiscernibility, with another one."[11] They continue,

> Components remain distinct, but something passes from one to the other, something that is undecidable between them. There is an area *ab* that belongs to both *a* and *b*, where *a* and *b* "become" indiscernible.[12]

Erinn Cunniff Gilson clarifies that what passes between the terms is not actually transferred from one to the other but is shared by both.[13] The something that is shared is imperceptible and does not have a definable form—"it is something sub-individual."[14] We can visualize a zone of indiscernibility as an area in which the terms of a seemingly clear distinction overlap.[15] This partial overlap between them leads to a temporary suspension of each of the distinct terms. According to Deleuze, such a zone is a place of becoming since it involves a passage or interchange between the terms.[16] This zone also involves a situation where

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[8] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 41.
[9] Ibid., 40.
[10] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 19.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 19–20.
[13] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility," 100.
[14] Ibid., 101.
[15] Ibid., 98.
[16] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 20, 173. Deleuze and Guattari develop the issue of indiscernibility in conjunction with the concept of becoming in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 256–341.

"things…endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation."[17] A situation is created in which it becomes difficult to differentiate between two things—they are on the brink of differentiating but it does not quite happen.

With regards to the works discussed in this article, a sense of continuity emerges between mark and surface and between different types of marks, making it difficult at times to differentiate between them. Obviously, the marks and the surface are not the same thing nor are the painted or drawn marks the same as a shadow or a pre-existing stain. A perceived continuity, however, develops between the two leading to moments when they appear to conflate—the artist's marks almost become part of the surface or are mistaken for other marks. A zone of indiscernibility emerges between different types of marks and between marks and surfaces. In this zone, marks almost become surface or almost become another type of mark. At one moment the viewers may see all the marks as shadows, at another moment they may be able to differentiate between them and at other moments they may see shadows and think that they are painted or drawn marks. This is a rather unstable situation. There is no clear view at all times. Rather, visibility and perception vary—what is visible as a specific thing at one moment, becomes invisible the next (and then may become visible again as another thing).

As a result of this continuity between marks and between marks and surfaces, the artist's marks become partially visible/invisible. Of course, thinking in strict dualities, something is either visible or invisible. As discussed earlier, however, in practice this situation is made problematic. The works create an ambiguous situation where something is partially visible and, thus, partially invisible. Here, we have an overlap between the terms visible and invisible, a zone of indiscernibility, where the terms are only partial. The zones of indiscernibility between marks and between marks and surfaces destabilize the clear distinction between visibility and invisibility, opening up another zone of indiscernibility between them. In this zone, visibility and invisibility co-exist and co-mingle.

Bracha Ettinger's theorisation of the matrix enables the conceptualization of a more complex relationship between visibility and invisibility when these terms overlap. Ettinger proposes the matrix as a supplementary signifier in the Symbolic, in addition to the phallus.[18] She models the matrix on the structure and processes of the late stages of pregnancy when mother and foetus co-exist in a situation where one is the "I" and the other the "non-I."[19] The foetus is unknown, or partially unknown, to the mother since she cannot see it. Similarly, the mother is partially unknown to the foetus. Yet the two of them co-exist and co-emerge —the foetus as a future baby and the pregnant woman as a mother-to-be. Ettinger sees the two as partial subjects that relate to each other in a non-threatening and non-aggressive manner. They neither reject each other as wholly other—the foetus exists inside the mother's body after all—nor do they assimilate each other into themselves. They remain two partial subjects that develop together. They each have their own bodily/subjective borderlines and

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[17] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 173.

[18] In Jacques Lacan's terms, the Symbolic indicates the pre-existing structures, including language, into which a child eventually enters. The Lacanian phallus is a privileged signifier—the signifier of the desire of the Other. For further discussion of these ideas see, for example, Lacan, *Écrits*, 62–84 and 311–322. For a critique of the phallus as a symbol see Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 47–49, and Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*.

[19] Ettinger always clarifies that she is dealing with the very late stages of pregnancy, when the foetus is at a post-mature stage.

where these come into contact borderlinks are formed. These borderlinks can become thresholds through which the partial subjects can share psychic traces. Thus, the womb becomes a shared bodily and psychic borderspace through which partial subjects affect each other by constantly negotiating and re-adjusting their relationship.[20]

The unknown "Other" with respect to the pregnant woman is the foetus but Ettinger expands this to include many Others: "The Other who is not known by 'me' (an Other as a subject) and unknown elements of the self and of the Other—the Other as a partial subject, a part-object."[21] In the matrixial sphere, partial subjects discern each other as non-I "without abolishing differences to make the Other a *same* in order to accept him/her," and without rejecting the Other as different and/or inferior.[22] The focus shifts from separate elements towards the borderspace between them and the processes of transformation that occur in that space.[23] Subjectivity becomes an encounter in which "partial subjects co-emerge and co-fade through continual re-tunings and transformations via external/internal borderlines and borderlinks."[24]

The various processes of exchange and transformation that take place in the matrix are called metramorphosis. Metramorphosis, according to Ettinger, is the "*becoming-threshold of borderlines*."[25] That is, it deals with processes that transform the borders between partial subjects, allowing these subjects to share a space between them and to re-adjust in relation to each other. The partial subjects transform together but differently. According to Rosi Huhn, "in contrast to metamorphosis, each of the new forms and shapes of the metramorphosis does not send the nature of each of the preceding ones into oblivion or even eliminate it, but lets it shine through the transparency, disarranges and leads an existence of multitude rather than unity."[26] In other words, the nature of the parts participating in the metramorphosis is still somehow present throughout the transformation. As such, metramorphosis leads to plurality rather than unity or duality, preventing any sort of hierarchies to set up.

We can think of metramorphosis as the set of transformations that can occur in the overlap or shared space between seemingly distinct entities. In the works discussed here, the relationship between mark and surface is presented as constantly shifting. As the viewer moves in space, marks may appear and disappear. They shift between being part of the surface and being drawn or painted marks. It is no longer possible to talk of a clear distinction between mark and surface. The surface ceases to be the "other" of the mark—the mark at times almost becomes surface. At the same time, however, the mark does not become the same as the surface—there is always an almost differentiation. There is, thus, a constant re-adjustment or negotiation between mark and surface as marks hover in and out of vision. In the case of visibility and invisibility, the two concepts transform together without, however, leading to a new unified concept. Rather they remain partial. The differentiation between marks or

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[20] For a detailed discussion of these ideas see Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," *The Matrixial Borderspace* and "Transgressing With-In-To the Feminine." See also Pollock's analysis of Ettinger's theories, for example, "Inscriptions in the Feminine," 77–82, introduction to "The With-In-Visible Screen," and "Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference?"

[21] Ettinger, "The Becoming Threshold of Matrixial Borderlines," 44.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 42.

[24] Ibid., 41.

[25] Ibid., 44.

[26] Huhn, "Moving Omissions," 8. Metramorphosis, thus, differs from metaphor and metonymy, which work by means of condensation or displacement. On this issue, see Ducker, *Translating the Matrix*, 4–5.

between mark and surface is delayed and the viewer's perception is destabilized. While the viewer is caught in this zone or gap between mark and surface, between visibility and invisibility, the image remains fugitive.

Artist–Artwork–Viewer

It is not only the artist's marks that become partially visible/invisible. The surfaces and pre-existing marks are also affected. The partial invisibility of the expected drawn or painted mark draws attention to the surface. From a distance, the drawing on the shadow pieces cannot be perceived and all the viewer can see is a somewhat wrinkled piece of paper with jagged edges. Attention is drawn to the object itself as opposed to any drawing on it. In fact, the emphasis is on the relationship between the marks and the existing texture since the marks make that texture more apparent—they reveal that the surface is not completely flat or smooth but encloses information within it. The drawing at the Stonehouse studio draws attention to the other marks on the wall. From afar, all marks appear to be the same—they may all be stains or they may all be drawn marks. Eventually, the viewers have to move so close to the wall to see the drawing that they cannot help but see the subtly bumpy texture of the wall, the holes created from pins and nails, the scratches, the old paint marks, the occasional finger print, a leftover piece of masking tape and so on.

Visibility, thus, no longer rests solely with the artist's mark but appears to be somehow shared between the different elements of the work. What is normally the focus of attention, the artist's mark, becomes partially invisible whereas what is normally not "seen," the surface and pre-existing marks, may become partially visible. Just as the surface "reveals" the marks during the process of making, the marks, in turn, "reveal" the surface during the process of viewing. This partial inversion or overlap leads to a situation where the normally seen and not seen can both be "seen" in new and different ways. The artwork is not solely based on the artist's marks but rather brings to the fore the relationship between what the artist did and what was already there.

For the viewers, it is challenging at first to discern what the artist actually did. The partial overlap between marks and surfaces leads to a degree of confusion. The viewers look at something and may not be immediately certain whether it was already there or whether it was painted or drawn. The viewers are, thus, caught in continuums of marks and surfaces, drawn marks and accidental marks and of visibility and invisibility. At any given moment, the viewers may find themselves situated anywhere along these continuums. In other words, there is no visual clarity or mastery at all times. Vision, knowledge and certainty become shifting concepts.

By placing the viewers in a position where they cannot fully see and definitively identify everything at any given moment, their role as viewers is challenged. They may not be receiving what they expected from a drawing or painting—a clearly visible image. Their position as viewers is not confirmed by the artwork but rather it is questioned. This places them in an unstable position where they need to re-negotiate their relationship to the artwork. This re-adjustment could potentially cause frustration but, at the same time, it can encourage the viewers to actively consider the relationship between visibility and invisibility. Moreover, the eventual visibility of the artist's marks may encourage them to start looking for imperceptible marks. Every shadow or change in colour that the viewers see becomes a potential painted or drawn area. At the Stonehouse studio, the viewers may start searching on other

walls to see if there are drawings there as well. This may turn the viewers into more active participants in their encounter with the work, employing movement and close and sustained looking in order to fulfil, as much as possible, their role as viewers.

When it comes to the artist, her marks seem to recede visually and conceptually into something else. In the essay "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," Roger Caillois discusses various organisms that come to resemble their surroundings through mimicry. He compares this condition to legendary psychasthenia, which is the disturbance between personality and space.[27] Patients may end up feeling as if they are devoured by space. Caillois calls this process "*depersonalization by assimilation to space*."[28] This absorption into the surrounding environment brings about a movement from the animate towards the inanimate.[29] Thus, the body as a living being starts to conceptually disappear. In the works discussed here, the marks, as indication of the artist's actions, partially disappear into the environment/surface.[30] This partial disappearance challenges the agency and body of the artist, leading perhaps to her partial eclipsing.

This is a paradoxical situation. It took a long time to make these works and yet the marks, at least from afar, are not fully visible. Even when they are, they may register as something else. Despite the physical effort and time involved in making these works, the resulting fugitive image almost eclipses the artist's actions. In fact, the fugitive image suggests a degree of self-effacement in the artist's actions—the marks strive to keep themselves from surfacing fully or from surfacing too quickly, that is from becoming definitively identified as what they really are. Thus, the artist's actions are also delayed in becoming identified. Initially, it may look like the artist actually did nothing. There is, thus, tension between visibility and invisibility as far as the artist herself is concerned.

As argued in this article, the destabilization of the duality mark/surface leads to the destabilization of the terms visibility and invisibility. This, in turn, may lead to the destabilization of the duality subject/object. The artist, as subject, almost becomes object by aiming for a near assimilation between her marks and the surface. The viewers may experience a similar shifting sensation as they come closer to the work in order to see as much as they can of the artist's marks. It is interesting to consider what kind of a relationship can develop between viewers, artworks and artist when the status of all three is not fully determined but is shifting. Going back to Irigaray's suggestion, perhaps we need to recognize that "the other as other remains invisible for me and that the first gesture with respect to him, or her, is to accept and respect this invisibility; which then transforms my perception of the world."[31] If for the viewer the other is the artist, then this other cannot be retrieved in full but only partially. By remaining in the gap between visibility and invisibility, any confirmation of boundaries and, thus, identifications is delayed. Perhaps this experience comes close to what Ettinger would call a matrixial relationship. Artist, artworks and viewers form partial subjects/objects in a continuum of shifting relationships that develop over time and space.

Of course, when the works are seen from close up all the details emerge and it becomes clear that there are marks on the surfaces that have been constructed carefully. The works

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[27] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 28.

[28] Ibid., 30.

[29] Ibid.

[30] The idea of marks as indications of the artist's actions can be linked to the notion of the index. See Krauss, "Notes on the Index," 58–63.

[31] Irigaray, "To Paint the Invisible," 395.

aim to delay this conclusion and keep it temporary. When the viewers step back, once again the artist's marks start to recede bringing forward the relationship between mark and surface. Passages, or zones, are re-opened between marks and surfaces and characteristics or pre-conceived ideas about each of these elements can now be partially shared. The hierarchy between the existing and the added starts to dissolve. The overlooked begins to emerge. The image escapes vision, becoming fugitive once again. Artworks, viewers and artist find themselves in a state of suspension, in between.

Fugitive Terms and Encounters

This article has shown that the three artworks discussed not only destabilize the mark/surface duality but also destabilize the visibility/invisibility binary. The artworks discussed employ marks that relate to each surface being marked. As a result, the artist's marks are partially absorbed by the surface or are confused with other kinds of marks, making them difficult to perceive at first. Zones of indiscernibility, as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari, emerge between mark and surface and between different kinds of marks, leading to a situation where it becomes difficult to differentiate between normally distinct elements. This situation destabilizes the relationship between visibility and invisibility—the artist's marks become partially visible/invisible, leading to the creation of a fugitive image. Moreover, the relationship between mark/surface and visibility/invisibility is constantly shifting—as viewers move in space and time, marks hover in and out of vision and perception varies.

As argued in the article, the destabilization between visibility and invisibility ultimately challenges the status of artworks, viewers and artist. The artworks no longer fully depend on the artist's mark and its differentiation from everything else, or on the opposition figure/ground. The surface is not simply the "other" of the mark since the mark at times almost becomes surface. We can no longer talk about the presence or absence of the artist's mark in absolute terms. Rather, the artworks bring to the fore the relationship between the drawn or painted mark and what was already there. Visibility no longer lies solely with the artist's mark but is shared between the different elements of the work. In terms of viewing, the viewers are placed in a position where they cannot fully see and definitively identify everything at any given moment. Their role as viewers is challenged, causing them to actively reconsider their relationship to the work. Finally, the subtle marks partially eclipse the artist's actions—as the marks recede, they take the artist with them. In fact, the artist, as subject, almost becomes object through the quasi-assimilation between her marks and the surface.

In a sense, during that time in which marks and surfaces are confused and are partially visible/invisible, artworks, viewers and artist all temporarily become partially visible/invisible or fugitive terms. For a little while, at least, the status of these terms is not fully determined but is shifting. During this period of instability, right in the gap between visibility and invisibility, any confirmation of boundaries and, thus, identifications is delayed, making it possible to glimpse a different kind of relationship between the various elements. As suggested earlier, this experience may come close to what Ettinger would call a matrixial relationship—a constantly shifting relationship in which artworks, viewers and artist form partial subjects/objects that co-emerge and co-fade through continual re-adjustments.

Going back to the relationship between visibility and invisibility with which this article began, the works discussed here create moments during which it may no longer be possible to think about or experience visibility and invisibility as absolute and strictly opposing con-

cepts. Instead, marks, artworks, artist and viewers, as terms or concepts, can be partially visible/invisible. These various elements encounter each other openly, as partial subjects/objects, in a relationship that moves beyond the visibility versus invisibility discussion and points towards art's potential for engendering novel or different conceptualizations and ways of thinking about and experiencing life.

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Marina Kassianidou is a practicing artist that lives and works in Limassol, Cyprus, and London, UK. She is a PhD candidate in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London. Her research develops and works through ways of thinking around relationships and hierarchies between mark, material and surface. In 1998, she received a CASP/Fulbright scholarship to study in the USA. She graduated from Stanford University with a BA in Studio Art (with Distinction) and a BS in Computer Science (with Distinction). Upon graduation, she was awarded the Arthur Giese Memorial Award for Excellence in Painting by the Stanford University Department of Art and Art History. She obtained a Master in Fine Art degree from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London. She has participated in exhibitions in the UK, USA, Cyprus, Israel, Germany and France and her writings have appeared in the arts journals *Arteri* (Cyprus, UK) and *ArtSEEN* (Florence, London, New York).

A MATTER OF SURFACE

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Abstract

This paper falls within the strand "Material Matters: On material as a matter of meaning and meaning as a matter of material." It focuses on practices that combine painting and collage with everyday materials. Traditionally, in practices such as painting, the artist's marks/actions, which differentiate themselves from the surface, are the privileged element. Feminist theorists, such as Griselda Pollock, have criticized this emphasis on the artist's mark. The paper focuses on two practices which question the significance of an artist's mark through interventions on everyday materials. British artist Louise Hopkins paints over printed images found on furnishing fabrics. In my work, I intervene on everyday materials, such as A4 lined paper, making subtle collages. Both practices employ marks that form a response to the material being marked. As such, both the surface and the artists' actions contribute to meaning—the material becomes the starting point and meaning arises through the relationship between the pre-existing (the material surface) and the added (the artist's marks). Moreover, these practices involve meticulous interventions that subtly modify the surface. The works, thus, both retain and efface the artist's hand, leading to a paradoxical situation where a significant amount of work results in "nothing" to be seen at first. I propose that by focusing on the material used, these practices problematize the notion of the artist's mark and the actual "making" of the work. This has implications for rethinking the relationship of the artist to the work as the artists' marks "become" part of the surface.

Keywords: Painting, Collage, Everyday surfaces, Marking, Visual Arts Practice

A Matter of Surface

Historically, in practices such as painting and drawing, the artist's marks/actions are the privileged element. These marks/actions differentiate themselves from the surface, which forms the "other" of the mark. This paper

focuses on two contemporary artistic practices that involve marking on already marked everyday surfaces. British artist Louise Hopkins paints over printed images found on readily available furnishing fabrics. In my own works on A4 writing paper, I employ collaged marks that partially merge with the pre-existing printed lines. Through a discussion of these practices, I will explore how the specific surface used in each case comes to occupy a crucial place in relation to the artist's mark. In fact, both practices employ marks that form a response to the material being marked. As such, both the surface and the artists' actions contribute to the creation of meaning. Meaning arises through the relationship between the pre-existing—the material surface—and the added—the artist's marks. I propose that by focusing on the material used, these practices problematize the notion of the artist's mark and the actual "making" of the work. This has implications for rethinking the relationship of the artist to the work as the artists' marks "become" part of the surface.

At its most basic, a mark is an area on a surface that somehow distinguishes itself from that surface. In the case of practices such as painting and drawing, the artist's actions result in the creation of marks on a surface. The marks of the artist are usually what the viewers are interested in seeing. Traditionally, the marks of the artist differentiate themselves from the surface, which, in turn, forms the "other" of the mark, that in relation to which the mark is positioned.[1] Feminist theorists, such as Griselda Pollock, Bracha L. Ettinger and Alison Rowley, have identified and criticized the historical emphasis on the artist's mark and on the opposition mark/surface, or figure/ground, which depends on the presence or absence of a mark, within specific art practices.[2] At the same time, it is important to note that the significance of the artist's mark, or of some evidence of the artist's hand, has changed over time. The painted or handmade mark might have been a key component in the work of the Abstract Expressionists, for example, but it was subsequently challenged and almost completely eliminated from the work of Minimalist artists.[3] Moreover, the notion of

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[1] The term "other" is based on the Lacanian Other as that which structures the subject's coming into existence—that in relation to which the subject is positioned. See, for example, Lacan, *Écrits*.

[2] See, for example, Pollock, "Killing Men and Dying Women," specifically pages 245–261, Ettinger, *The Matrixial Gaze*, and Rowley, *Helen Frankenthaler*, 34–44.

[3] See, for example, Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*.

the artist's mark was questioned in the work of Pop Artists, such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, who directly used or emulated mechanical processes of image making.

The works discussed in this paper focus on a way of marking that is very closely related to the material used as surface. As such, they question the significance of an artist's mark by insisting on marking as a form of "relational" activity, that is as an activity that depends on the relationships between what the artist does—her actions/marks—and what is already there—the chosen surface with its pre-existing printed patterns. The artist's marks intervene on the surface, changing it in some way. These marks are meticulously executed and involve a time-consuming process of making. At the same time, they depend on the surface for their existence. As a result, they partially "blend" in with the surface, leading to confusion between the artist's marks and the pre-existing marks. I argue that this confusion or continuity can have important implications for the artist and her relationship to the work.

"Responsive" Mark, "Retrieved" Surface

Since the mid 1990s, the British artist Louise Hopkins has been making paintings on patterned furnishing fabrics. One of the fabrics she has been using shows groups of blue flowers repeatedly printed on the surface. Hopkins stretches the fabric, as would be normally done with blank canvas or linen, presenting to the viewer the reverse side of the pattern. The flowers are still visible but some details are concealed since the viewer is looking at the back of the fabric. Hopkins then, paints over some of the flowers, recreating the image using a range of brown and beige colours. She uses discrete tiny brush strokes, emulating the fine weave of the cloth, so that her painted marks are almost interwoven into the fabric's surface.

Picture 1. Louise Hopkins*, Aurora 13*, 1996. Oil paint on reverse of furnishing fabric, 130 x 183 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

Picture 2. Louise Hopkins, *Recess*, 2010. Oil paint on reverse of furnishing fabric, 25.3 x 20.2 cm. Image courtesy of the artist

For my own practice, the methodology I have adopted involves using marks or ways of "marking" that, somehow, relate to the surface being marked—its appearance, everyday use or history. In the series of collages *Dotted Lines* (2010–present), I punch out holes from lined A4 pieces of paper and glue the punched out shapes, the chads, on other pieces of the same type of paper. Given the nature of the paper, it somehow makes sense to mark it using chads. The paper already has holes on its side to make it easy to store in a folder. The round shapes of the chads echo the existing holes on the paper. The actual tool I am using, the hole puncher, relates to stationery. The combination of A4 lined paper, a hole puncher and pieces of punched out chads makes sense given the relationship between materials and

tools. When gluing the chads on pieces of paper, I try to recreate the existing lines on the paper, even if imperfectly, by placing each chad such that the printed line on it coincides with the printed line on the page—a process of aiming with my finger. Getting the two lines to match exactly is not always possible. There may, thus, be a slight mismatch between the line on the page and the line on the chad. Moreover, the colour of the printed lines on two pieces of paper, even from the same pad, can be different—slightly darker or slightly lighter. This difference in colour results in another mismatch in the collages since the colour of the line on the chad may not be exactly the same as the colour of the line on the page.
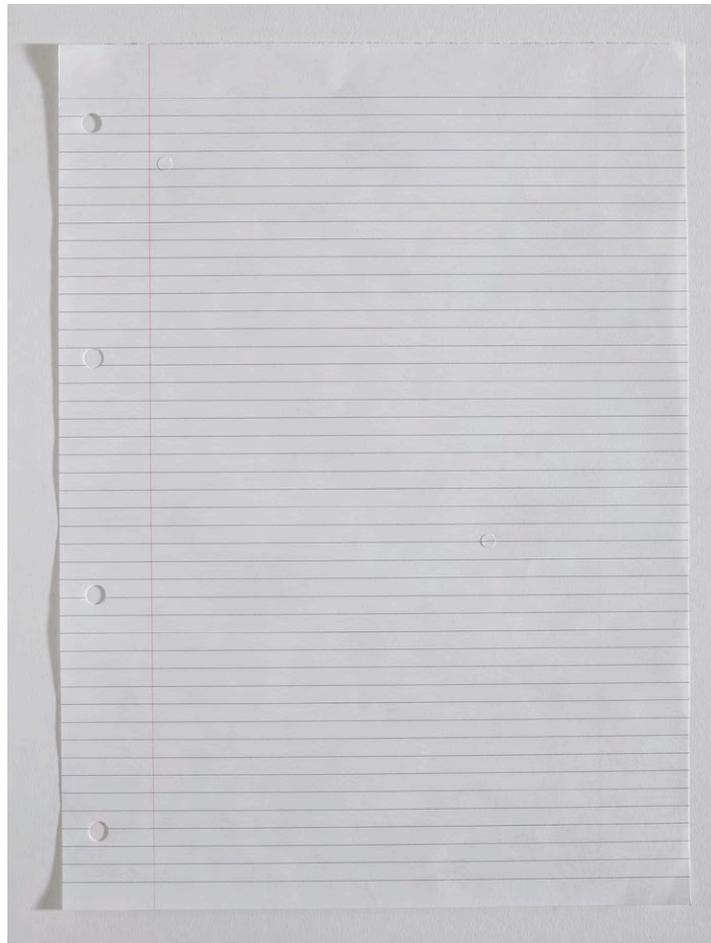
Picture 3. Marina Kassianidou, *Dotted Lines*, 2010. Paper collage, 21.6 x 27.9 cm
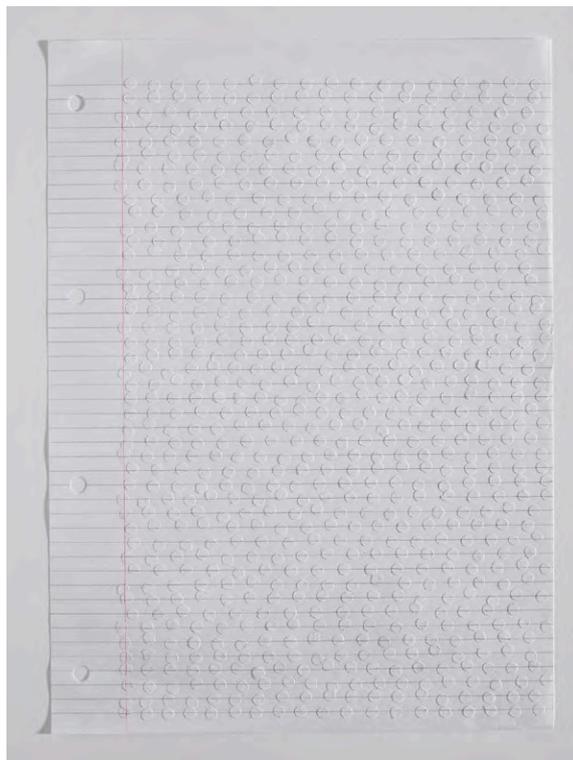
Picture 4. Marina Kassianidou, *Dotted Lines*, 2010. Paper collage, 21.6 x 27.9 cm

Picture 5. Marina Kassianidou, *Dotted Lines*, 2012, Paper collage, 21.6 x 27.9 cm

The marks or interventions employed by the artists in each of these cases come partly as a response to the surface. In other words, there is a direct relationship between mark and surface. Hopkins traces over an image that is already there, recreating it in paint. In the case of the *Dotted Lines* collages, I recreate the existing printed lines using leftover chads, which are pieces of the surface itself. The artists' actions in these practices respond to and closely "follow" the surface. The surface then almost initiates the process of making since it "reveals" the marks. Specific features of the surface "suggest" to the artist ways of responding through marking. The process of making "retrieves" the surface, bringing it, in a sense, to the foreground.

In-Between Spaces

I would argue that because of the close relation between mark and surface, meaning in these works is somehow shared between what the artist did and what was already there, the actual material of the specific surface. Meaning, that is, can be found in-between the artists' actions and the material surface.

Due to the close relation between the artists' marks and the pre-existing printed marks, from some distance away the two appear to be continuous. When the viewer looks at Hopkins' paintings from a distance, the surface seems to unify and painted and printed marks become difficult to separate. In the case of a painting like *Aurora 13*, one can see that the brown beige flowers stand out more than the light blue flowers but the initial assumption is that both sets of flowers have been painted. The viewer is after all looking at what appears to be a traditional painting on stretchers. The similarities and differences between the marks become apparent when the paintings are seen from close up. The viewer realizes that the brown flowers are painted and that the blue flowers are printed on the fabric (and that she is looking at the reverse side of the fabric). The viewer also realizes that the artist has painted over the existing image, recreating it. The fact that Hopkins leaves part of the surface untouched reveals her process. The brown and beige painted flowers are seen next to the blue printed flowers. As Ulrich Loock succinctly states, "the painting and its model" can be seen together.[4]

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[4] Loock, "Reproduction and Repression," 77–78.

In the case of the *Dotted Lines* collages, the collaged chads are initially difficult to discern. From a short distance away, the viewer cannot clearly see the glued pieces but only a slight disturbance on the surface. In one collage, only two pieces of round shapes have been glued on the paper. When this collage is seen from a distance of about one and a half metres away, these small interventions almost disappear. They come across as very subtle changes on two lines of the page. In the case of a collage where I glued chads on all the lines of the page, all of the printed lines appear to be slightly wobbly. The colour of each line is not entirely uniform from one end to the other nor are the lines completely straight. It looks as if something went wrong with the printing of the lines. From afar, then, the marks the viewer can see appear to be the result of a printing error. Moreover, the chads used to make the collages are literally part of the paper, resulting in their partial visual absorption by that surface. Instead of asserting their difference from the surface, the marks or the actions of the artist seem to be asserting a degree of sameness.[5]

This continuity between mark and surface and between the pre-existing and added marks can be viewed through the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on "zones of indiscernibility." A zone of indiscernibility is an area in which distinct and heterogeneous parts become inseparable. In this area, each of the parts "partially overlaps, has a zone of neighbourhood [*zone de voisinage*], or a threshold of indiscernibility, with another one."[6] In between the parts "[t]here is an area *ab* that belongs to both *a* and *b*, where *a* and *b* 'become' indiscernible."[7] This partial overlap leads to the temporary suspension of each of the distinct parts, resulting in a situation where "things…endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation."[8] It, thus, becomes challenging, within a zone of indiscernibility, to definitively differentiate between parts.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, a zone of indiscernibility is a place of becoming since it involves a passage or interchange between distinct terms.[9] In

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[5] For further discussion on the issue of "invisibility" in my practice, see Kassianidou, "In the Gap Between Visibility and Invisibility: The 'Fugitive' Image."

[6] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 19.

[7] Ibid., 19–20.

[8] Ibid., 173.

[9] Ibid., 20, 173.

fact, becoming "constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man's-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other."[10] The two parts approach each other and, within their zone of indiscernibility, start becoming each other. Deleuze and Guattari insist that becoming is not the same as trying to resemble something other or identifying with something other. Becoming cannot be reduced to a matter of resemblance because, as Erinn Gunniff Gilson explains, "becoming operates at a sub-individual level through affects, capacities, imperceptible movements, and intensities."[11] Of course, in the process of becoming, one does not actually turn into something other but rather is constantly becoming-other—there is no beginning or end but an in-between. As Deleuze and Guattari write, "becoming produces nothing other than itself."[12]

The works discussed in this paper result in a sense of continuity between mark and surface and between different types of marks, making it difficult at times to differentiate between them. Clearly, the marks and the surface are not the same nor are the painted or collaged marks the same as the pre-existing printed marks. In terms of method of making and materials used, the various types of marks differ. There is, however, a perceived continuity or proximity between them, leading to moments when they conflate—the artists' marks almost become surface or marks almost become other types of marks. Zones of indiscernibility emerge between different types of marks and between marks and surfaces. In the case of Hopkins' paintings, the viewer may confuse the printed marks with the painted marks. When encountering the *Dotted Lines* collages, the viewer may not even see the artist's marks at first or may see them as subtle printing errors. The surface, thus, ceases to be the "other" of the mark—the mark at times almost becomes surface. At the same time, however, the artists' marks do not become the same as the surface. Hopkins has chosen to use different colours to recreated the flower pattern and her brushstrokes create a differentiation in terms of material and texture on the surface. In the *Dotted Lines* collages, the chads extrude slightly from the surface of the paper, which is no longer completely smooth and flat.

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[10] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 323–324.

[11] Gilson, "Zones of Indiscernibility: The Life of a Concept from Deleuze to Agamben," 101.

[12] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 262.

With both practices, in order to be able to differentiate between marks, the viewer needs to approach the works. When the works are seen from close up, the interdependence between mark and surface emerges. I would argue that instead of only emphasizing the artist's marks/actions, the works bring to the fore the relationships between what the artist did and what was already there. These relationships, I would suggest, do not fully resolve into fixed or hierarchical oppositions. In the case of Hopkins' paintings, detailed painted marks coexist with what we may describe as an "anonymous," generic, mechanically produced mark. This printed mark could be seen to represent the opposite of the eponymous, "expressive" and unique mark of an artist. By "converting" the printed mark into a painted mark, Hopkins disrupts this opposition. Moreover, by closely "following" the printed pattern on the surface, she disrupts a fixed differentiation between her mark and the surface. In the case of the *Dotted Lines* collages, the artist's actions partially disappear into the paper, almost becoming one with it. The partial absorption of the artist's marks into the surface could potentially draw attention to the surface. From a distance, all the viewer can see is a piece of A4 lined paper. Attention is drawn to the surface itself as opposed to any marks on it. On approaching, the collaged pieces of paper emerge. On walking away again, the collage "disappears." Strict differentiations, such as mark versus surface, are, I would suggest, difficult to fully sustain at all times. Instead, there is partial continuity or indiscernibility between the various elements.

Artist and Work: Becoming-Surface, Becoming-Material

As discussed earlier, the actual making of the works depends on the specific surfaces used, which "invite" possible responses by the artists and are, thus, key in bringing into existence the art pieces. The artist, in each case, based her marks on what was already there. As a result, the artist's marks, as indication of her actions, can potentially become confused with the surface and its pre-existing patterns. This questions the activity of making since it may not be clear what the artist actually did. The material of the surface, in other words, "intervenes." In the case of Hopkins' works, the artist closely "follows" whatever is already there. This results in confusion between printed and painted marks such that both may be taken to be marks of the artist. Moreover, the close following of the surface comes to challenge, to some

extent, the artist's own agency. In the case of the collages, the artist is "making" something that partially effaces itself. The actions of the artist/maker and, consequently, the results of the making, are difficult to see or identify at first. Again, this challenges the agency and body of the artist. The artist, as subject, almost becomes object through the near assimilation between her marks and the surface. In other words, the artist is no longer someone who asserts her marks or actions, presenting them for viewing.

In addition, there is actual physical closeness involved in the making of these works. In an attempt to get their marks to follow the preexisting marks closely, both artists have to be physically very close to the surfaces with which they are working and they have to spend considerable time with them. During the making, the artists are somehow absorbed by the surface—they are partially becoming that surface. It is also interesting to note that the actual gestures or movements the artists perform are small in scale. Hopkins works with a tiny brush and her brushstrokes are very controlled. My gestures while making the collage involve precise and repetitive actions. There are no large gestures that emphasize movement and presence. Rather, the artists' motions are restrained, kept small and relatively still, perhaps trying to emulate the stillness of the surfaces.

Thus, by focusing on the material or surface used and by trying to "follow" it closely, these practices problematize the notion of the artist's mark and the actual "making" of the work. The artist and her marks partially become part of the surface, suggesting interdependence between the artist and her chosen materials. The works develop through the interaction between the artist and her materials, both during the making and during the viewing of the work. In a sense, the process of making opens up to the surface, allowing it to participate in the creation of the work. The artist places herself in a position where she has to "follow" the surface, thus, posing a potential challenge to herself and to her agency or presence as an artist. Following the surface, involves challenging boundaries between mark and surface and between various types of marks. At the same time, "following" the surface involves an opening up on behalf of the artist—opening up to each surface and becoming actively involved *with* it. The surface, along with all its patterns and histories, is

actively included in the making of the work. In the end, the surface "intervenes" in the artist's actions as much as the artist intervenes on the surface.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to suggest that these "relational" practices can open a path for rethinking the relationship with the "other" through art. In the works discussed here, a partial overlap emerges between the artist's mark and the surface and between different types of marks, making it challenging at times to differentiate between them. The various elements are not strictly "others." Instead, they share a space between them through which they transform each other. The various elements coexist, not as separate and independent entities, but as interrelated and interdependent parts. Of course, despite the overlaps and sharing between the various elements, it is important to note that they remain different. The artist's marks and the surface with its pre-existing marks approach each other but never fully turn into each other. Differentiation between mark and surface is delayed but does eventually come, provided the viewers are attentive. In fact, the viewers may be requested to be almost as attentive as the artists were. During making, the artists remain attentive to their chosen surfaces, working *with* them. Likewise, during viewing, the viewers are asked to be attentive and to approach the work.

As I have suggested in this paper, the material of the surfaces used by Louise Hopkins and by myself are crucial to the making and viewing of the works. In a sense, the surfaces become as important as the artists' actions. The making of the works is, to some degree, questioned since it is not exactly clear what the artist did. This, in turn, makes the experience of viewing more challenging—the works request closeness on behalf of the viewers. In the end, through the way they negotiate the relationships between the artist's actions and the materiality of the specific surface, the works may suggest a different way of relating to an "other," a way that emphasizes an in-between space.

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Acknowledgements

LOST IN SPACE? "INVISIBLE" MARKS, ARTWORKS, AND ARTISTS
PERDIDOS EN EL ESPACIO? MARCAS"INVISIBLES", OBRAS, Y ARTISTAS.
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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of invisibility as relating to visual art through a discussion of my practical and theoretical research. Visual art addresses, at least partly, our sense of visual perception. For example, with regards to drawing, what is usually or traditionally visible is the mark of the artist—that is what draws the attention of the viewer. This paper investigates how the relationships between viewer, artist, artwork and space shift when the artist's mark or action becomes almost invisible. Invisibility comes not as a result of the artist doing "nothing," but rather as a result of carefully recreating preexisting marks on a surface. This methodology leads to the artist's marks becoming "absorbed" by the surface or becoming indistinguishable from preexisting marks. Moreover, the artworks are not framed and, thus, they partially blend into the surrounding space. As a result, on first coming in the same space as the work, the viewers may not see the work. I propose that the partial invisibility of the artist's marks ultimately challenges the status of artworks, space, viewers and artist. This opens a path for rethinking subjectivity and the relationship with the "other" through art—whether that other is the artist's mark in relation to the surface and its preexisting marks, the artwork in relation to the surrounding space, the artist in relation to the viewer, or even, the self in relation to the other.

Key words: becoming, imperceptibility, invisibility, marking, matrixial subject, mimesis, practice-based research, self/other, site-specificity, subjectivity, visual art, zones of indiscernibility.

Resumen

En este artículo se aborda el tema de la invisibilidad en relación con las artes visuales a través de un análisis de mi investigación práctica y teórica. El arte visual, nos remite, al menos en parte, a nuestro sentido de la percepción visual. Por ejemplo, en lo que respecta al dibujo, lo que usualmente o tradicionalmente es visible es la marca del artista que es lo que atrae la atención del espectador. Este artículo investiga cómo las relaciones entre espectador, el artista, la obra y el espacio, varía cuando la marca o la acción del artista se vuelve casi invisible. La invisibilidad comprendida no como resultado de la no acción del artista, sino más bien como resultado de recrear cuidadosamente marcas preexistentes sobre una superficie. Esta metodología supone que las marcas del artista llegan a ser "absorbidas" por la superficie o se vuelven indistinguibles de las marcas preexistentes. Por otra parte, las obras de arte no están enmarcadas y, por lo tanto, se mezclan parcialmente en el espacio circundante. Como resultado, al encontrarse por primera vez en el mismo espacio que el trabajo, los espectadores podrían no ver la obra de arte. Propongo que la invisibilidad parcial de las marcas del artista desafía el status de las obras de arte, el espacio, el espectador y el artista. Esto abre un camino para replantear la subjetividad y la relación con el "otro" a través del arte, ya sea que el "otro" sea la marca del artista en relación a la superficie y sus marcas preexistentes, las obras de arte en relación con el espacio que lo rodea, el artista en relación con el espectador, o incluso, el ser mismo en relación con el otro.

Palabras clave: devenir, imperceptible, invisible, marcas, sujeto matricial, mimesis, la investigación basada en la práctica, el yo y el otro, site-specific art, subjetividad, artes visuales, zonas de indisponibilidad.

An invisible work is, by definition, not visible to the eye—it is a work concealed from sight. When this work falls within visual art, a seeming paradox emerges: How does one "make" an invisible artwork and how does one "view" or relate to such an artwork? This paper discusses two of my works that investigate the issue of invisibility as relating to the artist's actions. The works employ subtle drawn and collaged marks that relate, in some way, to the appearance or character of the surface or space being marked. The artist's time-consuming actions replicate, to some extent, features already present. As a result of this mimetic approach, the artist's marks become confused with the surface or with other kinds of marks, such as accidental stains and scratches. They are, thus, rendered partially invisible, destabilizing the borders between mark/surface and artwork/space and creating moments of "indiscernibility" between each pair. The article argues that this "indiscernibility" ultimately challenges the status of artworks, space, viewers and artist and destabilizes the relationships between them. This destabilization may enable a different way of thinking about subjectivity and a different way of relating to an "other" through art.

Theoretical Background

Vision and visuality as sources of knowledge have been very important in Western philosophy since the time of Plato. The emphasis on vision and the primacy of visibility in Western culture has been criticized by various authors, including the feminist theorist and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray.[1] Within visual art, the visible usually plays a crucial role. What happens, however, when there is "nothing" to be seen? There have been several attempts to challenge the privileging of the visual within art. Two important examples are the exhibitions *Voids. A Retrospective* at the Pompidou Center in 2009 and *Invisible: Art About the Unseen*, 1957–2012 at the Hayward Gallery in 2012. Both exhibitions presented works that dealt with the issue of invisibility or the "nothing" to be seen. For example, *Voids* consisted of a retrospective of exhibitions that showed an empty space, museum or gallery, such as Bethan Huws' Haus Esters Piece from 1993, while the Hayward exhibition included Gianni Motti's invisible ink drawings from 1989 and Song Dong's diary written with water which began in 1995.

This paper is specifically concerned with works that involve the notion of "invisible" marking. Historically, in painting and drawing visibility rests with the artist's mark. At its most basic, the mark is an area on a surface that somehow differentiates itself from that surface. It is also caused or made by something or someone. In the case of visual art, the marks are the result of the artist's actions and they are usually what the viewers are interested in seeing. Traditionally, the marks of the artist differentiate themselves from the surface, which, in turn, forms the "other" of the mark, that in relation to which the mark is positioned[2]. Feminist theorists, such as Griselda Pollock, Bracha Ettinger and Alison Rowley, have identified and criticized the historical emphasis on visibility, on the artist's mark, and on the opposition figure/ground, which depends on the presence or absence of a mark, within specific art practices[3]. It is important to note that the artist's mark, or evidence of the artist's hand, has fluctuated in importance over time. For example, it might have been a key component in the work of the Abstract Expressionists but it was subsequently challenged and almost completely eliminated from the work of Minimalist artists, such as Donald Judd (Buskirk, 2003)[4]. It was also questioned in the works of Pop Artists, such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein who directly used or emulated mechanical processes of image making.

The two works discussed in this article focus on the artist's mark and investigate its limits with regards to invisibility. This invisibility comes not as a result of the artist doing "nothing," but rather as a result of carefully recreating preexisting marks on a surface. As such, these works are found at a quandary. On the one hand, they are expected to offer some form of visual experience, being visual art. On the other hand, they approach a kind of invisibility or indiscernibility. They are not exactly anti-visual but rather operate near the limits of vision, turning vision into the equivalent of a "whisper" perhaps, and questioning the status of artwork, space, artist and viewer, as I argue later in the paper.

Methodology and works

The works discussed in this article form part of a research project that incorporates both art practice and theory. Within this project, artistic practice is addressed as research in that it involves an investigative process of making art that aims to examine different ways of seeing and

understanding. The knowledge or theory produced by artworks is not necessarily written but realized through the works. It is the result of ideas worked through matter, a kind of "matrixial theory," as Katy MacLeod (2000) has called it, that combines ideas, matter, form and existing theory. This type of "theory" demonstrates the intellectuality of making.

The specific methodology adopted for the two works discussed here revolves around the use of marks, or ways of "marking," that, somehow, relate to the surface being marked. The marks may relate to the surface's appearance, its everyday use or its history. The surface, in each case, forms part of a space: a wall in a studio inhabited during a residency and the floor of a gallery space in which work was shown. The surfaces to be marked and the way of marking were not predetermined but rather "surfaced" after spending a few days within each space. For a work at the Stonehouse Residency for Contemporary Arts, completed in 2010, I drew over existing paint stains on a wall in the studio. Using colored pencils, I drew lines through the paint stains, following the texture of the wall. In a collage at Tenderpixel Gallery, completed in 2011, I covered big scratches on the floor with pieces of contact paper that I cut to match the shapes of the scratches[5]. The intimate relationship between mark and surface in these two works, becomes the starting point for an investigation into invisibility in visual art and its implications for the artist, artwork, space and viewer. Moreover, the emphasis on and close attention to the surface comes as a challenge to theorizations and practices that privilege the artist's mark or action over other elements involved in the work, specifically the surface that is marked and the space in which the work is shown.

Experiencing "Invisibility"

The Artist: In the Making

June–July 2010. As part of a residency, I spent almost three weeks in a chicken coop turned studio, on the mountains of Miramonte in California. The first few days were spent studying the space: the colors, textures, and materials. On one wall, a previous resident had been making a painting using red and black paint. The painting was now gone but the space around it was demarcated by paint marks. These were painted over with white paint, probably to prepare the space for its next resident. They were still, however, faintly visible. These traces eventually presented themselves as a potential drawing. I began drawing over the preexisting marks, using red and black colored pencils, the same colors as the existing stains. The outline of the drawing was dictated by the old paint marks. Within each area, I drew lines, following the texture of the wall. In a sense, my drawing recreated the faint stains, making them somewhat more visible. I worked centimeters from the surface, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting or standing on a chair, sometimes sitting on the floor. My position depended on the stains' position.

As I was working on the drawing, confusion arose between the drawn marks and the preexisting stains. From a distance of about one and a half meters away, the marks and stains were hard to differentiate. I saw what I thought was a stain and approached to mark it only to realize that I had already drawn over that region. Even if I could see my marks from close by, whenever I tried to step back and look at the whole piece, I would lose some of them. The attempt to get a complete view resulted in the image partially escaping vision. Because of the limited time at the residency, I did not draw over every single stain, thus, the final piece consisted of both drawn-over and untouched stains.

August 2011. In 2011, I curated a group exhibition at Tenderpixel Gallery. The works exhibited involved interventions on found or preexisting objects. As part of my intervention, I covered scratches on the floor of the gallery with pieces of contact paper that I cut to match the shapes of the scratches. The floor was made up of wooden planks that were full of scratches, probably caused by people moving furniture and artworks over the years. I chose a contact paper design that approximated the gallery floor, both in terms of color and pattern. I worked on the floor, "crawling" from plank to plank, identifying scratches (only the most prominent ones), tracing over each one, cutting the contact paper according to the tracing, and sticking it over the scratch. The process took two full days. My work, in a sense, partially "repaired" the old floor.

Similarly to the wall drawing, the collaged pieces partially blended into the floor. From across the room, I could only faintly make out the covered

Figure 1. Studio at Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts, Miramonte, CA, USA.

Figure 2. Marina Kassianidou: Untitled, 2010, colored pencils on wall 220x270cm, Miramonte, CA, USA, Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts.
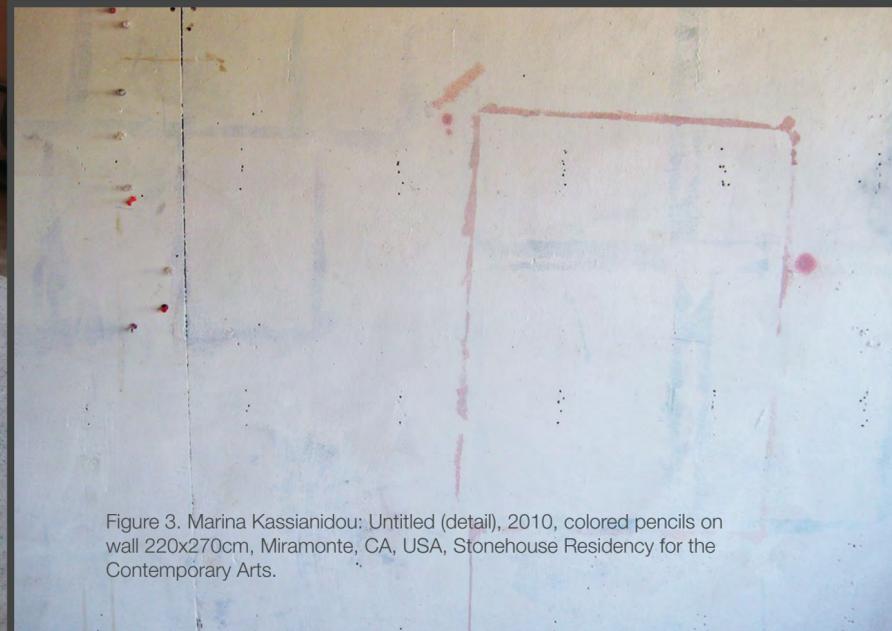
Figure 3. Marina Kassianidou: Untitled (detail), 2010, colored pencils on wall 220x270cm, Miramonte, CA, USA, Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts.
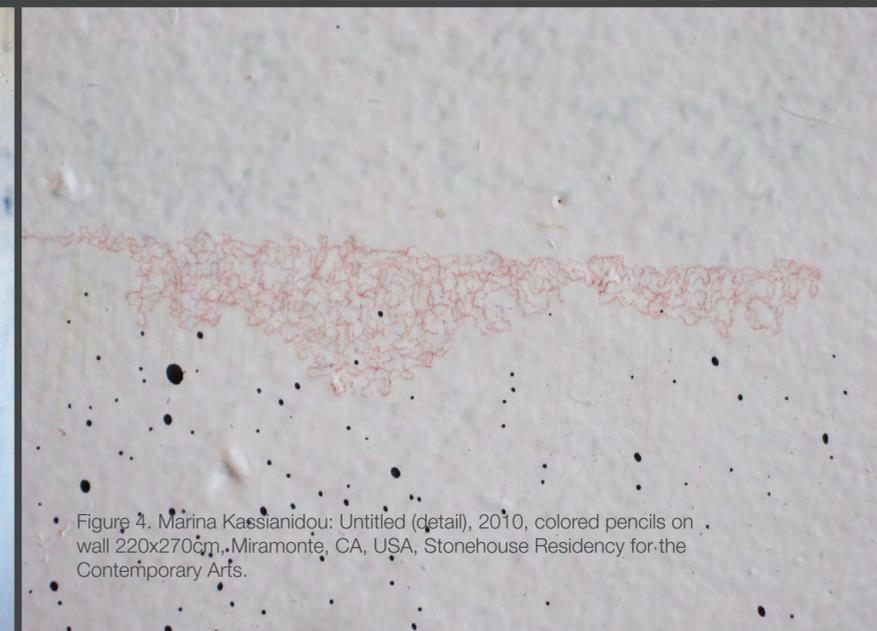
Figure 4. Marina Kassianidou: Untitled (detail), 2010, colored pencils on wall 220x270cm, Miramonte, CA, USA, Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts.

Figure 5. Marina Kassianidou: Untitled (detail), 2011, contact paper on floor 460x376cm, London, TENDERPIXEL.

Figure 6. Marina Kassianidou: Untitled (detail), 2011, contact paper on floor 460x376cm, London, TENDERPIXEL.

Figure 7. Marina Kassianidou: Untitled (detail), 2011, contact paper on floor 460x376cm, London, TENDERPIXEL.

scratches on the other end, even though the space was rather small. The contact paper surface had a satin finish to it that the wooden floor did not have, thus, as I moved around the space changes in light made some strips of contact paper more discernible.

The Viewer: While "Viewing"

June–July 2010. During the three weeks I worked in the Stonehouse studio, other artists would occasionally come into the studio to see what I was doing.[6] Since they did not know that I was working on a wall drawing, they thought I was not doing anything. When they eventually voiced their confusion, I told

them about the wall drawing. This led them to occasionally checking all of the studio walls to find out if I had done any other drawings (resident artists, personal communication, June–July, 2010). During the open studio event, at the end of the residency, several viewers initially assumed that nothing was shown in the space. Others walked around in an attempt to find or "discover" the work. Those that happened to walk very close to the wall eventually noticed the drawn marks. Once again, this led them to study all the other walls closely to find any remaining hidden drawings (viewers, personal communication, July 3, 2010).

August–September 2011. In the case of the floor collage at Tenderpixel Gallery, which was shown as part of a group exhibition, viewers walked around the space looking at the other works, usually without noticing the floor collage at first. A number on the printed exhibition plan, which showed where works were displayed, indicated the presence of something on the floor of the gallery. That something was very subtle and not easily visible at first, a fact that became clear during the exhibition. During the private view, several people asked where my piece was. I would point to the floor at which point they would see the collaged pieces. Some people thought that the collage was at a specific place and did not immediately realize that it covered the whole floor. For others, the collage eventually became all they could see since it took over the whole floor (viewers, personal communication, August 11, 2011).

Analyzing "Invisibility"

Mimesis, Zones of Indiscernibility and Becomings

In the two works discussed above, the artist's marks "follow" each surface quite closely, revealing a mimetic tendency. The artist's marks, in a sense, mime preexisting features of the surface. The drawn marks on the wall at Stonehouse mime the shapes and color of the preexisting paint stains as well as the rough texture of the wall. The drawing comes as a repetition, recreating, in a way, what is already there. The collaged pieces of contact paper on Tenderpixel's floor, mime the shapes of existing scratches as well as the colors and patterns of the wooden planks. The chosen contact paper

itself mimics wood by essentially being a processed image of wood printed endlessly in rolls.

Mimesis itself, of course, does not necessarily imply invisibility. Any attempt to try and define mimesis accurately is difficult or even undesirable, as Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf (1995) suggest. According to Gebauer and Wulf, mimesis is "a highly complex structure in which an entire range of conditions coincide" (p. 309), a structure that is heterogeneous and can only be described through its various and varied dimensions. Gebauer and Wulf go on to discuss these dimensions. The dimension that most obviously relates to the works discussed here is that of reference: something that mimes is, in effect, establishing a reference to that which it mimes (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995). This mimetic reference generates correspondences and similarities between what is mimed and the mimesis (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995).

The relationship between mimesis and partial invisibility is explored by Roger Caillois in his essay "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia" (1984) [7]. In this essay, Caillois focuses on the distinction between an organism and its surroundings. He describes organisms that mimic their environment, partially blending into it. For example, he discusses the Kallima butterflies which come to resemble the specific types of bush that they frequent (Caillois, 1984). In the case of the Kallima, "imitation is pushed to the smallest details: indeed, the wings bear gray-green spots simulating the mold of lichens and glistening surfaces that give them the look of torn and perforated leaves" (p. 22). The butterflies, thus, "become" leaves on the bushes, rendering themselves, as actual living butterflies, "invisible." The "invisibility" of the organisms, Caillois discusses, comes about precisely due to their tendency to mimic their specific environment. It is, thus, a combination of mimicking something and situating oneself, as the mimic, over or next to what one mimics. Through mimicry and placement, the organisms blend into their environment/background, becoming continuous with it.

A similar situation occurs with the works discussed here. The artist's marks not only mime preexisting stains and scratches but are also placed over and next to these prior marks. Thus, the artist's marks become partially lost in the surface. From a distance, the drawn marks on the wall look like

actual stains. In the case of the floor collage, the similarity between the contact paper and the wooden floor results in the partial absorption of the contact paper strips by the floor. The collaged strips can be mistaken for real wood or for scratches and stains since the old floor is full of these. The similarity of the various kinds of marks and their physical closeness lead to visual confusion. In both works, instead of standing out and asserting their difference from the surface, the artist's marks become part of the surface, continuous with it and with its preexisting marks. They, thus, become partially invisible since they are not always visible as what they truly are [8].

The continuity between mark and surface in these works can be further conceptualized using the idea of zones of indiscernibility developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In *What is Philosophy?* (1994) Deleuze and Guattari discuss zones of indiscernibility with respect to concepts. Every concept consists of components, which may potentially be seen as other concepts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). Within each concept, the components are distinct and heterogeneous, but, at the same time, inseparable (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994), each component "partially overlaps, has a zone of neighborhood [*zone de voisinage*], or a threshold of indiscernibility, with another one" (p. 19). Even though the components of each concept remain distinct, "something passes from one to the other, something that is undecidable between them" (pp. 19–20). There is, thus, "an area *ab* that belongs to both *a* and *b*, where a and b 'become' indiscernible" (p. 20). A zone of indiscernibility, then, involves both a partial overlap and an interchange between distinct terms. In her analysis of the concept of zones of indiscernibility, Erinn Cunniff Gilson (2007) clarifies that what passes between the terms is not actually transferred from one to the other but is shared by both. The element that is shared is "something imperceptible and indistinguishable in a quality, a form, or a statement—it is something sub-individual" (Gilson, 2007, pp. 100–101).

The partial overlap between the terms leads to their temporary suspension. A situation is created where the terms "endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation," thus, endlessly remaining just on the brink of differentiating (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 173). According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994), a zone of indiscernibility is a

place of becoming since it involves a passage or interchange between terms. In this zone, one term is in the process of becoming the other. Deleuze and Guattari insist that becoming is not the same as imitating or identifying with something other. Becoming cannot be reduced to a matter of resemblance "because becoming operates at a sub-individual level through affects, capacities, imperceptible movements, and intensities" (Gilson, 2007, p. 101)[9]. Moreover, becoming is always double—"that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 336). Of course, in the process of becoming, one does not actually turn into something other but rather is constantly becoming-other—there is no beginning or end but an in-between. Becoming "constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man's-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, pp. 323–324). The process is one of resonance and of change. As Deleuze and Guattari (2004) write, "becoming produces nothing other than itself" (p. 262).

Deleuze and Guattari's discussion enables a move from mimesis to indiscernibility and becoming. When discussing art, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) suggest that what starts out as a "representation" or imitation, enters into a becoming. The works discussed in this article start out by following a mimetic approach but result in a kind of continuity between mark and surface and between different types of marks, making it difficult at times to differentiate between them. Clearly, the marks and the surface are not the same thing nor can anyone claim that the drawn or collaged marks are the same as the preexisting stains and scratches. The stains and scratches are accidental marks, caused by people who were present in those spaces in the past. The drawn and collaged marks, on the other hand, have been made intentionally and carefully. They required a long time and intense concentration on the part of the artist. In terms of motivation, method of making, and materials used, the two types of marks are not the same. There is, however, a perceived continuity or proximity between them, leading to moments when they *appear* to conflate.

In the works discussed here, zones of indiscernibility, as theorized by Deleuze and Guattari, emerge between different types of marks and between marks and surfaces. Within these zones, marks almost become

surface or almost become another type of mark. At first, the viewers may not notice the artist's marks or, even if they do see something, they may think they are looking at a stain or part of the floor. The moment of recognition is delayed. Of course, recognition eventually comes when the marks of the artist become visible to the viewers as what they really are. The viewers may walk close to the wall and see the drawing or they may notice that something is not quite right about the floor and realize that the artist has intervened. The zones of indiscernibility may re-emerge as the viewers step back again. The difference now is that the viewers are aware of the existence of the drawing or collage. This leads to a different kind of confusion that involves the viewers seeing stains and scratches and mistaking them for drawn or collaged marks. Thus, confusion is somehow double. From some distance away, the artist's marks may appear to be stains and scratches and, at the same time, stains and scratches may be perceived as drawings and collages. The two types of mark overlap and become partially indiscernible. Both the artist's marks and the surface with its preexisting marks are partially transformed through their encounter.

These zones of indiscernibility between what the artist did and what was already there render the works partially invisible, preventing the viewers from immediately knowing what they are looking at or even what it is they are supposed to be looking at. The works could amount to a form of becoming-imperceptible. Becoming-imperceptible is, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2004), "the immanent end of becoming" (p. 308). It can mean becoming-everybody/everything, making a world by finding one's proximities, or becoming an abstract line or trait "in order to find one's zone of indiscernibility with other traits" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 309). Deleuze and Guattari (2004) discuss the example of a fish, which "is crisscrossed by abstract lines that resemble nothing, that do not even follow its organic divisions; but thus disorganized, disarticulated, it worlds with the lines of a rock, sand and plants, becoming imperceptible" (pp. 308–309). Similarly, the artist's marks/actions in the works discussed here become-imperceptible by becoming a continuation of the space and its preexisting marks—the works "world" with the space.

The Initial Marks

Invisibility comes into the two works on another level as well. In some ways, invisibility is already inherent within the original marks to be recreated—the leftover paint stains on the wall and the scratches on the floor.

These marks are leftovers of an activity. In fact, these leftover marks form an index. An index, as Rosalind Krauss (1977) writes, is a "type of sign which arises as the physical manifestation of a cause, of which traces, imprints, and clues are examples" (p. 59). The paint marks on the wall at Stonehouse are traces of the activity of painting and the scratches on the floor of Tenderpixel Gallery are traces of the activity of moving objects in space. The marks are leftovers of people and objects that were there in the past but are no longer there, a fact nicely signified by the "unmarked" rectangular section on the wall at Stonehouse, where the painting a past resident artist was working on once hung. There is an element then attached to these marks—what caused them—that is absent and, thus, partially invisible.

Yet one could argue that what is present—the traces of the activity, the actual marks—is still partially invisible. The specific marks recreated in the works discussed here, are usually overlooked. Paint stains on a wall in an artist's studio do not particularly stand out, especially if they have been painted over with white paint so that they are only faintly visible. Scratches on an old wooden floor, which is actually full of scratches and stains, are nothing special or noteworthy. These specific marks are partially invisible by nature since they do not ordinarily capture the attention of the onlooker. They recede into the background, becoming part of the space. They are also not meant to be seen in a way a painting is meant to be seen, for example. In fact, these types of marks are most likely accidental. It was probably not the intention of the artist making the painting at the Stonehouse studio to make those marks on the wall just like it was probably not the intention of the people moving furniture, artworks or other objects to scratch the floor at Tenderpixel. These marks are the unintentional leftovers of an activity, not made to be seen by anyone.

An Issue of Framing (or Lack Thereof)

In addition to the levels of invisibility discussed in the earlier sections, yet

another level of invisibility arises that results in the continuation between the artworks and their surrounding space. The artworks discussed are not visually framed as artworks. The wall drawing is a site-specific work on a wall in a studio—it is not framed by anything other than the wall. Similarly, the floor collage takes over the whole floor of the gallery. Again, it is not framed by anything other than the actual floor. In fact, we might say that the floor collage was "framed" by being named in the list of works shown in the exhibition and by being numbered on a map that indicated where each exhibited work was found. The wall drawing, on the other hand, was presented as part of an open studio with no accompanying text and, thus, no "framing."

 In *The Truth in Painting* (1987), Jacques Derrida discusses the frame of a work of art in relation to the idea of the parergon. According to Derrida (1987), the frame, as parergon, is neither inside not outside the work of art, "neither work (*ergon*) nor outside the work [*hors d'oeuvre*]" (p. 9). It is separated from the work of art by an inner border but, at the same time, it is separated from the wall by an outer border (Derrida, 1987). Derrida (1987) continues,

> ...the parergonal frame stands out against two grounds [*fonds*], but with respect to each of those two grounds, it merges [se fond] into the other. With respect to the work which can serve as a ground for it, it merges into the wall, and then, gradually, into the general text. With respect to the background which the general text is, it merges into the work which stands out against the general background. (p. 61)

Moreover, the presence of a parergonal frame "gives rise to the work" (Derrida, 1987, p. 9). It creates a differentiation between work and space that signals to the viewers where the work is and what exactly they should be looking at. Derrida's text also suggests a connection between the frame and invisibility:

> There is always a form on a ground, but the *parergon* is a form which has as its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy. (p. 61)

At the moment when the frame performs its function of differentiating between work and space and pointing out the work, it disappears.

If there is no frame, then there is no transition between work and environment. The two either differentiate themselves absolutely—where one ends, the other immediately begins—or they blend into each other— the differentiation between the two is unclear. If there is no frame, there is nothing to indicate which is the work or what the viewers should be focusing on. In the works discussed here, artwork and environment are continuous. The artist's marks blend in with the surface of the wall and floor and are confused with preexisting marks, as discussed earlier. The lack of any kind of visual framing renders the artist's actions even more invisible. A zone of indiscernibility emerges between artwork and environment, a zone in which it becomes difficult at first to definitively say whether something is an artwork or whether it just forms part of the environment. The artwork is partially "lost" in space or becomes-space, becomes-imperceptible.

In fact, with many site-specific works the question may arise as to whether something, if anything, frames them. Derrida (1987) asks this with regards to the Sistine Chapel frescoes. One suggestion might be that the work, in the sense of the actual drawing or collage, somehow slips into the role of a parergon or becomes parergonal. In the lack of framing, the work melts into the surrounding environment and partially disappears. The balance sustained by the presence of a frame, which "*gives rise* to the work," is now gone and the space seeps into the work. Which begs the question, if the work (the actual drawing or collage) is parergonal, then where is the ergon/work/action and what gives rise to it? This issue is explored in the following sections.

"Invisibility" and Beyond

Shifting Roles and Relationships: Viewer, Artwork, Space and Artist

Having discussed the various levels of invisibility that come into play in the two works, I now turn to the potential implications this invisibility may have. If, as suggested in the previous section, the works (the actual drawing and collage) become at times parergonal, then the ergon (the work or the action) may also be somewhere else. I suggest that the partial invisibility of the works problematizes common notions of viewing and making. This alters the roles of the various elements involved in these processes—viewer, artwork, space, artist—and subtly shifts the relationships among them. These alterations and

shifts become part of the work.

When artworks are partially invisible, the activity of viewing is problematized. The partial invisibility of the artist's marks/actions/works makes it quite challenging for the viewers, when first entering the space, to discern what the artist actually did. In fact, the overall role of the viewers as viewers, that is, as those who look at something, is brought into question. Initially, at least, the viewers cannot fully see or identify the works. The partially invisible marks do not allow the viewers full access to a clearly visible image, which is what they may expect when coming before a drawing or collage. As such, the viewers may need to renegotiate their relationship to the work, becoming perhaps more active and attentive participants in their encounter with the work. Viewers in the same space as the wall drawing or floor collage employed movement and close and sustained looking. They walked close to the surfaces to study the marks and they even started searching for marks elsewhere in space. Thus, the actual viewing of the works cannot happen from a distance but requires the viewers to move around the space and to come very close to the surfaces. When the viewers step back again, they "lose" the artist's marks. They may see drawn marks and take them to be stains or they may see stains and think that they are drawn marks. They may see scratches from across the room and think that they are collaged marks or they may see collaged marks and think that they are scratches. There is no clear view of the works at all times. Instead, visibility and perception change as the viewers move in space.

The closeness required for the viewing of the works, draws the viewers' attention to the preexisting elements in space. The drawing at the Stonehouse studio directs the viewers' attention to the wall's surface. In order to see the drawing, the viewers find themselves so close to the wall that they cannot help but notice aspects that are usually ignored: the slightly bumpy texture of the wall, small holes created from pins and nails, old paint marks, leftover pieces of masking tape and so on. Similarly, the floor collage at Tenderpixel Gallery draws the viewers' attention to the floor. The wooden planks, the scratches, areas where planks have been replaced with newer wood, all become more visible. The usually overlooked—stains and scratches or the texture of an ordinary wall or floor—becomes visible through the works. Thus, even though the works start out as partially invisible, by drawing the viewer close, they render more visible not only themselves but the preexisting elements in the

space. The viewers are drawn into the space, close to the artist's marks and preexisting marks and, hopefully, begin to consider the potential of the space and the possible relationships between marks and surfaces and works and spaces.

Given that the viewer's attention may shift between the artist's marks and the space, it is reasonable to suggest that the works are not solely based on the artist's marks and their differentiation from everything else or on the differentiation between artwork and space. Even though the works fall within the fields of drawing and collage, they diverge from the usual mark/surface or figure/ground distinction. The partial invisibility of the artist's marks and their continuity with the surface and preexisting marks, when seen from some distance, means that we can no longer talk about the presence or absence of the artist's mark in absolute terms. Moreover, the placement of the artist's marks on a wall and floor and the lack of obvious framing, allows the works to become-space or to become-imperceptible, as suggested earlier. Instead of remaining independent and separate, the works open up to the surrounding spaces. They become-space and the spaces become-work. When seen from some distance, the works and the space are almost indistinguishable. When seen from close up, the interdependence between mark and surface and between work and space emerges. This may lead the viewers to look elsewhere in space for more "invisible" works. Thus, instead of only emphasizing the artist's marks/actions—the drawing or collage—and instead of presenting themselves as the only thing to be viewed, the works bring to the fore the relationships between what the artist did and what was already there. These relationships do not fully resolve into hierarchical oppositions. Detailed pencil drawings and carefully cut strips of contact paper coexist with accidental stains and scratches. A group of differences and similarities exists between the various marks but it does not exactly break down to fixed dichotomies. Strict differentiations, such as mark versus surface, figure versus ground, accidental stain or scratch versus constructed drawn or collaged marks are, I would suggest, difficult to fully sustain. Instead, there is partial continuity between the various elements, a continuity that may allow for a different conversation and for a working together rather than against each other.

This continuity or interdependence is manifest in the making of the works as well. In fact, the actual making of the works depends on preexisting marks

in space which "invite" possible responses by the artist and are, thus, key in bringing into existence the art pieces—in rendering them visible, in a sense. The preexisting paint marks on the wall at Stonehouse, eventually led to a wall drawing while the old scratches on the floor at Tenderpixel led to the creation of a collage. The artist based her marks/actions on what was already there. As a result, the artist's marks, as indication of her actions, partially disappear into the surface/space. This questions the activity of making itself since the artist is "making" something that partially effaces itself. The actions of the artist/maker and, consequently, the results of the making, are difficult to see or identify at first.

This partial "disappearance" of the artist's marks/actions, takes us back to Caillois' essay on organisms that employ mimicry. Caillois (1984) argues that this mimicry is not a process of defense but rather a process of assimilation into the surroundings. He compares this to legendary psychasthenia, which is the disturbance between personality and space (Caillois, 1984). Schizophrenics may see space as a "devouring force" which "pursues them, encircles them, digests them" and, eventually, replaces them (Caillois, 1984, p. 30). This "replacement" results in the person feeling herself or himself "becoming space" (Caillois, 1984, p. 30), moving, in other words, from the animate towards the inanimate. Caillois (1984) calls this process "*depersonalization by assimilation to space*" (p. 30). In the works discussed here, marks performed actively and carefully are partially turned into passive matter—they become part of the surface, as if they appeared by themselves or were always there. This challenges the agency and body of the artist. The artist, as subject, almost becomes object through the near assimilation between her marks and the surface/space. In other words, the artist is no longer someone who asserts her marks/actions, presenting them for viewing.

Moreover, there is actual physical closeness involved in the making of these works—the artist has to be physically very close to the surfaces with which she is working, studying them carefully and trying to get her marks to follow the preexisting marks closely. There is also a significant time investment and physical effort. During the making, the artist is somehow absorbed by the surface. It is almost like having empathy with the surface—the artist and her marks are partially becoming that surface. It is also interesting to note that

the actual gestures or movements the artist performs are small in scale. The wall drawing requires continuous movement that is focused on a very small area for a relatively long period of time. The same is true with the making of the floor collage. There are no large or forceful gestures that emphasize movement and presence. Rather, gestures are restrained, kept small and relatively still, perhaps trying to emulate the stillness of the surfaces the artist is working with. In addition, one could suggest, as discussed earlier, that the mark the artist is making, whether drawn or collaged, acts as an index of the preexisting stain or scratch, itself also an index of the physical action that brought it into being. The artist's mark follows and overlaps the preexisting mark, setting up a physical relationship to it. At the same time, the artist's mark is an index of the artist herself—the physical trace left by her actions. The resulting mark is, thus, an index of a scratch or stain, an inanimate thing, and of the artist, a living being. The drawn or collaged mark becomes the meeting point of artist and surface, bringing the two together. The artist becomes surface, the surface becomes art.

Partial invisibility, then, leads to a rethinking of the role or status of artist, artwork, space and viewer and the relationships between them. The activity of making is questioned since the actions of the artist/maker and, consequently, the thing made, remain partially invisible. As a result, viewing is no longer so straightforward and the viewer is asked to work in order to try and fulfill her/his role. The ergon/work/action, then, may be found somewhere between the artist's marks/actions and the preexisting space, between the viewer and the marks/actions/space, between artist, viewer and world.

Conceptualizing Subjectivity, Relating to an "Other"

I would like to suggest that partial invisibility and the ensuing shifting relationships between mark and surface and between viewers, artworks, spaces and artist, open a path for rethinking subjectivity and the relationship with the "other" through art—whether that other is the artist's mark in relation to the surface and its preexisting marks, the artwork in relation to the surrounding space, the artist in relation to the viewer, or the self in relation to the world. I suggest that there emerges an overlap between self and other, yet, without the other ever being fully retrieved. To discuss this possibility, I will briefly turn to the work of feminist theorists Bracha Ettinger and Luce

Irigaray[10].

Ettinger's theorization of the matrix enables a different conceptualization of subjectivity. Ettinger proposes the matrix as a supplementary signifier in the Symbolic, in addition to the phallus, and, thus, as a distinct stratum of subjectivization[11]. She models the matrix on certain dimensions of the late stages of pregnancy [12]. As Ettinger (2006) explains, the late intrauterine encounter "can serve as a model for a *shareable dimension of subjectivity* in which elements that discern one another as *non-I*, without knowing each other, co-emerge and co-inhabit a joint space, without fusion and without rejection" (p. 65). The mother and fetus are partially unknown to each other since they cannot really see each other, yet they coexist and develop together in a non-aggressive manner, without rejecting each other as wholly other or assimilating each other into themselves. Ettinger (2006) sees the "*becoming-mother* (the mother-to-be)" and the "becoming-subject (baby-to-be)" as co-emerging "partial-subjects" (p. 66) [13]. Each of these partial subjects has her/his own bodily and subjective borderlines, yet where these come into contact borderlinks are formed. These borderlinks become thresholds through which the partial subjects transform each other's phantasies by sharing psychic traces (Ettinger, 2006). A shared space, thus, exists between them through which the partial subjects affect each other by constantly readjusting their relationship [14].

The unknown "Other" with respect to the pregnant woman is the fetus but Ettinger (1992) expands this to include many Others: "the other unknown to the *I*," "the unknown elements of the known *I*," and/or "the unknown elements of the known other" (p. 200). In the matrixial stratum of subjectivization, subjectivity becomes an encounter in which "partial subjects co-emerge and co-fade through retuning and transformations via external/internal borderlinks with-in and with-out" (Ettinger, 2006, p. 84). Ettinger calls these transformations metramorphosis. Metramorphosis transforms the borderspace between several partial subjects, allowing them to inhabit a shared space and to transform together but differently—what Ettinger (2006) calls "*differentiation-in-co-emergence*" (p. 65). Metramorphosis, then, is the "*becoming-threshold of borderlines*" (Ettinger, 1994, p. 44).[15]

Subjectivity within the matrixial sphere then, involves an encounter between

several partial subjects that affect each other through a shared space and transform together but differently. Metramorphosis allows this sharing by transforming borderlines into thresholds and, thus, opening up the partial subjects to each other. Within art practice, one way in which we can think of metramorphosis is as transformations that may potentially occur in the overlap or shared space between seemingly distinct elements. In the two works discussed here, a temporary but recurring partial overlap emerges between artist's mark and surface, between different types of marks, and between artworks and space, making it challenging at times to differentiate between them. These various elements are obviously not the same—the artist's marks are never turned into a stain or a scratch and the artworks do not completely disappear into space. There is never complete assimilation of these elements. Neither is there complete differentiation at all times. The various elements are not strictly "others." The surface is no longer the "other" of the mark, a painted or collaged mark is not just the "other" of an accidental stain or scratch, and the surrounding space is not simply the "other" of the artwork. Instead, they share a space between them through which they transform each other. The various elements coexist, not as separate and independent entities, but as interrelated and interdependent parts. In fact, the relationships between mark and surface, between different types of marks, and between works and space are constantly shifting. As the viewer moves in space, marks and works partially appear and disappear, existing in constant negotiation with each other and with the viewer. Moreover, if we take invisibility to be the "other" of visual art, then, in these works, the other is given a way in since the experience of making and viewing these works revolves around the partial invisibility of the artist's actions. The borderlines between "others" become thresholds, enabling encounters and partial overlaps.

If the artist is the viewer's "other," then something is partially shared between them. Aspects of the experience of making these works are partially transferred over to the experience of viewing. The confusion experienced by the artist is translated into the confusion experienced by the viewer. The physical closeness of the artist to the surface and the time taken to make these works are reflected in the physical closeness between viewer and work, as the viewer approaches to see the marks, and the time needed for that process.

Thus, the confusion experienced while making, the time of the making and the physical closeness to the surface are all transferred over to the viewing. I am not suggesting that the two experiences are the same but that some aspects of the experience of making are somehow translated into the experience of viewing—in other words, something is shared between artist and viewer.

Despite the overlaps and sharing between the various elements of the encounter, it is important to point out that the other cannot be retrieved in full but only partially. The artist's marks and the preexisting marks approach each other but never fully turn into each other. The artist and artwork are not presented as "other" for the viewing pleasure of the viewer. The viewer cannot define herself/himself as such when faced with these works, which are partially invisible. This point can be seen alongside Luce Irigaray's conceptualization of subjectivity. Irigaray (1996) calls for "a new economy of existence or being which is neither that of mastery nor that of slavery but rather of exchange with no preconstituted object" (p. 45). In order for this exchange to occur, each subject needs to accept her/his limits and recognize that the other cannot be reduced to an object or to one's self (Irigaray, 1996). Irigaray places emphasis on invisibility—the other will never be entirely visible or known and it is due to this that the other can be respected as different (Irigaray, 1996). According to Irigaray (2004), we need to recognize that "the other as other remains invisible for me and that the first gesture with respect to him, or her, is to accept and respect this invisibility; which then transforms my perception of the world" (p. 395).

The way to communicate with this other is via "reciprocal listening," which requires attentiveness and concentration (Irigaray, 1996, p. 46). Irigaray (1996) writes,

> I am listening to you: I perceive what you are saying, I am attentive to it, I am attempting to understand and hear your intention. Which does not mean: I comprehend you, I know you, so I do not need to listen to you... (p. 116)

This practice of listening emphasized by Irigaray implies a practice of engagement between two subjects, "an active practice of intersubjectivity," as Hilary Robinson (2006, p. 78) writes, that involves sharing and communication. Robinson (2006) relates this practice to the activity of viewing or experiencing an artwork. Instead of "viewer," she suggests using the phrase "attentive audience" (Robinson, 2006, p. 78) to emphasize the attentiveness required if an artwork is to act as an intersubjective object—an object that enables some kind of communication between two subjects. The "viewer" is asked to be attentive and to "listen" closely so as to offer the artwork "the possibility of existing" (Irigaray, 1996, p. 118; Robinson, 2006). With regards to the works discussed here, the viewing experience is converted to the equivalent of listening to a whisper. The works do not announce themselves present but rather require to be found. The viewers are requested to be attentive and seek out the works, engage with them, and *give* them the possibility of surfacing.

In the end, making and viewing these works perhaps suggests a different way of existing in the world. The artist works with the world, performing subtle interventions that do not resolve to full assimilation or rejection. Through these subtle interventions, artist and artwork become-imperceptible. This partial invisibility or imperceptibility involves challenging boundaries and taking the risk of "becoming indiscernable as a social subject, and unsettling a coherent sense of personal self" (Lorraine, 1999, p. 183). Taking these risks is worth it because becoming-imperceptible also involves an opening up to the world, which could result in new forms of living (Lorraine, 1999). As Tamsin Lorraine (1999) writes, when becoming-imperceptible "instead of excluding the world in order to maintain a determinate organization of self" (p. 183), one opens up to the world, transforming the world as well as becoming transformed by it. The potential of becoming-imperceptible, or of invisibility within visual art practice, may be suggested by the fact that the two works are still there, in the spaces in which they were made. They have not been painted over or removed precisely because they can coexist with other works that are brought into the space. They are still there for viewers to find. The viewers that enter the space will encounter a world that cannot be fully known or owned. They will then be asked to open up to this world and become actively involved in it, in an attempt to get to know it.

Conclusion

The two works discussed in this paper are partially invisible. This invisibility results from the partial assimilation of the artist's marks into the surface and, following from that, from the partial "loss" of the artworks into the

surrounding space. Thus, when the viewer enters the space in which the works are found, she or he may not see the work. Even if the viewer sees the work, she or he may mistake it for something else, a stain on the wall or a scratch on the floor. As a result of this partial invisibility or "loss," the activities of making and viewing are questioned, and the status of artwork, space, artist and viewer, as well as the relationships between them, are destabilized. The artworks are not solely based on the artist's marks/actions or on their differentiation from the surrounding space. Instead, artworks and spaces coexist in a non-oppositional and non-hierarchical relation, bringing attention to the overlap between them. The artist's marks/actions partially disappear, leading to the partial withdrawal of the artist herself. Finally, the viewers need to renegotiate their relationship to the work—they need to look for the work, approach it and be attentive to it.

As I have suggested, partial invisibility and the ensuing shifting relationships between mark and surface and between viewers, artworks, spaces and artist, open a path for rethinking subjectivity and the relationship with the "other" through art. The overlap between seemingly distinct elements, suggests an overlap between self and other. Making and viewing become encounters between others, encounters that lead to the partial transformation of all participating elements. These others that encounter each other cannot be fully retrieved but can be approached and attentively "listened to." Going back to the two artworks discussed here, their partial invisibility or imperceptibility may suggest, at least temporarily, a way of existing in the world, a way of making and/or viewing, that involves opening up, attending to the world, allowing it in, and, eventually, transforming *with it*.

Notes

1 See, for example, Jay (1993), especially chapter 9, for a discussion of Irigaray's critique of vision.

2 The term "other" is based on the Lacanian Other as that which structures the subject's coming into existence—that in relation to which the subject is positioned. See, for example, Lacan (2001).

3 See, for example, Pollock (1996), specifically pages 245–261, Ettinger (2006), and Rowley (2007), specifically pages 34–44.

4 Interestingly, according to Buskirk (2003), the removal of the artist's hand does not in fact lessen the importance of artistic authorship but makes the connection between work and artist more significant.

5 Contact paper, also called fablon, is an adhesive surface used as lining or covering, usually for shelves. It has a patterned surface on one side.

6 This was something I discovered towards the end of my residency. It was also quite normal since the studios were all joined together. I myself often went into the other artists' studios to see what they were working on.

7 According to Gebauer and Wulf (1995), the differentiation between the terms "mimesis" and "mimicry" relates to intentionality. Mimesis is a term used to refer to mimetic activities performed intentionally and consciously, which might relate to pleasure, pedagogy etc., something that only human beings can do (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995). Mimicry, on the other hand, refers to the mimetic activities of animals. Moreover, mimicry is confined to a physical relation whereas mimesis can mean a mental relation as well (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995).

8 For further discussion on this issue and for further examples, see Kassianidou (2012), which discusses additional works.

9 Intensity is difference that tends to "deny or to cancel itself out" (Deleuze, 2004, p. 281).

10 This section points towards a different way of thinking about invisibility in relation to subjectivity. The ideas introduced here form part of my current PhD research and will be developed fully in my dissertation.

11 According to Jacques Lacan, the Symbolic indicates the preexisting structures, including language, into which a child will eventually enter. The Lacanian phallus is a privileged signifier—the signifier of the desire of the Other. As Ettinger (1992) writes, the phallus is "the signifier of the lost unity between the mother and the child, and is related to the lost or impossible object of desire" (p. 189). For further discussion of these ideas see Lacan (2001). For a critique of the phallus as a symbol see Ettinger (1992, 1994, 2006) and Irigaray (1985).

12 Ettinger always clarifies that she is dealing with the late stages of pregnancy, when the fetus is at a post-mature stage and when it is assumed to have a phantasy life. On this issue, see Ettinger (2006), specifically page 219, note 46.

13 The matrixial "becoming," as Ettinger notes, relates to but also deviates from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "becoming" (Ettinger is specifically referring to Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-woman"). According to Ettinger, "becoming-woman" is assembled in an infinite arena while the matrixial "becoming" is a "becoming-in-jointness," oriented by the several (Ettinger, 2006, p. 220, note 78).

14 For extensive analysis of Ettinger's writings see, for example, Pollock (2006).

15 Metramorphosis is different to metamorphosis in that the nature of the parts participating in metramorphosis is still somehow present throughout the transformation. Metamorphosis, in other words, does not involve replacement or elimination. It, thus, leads to plurality rather than unity or duality. On this issue, see Huhn (1993).

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APPENDIX D

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, TALKS, AND SEMINARS

LIST OF PRESENTATIONS

2007
- "A Paint Thing: An Exploration of Paint's Potential Playfulness and Ambiguity," Summer Research Symposium, University of the Arts London, UK, June 27.

2008
- The Art of Research: Research Narratives, practice-led doctoral/postdoctoral symposium, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, October 28 and 29. Exhibited paintings.

2009
- "Encounters Between Painting and the Feminine: The Issue of Different 'Materialities'," Spring Research Symposium, University of the Arts London, UK, February 11.

2011
- "In the Gap Between Visibility and Invisibility: The 'Fugitive' Image," The Second International Conference on the Image, San Sebastian, Spain, September 27.

2012
- "In-between Marks and Surfaces: Relating to the Self and to the Other," *Relational Practices in Art and Curation*, panelist, Engendering Dialogue II: Seeing Things Differently Conference, University of Dundee, Scotland, UK, March 31.
- "'Retrieving' the *retrait*: An Encounter between Jacques Derrida and Contemporary Art Practice," *Aesthetics: Cinema, Art, Music* (session), Derrida Today Conference, University of Irvine, California, USA, July 11.

2013
- "The Artist's Trace or The Trace of the Trace of the Other," *Tracing and Erasing*, panelist, TRACES Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Research Conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK, June 14.
- "A Matter of Surface," *Material Immaterial—Light, Sound, Space, Mark* (session), PARADOX Fine Art European Forum Biennial Conference, Granada, Spain, September 12.
- "'Responsive' Marks: Rethinking the Self and the Other through Visual Art," *Understanding the Artist* (session), The Fourth International Conference on the Image, Chicago, USA, October 19.

2014
- "From Making to Writing to Reading and Back: A Quick Cycle Through a Studio PhD," *Just What is it that Makes Studio PhDs so Different, so Appealing?*, panelist, College Art Association (CAA) Annual Conference, Chicago, USA, February 13.
- "Following, Con-Fusing, Disappearing: On Approaching Bracha L. Ettinger's Work as an Artist and on Letting Go of the Self," Subrealism: On the Work of Bracha L. Ettinger, Dublin, Ireland, October 11.

2009
- Artist's talk on exhibition *Re-Surface*, Tenderpixel Gallery, London, UK, August 20.

2011
- "The Accidental Mark," The Practice Exchange Seminar, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, March 2.
- Visiting Artist Lecture, BA Drawing, Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK, May 12.
- Visiting Artist Lectures, Department of Arts, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus, October 25 and 26.

2013
- "Lost in Space? 'Invisible' Marks, Works and Artist," The Practice Exchange Seminar, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, July 2.

2014
- Visiting Artist Lecture, MA Drawing, Wimbledon College of Arts, London, UK, March 20.
- Visiting Artist Lecture, Transart Institute, Berlin, Germany, August 15.

SEMINARS

2013
- "Disappearing Act: Artists Camouflaging Themselves and their Actions," MA Fine Art, CCW/Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, July 3.
- "'Interpreting' Marks," MA Fine Art, CCW/Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, July 3.
- "Disappearing Act: Artists Camouflaging Themselves and their Actions," BA Drawing, Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK, November 19.

2014
- "Marks, Traces, Leftovers, Indices, Accidents, Stains, Errors and Repetitions," BA Drawing, Camberwell College of Arts, London, UK, January 21.
- Workshop on artistic research methodologies, MA Drawing, Wimbledon College of Arts, London, UK, March 21.

A Paint Thing: An Exploration of Paint's Potential Playfulness and Ambiguity
(Summer Research Symposium, University of the Arts London, UK, June 27, 2007)

Abstract

The presentation focuses on a theoretical and practical exploration of paint's materiality, its potential ambiguity, and its relationship to the painter's body.

The theoretical exploration looks at authors such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva and their writings on the grotesque, the abject, ambiguity and playfulness. I also look at authors, such as Roland Barthes, who have written specifically on painting and on paint.

I relate this theoretical research to the work of painters working today who quote elements of late modernist abstraction while embracing paint's materiality and indeterminate meaning. Artists such as Laura Owens, Michelle Fierro, Katie Pratt and Omar Chacon, build on the vocabulary of late modernist painters in ways that subvert accepted notions of the meanings of paintings. Their work takes into account a new consciousness of gender-specific readings of paintings and a new historical awareness of the context in which late modernist artists were working. In the presentation, I will focus on these young artists' varied uses of paint and on what these uses might mean.

Finally, I will present some of my own practical research. A painting's subject might be a physical body translated into a painted surface through the painter's actions. Paint is the actual body of that surface. My paintings acknowledge the blurring of dichotomies that occurs through varied uses of paint. I conceptualise the relationship between body and surface as fluid. Using the medium's flexibility, I strive for a conversation between body and surface, between the material's presence and what its application suggests.

The Art of Research: Research Narratives, practice-led doctoral/postdoctoral symposium, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK, October 28 and 29, 2008

Statement

My research revolves around the blurring of dichotomies that can occur through the materiality of paint. I conceptualise the relationship between figure and ground (or body and surface) as fluid. Using paint's flexibility, I strive for a conversation between body and surface, between the material's presence and what its application suggests. This flexibility may challenge gendered dichotomies surrounding painting historically, e.g. body/surface, activity/passivity, subject/object.

My practice explores the indeterminacy of painting through marks and procedures that cannot be easily decoded using established terms. This exploration leads to the issue of different "materialities." On the one hand, I have been investigating the use of thick lines of paint that visually relate to threads, hair and writing. On the other hand, I am interested in disappearing marks and "fugitive" images, painted using dilute paint, that suggest an ambiguous relationship between mark and surface. I am interested in a different type of materiality as suggested by an accumulation of lines/marks/gestures.

I address my practical work as research in that it involves an investigative process of making art that aims to reveal a new perspective when it comes to painting or a new way of seeing and understanding specific marks and procedures employed during the making of a painting, i.e. specific uses of paint that play with the medium's materiality. The aim is that the process of making a painting and the actual painting will offer "novel apprehensions" with regards to the issues described above (Scrivener, 2002). The encounters between practical and theoretical research, carried out in parallel, inform each other. I am interested in exploring the tense meeting point between my practice and the work of various feminist theorists that deal with the notion of what remains underneath/hidden in relation to the feminine, such as Griselda Pollock, Luce Irigaray and Bracha L. Ettinger.

Encounters Between Painting and the Feminine: The Issue of Different 'Materialities'
(Spring Research Symposium, University of the Arts London, UK, February 11, 2009)

Abstract

The main aim of my research, comprising theoretical and practice-based work, is to explore the relationship between specific marks and procedures of painting and the feminine. The emphasis will be on the materiality of paint and on new subversive uses of paint that do not necessarily conform to those already analysed and, in a sense, decoded by art history. I will investigate what different uses of paint might mean and how these may challenge phallic logic. The aim is to create artworks that produce syntax rather than works that can only be read through a phallic syntax. The specific issues my research focuses on are the creation of a feminine space in or through painting, materiality and the notion of different "materialities" in painting, the relationship between touch and sight, blurring and ambiguity, and, finally, play in painting, possibly as a subversive activity.

This presentation will be in the form of a critical review of practice. I will present and discuss some of my recent practical work, focusing on the issue of different "materialities." I will relate this practical work to theoretical writings on the feminine, mainly those by psychoanalyst and theorist Luce Irigaray and psychoanalyst, theorist and painter Bracha Ettinger. Both of these authors provide ways of thinking through the feminine in more positive terms than those proposed by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and begin to conceptualise what a potentially feminine space in or through painting might entail.

In the Gap Between Visibility and Invisibility: The 'Fugitive' Image
(The Second International Conference on the Image, San Sebastian, Spain, September 27, 2011)

Abstract

In everyday life, the terms visibility and invisibility are presented as opposites. In visual art, visibility traditionally rests with the artist's marks—viewers are interested in seeing the image produced. This focus on visibility and vision in Western culture has been severely criticised by feminist theorists, such as Luce Irigaray.

This paper will delve into the gap between visibility and invisibility, primarily through a discussion of my practice-based research in painting, drawing and collage on various surfaces. This work explores the alternative(s) to a strict hierarchical antithesis between visibility and invisibility. The aim is to create moments of "undecidability" between these terms. What kinds of relationships and meanings can be unravelled by exploring the in-between of visibility and invisibility?

The methodology I have adopted for my practice-based research involves using marks that relate to the surface being marked—its appearance, use and history. This approach enables the conceptualisation of complex relationships between mark and surface. Oftentimes, my marks are partially lost in the surface, either by being so subtle that they cannot be perceived from a distance, or by becoming confused with other marks. The faint traces create a "fugitive" image that almost escapes vision.

Through the discussion of my practice, as well as references to other artists, such as Louise Hopkins, and theories regarding visibility and invisibility, such as those of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I will explore how the visibility/invisibility duality can be problematized through the making, installing and viewing of artworks. Using the concepts of "zones of indiscernibility", developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and of partial subjects/objects, theorised by Bracha Ettinger, I will argue that the border between visibility and invisibility can be destabilised. Furthermore, I will propose that this destabilisation challenges the status of artworks, viewers and artist.

In-between Marks and Surfaces: Relating to the Self and to the Other
(*Relational Practices in Art and Curation*, panelist, Engendering Dialogue II: Seeing Things Differently Conference, University of Dundee, Scotland, UK, March 31, 2012)

Abstract

Historically, in painting and drawing the mark has enjoyed a higher status than the surface. The viewers are usually interested in seeing the artist's mark, which differentiates itself from the surface. The surface, in turn, forms the "other" of the mark. Several writers, such as Griselda Pollock and Bracha Ettinger, have argued that the structure of painting depends on the presence or absence of a mark. According to these theorists, painting follows a phallic logic premised on absence/presence and self/other that privileges presence/self over absence/other. This paper will delve into the gap between mark and surface, primarily through a discussion of my practice-based research in painting, drawing and collage on various surfaces. This work explores the alternative(s) to a strict hierarchical antithesis between mark and surface. The aim is to create moments of indiscernibility or "undecidability" between the two terms. What kinds of relationships and meanings can be unravelled by exploring the in-between of mark and surface? How might this exploration enable a re-thinking of the relationship to the other?

The methodology I have adopted for my practice-based research involves using marks or ways of "marking" that, somehow, relate to the surface being marked—its appearance, use and history. This approach enables the conceptualisation of complex relationships between mark and surface. Due to my approach, my marks are partially lost in the surface, either by being so subtle that they cannot be perceived from a distance, or by becoming confused with other types of marks, such as shadows, accidental stains or pre-existing patterns. After sustained looking, my marks become visible only to "disappear" once again into the surface at a later stage. There is an almost continual play involving disappearance and re-appearance between mark and surface.

My practice is informed by feminist insights, but is not obviously focused on gender issues. The works that will be discussed in the paper have been influenced particularly by the work of feminist theorists and psychoanalysts Luce Irigaray and Bracha Ettinger. Both Irigaray and Ettinger criticise dominant binary structures and provide ways of stepping outside or beyond them. Moreover, they both suggest alternate ways of theorising subjectivity and our relationship to the other that are not based on a strictly binary system of thinking.

Through the discussion of my practice and the theories of Ettinger and Irigaray, I will explore how the mark/surface duality can be problematized through the making, installing and viewing of artworks. Using the concept of partial subjects/objects, theorised by Ettinger, I will argue that the border between mark and surface can be destabilised. Furthermore, I will propose that the destabilisation between mark and surface ultimately challenges the status of artworks, viewers and artist. This opens a path for re-thinking the relationship with the other through art—whether that other is the artist's mark in relation to the surface and its pre-existing marks, or the artist in relation to the viewer.

'Retrieving' the *retrait*: An Encounter between Jacques Derrida and Contemporary Art Practice
(*Aesthetics: Cinema, Art, Music* (session), Derrida Today Conference, University of Irvine, California, USA, July 11, 2012)

Abstract

This paper enacts an encounter between Jacques Derrida's writings on the *trait* and *retrait* and two contemporary artistic practices that involve marking on already marked surfaces. By exploring the overlap and tensions between them as relating to issues of marking, repetition, invisibility and otherness, the paper re-examines Derrida's *trait* and *retrait* and explores how his thinking may affect and be affected by contemporary visual art practices.

In *Memoirs of the Blind*, Derrida proposes a relation between blindness, memory and the *trait*—the draughtsman must look away from the person drawn in order to make the drawing. Derrida also suggests a relation between *trait* and *retrait*—the *trait* is always a *retrait*, implying both redrawing and withdrawal. These ideas are juxtaposed with the works on furnishing fabrics of the British artist Louise Hopkins and my own drawings on found or already marked surfaces. Both practices involve the duplication of pre-existing marks. Hopkins replicates the printed marks found on the fabrics by painting over the pre-existing images. In my work, I often re-create pre-existing marks, such as stains, by subtly drawing over them.

The drawing of marks over the original pre-existing marks leads to the partial concealment of both. Moreover, the juxtaposition of pre-existing marks with those of the artist, leads to confusion between the two. The paper explores how notions of concealment and confusion that arise through these two practices might interact with or problematize Derrida's notion of the *retrait*, the repeated and self-eclipsing *trait*.

Furthermore, by looking at these practices through the lens of Derrida's *trait* and *retrait*, I suggest that a path opens for re-thinking the relationship with the other through art— whether that other is the artist's mark in relation to the surface and its pre-existing marks, or the artist in relation to the viewer.

The Artist's Trace or The Trace of the Trace of the Other
(*Tracing and Erasing*, panelist, TRACES Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Research Conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK, June 14, 2013)

Abstract

This paper discusses the "trace" in relation to two contemporary artistic practices that involve marking on already marked surfaces. The discussion focuses on the works on furnishing fabrics of British artist Louise Hopkins and my own drawings on marked surfaces. Hopkins replicates the printed marks found on the fabrics by painting over them. She works on the back of the fabrics such that only traces of the printed design are visible. In my work, I often recreate pre-existing marks, made by people present in a space at some moment in the past. For instance, in a site-specific work, I recreated paint stains found on a wall in a studio by drawing over them, using lines that followed the shapes of the stains and the texture of the wall.

The painting or drawing of marks over pre-existing marks leads to the partial concealment of both. The original marks are partially covered by the artist's marks, which, in turn, visually mingle with the pre-existing marks. The juxtaposition of pre-existing marks with those of the artist, leads to confusion between the two—at times, the traces of the artist become indiscernible from the traces of the "others." These "others" may be the designer(s) that designed the image on the fabric and the people whose actions caused the stains on the walls.

The paper explores how notions of confusion that arise through these practices might interact with Jacques Derrida's concept of the *trait*. The word *trait* carries a variety of meanings including trait, feature, line, trace, or limit. In Derrida's account, the *trait* is always already a *retrait*, implying both repetition and withdrawal. This echoes Derrida's writings on the *trace* in which the concept is discussed in terms of simultaneous presence and absence. I argue that the methodologies followed by Hopkins and myself in our practices, attempt to approach this condition of recall and retreat, of presence and absence. This is first attempted by tracing over past traces, thus, remaking them. It is, however, in the confusion that emerges between the different kinds of traces that this unstable condition is perhaps almost reached. The confusion between what was already there and what the artist added destabilises the oppositions past/present and absence/presence and leads to temporary overlaps between these terms.

Furthermore, I suggest that these overlaps enable an overlap between self and other, however temporary that may be. By tracing the trace of the other, the artist approaches the other. The artist's trace then becomes, or almost becomes, the trace of the trace of the other.

A Matter of Surface
(*Material Immaterial—Light, Sound, Space, Mark* (session), PARADOX Fine Art European
Forum Biennial Conference, Granada, Spain, September 12, 2013)

Abstract

This paper falls within the strand "Material Matters: On material as a matter of meaning and meaning as a matter of material." It focuses on practices that combine painting and collage with everyday materials.

Traditionally, in practices such as painting, the artist's marks/actions, which differentiate themselves from the surface, are the privileged element. Feminist theorists, such as Griselda Pollock, have criticised this emphasis on the artist's mark. The paper focuses on two practices which question the significance of an artist's mark through interventions on everyday materials. British artist Louise Hopkins paints over printed images found on furnishing fabrics. In my work, I intervene on everyday materials, such as A4 lined paper, making subtle collages.

Both practices employ marks that form a response to the material being marked. As such, both the surface and the artists' actions contribute to meaning—the material becomes the starting point and meaning arises through the relationship between the pre-existing (the material surface) and the added (the artist's marks). Moreover, these practices involve meticulous interventions that subtly modify the surface. The works, thus, both retain and efface the artist's hand, leading to a paradoxical situation where a significant amount of work results in "nothing" to be seen at first.

I propose that by focusing on the material used, these practices problematize the notion of the artist's mark and the actual "making" of the work. This has implications for rethinking the relationship of the artist to the work as the artists' marks "become" part of the surface.

'Responsive' Marks: Rethinking the Self and the Other through Visual Art
(*Understanding the Artist* (session), The Fourth International Conference on the Image, Chicago, USA, October 19, 2013)

Abstract

In practices such as painting, the artist's marks/actions, which differentiate themselves from the surface, are traditionally the privileged element. Feminist theorists, such as Griselda Pollock, have criticised the historical emphasis on the artist's mark and the opposition figure/ground within specific art practices.

This paper focuses on my practice-based research which questions the significance of an artist's mark by employing subtle interventions on pre-existing mass-produced images, such as fabric samples.

My methodology involves using marks that form a response to the surface being marked. The works on fabric samples involve detailed and time-consuming interventions, through painting and collage, that subtly modify the pre-existing pattern. As such, the works both retain and efface the artist's hand, leading to a paradoxical situation where a significant amount of work results in "nothing" to be seen at first. The notion of the artist's mark and the "making" of the work are, thus, problematized.

Through discussing my practice, alongside theoretical works by Jacques Derrida, Bracha Ettinger and Luce Irigaray, I propose that this problematization enables a rethinking of the relationship to the "other"—whether that other is the artist's mark in relation to the surface, or the artist in relation to the viewer.

From Making to Writing to Reading and Back: A Quick Cycle Through a Studio PhD
(*Just What is it that Makes Studio PhDs so Different, so Appealing?*, panelist, College Art Association (CAA) Annual Conference, Chicago, USA, February 13, 2014)

Abstract

This paper-conversation focuses on interrelations between making artworks, writing, and studying existing literature during a studio PhD.

Using my artworks, I will discuss ways in which an artist can write about her work within the context of a PhD. I will present excerpts from studio journals, focusing on reflective writing and its use in guiding the research. Next, I will discuss how an artist/researcher can utilise existing literature and how theory can enrich, inform or alter one's approach to art. Finally, completing the cycle of activities, I will return to my artworks to discuss how the experience of making work and writing about the work, along with theoretical readings, transformed both my view of the work and my understanding of specific theories.

The aim is to challenge the separation between making, writing and reading, thus, revealing the enriching interrelations that emerge between these activities while working on a studio PhD.

Following, Con-Fusing, Disappearing: On Approaching Bracha L. Ettinger's Work as an Artist and on Letting Go of the Self
(Subrealism: On the Work of Bracha L. Ettinger, Dublin, Ireland, October 11, 2014)

Abstract

This paper enacts an encounter between Bracha Ettinger's work—specifically her conceptualisations of partial subject/object, copoiesis, and nonlife—and contemporary artistic practices that involve the partial disappearance of the artist's marks.

Several writers, including Griselda Pollock and Bracha Ettinger, have argued that the structure of painting, or any mark-making activity, depends on the presence or absence of a mark. Marking follows a phallic logic premised on presence/absence and self/other that privileges presence/self over absence/other. The artist's mark, as evidence of her work, usually declares its presence and asks to be seen.

Here, I focus on practices that involve the meticulous remaking of pre-existing marks on a surface, practices that resonate with Ettinger's artistic practice. The artist Louise Hopkins re-creates printed lines on sheet music and graph paper by drawing over their traces. In my work, I often re-create pre-existing marks, such as paint stains left in studios by other artists, by drawing over them. Both of these practices involve a conscious decision to follow an other's marks, thus, subduing the agency and presence of the artist, whose marks partially disappear or become con-fused with pre-existing marks.

I consider Ettinger's work, in relation to these practices, on two levels. Firstly, I propose that Ettinger's conceptualisation of copoiesis offers a way of rethinking the relationship between an artist and the materials she works with. Secondly, I begin to conceptualise the artist's following of an other, and her marks' subsequent disappearance, beyond theorisations relating to the phallic logic of the death drive and depersonalisation. To do this, I juxtapose Ettinger's conceptualisations of partial subject/object and nonlife, as analysed by Tina Kinsella, with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's becoming-imperceptible. By placing the artistic practices in between these conceptualisations, the possibility emerges for creative activities involving following, con-fusing, and disappearing to become affirmative and productive.

APPENDIX E

RESIDENCIES

LIST OF RESIDENCIES

2010
- Ragdale Foundation Residency, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA (May 20–June 16)
- Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts, Miramonte, California, USA (June 17–July 4)

2012
- Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts (VCCA) Fellowship, Amherst, Virginia, USA (July 15–29)
- Hambidge Centre for the Creative Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Rabun Gap, Georgia, USA (July 30–August 12)
- Ragdale Foundation Residency, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA (August 23–September 5)

2013
- Paradox Fabric Residency, Facultad de Bellas Artes, University of Granada, Granada, Spain (September 3–14)

2014
- The Centre for Drawing UAL, Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts London, UK (March 20–April 6)