

**The Legacy of the Burkean Sublime: Representations of British Spaces and
Landscapes in a Contemporary Art Practice**

Paul Vousden

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Norwich University of the Arts and the University of the
Arts London**

September 2021

Abstract

Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757-59) attempts to establish a theory of the passions. The ambitious central idea of this treatise is that emotional reactions to objects, landscapes, and ideas, which can be categorised as either sublime or beautiful, can be explained by a rational examination of passion, ethics, and morality.

My research reconsiders the *Enquiry* from the perspective of an artist *using* an autoethnographic approach to ask the question, to what extent can Burke's aesthetic philosophy be used as an applied methodology in the production of paintings, and drawings, which reflect on contemporary spaces, places, and landscapes?

The thesis explores Burke's contributions to the discourse of the sublime in the eighteenth-century and how contemporary authors have reflected on the *Enquiry's* meaning. It shows how the *Enquiry* can be said to reflect a utilitarian aesthetic philosophy which is open-ended enough to offer multiple ways of seeing and thinking.

Central to my practice-based research is the argument that various, and differing, aspects of Burke's conception of the sublime and beautiful are potentially useful in the process of understanding, and presenting, artistic visions of British spaces. This argument is explored in three chapters which consider very different territories defined as the horizontal, vertical, and transcendental sublime using Burke's thoughts about extensions of space. In this research the horizontal sublime is reimagined as the British coastline or border, the vertical sublime is reinterpreted as a mineshaft, and the transcendental sublime becomes an ancient British chapel. In these spaces differing relationships to nature are explored through the prism of the Burkean Sublime, as are contemporary events which give these spaces context in the twenty-first century.

The thesis argues that Burke's flawed attempt to impose strict laws and very narrow limits on the recalcitrant material of the passions is more than a confusion of eighteenth-century speculations. My research demonstrates how the *Enquiry* can be used to stimulate the imagination, and how Burke's aesthetic speculations can turn painting, and drawing, into an exciting conceptual adventure with links to an eighteenth-century principled code of ethics and aesthetics.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors Judith Stewart, Mark Wilsher, Neil Powell and Simon Willmoth for challenging and encouraging me during this practice-based research project. Much that has been good in this research is due to them and all the faults are my own.

Thanks also to Sally Wilkinson and my mum for all their love and support throughout my research.

Finally thanks to my dog Parker (2005-2021) who slept in my studio and kept me company as I worked.

Contents

List of Illustrations	xii-xxiv
-----------------------	----------

Introduction	1
---------------------	----------

The origins of this research project and the search for a guide to Perception	4
---	---

Burke's <i>Enquiry</i> considered as a potential handbook for contemporary cultural production	5
--	---

In the beginning: a paralysing excess of implication	7
--	---

A consideration of the relevance of Burke's eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy in contemporary Britain	8
---	---

A brief snapshot of evidence supporting the claim that eighteenth-century conceptions of social rights are still relevant to British culture	10
--	----

Who are the Culture Defining Classes?	12
---------------------------------------	----

My primary research aim, and research question	13
--	----

Research structure and secondary research questions explained	13
---	----

The role sketchbooks have in my research methodology explained	14
--	----

A brief introduction to the concepts of the Horizontal, Vertical and Transcendental Sublime	18
---	----

Part One Section 1	22
---------------------------	-----------

Introduction

An overview of the <i>Enquiry</i>	22
-----------------------------------	----

Edmund Burke's debt to Dionysius Longinus	23
Obscurity and the power of rhetoric for Longinus and Burke	25
The influence of Sappho of Lesbos upon Burke	27
The unrecorded sublime	28
The shock of the Reformation	29
The English law of the heart	31
Part One Section 2	
Introduction	35
A Contemporary Literature Review of Edmund Burke's <i>Enquiry</i>	
Conclusion to Part One Sections 1 – 2	48
Part Two: The Burkean Horizontal Sublime	51
Introduction	
The meaning of the term Burkean Horizontal Sublime	52
The eighteenth-century British coastline considered in terms of an identity perceived through association	52
The Contemporary British Coastline considered in terms of an identity perceived through association	56
The British coastline considered in terms of my perception	58
Practice-based research into Sheringham and the Sublime	58
Contemplation at the water's edge	59

The search for interesting visual ideas with emotional meaning	60
Nature as a great ugly thing	70
<i>A Small Island of Pain</i> : death and the obscure	77
<i>A Small Island of Pain</i> : and the consideration of the aesthetic impact of text	79
The travels of <i>Small Island of Pain</i>	83
Deceit, delight, and suffering	86
Thoughts on the imagination unbound, the terror of possibility and Romanticism	86
Janette Kerr: her painting style and subject matter explained as Burkean concept	87
How to exploit the idea of Burke's rejection of the connections Sublimity, good taste, probity, and sanity	89
The serpentine line explored and the concept of the amphitheatre of terror	91
How to deceitfully craft tragedy for the dark delight of audiences	92
The travels of <i>The Devil is in the Detail</i>	93
Further Seascape Prints	97
The Horizontal Sublime	101
A new interpretation of the Burkean Sublime in landscape painting	101
A new perspective on the seascape horizon	104

Testing Rodolphe Gasche's interpretation of Burke's aesthetic theory	105
Conclusion to Part Two: The Burkean Horizontal Sublime	108
Part Three: The Burkean Vertical Sublime	110
Introduction	
The search for the vertical sublime	110
Classed consciousness in the <i>Enquiry</i> , explained in terms of its relevance to my search for a space reflective of the Burkean Vertical Sublime	112
Back to work, discovering the Apedale Heritage Centre, and thoughts on toil and tragedy	113
Delving deeper: the Apedale mine considered in terms of my perception	114
My guide to the underworld	117
The meaning of the term Burkean Vertical Sublime	117
The entrance to the underworld	118
Burke's relationship to the abyss	119
Disappointment and consolation	119
An invisible enemy	120
The descents	120
Pride and prejudice	122
Reflections on the contemporary classed experience of the	123

Vertical Sublime	
A deluge of sound	124
A deluge of terror	125
The power of imperfect presentations of tragedy	129
The positive critical purpose of pain and terror according to Burkean aesthetic theory and their potential relationship to Landscape depiction considered	130
The operation of the mind in landscape production considered	132
Claustrophobia	137
Lost and empowering space drawings	137
Identity and landscape	144
A positive critical purpose for suffering and the construction of an analogy with labour and the power of religious symbolism	146
A final exploration of the Burkean Vertical Sublime	151
A final touch of beauty	156
The Abstract Sublime	158
Conclusion to Part Three: the Burkean Vertical Sublime	158
Part Four: The Burkean Transcendental Sublime	159
Introduction	
Introducing a new direction for my research	160

Considering the process of gazing upwards, and how this can be useful to artists influenced by Burkean conceptions of the sublime	161
A contemporary perspective on the significance of a raised gaze	162
British painters considered who have employed the sublime and encouraged an upward gaze	163
A new vision of the imagination unbound: the Burkean Transcendental Sublime	171
How Lady Chapel became identified as a sublime space filled with power, magnificence, and transcendental meaning	172
How Covid 19 augmented my conception of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime	176
The wolf's lair invaded: preparatory paintings for my final Artwork and their relationship to the year of terror	179
My return to Lady Chapel	198
Why Lady Chapel embodies my conception of the Burkean ideas of magnificence, power, wealth, and religious conviction	198
Lady Chapel invaded by nature and the Burkean Transcendental Sublime made manifest	203
Conclusion to Part Four: the Burkean Transcendental Sublime	215
Part Five	
Introduction: the bigger picture	217
Landscape painting and depiction in the Twenty First Century	217

Realism and Beyond	218
Post Pop Landscapes	221
Constructed Realities	227
Abstracted Topographies	229
New Romanticism	230
Drawing and New Romanticism	233
Complicated Vistas	234
The technological reimagining of landscape	236
Digital landscapes and the sublime	237
Dan Holdsworth and the digital sublime	240
Conclusion to Part Five	242
 Conclusion	
The Contemporary Sublime exhibition	243
Final reflections on the importance of my research question	260
A summary of how I have used Burke's subjective and empirical approach to aesthetic speculation and how this speculation relates to contemporary Britain	260
Final conclusions on my practice-based research into the Horizontal, Vertical and Transcendental Sublime	261
Conclusions on how an eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy has changed me	265

How my relationship to the Burkean Sublime has developed during this research project	266
How my research into the <i>Enquiry</i> led me to conclude that the artist's sketchbook is an important arena for engagement with the sublime	268
How my research into the <i>Enquiry</i> led me to conclude that there are significant limitations in his aesthetic theory	270
The Burkean Sublime considered as an aesthetic form of empowerment	271
Bibliography	274

List of Illustrations in the text			Page/s
Fig. 1	Eric Tucker	<i>Bare Arsed</i> 1970-79 oil on board 54cm X 37cm	12
	David Hockney	<i>Pool with Two Figures</i> 1972 acrylic on canvas 210cm X 300cm	
	Anthony Gormley	<i>Angel of the North</i> 1998 steel sculpture 2000cm X 5400cm	
Fig. 2	J. M.W Turner	<i>Study for a Shipwreck</i> 1805 sketchbook drawing 1805 pen and ink with watercolour 11.8cm X 18.5cm	15
Fig. 3	Paul Vousden	<i>Study for a Seascape</i> 2016 sketchbook drawing pen and ink on paper 25.5cm X 13.5cm	15
Fig. 4	Paul Vousden	Various sketchbook drawings 2016 diversely sized in differing sketchbooks	16
Fig.5	Paul Vousden	<i>Serpentine Line</i> 2016 digital print 32cm X 42cm	17
Fig.6	Anselm Kiefer	<i>Siegfried's Difficult Way to Brunhilde</i> 1977 acrylic and emulsion on original photograph in book 59cm X 83.5cm <i>The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen</i> 1975 ferrous oxide and linseed oil on original photograph in book 62cm X 45cm	18
Fig.7	Paul Vousden	<i>The Norwegian Giants</i> 2015 digital photograph	19
Fig.8	Paul Vousden	<i>Mineshaft at Apedale</i> 2019 digital photograph	19
Fig. 9	Dean and Chapter	<i>Exterior of Westminster Abbey</i> digital photograph Westminster Abbey	20
Fig.10	Hans Holbein	<i>The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb</i> 1521-22 oil on panel 305cm X 200cm	29
Fig 11	Paul Vousden	<i>Sea Defences at Sheringham</i> 2015 digital photograph	59
Fig.12	Norman Ackroyd	<i>Inishbofin Sound</i> 2005 etching	61

	Maggi Hambling	18cm X 26.5cm <i>Wave Returning</i> 2009 oil on canvas	
	Janette Kerr	152cm X 244cm <i>Holding my Breath II</i> 2013 oil on canvas	
	John Virtue	180cm X 210cm <i>Painting No.40</i> 2012-13 acrylic on paper	
		56cm X 76cm	
Fig 13	J.M.W.Turner	<i>The Wreck of a Transport Ship</i> 1810 oil on canvas 241cm X 173cm	63
Fig 14.	Paul Vousden	<i>Repository of Distress I</i> 2015 sketchbook drawing 21cm X 14.8cm	64
Fig 15.	Paul Vousden	<i>Repository of Distress II</i> 2015 sketchbook drawing 21cm X 14.8cm	64
Fig 16	Paul Vousden	<i>Repository of Distress III</i> 2015 sketchbook drawing 21cm X 14.8cm	65
Fig 17	Paul Vousden	<i>Repository of Distress IV</i> 2015 digital drawing	65
Fig 18	Paul Vousden	<i>Repository of Distress V</i> 2015 digital drawing	66
Fig 19	Paul Vousden	<i>Repository of Distress VI</i> 2015 sketchbook drawing 21cm X 14.8cm	66
Fig 20	Paul Vousden	<i>Defence Horizon</i> 2016 digital drawing	69
Fig 21	Paul Vousden	<i>Defence Horizon II</i> 2016 digital drawing	70
Fig 22	Paul Vousden	<i>Invasion</i> 2016 digital drawing	72
Fig 23	Paul Vousden	<i>Invasion II</i> 2016 digital drawing	73
Fig 24	Paul Vousden	<i>Invasion III</i> 2016 digital drawing	74
Fig 25	Paul Vousden	<i>Invasion IV</i> 2016 digital drawing	75
Fig 26	Paul Vousden	<i>Norwegian Giant</i> 2016 oil on canvas 61cm X 76cm	76

Fig 27	Paul Vousden	Preparatory work for <i>Island of Pain</i> 2016 oil paint on board 40cm X 51cm	80
Fig 28	Paul Vousden	Preparatory work for <i>Island of Pain</i> 2016 black ink on paper 40cm X 51cm	81
Fig 29	Paul Vousden	Preparatory works for <i>Island of Pain</i> 2016 digital drawing	82
Fig 30	Paul Vousden	<i>Island of Pain Reflections</i> 2016 digital drawings	83
Fig 31	Paul Vousden	<i>Small Island of Pain</i> 2016 digital print 35cm X 25 cm	85
Fig 32	Jackson Pollock	<i>The Deep</i> (1953) oil and enamel on canvas 150.7cm X 220.4cm. Available from https://jackson-pollock.org/the-deep.jsp [Accessed 29 Aug 2021]	88
Fig 33	Janette Kerr	<i>Law of Storms 1</i> 2019 oil on canvas 121.9cm X 152.4cm - <i>Holding my Breath II</i> oil on canvas 180cm X 210cm	89
Fig 34	Paul Vousden	<i>Island of Boundless Pain</i> 2016 digital print 42cm X 100cm	90
Fig 35	Paul Vousden	<i>The Serpentine Line II</i> 2016 digital artwork	91
Fig 36	Paul Vousden	<i>The Serpentine Line III</i> 2016 digital artwork	92
Fig 37	Paul Vousden	<i>The Devil is in the Detail</i> 2017 digital print 59cm X 38cm	95
Fig 38	Paul Vousden	<i>The Devil is in the Detail, Purple Version</i> 2017 digital artwork	96
Fig 39	Paul Vousden	<i>The Devil is in the Detail, Black and White Version</i> 2017 digital artwork	96
Fig 40	Paul Vousden	<i>The King of Terrors</i> 2017 digital artwork	98

Fig 41	Paul Vousden	<i>The Norwegian Giants</i> 2017 digital artwork	98
Fig 42	Paul Vousden	<i>Defenders of the Realm</i> 2017 digital artwork	99
Fig 43	Paul Vousden	<i>The Brexit Horizon</i> 2018 digital artwork	99
Fig 44	Paul Vousden	<i>The Brexit Horizon II</i> 2018 digital artwork	100
Fig 45	Paul Vousden	<i>The Brexit Horizon III</i> 2018 digital print 85cm X 42cm	100
Fig 46	Paul Vousden	<i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> 2018 acrylic on panel 366cm X 136.5cm	101
Fig 47	Paul Vousden	<i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> 2018 acrylic on panel 366cm X 136.5cm	103
Fig 48	Paul Vousden	<i>Seascape Horizon</i> (detail) 2018 oil paint on canvas 100cm X 100cm	107
Fig 49	Paul Vousden	<i>Seascape Horizon</i> 2018 oil paint on canvas. 100cm X 100cm	107
Fig 50	Paul Vousden	<i>Seascape Horizon II</i> 2018 digital artwork.	108
Fig 51	James Ward	<i>Gordale Scar</i> 1812-14 oil on canvas 426.7cm X 365.7cm	110
Fig 52	Paul Vousden	<i>Gordale Scar</i> (2019) acrylic, oilbar and oil paint on canvas 66cm X 102cm	111
Fig 53	Joseph Wright	<i>An Iron Forge</i> (1772) oil on canvas 122cm X 132cm	114
Fig 54	Ford Madox Brown	<i>Work</i> (1852-65) oil on canvas 137cm X 197.3cm	114
Fig 55	William Scott Bell	<i>Industry on the Tyne: Iron and Coal</i> (1861) oil on canvas 185cm X 185cm	115
Fig 56	Graham Sutherland	<i>Miner probing a drill hole</i> 1942 gouche, wax crayon and ink on paper 56cm X 51cm	115

Henry Moore	<i>Miner drilling</i> 1942 pencil, wax crayons, ink and wash on paper 31cm X 21.4cm	
Fig 57 Norman Cornish	<i>Two miners on Pit Road</i> 1980-89 Acrylic and pastel on paper, 61cm X 84cm	116
Fig 58 Tom McGuinness	<i>At the coal face</i> 1978 gouche on paper 22.5cm X 26cm <i>Miners in the Cage</i> 1985 watercolour on paper 30cm X 30cm	117
Fig 59 Paul Vousden	<i>Entrance to Hell</i> 2019 digital image	119
Fig 60 Paul Vousden	<i>Entrance to Hell II</i> digital image	120
Fig 61 Uncredited	The entrance to the deep mine tour 2019 digital image Available from http://www.apedale.co.uk/galleries [Accessed 4th August 2019]	121
Fig 62 Uncredited	The dual nature of the Apedale mine 2019 digital image available from http://www.apedale.co.uk/galleries [Accessed 4th August 2019]	122
Fig 63 Peter Doig	<i>Gasthof zur Muldentalsperre</i> 2002 Oil on canvas 196cm X 296cm	125
Vincent van Gogh	<i>Starry Night</i> 1886 oil on canvas 73cm X 92cm	
Fig 64 Paul Vousden	<i>The unsupported mine shaft</i> 2019 digital image	126
Fig 65 Paul Vousden	<i>The unsupported mine shaft II</i> 2019 digital image	127
Fig 66 Paul Vousden	<i>The unsupported night sky shaft</i> 2019 digital image	128
Fig 67 Paul Vousden	<i>Labour of torment</i> 2019 digital image	131
Fig 68 Paul Vousden	<i>External</i> 2019 digital image	134
Fig 69 Paul Vousden	<i>Internal</i> 2019 digital image	135

Fig 70	Paul Vousden	<i>Internal II</i> 2019 digital image	136
Fig 71	Paul Vousden	<i>Descent</i> 2019 digital image	138
Fig 72	Paul Vousden	<i>Lost</i> 2019 digital image	139
Fig 73	Paul Vousden	<i>Lost II</i> 2019 digital image	140
Fig 74	Paul Vousden	<i>Lost III</i> 2019 digital image	141
Fig 75	Paul Vousden	<i>Lost IV</i> 2019 digital image	142
Fig 76	Paul Vousden	<i>Lost V</i> 2019 digital image	143
Fig 77	Paul Vousden	<i>Lost VI</i> 2019 digital image	143
Fig 78	Paul Vousden	<i>Landscape as empowering space</i> 2019 digital image	144
Fig 79	Paul Vousden	<i>Know thy place</i> 2019 ink on paper 23cm by 41cm	148
Fig 80	Paul Vousden	<i>Black, red, and white crucifixion</i> 2019 digital image	149
Fig 81	Paul Vousden	<i>Dark crucifixion</i> 2019 digital image	150
Fig 82	Paul Vousden	<i>These pampered hands</i> 2019 digital image	151
Fig 83	Paul Vousden	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> in progress 10th November 2019 black pencil on card 180cm X 120cm	153
Fig 84	Paul Vousden	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> in progress 2019 black pencil on card 180cm X 120cm	154
Fig 85	Paul Vousden	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> in progress 2019 black pencil on card 180cm X 120cm	154
Fig 86	Paul Vousden	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> 2019 – 2020 black pencil on card 180cm X 120cm studio view	157

Fig 87	Paul Vousden	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> 2019 – 2020 black pencil on card 180cm X 120cm exhibition view	157
Fig 88	John Martin	<i>The Coronation of Queen Victoria</i> (1839) oil on canvas 238.1 X 185.4cm	164
Fig 89	John Martin	<i>The Great Day of His Wrath</i> (1851-53) oil on canvas 197cm X 303cm	165
Fig 90	Glenn Brown	<i>The Tragic Conversion of Salvador Dali</i> 1998 oil on canvas 222cm X 323 cm	166
Fig 91	Gordon Cheung	<i>Rivers of Bliss</i> 2007 newsprint, gel and spray paint, acrylic, ink on canvas 76cm X 122cm	167
Fig 92	Raqib Shaw	<i>The Adoration (After Jan Gossaert)</i> 2015-16 Acrylic liner and enamel on birchwood 177cm X 161.8cm	169
Fig 93	Clive Head	<i>Looking Glass</i> 2014.oil on canvas 195.6cm X 210.8cm	173
Fig 94	Paul Vousden	<i>Lady Chapel Experiment</i> 2020 ink on paper 21cm X 29cm	174
Fig 95	Paul Vousden	<i>Lady Chapel Colour Experiment</i> 2020 digital drawing	175
Fig 96	Justin Mortimer	<i>Zona</i> 2016 oil and acrylic on canvas 183cm X 305cm	176
Fig 97	Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of power</i> and digital photograph of Glen Affric 2020 oil on canvas 90cm X 90cm	179
Fig 98	Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of power</i> , details 2020 oil paint on canvas	180
Fig 99	Paul Vousden	<i>Other</i> 2020 digital drawings	181
Fig 100	Paul Vousden	<i>Highland Hellscape</i> 2020 black ink on paper 24cm X 28cm	183

Fig 101 Paul Vousden	<i>Highland Hellscape II</i> 2020 digital image	184
Fig 102 Paul Vousden	<i>Death is coming</i> 2020 acrylic, on canvas 200cm X 100cm	185
Fig 103 Paul Vousden	<i>Flowers for Thelma</i> 2020 digital drawing.	189
Fig 104 Paul Vousden	<i>Viral Summer</i> 2020 digital image	190
Fig 105 Paul Vousden	<i>His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer</i> 2020 acrylic paint on canvas 100cm X 100cm	191
Fig 106 Paul Vousden	<i>Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape</i> 2020 acrylic paint on canvas 100cm X 100cm	192
Fig 107 Paul Vousden	<i>Wreckage</i> 2020 ink on paper 29cm X 28cm	194
Fig 108 Paul Vousden	<i>Wreckage</i> 2020 digital image	195
Fig 109 Paul Vousden	<i>Variants of the sublime and beautiful</i> 2020 oil paint and acrylic paint on canvas 90cm X 180cm	197
Fig 110 Uncredited	<i>Lady Chapel</i> 2021 digital image available from http://bing.com/images/ /search?view=detailV2&ccid [Accessed 27th August 2021]	200
Fig 111 Paul Vousden	First sketch of <i>Lady Chapel invaded</i> 2021 ink on paper 20cm X 29cm	203
Fig 112 Paul Vousden	Second sketch of <i>Lady Chapel invaded</i> 2021 ink on paper 20cm X 29cm	204
Fig 113 Paul Vousden	Third sketch of <i>Lady Chapel invaded</i> 2021 digital drawing	205
Fig 114 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power</i> 2021 ink on 12 sections of paper ink on paper 123cm X 85cm	206
Fig 115 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power</i> 2021 cartoon details ink on paper three paper sections 3 X 42.5cm X 20.5cm	207

Fig 116 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power</i> 2021 cartoon details ink on paper three paper sections 3 X 42.5cm X 20.5cm	208
Fig 117 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power</i> 2021 cartoon details ink on paper three paper sections 3 X 42.5cm X 20.5cm	209
Fig 118 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power</i> 2021 cartoon details ink on paper three paper sections 3 X 42.5cm X 20.5cm	210
Fig 119 Paul Vousden	Details of my loose painting process 2021 acrylic on canvas 90cm X 90cm	211
Fig 120 Paul Vousden	Details of my loose painting process 2021 acrylic on canvas 90cm X 90cm	211
Fig 121 Paul Vousden	Image showing painting in progress 2021 acrylic on canvas 90cm X 90cm	212
Fig 122 Paul Vousden	Images showing the gulf in scale between my original reference material and the painting in my studio (2021). Acrylic on canvas 180cm X 180cm. Digital photograph 19.5cm X 28cm.	212
Fig 123 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power and Pestilence</i> (separated view) 2021 acrylic on canvas 270cm X 180cm	213
Fig 124 Paul Vousden	<i>Fantasy of Power and Pestilence</i> 2021 acrylic on canvas. 270cm X 180cm.	214
Fig 125 Anotonia Lopez Garcia	<i>View of Madrid from Vallecas Fire Tower</i> 1990-2006 oil on canvas 250.5cm X 406cm	218
Fig 126 Theodore Gericault	<i>The Raft of the Medusa</i> 1818-19 oil on canvas 491cm X 716cm	220
Fig 127 Mario Rossi	<i>La Radeau</i> 2001 acrylic on canvas 243cm X 396cm	221
Fig 128 Jonas Wood	<i>Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe</i> 2014 oil and acrylic on canvas 193cm X 304.8cm	223

Fig 129 Utagawa Hiroshige	<i>The Sleeping Dragon Plum Tree</i> 1857 woodblock print 23.5cm X 36cm	224
Vincent Van Gogh	<i>Flowering Plum Tree after Hiroshige</i> 1887 oil on canvas 46.8cm X 55.6cm	
Fig 130 David Hockney	<i>A Closer Winter Tunnel</i> 2006 oil on six canvases 182.9cm X 365.7cm overall	224
Fig 131 Alex Katz	<i>Reflection 7</i> 2008 oil on linen 274.3cm X 548.6cm	225
Fig 132 Katsushika Hokusai	<i>Red Fuji</i> 1830-32 woodblock print 25.4cm X 36.5cm	225
Fig 133 Tamako Kataoka	<i>Auspicious Mount Fuji</i> 1991 oil on canvas 54cm X 33.5cm	226
Fig 134 Alison Elizabeth Taylor	<i>Only Castles Burning</i> 2017 marquetry hybrid 147.3cm X 160cm	228
Fig 135 Cecily Brown	<i>Help! Help! Another Day!</i> 2016 oil on linen 276.9cm X 1008.4cm	230
Fig 136 Caspar David Friedrich	<i>Wanderer above the Sea of Fog</i> 1818 oil on canvas 74.8cm X 94.8cm	231
Fig 137 Peter Doig	<i>Lunker</i> 1995 oil on canvas 200cm X 266cm	232
Fig 138 Anselm Kiefer	<i>der Morgenthau Plan</i> 2012 280 X 570cm acrylic , emulsion, oil, shellac on photograph on canvas	233
Fig 139 Tacita Dean	<i>Chere petite soeur</i> 2002 chalk on blackboards 243.8cm X 487.7cm	234
Fig 140 Kay WalkingStick	<i>Danae in Arizona, Variation II</i> 2001 oil and gold leaf on wood panel 91.4cm X 182.9cm	236
Fig 141 Olafur Eliasson	<i>The Weather Project</i> 2003 site-specific installation , mirror foil, semi- circular screen, 200 mono-frequency lights, Turbine Hall Tate Modern	237

Fig 142 Andreas Gursky	<i>The Sky Over the Garbage Dump</i> 2002 digital photograph 213cm X 275cm	238
Fig 143 Andreas Gursky	<i>Brasilia Plenary Hall II</i> 1994 digital photograph 186cm X 226cm	239
Fig 144 Toshiharu Mizutani	<i>cut no. 954</i> 1988 poster colour on paper 16cm X 30cm	240
Fig 145 Dan Holdsworth	<i>Blackout 17</i> 2010 digital photograph 177cm X 266cm	241
Fig 146 Andi Sapey	Exterior of East Gallery NUA 2021 digital image	243
Fig 147 Andi Sapey	<i>Norwegian Giant, The Devil is in the Detail</i> 2021 digital photograph	244
Fig 148 Andi Sapey	<i>Lost IV, Flowers for Thelma,</i> <i>His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020</i> digital photograph 2021	244
Fig 149 Andi Sapey	<i>Lost IV, Flowers for Thelma</i> <i>His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020,</i> <i>Know thy place and be grateful, The Horizontal Sublime</i> digital photograph 2021	245
Fig 150 Andi Sapey	<i>Lost IV, Flowers for Thelma,</i> <i>His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020,</i> <i>External, Highland Hellscape II</i> digital photograph 2021	245
Fig 151 Andi Sapey	<i>Fantasy of Power and Pestilence</i> digital photograph 2021	246
Fig 152 Andi Sapey	<i>Fantasy of Power and Pestilence</i> digital photograph 2021	247
Fig 153 Andi Sapey	<i>Norwegian Giant</i> <i>The Devil is in the Detail</i> <i>Fantasy of Power and Pestilence</i> <i>Know thy place and be grateful, The Horizontal Sublime</i> digital photograph 2021	247

Fig 154 Andi Sapey	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> <i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> digital photograph 2021	248
Fig 155 Andi Sapey	<i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> digital photograph 2021	248
Fig 156 Andi Sapey	<i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> digital photograph 2021	249
Fig 157 Andi Sapey	<i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> details, digital photograph 2021	249
Fig 158 Andi Sapey	<i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> details, digital photograph 2021	250
Fig 159 Andi Sapey	Exhibition view of <i>Artist's Statement</i> <i>The unsupported mine shaft II, Death is coming</i> <i>Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape</i> <i>Seascape Horizon</i> and vitrine with sketchbooks digital photograph 2021	250
Fig 160 Andi Sapey	<i>Death is coming</i> <i>The unsupported mine shaft II</i> <i>Know thy place and be grateful</i> <i>The Horizontal Sublime</i> digital photograph 2021	251
Fig 161 Andi Sapey	<i>Death is coming</i> <i>The unsupported mine shaft II</i> and <i>Artist Statement</i> digital photograph 2021	251
Fig 162 Andi Sapey	<i>Death is coming, details</i> digital photograph 2021	252
Fig 163 Andi Sapey	<i>Defence Horizon</i> <i>Gordale Scar, Variants of the sublime and beautiful</i> digital photograph 2021	253

Fig 164 Andi Sapey	<i>Defence Horizon</i> <i>Gordale Scar, Variants of the sublime and beautiful</i> digital photograph 2021	253
Fig 165 Andi Sapey	<i>Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape</i> <i>Seascape Horizon</i> digital photograph 2021	254
Fig166 Andi Sapey	<i>Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape</i> <i>Seascape Horizon</i> open vitrine, digital photograph 2021	254
Fig 167 Andi Sapey	Framed sketchbook in vitrine digital photograph 2021	255
Fig 168 Andi Sapey	Framed sketchbook in vitrine digital photograph 2021	255
Fig 169 Andi Sapey	Framed sketchbook small sketchbook unframed sketchbook in vitrine digital photograph 2021	256
Fig 170 Andi Sapey	Framed sketchbook in vitrine digital photograph 2021	256
Fig 171 Andi Sapey	Open vitrine and exhibition view digital photograph 2021	257
Fig 172 Paul Vousden	Comments book, digital scan 2021	258
Fig 173 Paul Vousden	Comments book, digital scan 2021	259
Fig 174 Paul Vousden	Multiple configurations of the <i>Horizontal Sublime</i> acrylic on panels 2018	262
Fig 175 Paul Vousden	Sketchbook mounted in frame 2016 ink on paper 54cm by 72cm	270
Fig 176 Paul Vousden	<i>Hybrid</i> (unfinished) (2021) digital drawing	272

Introduction

Prior to beginning this research the landscapes, interior spaces, and places I have moved through have always confounded my senses and made me feel tense. This was because busy, crowded spaces were always imagined and experienced as uncontained bombardments of movement, colour, noise, emotions, allegory, and symbolism. At other times I experienced unease when encountering tranquil spaces. This was because these places often seemed loaded with psychological and, on occasion, sinister meanings just beyond my ability to comprehend. These strong emotional responses to environments have had the positive effect of almost forcing me to create art. This art instinct helped me to think through confused perceptions. However, the chaotic nature of my instinctive perception has always bothered me, and so, in 2015, I began looking for some way of finally organising and categorising this imagined chaos.

In this project I have extended my understanding of how the disorder of the world affects me through practice-based research informed by the aesthetic speculations of Edmund Burke. His eighteenth-century text *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757-59) claims to offer the reader a theory of the passions. This theory is constructed around empirical observations and how the mind responds to emotive experiences and objects. Central to this argument is 'a growing reliance on feeling as a means of insight' (Phillips, 1990:11). Burke states, in the *Enquiry*, that love, grief, fear, and anger are all passions which affect every mind; however, he is adamant that this affect is not arbitrary but understandable 'upon certain, natural and uniform principles' (Burke, 1757-59:22). The conception of becoming adept at interpreting, and using, Burke's aesthetic theory to help try to make sense of the bedlam I saw all around me, and the feelings this chaos provoked, excited my imagination and acted as a conceptual support throughout this research.

My research aims to explore the extent to which I can use the contents of the *Enquiry* as an applied methodology in the production of paintings, and drawings, which reflect upon contemporary British spaces and landscapes. Effectively I have tried to inhabit the thought space of the Burkean Sublime and rather like an actor putting on a costume, see where this aesthetic identity will lead me. I have also used autoethnography as a research method to express, analyse and set into a wider context my personal experience of Burke's treatise, the sublime, my art practice and the development of the research for this thesis.

I have chosen drawing, painting and print making as my research media throughout this thesis because these media were often used by British eighteenth-century artists interested in the sublime and beautiful. These forms of communication helped support the western patriarchal tradition intrinsic to the Burkean Sublime and can therefore be thought of as mediums which are associated with the eighteenth-century conception of the sublime. My choice of medium has also been influenced by Robert Rosenblum who states in *The Abstract Sublime* (1961) that pantheism, a belief that everything composes an all-encompassing God, has been legitimately replaced by 'paint-theism' (Rosenblum, 2010:112). However, in the contemporary context, painting and drawing are also suitably flexible and capable of enacting, through a process of imitation and interrogation, many of Burke's claims regarding the sublime or beautiful. This process has made my research an activity in which art has a symbiotic relationship with philosophy. The physicality of my drawing, and painting processes, have also seemed to create a material discourse which is felt through the body and seems appropriate to the Burkean conceptions of the imagination being only the representative of the senses (Burke, 1757-59:17). This direct relationship with physicality, coupled with the clear and accessible nature of Burke's writing on empirical observation, is why I choose to explore sublimity using the *Enquiry* rather than Kant's more elaborate and cerebral *Critique of Judgement* (1790). On a practical level the mediums of paint, pen and pencil are also accessible, in terms of their cost implications, to an artist on a modest budget.

As my research progressed my relationship to Burke's treatise has changed significantly. Initially I used the *Enquiry* like a handbook for cultural production. Burke was my guide and I followed where he led. Essentially, I used the *Enquiry* as a work of experimental psychology which maps out for the reader how various emotional states can be aroused by a variety of experiences of the sublime (Shaw, 2006:53). My activity was made possible using art practice, and this autoethnographic practice-based research revealed some surprising limitations and contradictions in Burke's *Enquiry*. However, the realisation that Burke's theory of the emotions is a fundamentally flawed guide to perception because a guide to the *obscurity* of the emotions is an impossible contradiction, did not diminish my enthusiasm for his treatise. What this insight did mean was that an initial intellectual investigation turned into a more equal and interactive conversation with the author as my project developed. From as early as 2016 I began breaking Burke's colour theory rules, and my subsequent art production is far from a formulaic illustration of the *Enquiry*. However, Burke's aesthetic thought processes inform my art production throughout this research. Even where, in the later

stages, I choose to contradict Burke, his usefulness to the development of my practice and imagination remains. This usefulness is created because without the influence of the *Enquiry* I would have nothing to reject, or use, as a conceptual prism to see through. Therefore my research has taught me that when art interrogates aesthetic philosophy, it can expose weaknesses, limitations, and contradictions in arguments which, when viewed only in the form of the written word, seem entirely plausible.

Throughout this thesis the term 'landscape' is used to mean more than just external natural spaces. Because Burke makes little distinction between the sublime power of nature, the sublime power of society, and the sublime potential of the imagination, I began to reimagine my conception of what a landscape is. By following Burke's blurring of sublime boundaries, I began to imagine ways in which constructed spaces, internal and external, also act like landscapes. Essentially, I reimagined landscapes as immersive backdrops to lived experience. Such spaces become sublime when they are loaded with sublime energies, emotions, allegories, symbols, associative ideological, political meanings and psychological characteristics. I also began to perceive the sublime associative links between potentially dangerous natural spaces and potentially dangerous manmade hierarchical spaces. I started to imagine military, medical, industrial, financial, educational, legal, religious, and political centres of power in a similar way to naturally threatening spaces such as mountain ranges, waterfalls, lochs, moors, caves, dark ravines, gloomy forests, swamps, and marshes. Burke helped me to imagine all spaces as informed by his thinking and in relation to his conception of sublime ethical and moral issues.

My re-imagining of constructed internal spaces as landscapes happened because I read and absorbed the essence of Burke's *Enquiry* from the viewpoint of an artist. My thesis is a practice-based research project which seeks to explore how useful Burke's theory of the passions can be in the production of contemporary art, it does not attempt to make an original contribution to knowledge through philosophical or art historical analysis of Burke's aesthetic speculations.

The treatise is divided into five main chapters, which I have titled Parts One to Five, following the terminology of Burke's *Enquiry*. Within each Part there are subheadings which indicate areas of investigation, also following the example of Burke's *Enquiry*. Part One is an explanation of the historical context which informed the treatise and is accompanied by a contemporary literature review of the text. Part Two analyses the Burkean Horizontal Sublime, Part Three reflects on the meaning and importance of the Burkean Vertical Sublime and Part Four considers how the conception of the Burkean

Transcendental Sublime can be useful to art practice. Part Five considers the key concerns in contemporary landscape painting and their relationship to the sublime, this topic is a summary whose purpose is to illustrate the conceptual relationship and difference between influential artists and my practice.

The origins of this research project and the search for a guide to perception

The research was initially inspired by discontent with my artistic practice and its poorly defined relationship to Romanticism and value. Terry Eagleton states in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) that Romantic art 'is most rich in political implications where it is most gloriously futile' (Eagleton, 1990:65), implying that cultural production need not be like other commodities, its functionless nature can act as 'value grounded entirely in itself' (Eagleton, 1990:65). This value, according to Eagleton, is 'eloquent testimony to the obscure origins and enigmatic nature of value' (Eagleton, 1990:65). Essentially Eagleton is saying that Romantic art is associated with the unmeasurable values implicit in human existence, and perception, which often ignore rationalism, and utilitarianism, and draw strength from 'self-delight' (Eagleton, 1990:65).

As an artist, I am often questioned by my peers, most of whom are working-class and uninterested in art, about the value of my work. The unsubtle implications of most such queries being: if my art does not sell, which it mostly does not, what is it good for? I often reply to such interrogations by restating Eagleton's argument and adding that my art has value as a repository of my experience and intellect. This answer rarely satisfies either me, or the questioner, because these values are hard to pin down and quantify. Such intrusive questionings, and Eagleton's thoughts on the nature of value have made me want to explore for myself the origins of arts' functionless power and analyse further the implications, and validity of, art which draws strength from self-delight. This speculation has led me to explore the possibility that the sublime and beautiful, most commonly associated with eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Romanticism, might contain qualities which still have relevance for myself and other artists. I reasoned that if I could examine these qualities and understand their relationship to wider British culture, I might be able to incorporate the research implicit in this process into my own artistic practice to positive critical effect. This positive effect could potentially give my artworks definite utilitarian purpose through cultural value, thereby creating a robust foundation for a meaningful ongoing visual demonstration of the relationship between strong feelings, or passions, and their representative qualities in the sublime and the beautiful.

The search for a visual key to the emotions led me to explore Edmund Burke's treatise. Throughout the *Enquiry* Burke is primarily interested in exploring the reactions of the eighteenth-century mind to emotive objects and experiences. Burke's text fascinated me because the author's thought process is accessible and appears, on first reading, to be an empirical guide to perception; a systematic theory of the relationship between aesthetics and emotions. I found the implications of Burke's attempt to create an exact theory of the passions, and how this can be said to affect perception, intoxicating. Initially the idea that emotion can be stripped of confusion and uncertainty seemed a contradiction in terms, an impossible daydream in which obscure emotive effect becomes fixed by intellectual deceit into a consistent theory. However, Burke's argument is persuasive and beguiling. Despite fearful reservations and doubts, I was drawn to the possibility that Burke offers artists a powerful explanation of how aesthetics, and emotions, can be imagined as informing experience. This is because the *Enquiry*, although often based upon rhetorical insights, can easily be interpreted as an exploration of the mechanics by which artists can capture perceptions of reality.

The text also links aesthetic understanding to a series of conservative moral and political constructions. This conflating of aesthetics with politics also seemed to be important because it gave artists of the eighteenth century a means by which they could potentially link the power of art to the *Enquiry's* socio-anthropological underpinnings. I began to wonder if the mean-spirited nature of Burke's thoughts on how eighteenth-century British society operated aesthetically, was still pertinent to contemporary British society and I was excited by the possibility that a theory existed which might have the potential to make my art nearer to a facsimile of reality as I understand it.

Burke's *Enquiry* considered as a potential handbook for contemporary cultural production

Once I had glimpsed the potential usefulness of the *Enquiry* to contemporary artistic practice; I began to search for evidence that Burke imagined his aesthetic speculations as more than just an esoteric theory. I was aware that Burke aimed his treatise at the literary classes of London in the 1750s, but felt it was important to assess if Burke believed the *Enquiry* to be of genuine use to the wider visual arts. This was pertinent because I did not want my research to be merely an enigmatic and seemingly useless reflection of eighteenth-century middle-class values. My aim was to explore and explain a theory of aesthetic judgement to see if I could use this theory as a vehicle for my own material exploration of 'self-delight'. 'Self-delight', or a feeling of self-worth,

through artistic action, was the minimum aim of my analysis of the *Enquiry*. This feeling of self-worth, created through aesthetic activity, was imagined as being achievable once the cognitive dimensions of the Burkean Sublime were absorbed and mastered. This research aim was envisaged as a key to the achievement of a measure of personal sublimity which would end my artistic insecurity. I also wanted to see if by uncritically obeying eighteenth-century thought processes my art practice would improve visually and conceptually.

On the first page of the preface to the first edition of the *Enquiry* (1757) (a second edition followed in 1759) Burke states that:

'I imagined it could only be from a diligent examination of our passions in our own breasts; from a careful survey of the properties of things which we find by experience to influence those passions; and from a sober and attentive investigation of the laws of nature, by which those properties are capable of affecting the body, and thus exciting our passions. If this could be done, it was imagined that the rules deducible from such an enquiry might be applied to the imitative arts, and to whatever else they concerned, without much difficulty' (Burke, 1757:1).

With this statement Burke makes plain that he felt his thesis could be used by artists as if it were a handbook, a step-by-step guide, or rule book, to the emotions and their visual expression. I felt Burke's aspiration to create such a rule book was admirable and potentially a means to unlocking an important structure of understanding. I reasoned that even if I found Burke's theory of the passions to be flawed, my process of investigation into his speculations would enable me to see the world anew. I then began to look for examples of contemporary artists who appeared to be still influenced by the contents of the *Enquiry*. Luke White argues that:

'a Damien Hirst catalogue can look as if one is being presented with a practical demonstration of what art would look like if one were to take Edmund Burke's famous writings on the sublime as a handbook for artistic production – which in many ways was exactly how it was intended' (White, 2009:71).

White's statement provides evidence that Burke's thinking still presents artists with a visual argument which they are compelled to manifest. White's opinion is important because, as a lecturer at Middlesex University and contributor to the Tate's *Art of the Sublime* (2007-11) project, he is an acknowledged and validated member of the culture defining classes of Britain. This knowledge inspired me to further my research and

consider how it might differ from that of Damien Hirst and how I could manifest Burke's presentation of the sublime.

In the beginning: a paralysing excess of implication

A first reading of the *Enquiry* overwhelmed me. This was because the treatise contains a myriad of empirical observations and opinions derived from the realities of eighteenth-century Britain. These concepts are contained within eight distinct texts and one hundred sub-sections of these texts. Because each sub-section contains an individual idea or observation, they initially overpowered my ability to synthesis and organise them all into useful data.

Despite this initial overload of information, two powerful conceptions from the text took an immediate and intense grip upon my imagination. The first was that throughout the *Enquiry* Burke presents the sublime as a terrifyingly powerful force, linked to an instinct for self-preservation in the face of nature. He also sees the sublime simultaneously as useful for the validation and enforcement of eighteenth-century middle-class conservative conceptions of law and order. This interpretation of aesthetics seemed to offer me an unexpected utilitarian facet to the sublime as a meaningful conduit to the terror of my lived twentieth and twenty-first century experiences. This seemed particularly true once the full force of the Covid-19 pandemic took hold in Britain.

The second conception taken from the text had more immediate visual use for material practice but was also associated with conceptions of what the Burkean Sublime might mean. W.J.T. Mitchell alerted me to this facet of the Burkean Sublime by arguing that unions of extreme opposites are employed by Burke to create 'a principle of the sublime' (Freeman, 1995: 44). By searching for examples of such unions in the *Enquiry* I discovered that Burke divides words into three types - aggregate words, abstract words and compounded abstract words - which he uses as devices to express the rhetorical sublime. Aggregate words represent what Burke calls determinate compositions, ideas which are whole and clear to the imagination, such as horse or castle. Simple abstract words stand for one simple idea relating to such a composition such as a brown horse or a square castle (Burke, 1757-59:149). However, compounded abstract words are formed from a union, often 'an arbitrary union' (Burke, 1757-59:150) of aggregate and simple abstract words. As an artist the potential importance of this arbitrary union resonated with limitless visual potential. Burke also seemed to challenge me by stating that compounded abstract words have no real essence, they conjure up no clear picture in the mind (Burke, 1757-59:150) and are therefore, from my perspective, a visual challenge without limit. Such words, he

suggests, have a strong emotional impact- this he illustrates by quoting Milton's 'universe of death' (Burke, 1757-59:159) . The idea of what a 'universe of death' might look like inspired me to consider compound abstract words as visual compound abstract expressions. I began to reimagine myself as an artist informed by the idea of compound abstract expressions. I reasoned that my contemporary perspective meant that a profound reimagining of Burke's thoughts was now possible by reinterpreting his rhetorical conceptions of the sublime as if they were thoughts on the visual.

Burke makes a further exciting claim about the power of individual perception in *Part Five, SECTION VII* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *How WORDS influence the passions*, when he states:

'we find by experience that eloquence and poetry are as capable, nay indeed much more capable of making a deep and lively impressions than any other arts, and even than nature itself in very many cases' (Burke, 1757-59:158).

Here Burke is expressing a belief that powerfully crafted words, such as compounded abstract words, can express perceptions which exceed nature. This ability to exceed nature is explained by reasoning that the representative power of words can convey both the subject and how the orator was affected by the subject (Burke, 1757-59:158). Burke's belief that artful construction can both express lived experience and exceed the power of nature fascinated me. Essentially Burke became my tutor as I struggled to express my visual perception with an extreme intensity which aimed to privilege the boundless over the bounded and excitement over calmness and comfort (Zizek1989:228). In practice this meant using parts of the *Enquiry* as springboards, or speculative ideas, for my visual imagination. I began to think of Burke as providing me with the route and approximate destination for my research, whilst I would manifest this new reimagining of the Burkean Sublime through original practice-based research set in contemporary British contexts. These contexts would be landscapes, both natural and manmade.

A consideration of the relevance of Burke's eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy in contemporary Britain

The idea that Burke had handed down a visual argument which I needed to make manifest forced me to research further the *Enquiry's* socio-anthropological underpinnings and assess their potential relevance to contemporary Britain. Barbara Claire Freeman sums up the interconnectivity between Burke's aesthetic and political thought and hints at its continued potential, when she states:

“the originality of Burke’s sublime is that it calls into question our belief in the ‘merely aesthetic’ and unsettles the notion of an autonomous domain of human experience that exists independent of political, ethical, and social concerns” (Freeman, 1997:46).

In the eighteenth-century Burke’s ideological aesthetic privileged from a middle-class perspective, the stability of the natural order which, God the father had given Britain. Burke is therefore credited with continuing a patriarchal psychology of fear and entitlement. His *Enquiry* reflects upon and links aesthetics to oppressive political and moral arguments, and contributed to meta-anxieties of his day via a successful aesthetic correlation of the need to present patriarchal social stratification as both natural and meritorious (Eagleton, 1990:52-60). This action linked aesthetic understanding to, what is now understood as, a politically right-wing and conservative world view. In Burke’s eyes a tiny aristocracy and growing middle-class could experience the sublime through the pleasures of exploitative ambition, the ownership of expensive properties, artefacts, and paintings, and thrilling leisure-filled trips to dramatic landscapes. The rest of the population endured what they must. Their experience of the sublime could be confined to the masochistic affair of labour, which is both painful in its exertion yet enjoyable in its awakening of energy, according to Burke, and the passions associated with religion (Eagleton, 1990:56). This Burkean division of access to the sublime helped reinforce the structures of an eighteenth-century society which served and entitled the powerful. Effectively Burke was saying that the elite engage with the sublime by accessing an invigorating energy of the mind whilst the inferior classes know the sublime mainly through physical struggle (Eagleton, 1990:56-57). This theory leads Eagleton to conclude that aesthetic experience helps to create a hegemony which ‘is not only a matter of the political state, but is installed within the labour process itself’ (Eagleton, 1990:57).

I reasoned, initially using anecdotal evidence taken from my lived experiences, that Burkean notions of a class-based access to the sublime continue to have relevance to contemporary British society. Religious engagement now appeared, in my view, to be largely replaced by political commitment, but this fact changed very little because, according to academics such as John Gray, politics is faith based and essentially ‘a chapter in the history of religion’ (Gray, 2007:1). Therefore a Burkean trans-avantgarde re-imagining of landscape was still potentially culturally significant. This significance was supported by the fact that Burke’s interpretations of the sublime and the beautiful still seemed to signify a comprehensible British version of reality; a reality informed by terror and the sublime, and still accessed in much the same way as it was in the eighteenth-century.

A brief snapshot of evidence supporting the claim that eighteenth-century conceptions of social rights are still relevant to British culture

When organising my initial research I reflected upon the conditions required in contemporary British society to make Burke's interpretation of the sublime irrelevant. This allowed me to conclude that if Britain could be imagined as a just society where everyone is welcomed and supported, a society which exists in a permanent state of contentment and harmony with nature, a bucolic paradise in which nobody dies or is overwhelmed by paralysing disease, poverty, loneliness, despair, or class-based exclusion, then the terror of the sublime would be irrelevant. This imagination defying interpretation of Britain convinced me to continue my studies and to find evidence which supported my theory that twenty-first century British society is a terrifying and sublime construction in which eighteenth-century values are still prevalent.

According to Gregory Clark's study of the British class system, 'even after the monumental changes of the Industrial revolution and the introduction of universal education'[...]'it takes around 10 generations for someone at the highest or lowest levels of society to reach the middle classes' (Robson,2016). This data is either comforting or disturbing depending upon your viewpoint. If true, it means that access to the sublime experience is largely fixed for life, making it a representation of an inherited destiny which the individual makes manifest through action. What cannot be contested is the existence of a class system in Britain in which wealth disparity is extreme, just as it was in the eighteenth-century.

According to the Office *for National Statistics* figures on wealth inequality, in 2014, Britain's richest 1% owned as much wealth as the poorest 55% of the population (Inman,2014). Such inequality is still accepted as natural, and meritorious, by nearly half of the British population according to statistics published by the *Equality Trust* (Wyporska,2018). This body revealed in 2013 that only 51% of the population believe the wealth gap in Britain to be unfair (Wyporska,2018). This faith in a societal order which is both natural and meritorious means that poverty within the lower classes of Britain is tolerated. In 2018 *The Independent* ran the headline 'Food bank use in UK reaches highest rate on record as benefits fail to cover basic costs' (Bulman,2018). The article also featured a quote by Tess Lanning, director of the *Living Wage Foundation* who claimed that 'over a third of parents working full-time and earning less than the real *Living Wage* are now regularly skipping meals' (Bulman,2018). Even within professions, class-consciousness and the stratification of society based on access to wealth, advantages those from affluent backgrounds, much as it did in the

eighteenth-century. Within UK professions such as medicine and finance, individuals from working class backgrounds earn significantly less than their more privileged peers (Sellgren,2017). These facts, collated by the *Social Mobility Commission*, caused the commission's chairman Alan Milburn, to conclude in 2017 that the UK remains a deeply elitist society (Sellgren,2017). In 2019 the commission, in collaboration with the *Sutton Trust*, issued a report examining the link between private education and Britain's most influential jobs. The report defined influential jobs as 'politicians, CEOs, A-list celebrities, journalists, musicians, judges and other high-ranking figures' (Sabin,2019), who collectively represent the culture-defining classes. The report concluded that 'social mobility is being restricted by the vast likelihood that former private school pupils will take top jobs' (Sabin,2019). The likelihood of privately educated individuals joining the culture-defining classes is aided by what is described, in a report which ostensibly purports to condemn inequality, as this elite's highly developed soft skills, their confidence, articulate nature, team working skills and academic excellence (Sabin,2019).

This elitism and self-confident sense of natural entitlement is often reflected in the attitudes to be found within the British government. In 2012 privately-educated Ben Bradley, who became the Conservative Party vice chairman in 2018 aged twenty-eight, (Cambridge, 2018) blogged that without a cap on benefits the UK could be 'drowning in a sea of unemployed wasters' (Lister,2018), and suggested that benefit-claimants should be offered sterilisation (Lister,2018). Fear of a parasitic Other which is obscure yet powerful enough to undermine British identity, may have been a factor influencing the *Brexit* decision in 2016. A poll conducted by the Tory peer Lord Ashcroft supports the idea that *Brexit* symbolised a psychological longing to retreat into a cultural past, a past hostile to 'multiculturalism, social liberalism, feminism and environmentalism' (Chu,2016). However, along with such obvious psychological fearfulness, contemporary conceptions of Otherness, appropriate to Burke, often arise, seemingly unconsciously, at the heart of British culture.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the effects of inequality, conservative political thinking is still the dominant political force in British society. This dominance was most recently demonstrated by the general election triumph of the Tory party in 2019 and the local election success of 2021. Such political victories show that British society continues to support conservative values, much as it did in the eighteenth-century when Burke was formulating his interpretation of the meaning and function of the terror of the sublime.

Who are the Culture Defining Classes?

The term '*Culture Defining Classes*' is used in this thesis to signify those in society with the power to influence others and effectively set limits on conceptions of good taste. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the culture definers of Britain were a relatively small cohort mainly drawn from the middle and upper classes. Only a small number of exceptionally talented working-class individuals, like Turner or John Martin, managed to join this elite.

Today, creating a definition of the culture-defining classes, that clearly states who is part of this group is more complex. This complexity has been created by the impact of increased access to education and social mobility resulting from the post-war social contract. In this thesis I argue that anyone who influences British culture, from any class or background, is part of the contemporary culture defining classes. However, because identity and perception are informed by experience and access to social power, those with the greatest access to social or cultural capital have an implicit advantage over other groups in the struggle to become influencers. As a group, culture definers, such as gallerists, curators, critics and artists accepted into these influential circles, can choose to use the power of patronage and their authority to mediate artistic activity. Without the patronage of this cohort the activities of painting and drawing can exist and achieve excellence, as the artistic productivity of Eric Tucker proves, but where artists can find favour with the culture-defining classes, as David Hockney and Anthony Gormley have, their careers flourish and this can lead to the artist joining the ranks of the British culture defining classes by becoming influencers themselves.



Fig 1. L-R Eric Tucker *Bare Arsed* (1970-79) David Hockney *Pool with Two Figures* (1972) Anthony Gormley *Angel of the North* (1998)

My primary research aim, and research question

My research seeks to answer the question:

to what extent can Burke's aesthetic philosophy, as defined in the *Enquiry* (1757-59), be used as an applied methodology in the production of contemporary Burkean landscapes and spaces?

This question is important because I wish to capture the transmutable energy of sublime landscape and present this to audiences, thereby creating a bridge of empathy, through material thinking, which has an emotional impact relevant to Burkean interpretations of the sublime. This impact is itself important because of the way art explicitly constructs society through its normative power and relationship to reality. I am attempting to create artworks which offer an alternative way of looking at British spaces by exploring how ideas taken from the past can reflect the present and suggest future possibilities. Theoretically my research may create material outcomes of interest to others. Potentially some of my future audiences will contain those who struggle with their own emotional faculties, and reflections upon culturally constructed perceptions of reality.

My primary research question is largely explored through visual production in parts two three and four of the following discourse. These chapters make an original contribution to knowledge through the fusing of aesthetic instructions from the *Enquiry* into contemporary representations of space. In these chapters I am effectively asking what the *Enquiry* can mean for me as a twenty-first century working class artist exploring landscape? The aim of this literal approach to production is to make artworks sites of visual research and interpretation, or hermeneutical phenomenology.

Research structure and secondary research questions explained

The research in parts two to four of this thesis is given context by secondary or supportive research. A historical explanation of the sublime's development as concept, before Burke, sets the scene for analysis of the *Enquiry* and attempts to describe the sublime as a developing idea or state of mind. This section addresses the question: what was the sublime before Burke's *Enquiry*, why did it have meaning, and how did this influence Burke?

A literature review which acts as an appraisal of contemporary interpretations of the *Enquiry* is also included in this thesis. To keep this review focussed only authors whose work deals directly with the *Enquiry* and who have been published within the

last thirty years, are included. These selected voices act as a testament to the aesthetic influence of Burke in the postmodern era and represent the various biases of the culture-defining classes' interpretations of Burkean aesthetic theory.

Further sub-questions are raised throughout this essay by texts which stimulated my practice-based research and situated it within the context of contemporary artistic practice. The hierarchical relationship between the primary and secondary-questions mirrors the way in which Burke laid out his speculative research process in the *Enquiry*, moving as he did from overall perceptions of the sublime and the beautiful to specific examples. I have also made copious use of subheadings in my argument, echoing Burke's structural layout of the *Enquiry* which contained one hundred such devices.

The role sketchbooks have in my research methodology explained

Burke privileges the unrefined nature of sketchbook work above finished paintings in the *Enquiry* because he argues that sketches offer the viewer the prospect of both visual development and a degree of present uncertainty. He argues that these qualities are linked to the idea of the sublime and infinity (Burke, 1757-59:70). Burke's reasoning motivated me to imagine my sketchbooks as visual extensions of his treatise, which could also explore and develop my key research questions. This meant that my sketchbooks became centrally positioned within my research and offered a convenient conduit for development because of their constantly evolving nature. My manner of thinking about the usefulness of sketchbooks evolved during my research process as I explored how the many ideas in the *Enquiry* can relate to representation.

The struggle implicit in any research process has given my sketchbooks an aesthetic quality informed by the deliberate slowness of my reflective process. This process makes many of my drawings and texts appear unlike many contemporary, or past, landscape artists. This gulf of difference can be demonstrated by comparing Turner's masterfully observed *Study for a Shipwreck* (1805) with my *Study for a Seascape* (2016). Turner's drawing is a swiftly executed invention which is spontaneously rendered using a minimum of mark making. His sketch is part of a working process intended for the artist's eyes only. By contrast my drawing gropes for form as I struggle with ideas which are new, unvalidated and form a record of academic adventure into the unknown. Essentially my journey is less of a skilled work process and more of a process of conceptual academic distillation in which the sketchbook presents imperfect performances of the mind for the critique of imagined future audiences.



Fig 2. Joseph Mallard William Turner *Study for a Shipwreck* (1805)

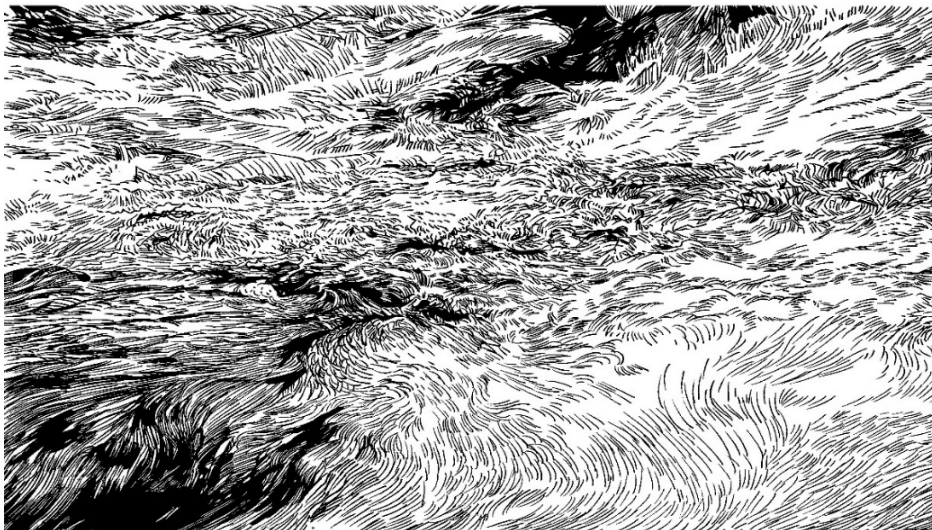


Fig 3. Paul Vousden *Study for a Seascape* (2016). 25.5cm by 13.5cm

Often the drawings which resulted from my laboured process of critique have led my research. This development has evolved because the act of drawing naturally extends exponentially the themes and intentions I have researched. This exponential process became increasingly non-linear and complex as research progressed. In very general terms as my research developed the more important my sketchbooks became in the process of exploring the seemingly unbounded potentiality of the Burkean Sublime.

My use of sketchbooks as research tools can be demonstrated by following Burke's very simplistic observations upon the properties of lines. Essentially Burke argues that gently curving lines, or shapes, are beautiful and therefore cannot express the terror of the sublime (Burke, 1757-59:105). This concept is explored in more detail in Part Two

(pages 79-80,91). In order to test Burke's argument and its ability to still inform contemporary depictions of space I began writing down interpretations of Burkean themes and their relationship to objects and the process of object depiction. I then produced several sketchbook drawings which sought to create obscure but nevertheless horrifying forms with terrifying associative meaning using curving lines and shapes.

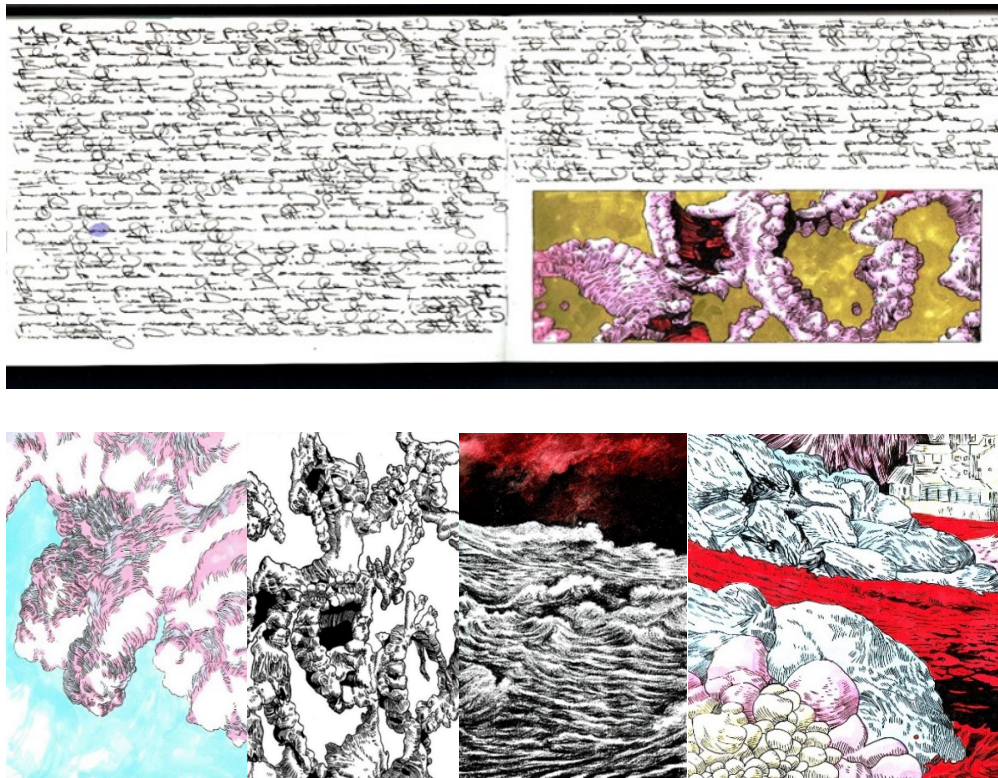


Fig 4. Paul Vousden L-R Various sketchbook drawings exploring the concept that curved lines express the beautiful (2016). Various sized in differing sketchbooks

My reflective processes continued until the digital drawing and print *Serpentine Line* (2016) (fig 5) was imagined. Drawing and written reflection both allowed me to conceive the drawing in which something obscure, perhaps suggestive of diseased bone, rises from the sea, this something is depicted without using any angular lines. The form is clearly designed to be ugly, but I think the use of a gently curving lines softens the effect of this miscreation. By exploring Burke's linear conception using drawing and written reflection as a conduit, I was therefore able to question Burke's articulations on the nature of line in presentations of landscape and signify a limit to his validity using visual associative meaning.

Toward the conclusion of my research process I realised that my methodology had turned my sketchbooks into valuable research statements which demonstrated my

divergent thinking. These artefacts offered viewers insights into the motivations underpinning the larger visual experiments which were subsequently executed outside the confines of sketchbook experiments. This made my sketchbooks interpretable as nexus points for my wider practice and many of the drawings within can be thought of as cartoons for future paintings. Although physically very different from the art books of Anselm Kiefer, these objects nevertheless share the idea of the artist's book as an 'original and individual form of art' which attempts to communicate a 'message' (Arasse, 2001:57).



Fig 5. Paul Vousden *Serpentine Line* (2016) digital print. 32cm by 42cm



Fig 6. Anselm Kiefer *Siegfried's Difficult Way to Brunhilde* (1977) and *The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen* (1975)

A brief introduction to the concepts of the horizontal, vertical, and transcendental sublime

In this thesis the horizontal sublime is imagined as the British coastline or border. This edge space represents, for many, a vulnerable physical barrier between an idealised Britain and a technologically driven borderless, vast, and profoundly Other, world of global capitalism, terrorism, disease, and increasing environmental crisis. British culture has shaped how people perceive this edge space and Burke's *Enquiry* has added to this process. My material research associated with the British coastline focusses on the sea defences, sea and seafront at Sheringham in Norfolk. Since 1995, 20,000 tonnes of Norwegian rock have been deposited on the beach to preserve it against erosion. The rocks are massive, visually awesome, interlopers in the British landscape. Their presence protects Sheringham from wave-attack, but they are profoundly Other, alien and, because of their scale and age, beyond comprehension. This research took place between October 2015 and September 2018.



Fig 7. Paul Vousden *The Norwegian Giants* (2015) digital photograph

The vertical sublime is imagined as that which descends into the underworld and conjures up ideas of the abyss. In the *Enquiry* Burke considers why darkness is terrible, he also conceptually links privation to ideas of hell and the 'black realms of darkness' and 'dominions of the dead' (Burke, 1757-59:65). Essentially Burke expresses a terror of the dark that all diurnal creatures share. This vision of terror is not grandly beautiful, it is an emotional expression of distress (Bell, Lyall, 2002:5). My practice-based research explores the abyss by focussing on Burkean concepts of association, darkness, hell, social stratification, access to the sublime via labour and privation as embodied by the physical space of the Apedale mine in Staffordshire. This research took place between October 2018 and January 2020.



Fig 8. Paul Vousden *Mineshaft at Apedale* (2019) digital photograph

The transcendental sublime is imagined as being represented by the power and magnificence of buildings which embody the state. Burke states in the *Enquiry* that there is a direct connection between kings, institutions of power and terror (Burke, 1757-59:62). The practice-based research linked to conceptions of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime, focusses on the architectural splendour of Westminster Abbey and the terror and awe it inspires. This final phase of research was completed between early 2020 and the summer of 2021 and is heavily informed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

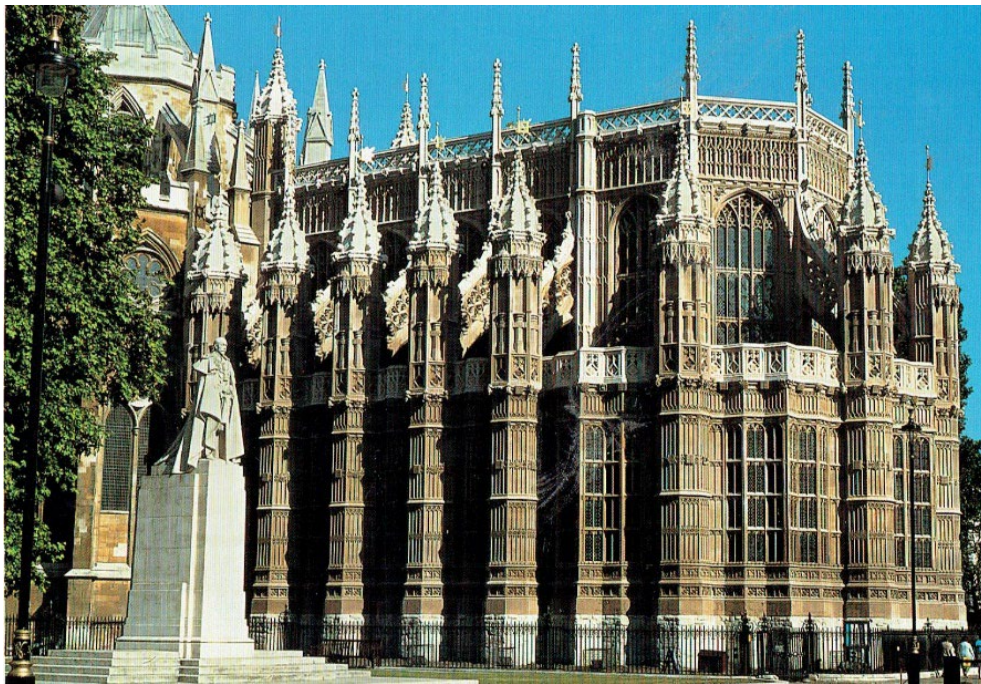


Fig 9. Exterior of Westminster Abbey

Within all these spaces I will link, where possible, my virtually unknown artistic practice to the work of other more established contemporary British artists, and those drawn from the culture defining classes of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. This process aims to demonstrate to the reader the usefulness of Burke's *Enquiry* as a text which theoretically could inform British cultures' various levels of influence.

Most importantly of all my practice-based research aims to create three Burkean contemporary landscapes. This research converts Burkean philosophy into a record of material activity with new discursive and aesthetic value. In the places defined as the Burkean Horizontal and Burkean Vertical Sublime, space is considered as a combination of experienced physical reality informed by a psychological projection of the *Enquiry*. In the area defined as indicative of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime the disruptive influence of the Covid-19 pandemic made empirical observation of this

space impractical and dangerous. Therefore this chapter of research is entirely a psychological projection of Burkean thought and demonstrates how this thesis can still be usefully employed to stimulate artistic reflexivity, and activity, even in the most stressful of circumstances.

Part One Section 1

Introduction

It is important to acknowledge that much of what is written in the *Enquiry* extends, or echoes, the work of earlier thinkers. In this chapter I have explored the nature of Burke's text and how it draws strength, and validity, from a broad range of *earlier* authoritative aesthetic influences. This research was important because I knew that trying to make visible, through drawing and painting, spaces informed by themes of the Burkean sublime, such as obscurity, power, emotion, and associative meanings connected to spaces, would be no easy task. I therefore needed to understand and explore where many of the themes of the Burkean Sublime came from to fully acquaint myself with the developing trajectories of psychological meanings which eventually led to the *Enquiry*.

An overview of the *Enquiry*

Edmund Burke published his first edition of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1757. According to Adam Phillips, author of the introductory notes included in the *Oxford World's Classics* publication of Burke's *Enquiry*, motivation for writing the treatise was opportunistic. Phillips states that by the early eighteenth-century the sublime had acquired cult status amongst the literary classes. Burke, as a young man, was eager to take his place amongst the British culture defining classes, and therefore used the theme of the sublime to identify himself with their carefully cultivated image of intellectual exclusivity and superiority (Phillips, 1990:10).

The structure of the *Enquiry* initially consisted of a short preface, contents list, and five subdivisions exploring how ideas of the sublime and the beautiful might be understood, experienced and created. In the first of these subdivisions, entitled *Part 1*, Burke concentrates his attention upon reality and how it is filtered through the mind and the body to create perception. Burke's findings in *Part 1* are organised under nineteen various headings, or sections. These sections are important because they are distinct arguments or observations which collectively relate to Burke's overall aesthetic argument. In *Part 2* he focusses his attention upon the sublime and primarily how it is caused and experienced through perception and passion. *Part 2* is organised into twenty-two sectional headings which reflect upon both the sublime of nature and the sublime of the human construct. *Part 3* which consists of twenty-seven sections, is devoted to the properties of beauty and ends by comparing the sublime to the beautiful.

In *Part 4* Burke considers the external causes of the sublime and beautiful. His arguments in this section of text often elaborate upon previous observations, as if to reinforce thought processes, and is comprised of twenty-five sections. *Part 5* of the text is devoted to considering the power of words to evoke the sublime, this comparatively small passage of text is made up from seven sections.

In the following chapter the most important of these sections, which in total number one hundred, will be explored to examine their continuing relevance, or lack of applicability, to contemporary practice-based research.

In 1759, possibly in response to Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757), which sceptically questions aesthetic experience, and wider public reaction to the *Enquiry*, Burke published a second edition of the treatise which contained a revised preface, an additional text entitled the *Introduction on Taste*, and a section on *Power*. The purpose of these new texts was to both defend Burke's original publication and to suggest that limits and laws could be applied to issues of taste which bond society together. These additions to Burke's treatise will also be analysed in forthcoming chapters.

Tom Furniss claims that Isaac Kramnick's psychobiography, *The Rage of Edmund Burke* (1977) makes explicit the middle classes' ownership of the sublime in the eighteenth-century (Furniss, 1995:5). Essentially both the 1757 and the 1759 texts propose a view on aesthetics which makes a significant contribution to the culture-defining classes of the eighteenth-century's embrace of obscurity and Romanticism. In the *Enquiry* Burke equated the sublime, according to Thomas Weiskel, to a physiological response, derived from natural objects which is akin to 'an active response to an internal and/or external danger' (Furniss, 1993:25-29). Burke's responsiveness to natural objects was inspired by the example of *On Sublimity*.

Edmund Burke's debt to Dionysius Longinus

The first known treatise of any theoretical value to explore the sublime was entitled *Peri Hupsos* or *On Sublimity*. This essay is thought to have been written sometime in the first century and is only partially preserved - approximately thirty-five percent of the original has been lost (Heath, 2012:16). Given the text's age, its authorship is unsurprisingly contested. The Greek philosopher Dionysius Longinus is sometimes given credit for the work whose importance to sublime discourse centres on how rhetoric can be best delivered to move or persuade an audience. In *The Sublime: the New Critical Idiom* (2006), Philip Shaw acknowledges that although rhetoric is 'the primary determinate of the sublime', (Shaw, 2006:28) Longinus recognises nature as

providing the seeds of great thoughts in mankind. Longinus explains that we admire the grandeur of great rivers, oceans and mountains because they make evident the 'glory of God' and fill us with elevating awe (Shaw, 2006:14-28). By the eighteenth-century *On Sublimity* had acquired cult status among the literary classes (Phillips, 1990:10). It is known that Burke was familiar with the text, he states as much early in the *Enquiry* when he describes the observations of Longinus as an 'incomparable discourse' upon the sublime (Burke, 1757-59:1). Burke was also eager, according to Phillips, to "link the experience of certain kinds of 'great' literature with the experience of that other recently fashionable eighteenth-century pleasure, the natural landscape" (Phillips, 1990:10-11). Perhaps the most important lesson Burke gleaned from Longinus, as seen from the perspective of a contemporary painter, was that the energy of the sublime had the potentiality for movement through the integration of the self to the object or concept. This he clearly expresses in the *Enquiry*, in *Part One*, under the sub-heading *SECTION XVII: AMBITION* when he states:

'Now whatever either on good or upon bad grounds tends to raise a man in his own opinion, produces a sort of swelling and triumph that is extremely grateful to the human mind; and this swelling is never more perceived, nor operates with more force, than when without danger we are conversant with terrible objects, the mind always claiming to itself some part of the dignity and importance of the things which it contemplates. Hence proceeds what Longinus has observed of that glorying and sense of inward greatness, that always fills the reader of such passages in poets and orators as are sublime; it is what every man must have felt in himself upon such occasions' (Burke, 1757-59:46-47).

Burke believed that objects can so entirely fill the mind that assimilation between the object and the mind was possible. Once the mind has relinquished 'its power over the world it perceives' (Ashfield, de Bolla, 1996:128) then, in Burke's opinion, the experience of opening-up, surrendering consciousness to perception, leads to intensified self-presence. This intensification leads to 'delight', a term he used to explain a state of being in which the individual experiences the thrill of the sublime in response to a safe source of terror, such as a painting or awe-inspiring landscape (Furniss, 1993:29). The sense of transgression and elevating awe, derived from viewing the natural world, which Longinus describes, becomes linked to the possibilities of painting and drawing by Burke. In *Part Five* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading of *SECTION 1: Of WORDS* Burke makes the link between feeling and painting explicit when he states that:

‘Natural objects affect us, by the laws of that connexion, which Providence has established between certain motions and configurations of bodies, and certain consequent feelings in our minds. Painting affects in the same manner but with the superadded pleasure of imitation’ (Burke, 1757-9:149).

Burke’s insistence upon the pleasure which the viewer experiences through perceiving imitation is important as he is connecting pleasure to the mind’s ability to reflect upon the process of painting, and paintings’ relationship to culture’s laws of connection which give some objects, such as great rivers, oceans and mountains, emotive power.

Obscurity and the power of rhetoric for Longinus and Burke

Both Burke and Longinus privileged the power of the word to express the elevating effects of the sublime upon their respective culture-defining classes and linked appreciation of the sublime to exclusivity, to the best and brightest thinkers in society. Longinus achieved this aim by linking the didactics of sublime rhetoric to great speakers such as Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian (Lyotard, 2010:31). He also introduces into sublime discourse the concept of formlessness which Burke later develops. Shaw states that Longinus ‘secretly regards his subject as formally unteachable’, and that ‘the sublime is something that the elevated individual instinctively knows: one does not learn the sublime, one catches it, like a divine contagion’ (Shaw, 2006:12-13). The stress Longinus ‘places on a mode of speech that is indeterminate or without form,’ (Shaw, 2006:12) is important because it implies that the speaker who aspires to the sublime can never achieve that goal through the dogged pursuit of logic, clarity and study. The sublime is therefore something eluding definition: a God-given imaginative X-factor, *je ne sais quoi*, or genius (Shaw, 2006:12-13).

For those privileged culture definers aspiring to sublime rhetoric Longinus offers advice by way of illustrative texts and descriptions of the affects these have on audiences. He attempts to make the argument that it is within the ‘elite’ reader’s ‘power to achieve greatness’ (Heath, 2012:22) if an effort to cultivate appreciation of the sublime is undertaken. Longinus divides his analysis of the sublime into five sources: thought, emotion, figures of speech and thought, diction and composition. According to Malcolm Heath in his essay *Longinus and the Ancient Sublime*, analysis of these sources ‘together with its richly illustrated elaboration, is the basis of the text’s claim to practical usefulness’ (Heath, 2012:17). For Longinus the ideal speaker is one who can make art appear natural and whose natural talents are informed by a concealed understanding of art creating a harmonised whole (Heath, 2012:22). Such a speaker,

according to Longinus has the ability to produce 'ecstasy rather than persuasion in the hearer' (Freeman, 1997:17) and create a state of transportation which is the mark of sublimity. In *Part One* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *SECTION IV: Of the difference between CLEARNESS and OBSCURITY with regard to the passions*, Burke states that:

'The proper manner of conveying the affections of the mind from one to another, is by words; there is a great insufficiency in all other methods of communication,' and 'a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever.' (Burke, 1757-59:56)

With these words Burke restates the *Peri Hupsos* text's privileging of rhetoric and the imagination unconcerned with strictly illustrational re-imaginings of reality. However, Burke's conception of an instinctive understanding of the sublime diverges from that of Longinus. Burke states, in his *INTRODUCTION ON TASTE* that:

'wrong Taste is a defect of judgement. And this may arise from a natural weakness of understanding (in whatever the strength of that faculty may consist) or, which is more commonly the case, it may arise from a want of proper and well-directed exercise,' (Burke, 1757-59:23).

Burke may believe, like Longinus, that the greatest minds in society are instinctively drawn to the sublime, but in his speculations upon taste he lays greater emphasis in the belief that the sublime can be understood through study and experience. Burke also asserts that the acquisition of taste comes at a heavy cost. He states toward the end of his *INTRODUCTION ON TASTE* that:

'it frequently happens that a very poor judge, merely by force of a greater complexional sensibility, is more affected by a very poor piece, than the best judge by the most perfect; for as every thing new, extraordinary, grand, or passionate is well calculated to affect such a person, and that the faults do not affect him, his pleasure is more pure and unmixed;' (Burke, 1757-59:24).

Burke surprises the reader by illustrating how the effort to understand taste has a paradoxical capacity, even within the sensitive, to undermine the ability to be moved by aesthetic experience. Effectively he is arguing that the struggle to understand the sublime risks undermining the intensity of experience itself.

The influence of Sappho of Lesbos upon Burke

Longinus cites one female poet in his treatise, Sappho of Lesbos, whose early sixth century B.C. poem *Plainetai Moi* is excellent in his view because of her 'ability to harmonize difference and create an organic whole' (Freeman, 1995:13). This single female poem plays a vital role in the early theorization of the sublime. Sappho gives shape to an encounter with excess, in this instance an excess of passion or, as Longinus states, 'the madness of being in love' (Freeman, 1995:14). The concept of ecstasy, as described by Sappho, is interpreted in the contemporary context by Barbara Claire Freeman, in *The Feminine Sublime : Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (1995), as extending sublimity beyond the masculine desire for domination. Sappho's lyric, despite its varying translations, comes close to the limits of emotional representation and self-annihilation according to Freeman.

The theme of ecstasy undermining the integrity of the self is hugely important to the development of sublime discourse. Sappho's lyric articulates a vision of sublimity which has the courage to embrace vulnerability whilst ignoring the rivalry and power associated with the Longinian Sublime. Her creative expression of experience foregrounds 'the deployment of agency to intensify and underscore the wish for dispossession, and to recognize in the scene of self-dispersal a site of self-empowerment' (Freeman, 1995:19).

Passion and love would later inspire Burke's gendered view of the sublime and the beautiful. He also embraced the notion that emotional trauma, or sensory distress, could have positive effects in terms of empowerment and health. However, despite Burke's interest in the question of whether the sublime supports or undermines notions of the self he chose to ignore feminine notions of the sublime as expressed in *On Sublimity*. The madness of love is a theme of the sublime explored in the *Enquiry*, however, Burke privileges the male perspective. In *Part 1 Section VIII* of the text, under the sub-heading *Of the passions which belong to SOCIETY* Burke states:

'if you listen to the complaints of a forsaken lover, you observe, that he insists largely on the pleasures which he enjoyed, or hoped to enjoy, and on the perfection of the object of his desires; it is the loss which is always uppermost in his mind. The violent effects produced by love, which has sometimes been even wrought up to madness, is no objection to the rule which we seek to establish. When men have suffered their imaginations to be long affected with any idea, it so wholly engrosses them as to shut out by degrees almost every other,' (Burke, 1757-59:37).

Burke hands the concept of the sublime as a way of contemplating excess and a 'key to a new kind of subjectivity' (Phillips, 1990:9) to the forsaken male lover, imagined as a more suitably robust vessel than the female. For Burke the male alone has the capacity to internalise the violent effects of love (Burke, 1757-9:37). Burke's exclusion of the feminine sublime is curious given his stated admiration for *On Sublimity*. Possibly Burke chose to ignore the example of *Plainetai Moi* simply because the text did not fit with his conservative and oppressive patriarchal world view

The unrecorded sublime

After *On Sublimity*, interest in the aesthetic of the sublime appears to have faded back into the fog of unrecorded history. No documentation, or artefact, considering the aesthetic of the sublime has been discovered, either in Britain or in Europe, between the first and the sixteenth century. This does not mean that the phenomena of the natural sublime somehow disappeared, or that humanity stopped creating constructions which were grandiose and overwhelming, such as medieval cathedrals and castles, it simply means that the sublime, as recorded concept appears to have fallen from favour. Why this should be can only be speculated upon, Burke offers one possible explanation in the *Enquiry*, when he states:

'When dangers or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible,' (Burke, 1757-59:36).

Perhaps even more importantly throughout the period in question Christianity offered humanity a comforting 'tale of progress or redemption' (Gray, 2002:174) which added divine meaning to life. It could be argued that the rise of Christianity offered such a grandiose and uplifting view of human possibility, including the promise of everlasting life and dominion over nature, that nature and its terror lost potency. The loss of sublime terror would be especially true for those virtuous souls who felt themselves unthreatened by the prospect of Hell. In this interpretation of cultural development, the New Testament provides a spiritually enriching source of sublime feeling and thereby offers, for the educated culture defining classes, a 'death of death', 'a victory over the tomb', (Kristeva, 1989:135). temporarily taming death itself, or as Burke would later describe it, the sublime 'king of terrors' (Burke, 1757-59:36).

The shock of the Reformation

Comforting faith in identity creating work, and ritual, became increasingly problematic in Britain and northern Europe once the Reformation took hold. The Reformation moved spiritual emphasis away from the exclusivity of a hierarchical priesthood of the church toward that of a universal priesthood of all Christians. This shift towards individual responsibility for the creation of a relationship with God was, for many, a destabilising shock. Indulgences and patronage no longer assured access to the kingdom of heaven, instead 'Martin Luther formulated a mystical call for suffering as a means of access to heaven' (Kristeva, 1989:120). In, *The Intellectual Life of Edmund Burke* (2014), Bromwich states that Protestantism eroded the restraints in society which assured the docility and obedience of the masses through a fear of God. This process of erosion however did not lead to a radical revolution, according to Burke, because a fear of God was swiftly replaced by a 'fear of man' (Bromwich, 2014:13).



Fig 10. Hans Holbein *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1521-22)

Hans Holbein's painting *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1521-22) encapsulates this strange new unmediated relationship to God and access to sublime feeling through art. In the painting Holbein produced a life size representation of a corpse which has been beaten, wounded and crucified. The face of Christ is swollen, bruised and bloodstained, his eyes are open and glassy, and 'bears the expression of a hopeless grief' 'without the promise of Resurrection' (Kristeva, 1989:108-110). With this image Holbein resurrects the terror of the natural sublime in the guise of death, nature is implacable, a dark 'senseless eternal power, to which everything is subordinated' (Kristeva, 1989:109). Holbein's representation of a corpse is shocking because of its extreme austerity, it is a minimalist metaphor, devoid of the theatrical comfort of Classicism. Holbein's image has no sense of transcendence, it is simply an isolated corpse in a closed-in coffin barely twelve inches high, rendered in a dark palette of flesh tones, greys, greens and browns. The corpse appears to be captured in that moment when the link between Christ to the Father has been briefly broken, thus becoming a metaphor for the many separations which inform, threaten and

unbalance the emotional life of individuals (Kristeva, 1989:132). Holbein's Dead Christ is therefore a poignant reflection of the spirit of the Reformation, an anxious zeitgeist newly suspicious of Catholicism's tendency to beautify Christ's death (Kristeva, 1989:113-119). The painting can be thought of as an aesthetic symbol of the rebirth of terror and the sublime in Protestant northern Europe.

Holbein's withdrawal from beauty is important for the development of sublime discourse because by adopting 'the aesthetic position of a disenchanted verist' (Kristeva, 1989:126), he creates a precedent for investigation which others, including Burke in the *Enquiry*, could follow. Holbein's example of psychological and aesthetic aloofness sets a precedent for Burke's belief that the spectator desires spectacle 'not in order to watch the triumph of virtue but simply to watch' (Bromwich, 2014:61). This detachment also validates Burke's belief that it is possible to reflect upon the passions which inform works of art and see them as 'relevant evidence of what we are' and 'instructive for the science of human nature' (Bromwich, 2016:61-62).

The English law of the heart

According to Eagleton (1990) a unique combination of beneficial economic and political forces coalesced in England during and after the sixteenth century, resulting in an explosion of aesthetic speculation in the eighteenth century. A renewed interest in the sublime was also prompted by Boileau's French translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsous* (1674) and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667-74). According to Samuel Monk the first half of the eighteenth century saw the authority of tradition displaced by a new emphasis upon the legitimacy of individual experience. Monk also stresses that as the century progressed discourse surrounding the sublime began abandoning rhetorical questions central to *Peri Hypsous* in favour of 'psychological responses to nature in its irregular or vast aspects' (Monk, 1960:63-83). Burke's innovative aesthetic treatise can therefore be understood as a logical extension of a wider eighteenth-century discourse which was both psychological, politically expedient and pragmatic. Knowledge of this discourse is useful to the student of Burkean aesthetic philosophy because it clearly shows how Burke built upon the thoughts of his predecessors, taking themes from their thinking, and adding them to his wider aesthetic speculations.

According to Philip Shaw in *The Sublime: The New Critical Idiom* (2006) John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* (1667-74) provides for the eighteenth-century culture-defining classes evidence of the superiority of the Christian imaging of the sublime over the pagan. Although Milton, like pagan philosophers before him, is exclusively concerned with the power of language to evoke the sublime, *Paradise Lost* is distinguishable from these predecessors because of its comprehension of the immaterial and the ideal as provided by the transcendental conception of God. The transformational power of the word is thereby associated with more than the pagan evocation of natural terror.

Burke repeatedly quotes from Milton in the *Enquiry*; Milton's description of death and Satan are both explorations of abstract concepts and both have a powerful affect, on the imagination of Burke. Burke describes Milton's imagining of death as 'admirably studied' and 'astonishing' (Burke, 1757-59:55). He concludes that Milton has achieved an expressive affect upon the reader using obscurity, darkness, uncertainty, and confusion, thereby making description 'terrible and sublime to the last degree' (Burke, 1757-59:55). Burke is equally admiring of Milton's evocation of Satan; suggesting that in this portrait the mind is overwhelmed by a multitude of 'great and confused images which affect because they are crowded and confused' (Burke, 1757-9:57).

In the treatise *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1680-1689) Thomas Burnet, a Cambridge educated theologian, moves beyond a celebration of serene or charming landscape and instead begins privileging wild or irregular seascapes and mountains which are naturally full of obscurities, and visual confusions. Burnet's text places an image of the divine not within reasoned beauty but within spaces in which 'the orders of beauty collapse' (Shaw, 2006:30). Burnet does not offer the reader the oppositional, and gendered, conceptual distinctions between the sublime and the beautiful, which Burke would later conceptualise, but he does emphasize that reason is linked to beauty whilst the sublime is emotionally charged (Shaw, 2006:30).

John Dennis (1657-1734), a Cambridge educated literary critic also reasoned, like Burnet, that the natural sublime represented the awesome majesty of God. However, Dennis added that nature itself was not sublime unless perceived as such by cognitive process. The sublime, according to Dennis, was neither entirely external to the self nor entirely internal, instead the sublime experience occurred when object and self interacted. In the text *The Grounds of Criticism* (1704) Dennis explained this symbiotic relationship between self and beyond the self in terms of ordinary passion and enthusiasm. Dennis stated that ordinary, or vulgar passions such as anger and awe were easily comprehended. In contrast to these run-of-the-mill emotions, enthusiasm is described by Dennis as being linked to 'the meditation of things that belong not to common life' (Ashfield and de Bolla, 1996:35). God above all else was considered by Dennis to be not common to life and therefore the capacity for discerning appreciation of alpine scenery was described by him as representative of God's divine sublimity (Ashfield and de Bolla, 1996:59).

The Oxford-educated founder of *The Spectator* (1711), Joseph Addison, (1672-1719) expanded upon the thinking of Dennis in a series of texts collectively entitled *The Pleasure of the Imagination*. These were published in *The Spectator* between 21st June and the 3rd July 1712. In these publications Addison reasons that because man is created in God's image it is entirely natural that we experience delight when contemplating the great or unlimited in nature. He caveats his admiration for the terrors of nature by stating that storms, earthquakes, and other disasters, become sublime only through the act of safe reflection. In effect Addison recognises that rhetoric, or description, allows the individual to compare ideas arising from reflection to ideas based on experience of an event or object (Shaw, 2006:36-37).

Addison's texts are also important because, according to Marjorie Hope Nicolson, he added to sublime discourse by describing rhetorical ideas as secondary to, and

dependent upon, primary ideas which come to man directly from nature (Hope Nicolson, 1959:310). Tom Furniss develops Nicholson's observation further when he states that Addison argues that 'the mind is not simply engulfed by great objects or prospects but attempts to make an equation between itself and what it sees' (Furniss, 1993:22). This empirical approach to the sublime mirrored Burke's belief that nature, at its most dramatic had sublime meaning. This meaning led Burke to formulate 'the beginnings of a secular language for profound human experience' (Phillips, 1990 :11) and an introspective form of empiricism (Phillips, 1990 :11).

Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) wrote extensively about the distinction between objects as isolated entities and objects in relation to the world. He was notable for his fascination with the grandeur of Alpine scenery, as was Dennis, and his belief in 'cosmic order' and 'the ultimate goodness of the universe' (Shaw, 2006:38-40). Shaftesbury's privileged perspective upon the world led him to try to graft Platonism onto the body of eighteenth-century speculations concerning sublimity. Effectively this meant that, according to him, the sublime is not opposed to the beautiful, as Burke would insist in the *Enquiry*, but rather an aesthetic quality more magnificent and of greater importance than beauty. Shaftesbury's instinctive mistrust of formlessness, which Burke admired and thought to be connected to the sublime, and anything which was beyond the control of the mind also led Shaftesbury to consider the origins of sublime rapture. He concluded that rapture must be located within Stoicism, a Hellenistic philosophy founded in the 3rd century BC, which advocated the gentlemanly ideal of manly calm and endurance in the face of the dangers of extremity (Shaw, 2006:41).

The poet Mark Akenside (1721-70) regards nature as a means of accessing the amplified discernment of the divine in *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744). This work, which was a best seller in the eighteenth century, is concerned with the sublime as a quality of the mind rather than as a force of nature. He imagines the poet or philosopher as able to 'transcend the bounds of corporeality' (Shaw, 2006:41) and look upon worldly things with a disdain and sternness informed by Stoic acceptance. Akenside's imagination equates truth with beauty and implies that irrational impulses, or passions, are a misappropriation of reason rather than devoid of reason.

The essayist and dramatist John Baillie (unknown-1743) did not perceive the order that Akenside and Shaftesbury saw in the universe. In the posthumously published treatise, *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747) he considers how language facilitates the transgression of meaning between objects. Baillie asserts that connection can lift

mundane objects to the point where they can produce an 'Exaltedness of Mind' (Shaw, 2006: 43). He is effectively denying that the relationship between objects is guaranteed and fixed by divine authority. Instead Baillie offers the reader the power of the constructed nature of the sublime. This construction enables objects to become metaphors for ideas. Burke, echoes Baillie's idea on connection when he states *in Part Five, SECTION VII* of the *Enquiry*, under the sub-heading *How WORDS influence the passions* that:

'by words we have it in our power to make such combinations as we cannot possibly do otherwise. By this power of combining we are able, by the addition of well-chosen circumstances, to give a new life and force to the simple object' (Burke, 1757-59: 158).

With these words Burke appears to be acknowledging his indebtedness to Baillie, they both appear to privilege discourse as a means of framing the sublime. However one important difference between the two thinkers needs to be acknowledged, Baillie reimagines the sublime as an almost arbitrary property created through discourse (Shaw, 2006: 45). Burke, by contrast, goes to great lengths throughout his aesthetic speculations in the *Enquiry* to frame the sublime within the language of empirical observation which is linked to the authority of a divine order.

Part One Section 2

Introduction

The following literature review of Burke's *Enquiry* considers how contemporary academics have interpreted his motives and conclusions in the treatise. In this project an understanding of how some of British culture's most validated and significant thinkers view Burke is useful to the development of my own understanding of the *Enquiry's* contemporary significance. The views on the *Enquiry* uncovered by this research explore arguments which are diverse and at times contradictory, however, they all address certain themes which are fundamental to Burke's aesthetic speculations. Each author considers what the Burkean Sublime is and why it has meaning for them. Each then deconstructs the Burkean Sublime's relationship to terror, obscurity, and power. They also compare the sublime to the beautiful and consider how the power of the sublime is linked to conceptions of self-preservation. Taken as a whole, these differing authorised cultural voices show how the *Enquiry* can be said to reflect a utilitarian aesthetic philosophy which is open ended and offers multiple ways of seeing and thinking.

A Contemporary Literature Review of the *Enquiry* (1757-59)

Adam Phillips is the author of the introduction to the *Oxford World's Classics* publication of the *Enquiry* (1990). The purpose of his text is to give the reader background information and thereby aid understanding. Phillips is therefore an author who is constrained in his interpretation of Burke's treatise by the requirements of the publisher. In this instance the publisher privileges scholarship, objective reliability as opposed to creative reimagining, and brevity to attract interest and sales. Phillips's reimagining of Burke's sublime is therefore judged to be solidly objective, historically accurate and academically validated by the culture definers who employed him. His introduction is a strong impersonal foundation upon which to build a picture of wider interpretations of Burkean aesthetic philosophy.

Phillips goes straight to the central reason an artist should be intrigued by the treatise by beginning his introduction with Burke's quote:

'A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectator' (Burke, 1757-59: 70).

Phillips then goes on to stress that for Burke the sublime was a means of thinking about excess as central to a new kind of subjectivity, whilst beauty was something more soothing and comforting. He states that although Burke was something of an

opportunist with regards to his motivation for writing the *Enquiry*, the sublime having acquired something of a cult following, Burke's text clearly had identifiable influence over the following decades (Phillips, 1990:9). This influence was achieved, according to Phillips, by linking the sublime to both great literature and the experience of the natural landscape (Phillips, 1990:10-11). Effectively Burke offered those wealthy enough and leisured enough to consider philosophical questions, a conundrum: what was nature, in its most dramatic forms, trying to communicate in an age increasingly doubtful of certain religious and epistemological assumptions (Phillips, 1990:11)?

Phillips is very careful never to explicitly give the *Enquiry* any kind of quasi-religious significance, however, he implies that this text can be interpreted as the beginnings of an attempt to create a 'secular language for profound human experience' (Phillips, 1990:11). He also implies that as God withdrew from perception, something was needed to fill the void left by this divine withdrawal, and that this something was, at least partially filled by, Burke's 'erotic empiricism' (Phillips, 1990:11).

Phillips stresses that this empiricism was based upon the minds' response to emotive objects, experiences and 'a growing reliance on feeling as a means of insight' (Phillips, 1990:11). He states that Burke's aesthetic theory is one driven by an interest in the power of suggestion implicit in the sublime and the beautiful. This theory is erotic because of his insistence upon linking introspective empiricism and emotive experience with bodily representations. Phillips argues that 'Beauty and Sublimity turn out to be the outlaws of rational enquiry. Both are coercive, irresistible, and a species of seduction' (Phillips, 1990:23). He states that the Burkean conception of the sublime is a delight and a rape, whilst Burkean beauty is pleasurable and a lure (Phillips, 1990:23). However, the power of suggestion which Burke struggles to articulate, according to Phillips, is no mere trifling, it is linked with passions which are 'essential or irreducible in human experience' (Phillips, 1990:11).

The nearest Phillips comes to linking the *Enquiry* to a quasi-religious meaning is when he considers how the example of Sir Isaac Newton's definition of a God-created universe may have inspired Burke's research. According to Phillips, if Newton had succeeded in showing that the God given universe was rule-bound and knowable, this may have motivated Burke's attempt to regulate, by discernible laws, aesthetics and ethics. Phillips argues that the discernible laws Burke articulated tried to create a standard of taste which could stand as a bulwark against the 'terror of endless confusion and uncertainty' (Phillips, 1990:12).

The creation of the Burkean Sublime, and beautiful, is therefore, according to Phillips, an attempt to invent, by aesthetic means, a rational interpretation of reality which incorporates the apparent chaos of both the passions and the imagination. Burke's struggle has meaning because he was attempting to engage with a huge question: can 'passions, or their representative the imagination, be curbed by rational examination and description, or was passion itself a method of deception?' (Phillips, 1990:12). Phillips implies that Burke sought to find solutions to his philosophical questions in order to curb the unbounded imagination and the grave social consequences he feared might arise from a division of the self between passionate instinct and rational intellect. Phillips informs the reader that Burke, as the son of an Irish Catholic mother and Irish Protestant father, had an ambition 'fuelled by complicated sympathies and grievances' (Phillips, 1990:14). He then presses home the point that Burke was himself divided between passion and intellect, by stating that the *'Enquiry'* turns out to have been, among many other things, a prospective autobiography' (Phillips, 1990:14).

In the *Introduction to Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender and Political Economy in Revolution* (1993) Tom Furniss argues that the Burkean Sublime is an aesthetic discourse which contributed to the 'hegemonic struggle of the rising middle class in the first half of the eighteenth century' (Furniss, 1993:1). This statement alludes to the fact that the sublime 'is experienced not through sympathy with, but in competition against, and at the expense of, other human beings', (Furniss, 1993:33) and that Burke's aesthetic argument emerged 'out of a larger debate about the social and political consequences of the commercial revolution in the first half of the eighteenth century' (Furniss, 1993:1).

Furniss views the *Enquiry*, in its simplest terms, as a set of theoretical beliefs which attempt to demonstrate the opposing principles of the sublime and the beautiful in the eighteenth-century. Furniss begins his deconstruction of the text by explaining to the reader Burke's distinctions between pleasure and delight. Pleasure is achieved through the "enjoyment of a 'positive' stimulus of the senses" (Furniss, 1993:18), whilst delight is associated with the deletion of pain or danger (Furniss, 1993:18). These distinctions are then associated respectively with both social relations and the passions. Burke equates the beautiful with pleasure and the sublime with pain, which Furniss, quoting from James T Boulton, claims 'had no precedent' (Furniss, 1993:19). Furniss then states that by placing the 'origins of the sublime and the beautiful in the pains and pleasures of the body' (Furniss, 1993:19), Burke effectively creates a form of aesthetic experience which is demonstrable to everyone and especially ideologically

relevant to the middle-classes' struggle to dominate eighteenth-century Britain (Furniss, 1993:19-21).

Furniss states that Burke's deliberate blurring of the boundary between physical and imaginative experience enables him to project the vigorous workings of the mind with the pain of physical labour. This imagined symbiosis makes an appreciation of the sublime heroic because Burke frames the sublime in terms of an event in which the endangered individual overcomes, or conquers, danger through effort. According to Furniss, Burke's philosophical interpretation of aesthetics therefore contributes to the 'making of the English middle class' (Furniss, 1993:24-25). This collective identity was achieved because the eighteenth-century middle-class man (rather than woman) of action saw himself as being capable of responding to fear and danger by reversing personal subjugation before nature, thereby distinguishing himself from the weak, the feminine, the aristocratic, and the working class.

Furniss states that Burke's distinction between the sublime and the beautiful, labour and repose, virtue and luxury, vigorous masculinity and weak femininity is primarily driven "by the need to refute traditionalist attacks on the 'corruptions' of middle-class commerce" (Furniss, 1993:2). In effect Burke seeks to create an impression of the middle-class man of ability as 'virtuous labourer whose sublime aspirations are quite different from the beautiful but debilitating luxury of the aristocracy (and of women)' (Furniss, 1993:2). Furniss further argues that Isaac Kramnick's psychobiography, *The Rage of Edmund Burke* (1977) makes explicit the middle classes' ownership of the sublime and that Burke saw the bourgeois and aristocratic respectively in terms of the masculine and the feminine (Furniss, 1995:5).

However, Furniss believes that Burke's attempt to create an aesthetic which legitimises the socio-economic links between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie is both unstable and lacking in coherence. He reads Burke's privileging of the sublime over the beautiful as symptomatic of a fear that the rise of the middle classes will lead to an 'inevitable tendency towards personal and political corruptions' (Furniss, 1995:2) as the temptations of material luxury take hold. Furniss sees Burke's 'image of the middle-class subject' 'as a strategic fiction' (Furniss, 1995:2). He states that the "internal incoherence, which already disorganises Burke's aesthetic theory in 1757-59, is rendered more critical in 1789-90, where an apparent alliance, in France, between the bourgeoisie and 'the people' sets an example which threatens" (Furniss, 1993:2) the very structure of English society which Burke had laboured to reinforce in the *Enquiry*.

Furniss argues that the example of the civil disorder in France led Burke to alter his own opinions by moderating the radicalism of his early aesthetics in favour of his more reactionary instincts. Burke's text *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) attempts to show, according to Furniss, that the Revolution is neither sublime or beautiful but simply barbaric and ridiculous. The Revolution is painted by Burke as the antithesis of the political and social system in France before 1789 which now becomes 'the locus of all things sublime and beautiful' (Furniss, 1993:3).

Burke's revision of aesthetic categories is described by Furniss as being 'incompatible with their formulations in the *Enquiry*' (Furniss, 1993:3) and adds to a sense of confusion and incoherence within Burke's aesthetic ideology when viewed through the prism of contemporary experience. This confusion is explained by suggesting that Burke's aesthetic thinking is both fragmented and motivated 'by contradictions which are endemic to the political tensions of its historic context' (Furniss, 1993:4). Citing Isaac Kramnick, Furniss claims that Burke can be understood conceptually as a thinker who sees taste and art as maintaining a balance between the beautiful and the sublime. For Burke, the French Revolution can be explained as a process which threatens to destroy, for all time, the balance between the masculine and sublime principle represented by middle-class radicalism and 'the passive feminine principle represented by the aristocracy' (Furniss, 1993:5).

Furniss further claims, citing Crawford Brough Macpherson's (1911-87) Marxist interpretation of Burke, that the question of coherence between Burke the guardian of market liberalism and Burke the defender of the hierarchical establishment is interpretable as a misconception. According to Macpherson, Burke simply valued traditional order which, by the eighteenth-century, was capitalist, as opposed to feudal in nature. This interpretation of Burke succinctly explains his privileging of bourgeois identity over both the aristocracy and the working-classes of Britain.

However, Furniss is at pains to explain that the arguments of both Kramnick and Crawford, although useful as tools in understanding Burke's thought process, are incomplete assessments of Burkean philosophy. According to Furniss, Burke's *Enquiry* cannot be fully understood by discovering its genesis in either 'Burke's psyche, or in his politics, or even in the complex relationship between his psyche and his politics' (Furniss, 1993:7). Instead he proposes that Burke's thought process should be thought of in terms of the weave of wider eighteenth-century discourse.

According to Furniss, because the relationship between nature and culture is a political question, nature is always supplemented either positively or negatively by culture and

this supplementation means that nature is 'incomplete in itself' (Furniss, 1993: 10). Therefore for Burke custom and habit, or second nature, are essentially part of nature. The relationship between nature and second nature is imagined by Furniss as unstable because of the way in which nature is used to supplement custom in one breath, whilst in the next custom supports nature. Furniss explains to the reader that such instabilities arise as a response to the 'intractable problems and structures which are intrinsic to the ideological struggles of the period' (Furniss, 1993:12). Effectively Furniss argues that the Burkean Sublime is an aesthetic construction whose meaning is deeply political and inextricably linked to the rise of the middle-classes and the privileging of their values in the eighteenth-century.

Furniss also argues that Thomas Weiskel's deconstruction of the Kantian Sublime, which is itself a cognitive extension of the Burkean, can be instructive in terms of illustrating three physiological phases experienced when encountering the Burkean Sublime. Furniss states that a central strategy of Burke's is to 'abandon the Longinian concern with rhetoric in order to focus on physiological responses to natural objects. Different stages in such a response can be read in terms of Weiskel's three-phase model of the Kantian Sublime' (Furniss, 1993:25). This argument is important to any understanding of the Burkean Sublime because it offers an easy to comprehend and retain, rationale for the perceived achievement of personal sublimity. Weiskel describes the sublime experience as having three phases or 'economic states' (Furniss, 1993:25). Weiskel states that the first state of normal perception is one of equilibrium between mind and external objects. This equilibrium is thrown into a second phase, a state of crisis, when the mind is suddenly confronted by an encounter with a phenomenon which exceeds comprehension. Such phenomena can be either from the natural or manmade world. The essential affect that this encounter must have upon the viewer, for the notion of the sublime to be introduced, is astonishment. The ensuing struggle to reconcile the initially irreconcilable disproportionate conception of power, between the inner and the outer worlds, leads to the third phase of the sublime experience. In this third phase the mind identifies with and ascribes to itself the qualities it finds in the object or text which first 'threatened to overwhelm it' (Furniss, 1993:25). Weiskel terms this process, a 'metaphorical transposition' (Furniss, 1993:25). Furniss then goes on to explain to the reader that in the second stage of a Burkean encounter with the terror of the sublime the difference between states of weakness and strength is crucial to how any individual experiences the sublime confrontation. Weaker feelings immobilize individuals in the face of terror, whilst stronger feelings, which often follow the weaker, galvanise people into action to

overcome their fears and thereby 'experience delight and achieve sublimity' (Furniss, 1993:26). This final action leads to the equivalent of the third phase of Weiskel's 'metaphorical transposition' (Furniss, 1993:25).

In this understanding of the sublime, pain and fear need to be courted so the strong can exercise their strength and thereby avoid the dejection and melancholy which Burke associates with a relaxed bodily state (Furniss, 1993:27). Pain and fear are therefore only truly dangerous to the weak and passive, who remain immobilised in the face of terror, and can never experience the delight of overcoming it and thereby achieving sublimity (Furniss, 1993: 27). When faced with an encounter which threatens to overwhelm, the strong alone experience delight through an effort of the mind which Burke argues is akin to the struggle of exercise or physical labour.

By linking Burkean aesthetic speculation to class struggle in the eighteenth-century Furniss is also able to claim that the *Enquiry* uses metaphors to create a representation of Britain as a political entity whose existence depends upon an ability to resist external or internal dangers. For Furniss sublimity is achieved by conquering, through extraordinary effort, moments of weakness. However, Furniss argues that the eighteenth-century individual was not threatened by external forces, such as the poor, women, or the aristocracy, but rather by dangers already internal to the self. These dangers he describes as 'insidiously within the particular kind of self (or political state) which Burke is attempting to valorize' (Furniss, 1993:29).

Despite Burke's best efforts, an attempt to assert heroic identity through engagement with the sublime is problematic for Furniss because of Burke's unwillingness to engage with real danger. Furniss argues that because the empowering feeling of delight, associated with the sublime, can only be experienced when danger or pain are incapable of directly affecting an individual, Burke's theory of the sublime is flawed. Furniss describes the Burkean Sublime as 'more an efficacious fiction than a genuine transcendence' (Furniss, 1993:29). He interprets the removal of danger in the Burkean Sublime as 'a removal effected through metaphor' (Furniss, 1993:30). This interpretation effectively makes Burke's argument in the *Enquiry* one which is reliant upon rhetoric and metaphor-making. However, Burke's fictional threat has the positive purpose of reaffirming a sense of selfhood which is important in the creation of the myth of the philosophical or economically 'self-made man' (Furniss, 1993:31). Burke encapsulates his belief in the naturalness of the relationship between personal ambition and aesthetics when he states that:

‘Now whatever either on good or upon bad grounds tends to raise a man in his own opinion, produces a sort of swelling and triumph that is extremely grateful to the human mind; and this swelling is never more perceived, nor operates with more force, than when without danger we are conversant with terrible objects’ (Burke, 1757-59:46-47).

Because the self-made man of the eighteenth-century was unlikely to have had any direct experience of manual labour, the aesthetic of Burke’s sublime was also an ideological tool which could be used to promote a division of labour between the manual and the mental. This aesthetic aid to exclusivity and societal division was one of the many inventions by Burke, in the *Enquiry*, which articulate cultural values derived from a need to promote individual middle-class ambition. Burke’s privileging of middle-class ambition is unsurprising, he was the son of a lawyer, and firmly rooted in middle-class society. The consequences of individualistic ambition continue to inform British society to this day. Exclusivity implies exclusion and the mechanisms of conceptual terror which are implicit in the process of enforcement of exclusion signify, in a contemporary context, how Burkean delight maybe experienced by the strong when reflecting upon the privations of the weak.

David Bromwich in *The Intellectual Life of Edmund Burke* (2014) also believes that the Burkean sublime has political purpose. He begins an exploration of Burke’s aesthetic and moral thinking by informing the reader that it is a mistake to see Burke in terms of a separation between his literary activity in the *Enquiry* and his political reflections. He states that ‘Burke acknowledged no such division in his thinking’ (Bromwich, 2014:12) and believed that reality and imagination sprang from the same set of perceptions. Therefore, Burke’s aesthetic and political activity were driven by the same ‘unreasoning and irreducible energy’ (Bromwich, 2014:12).

Much of this energy derives, according to Bromwich, from curiosity, which Burke states is ‘the simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind’ and which is neutral in relation to both good and evil (Burke, 1757-59:29). Bromwich then explains to the reader that Burke perceived curiosity as leading to both improvements and deteriorations in the human condition. He states that Burke also placed great importance upon sympathy in the *Enquiry*, which is described as a faculty of imagining the feelings of others, as if in their shoes, and was aided by sensibility, or ‘an aliveness of the senses’ (Bromwich, 2014:12). This gift is not bequeathed by culture and therefore its ‘opposite is not coarseness but insensibility’ (Bromwich, 2014:12).

Bromwich’s argument privileges those who have sensibility and is important within the context of this thesis because it illustrates the conceptual linkage between aesthetic

appreciation and morality as conceived by Burke. Bromwich has effectively argued that without sensibility an individual is incapable of being moved by artistic endeavour because they cannot imagine themselves inhabiting the thought space of the artist: effectively they are dead to the animating impulse of the sublime and its relationship to art.

He also argues that Burke believed religion to be a manifestation of mankind's activity as a 'symbol-making animal' (Bromwich, 2014:20) with a need to create and exalt a 'more-than-human power above themselves' (Bromwich,2014:20). Such individuals, Burke's argument implies, need to create the overwhelming as part of the instinct of the sublime, thereby forging a conceptual link between, aesthetics, morality, social stratification, and religion. However, Bromwich's most powerful statement about Burke's original contribution to sublime discourse is that he rejected 'utterly the connections between sublimity, good taste, probity, and sanity' (Bromwich, 2014:60). With this statement Bromwich appears to goad the reader into considering the relationship between art, the intellect, sublimity, morality, and the transcendental. Burke's *Enquiry* therefore challenges the reader to consider art's relationship with reality, presenting the sublime as a philosophical encounter which is forever relevant to material practice and the human condition (Bromwich,2014:62). Bromwich's statement that Burke rejected links between 'sublimity, good taste, probity, and sanity' (Bromwich, 2014:60) struck me as being a particularly powerful expression of his views. I reflected that maybe Bromwich had overstated his case, sublimity and real insanity seemed incompatible to me. However, the projection of the idea of insanity, maybe that action, particularly when linked to the idea of staged terror, with all its links to chaos, energy and reflection, had merit?

Shaw appears less concerned with the political implications of Burkean aesthetics than either Bromwich or Furniss. His relative lack of interest in the political meaning of the sublime is illustrated by his failure to connect the sublime with 'the emergence and persistence of modern bourgeois identity' (Shaw, 2006:66) until page nineteen of a twenty-four page text on the treatise. Instead Shaw begins his reinterpretation of the Burkean sublime in *The Sublime: the New Critical Idiom* (2006) by introducing the reader to the *Enquiry*, and stressing the cognitive nature of the treatise. The full title of the aesthetic discourse, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* is used by Shaw to make clear Burke's interest in ideas that make physical things either sublime or beautiful. He further argues that because in the *Enquiry* Burke uses language itself to express obscurity, Burke 'seems to confirm that the origins of the sublime reside in words rather than ideas' (Shaw, 2006:49).

Shaw interprets Burke's definition of the sublime as both brief and informed by ambiguity. He states that Burke's reimagining of the sublime seems to be constantly on the threshold of asserting that 'sublimity is an effect of language' (Shaw, 2006:49) without ever conceding this point. Shaw expands his argument by exploring *Part Five* of the *Enquiry*, which is specifically devoted to explaining to the reader how words can create the effect of the sublime. In this part of the treatise Burke states that words have a considerable 'share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime' (Burke, 1757-9:149), quoting Milton's conception of a 'universe of death' (Burke, 1757-9:159) as a clear illustration of how words can become a strong expression and evoke 'a very great degree of the sublime' (Burke, 1757-9:159). According to Burke, Milton's conception of death is successful because of the power of words to form combinations which are otherwise impossible. Shaw stresses that the sublimity of the phrase a 'universe of death' is created by the unique ability of words to link dissimilar entities together (Shaw, 2006:53).

Shaw also argues that Burke's treatise, unlike its predecessors, is largely secular and that God is no longer required to guarantee the validity of our encounters with the sublime. Because Burke is a follower of the empiricist school of philosophy, he forms a view of the world based upon what he can see, smell, taste and touch. This way of thinking leads him to conclude that the ocean is a source of terror because of the way the eye is overwhelmed and its capacity stretched by the vastness and infinite details of the phenomena. Shaw concludes that Burke brings a 'new psycho-physiological twist' to the conception of the sublime (Shaw, 2006:49). According to Shaw 'Burke appears to recast the sublime as an object not only of philosophical but also of scientific enquiry' (Shaw, 2006:49).

Shaw detects a self-subversive tendency in the *Enquiry* which helps explain why Burke is insecure in his belief in empiricism. Shaw states that Burke's empiricism clearly fails when he tries to explain the relationship between words and feelings. He argues that in Burke's 'analysis drawing and painting correspond to the empiricist insistence on the intelligibility of the senses' (Shaw, 2006:50), whilst words always fall short of presenting a comprehensive idea of an object. This process of falling short has the positive outcome of meaning that words, rather than any other medium, entangle the objective and the emotional. However, this entanglement, so useful for passing on the affections of the mind, means that the empirical calculus is undermined (Shaw, 2006:50). Shaw concludes that the Burkean Sublime is not a purely objective expression of reality, it is an ambiguous and contested idea, or expression of reality, informed by passion and rhetoric (Shaw, 2006:50).

Rodolphe Gasche in *And the Beautiful? Revisiting Burke's "Double Aesthetics"* (2012) proposes that the *Enquiry* was the first treatise 'to propose an uncompromising empiricist' interpretation of aesthetic understanding and experience (Gasche, 2012:24). He claims that Burke sought to establish a theory of passion and ideas which would explain both the beautiful and the sublime as sensual impressions. According to Gasche investigation into these aesthetic experiences is 'radically uncoupled' from extrinsic considerations, such as morality and religious belief (Gasche, 2012:24). This approach to aesthetics carefully matches the feelings of the sublime and beautiful 'with the affections caused by objects from which they spring' (Gasche, 2012:25). The *Enquiry* is therefore a work informed by the example of Locke's empiricism and Newton's establishment of fixed laws. Gasche argues that Burke seeks to lay down fixed laws of his own devising for 'the domain of the passions' (Gasche, 2012:25) and does not express the insecurity of belief which Shaw perceives.

Gasche's interpretation of Burke's *Introduction to Taste* is seen as evidence of an understanding of aesthetics uncoupled from all other considerations. This autotelic interpretation of aesthetic philosophy means that he can state that Burke sought to establish 'a standard of taste' (Gasche, 2012:25) which was not based upon cultivation and expertise. Instead Gasche proposes that Burke attempts to rationally account for taste based upon universal standards which apply to all levels of society. According to Gasche, Burke reasoned that everyone is capable of perceiving through their senses, everyone uses imagination to interpret this incoming information and reasoning to draw conclusions from this process. Gasche further explains that whilst these procedures are not 'conditioned by custom or requirement' (Gasche, 2012:25), then a distinction can be made between Burke's conception of taste and earlier conceptions which emphasised the cultivated nature of taste.

Gasche argues that Burke also breaks with earlier conceptions of the sublime and the beautiful by distinguishing them from each other in a way which prohibits the possibility of intersection. Burke further strengthens the distinctions between the sublime and the beautiful by privileging the former over the latter, and for Gasche, it was the extremism of Burke's aesthetic theory that caused interest almost immediately in Britain, France, and Germany. This was because Burke had created a new conception of the sublime which derives power from objects which are so terrifying that they suspend 'the motions of the soul' (Gasche, 2012: 25), creating a dark side to the rationalism of the Enlightenment (Gasche, 2012:25). Gasche argues that Burke makes explicit his break from past conceptions when he states, in the preface to the first edition of the *Enquiry*, that:

'Even Longinus, in his incomparable discourse upon a part of this subject, has comprehended things extremely repugnant to each other, under one common name of the Sublime. The abuse of the word *Beauty* has been more general, and attended with still worse consequences' (Burke, 1757-59: 1).

Gasche then suggests that the opposition of the sublime to the beautiful means that the latter is just as important as the former. He reasons that aesthetic experience, as defined by Burke, is a 'double aesthetic' in which, in principle, it is 'not permissible to privilege one of the passions in question over the other' (Gasche, 2012:26). Gasche's argument is radical because Burke's conception of the beautiful failed to gain validation from the culture-defining classes, even within the eighteenth-century. Gasche acknowledges this failure but argues:

'that the sublime and the beautiful are intrinsically linked, and that one cannot have one without the other, except at the price of amputating one of the two constitutive drives that, according to the socio-anthropological underpinnings of the *Enquiry*, make up the core of the human being' (Gasche, 2012:26). Essentially Gasche argues that the sublime is perceived as more sublime when considered in relationship to the beautiful and vice versa.

Gasche also differs from Furniss, Bromwich and Shaw in his analysis of the sublime, and its meaning in the *Enquiry*, because he focusses attention upon Burke's remark 'that every day we have experience of sublimity' (Gasche, 2012:29). This reinterpretation of the Burkean Sublime means that not only is experience of sublimity not 'out of the ordinary' (Gasche, 2012:29), it is a relative experience, enhanced or decreased according to our perception of the reality of our lives. In effect Gasche is arguing that if the sublime can be encountered through association then it is an experience far more nuanced than an encounter with overwhelming and terrible phenomena. His argument concludes that in comparison with his predecessors and Romantic followers there is therefore 'nothing particularly sublime about Burke's sublime' (Gasche, 2012:29).

In the introduction to *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (1995) Freeman argues that the feminine sublime is neither an aesthetic category nor a rhetorical mode but rather a 'domain of experience which resists categorization' (Freeman, 1995:2). She interprets the sublime as an encounter with an Otherness which can be either aesthetic, erotic, ethical, political, or social, but which is always beyond representation and excessive. Freeman imagines the sublime as informed by the experiences of female writers and their responses to the oppression implicit in the

'gendered mechanisms of power' (Freeman, 1995:2). She explores the conjunction between theories of the sublime and novels by women in order to enhance understanding of both.

According to Freeman many female novelists have responded 'to the arguments, metaphors, and ideological underpinnings at stake in the sublime's most definitive theorists' (Freeman, 1995:7). However, the novels she chooses to cite in her exploration are those which 'make explicit the blind spots within the history of the sublime's theorization' (Freeman, 1995:7). This theory she applies to the 'apparently dissimilar domains' of (Freeman, 1995:7) Burke's *Enquiry* and Edith Wharton's (1862-1937) novel *House of Mirth* (1905). The rationale behind Freeman's argument is that both Burke and Wharton were influenced, but in different ways, by 'a profound link between sublimity, chance and speculation' (Freeman, 1995:40). This she illustrates by arguing that 'Wharton insists upon precisely that which Burke feared: that ethics, politics, and aesthetics are inseparable, and that human excellence resides in the capacity to engage the incalculable' (Freeman, 1995:40-41) within everyday life. Freeman illustrates her argument by stating that 'Burke attempts to banish terror and everything that accompanies it from everyday life' (Freeman, 1995:40). The idea that the terror of the Burkean sublime can intrude into the mundane, as described by Gasche, is not a concept which fits within Freeman's interpretation of the *Enquiry*. However, her objective is not to simply restate the contents of the treatise, Freeman seeks to develop the Burkean sublime using ideas surrounding the discourses of contemporary feminism.

Freeman expands her hypothesis by stating that Burke gained fame through his speculations on the sublime. She then deconstructs the word 'speculation' in order to make clear, to the reader, that it has a double meaning pertinent to the sublime. Because speculation means both the buying and selling of commodities for profit, and to observe mentally, or reflect theoretically on an issue, Freeman is able to conclude that risk-taking and theorizing are related. She states that Burke's '*Enquiry* is a speculative work in every sense of the word' (Freeman, 1995:41) and then clarifies her statement with three examples of how this speculative nature is achieved.

According to Freeman, Burke's relationship to the subject matter of the *Enquiry* is speculative because of his disinterested observations. Burke's consideration of extremes of size, vastness and littleness, is also described as speculative because it offers the intellect a challenge which is boundless and loaded with associative possibilities. Freeman concludes by stating that speculation and the sublime both

entail an encounter in which objects that are usually separate from one another become confused. She illustrates this last example of the speculative nature of the *Enquiry* by describing Burke's observation that a rotund produces a sublime effect because it has no fixed boundary upon which the imagination can rest (Freeman, 1995:41). Freeman describes Wharton's relationship to speculation as bound up with the concept of the 'terrible god of chance' (Freeman, 1995:40). She states that the novel *The House of Mirth* (1905) is a work in which the Burkean sublime is transformed and a version of it is enacted by Lily Bart, the story's heroine, 'in which ethics and aesthetics, risk and art, have become inseparable' (Freeman, 1995:67). The narrative of *The House of Mirth* deviates from Burke's vision of the sublime because Lily Bart does not engage with the concept of the sublime as a means of self-preservation. Instead she maintains a lofty moral code which eventually leads her to fall into destitution and death. Her death passes judgement upon the imbalances of power within the capitalist marketplace and her 'total obedience to the law becomes a 'parodic subversion of it' (Freeman, 1995:65). Lily Bart's capacity to commit 'acts of self-extinction become symbolic acts of self-creation' (Freeman, 1995:64) because she resists debasement of her ideals and creates a new kind of value based upon defiance of 'the prevailing norms of her society, instilling ethical value where previously there was none' (Freeman, 1995:64).

Conclusion to Part One Sections 1 - 2

My analysis of how significant influencers of culture shaped, or viewed, Burke's *Enquiry* allowed me to develop an overall understanding of the treatise. This understanding was an essential component in the process of identifying the key themes of the Burkean Sublime and their importance to aesthetic discourse. My research was also instrumental in developing my appreciation of Burke's ability to blend aesthetic philosophy with physiology and psychology to extend the range of the sublime beyond the natural and into the manmade world. This extension of the sublime into the terror implicit in meritocratic human power, and conceptions of selfhood, made me realise that Burke imagined landscape in terms of a critique of representation informed by documented empirical events and phenomena.

I would argue that critiques of the *Enquiry* cited in *Part One Section 2* demonstrate some of the diverging ways the treatise can be deconstructed and illustrate the *Enquiry's* usefulness as a utilitarian guide to perceptual thinking. Essentially this utilitarian purpose is created by the conceptual 'wriggle room' or open-ended nature of Burke's observations on aesthetics, power and perception.

Most importantly to my art practice the research into the origins, contents and reinterpretations of Burke's *Enquiry* made obvious that contemporary reinterpretations of the text can move beyond passive contemplation and into the realms of philosophy, politics, psychology and physiology. These realms create a potential for personal empowerment and a powerful tool for processing and presenting terror from a potentially endless variety of perspectives. These perspectives demonstrate that the influence of the Burkean Sublime has the potential to spread far beyond its elitist origins. I would further argue that the empowerment Burke offers can lead otherwise powerless individuals to create representations of the Burkean Sublime which have a cathartic and symbolic political meaning. My research suggested to me that this meaning need not be explicit like the illustrative art of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Romantic artists or overtly political like the twentieth-century Nazi and Communist artists. Instead I began to imagine how landscape, or 'second nature' (Furniss, 1993:10) could be used to stage, aestheticize, analyse and present the terrifying violence of twenty-first-century British nature and the human construct. In the next part of my thesis I will explore how horizontal extensions of British spaces can be visually interpreted and understood using Burkean perspectives.

The recognition of Burkean themes within contemporary landscape depiction has not been aided by the term sublime becoming misused in everyday language. Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding argue in *British Art and the Sublime* (2013) that the sublime is now used to describe almost anything which has been 'refined to the highest point' (Llewellyn, Riding 2013). This contemporary misuse of the term now means that custard, a hat, wig or superbly constructed joke can be described as sublime. These examples show that the terror implicit in the Burkean Sublime is in danger of being degraded and diffused beyond rescue. The terrible, the awful and the dreadful, which were once understood as expressions of terror, awe and dread has suffered a similar fate to the term sublime. These words are now commonly used to express dissatisfaction with something deemed to be less than satisfactory rather than elements in Burkean aesthetic discourse (Llewellyn, Riding 2013).

This process of regeneration and misrepresentation means that although many of the original themes of the Burkean Sublime may still be very prescient, the language used by contemporary artists to express their grander ideas has changed in line with new contexts and conceptions of terror, power and ambition. Today the sublime is viewed by many artists as a very vague term which expresses fears over climate change, concerns over migration, viral infections, or the negative influences of cultural hegemony implicit in digital and financial globalisation. These new contexts of terror

suggest that the argument could be made that a twenty-first century version of the Burkean Sublime exists which is central to art practice, but which is in disguise and hidden in plain sight.

Part Two

The Burkean Horizontal Sublime

Introduction

Research in this chapter explores the idea of the British coastline and how this space can be understood by applying my conception of the Burkean Horizontal Sublime to it. This research charts how I applied Burke's aesthetic principles to my perception and representation of the sea defences, and seascape, at Sheringham in Norfolk, between the autumns of 2015 and 2018. This is a space which I used associatively to represent Britain's wider coastal borders.

My conceptual perspective is partly achieved by considering how the methodology underpinning my research aligns with the marine paintings of two artists; one from the eighteenth, and one from the twenty-first centuries, who can be defined as representative of the British culture defining classes. These artists are Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) and Janette Kerr (1957-). Their selection from thousands of artists who have produced work associated with either maritime themes or the coastline, means only a snapshot of the usefulness of Burke's aesthetic philosophy, as a means of understanding art, is considered. However, the conceptual links between Burke's aesthetic observations and these artists are transferable concepts. In this thesis Turner and Kerr are used to illustrate how the Burkean Sublime can be employed, in different eras, to understand the functionless power of art (Eagleton, 1990:65) and its relationship to my conception of the Burkean Horizontal Sublime.

Because this chapter deals with the earliest period of my research it is preceded by a period of reflection in which I theoretically grappled with the challenges to come. For me, every material research project goes through a lengthy period of pre-digestion. Setting out on an attempt to make visually manifest Burke's endeavour to 'impose strict laws and very narrow limits on the recalcitrant material of the passions' (Phillips, 1990:28) was especially challenging.

The meaning of the term Burkean Horizontal Sublime

Since the union of Scotland and England under a single royal family in 1603, Britain's landmass has differed from all other *major* western European countries in that its borders, except the Northern Ireland border, are coastal. At the edges, these regions are areas where rationally constructed, and sometimes beautiful, land ends and the sea, which is often menacing and always profoundly insensible, begins. This horizontal space is further informed by anxious notions of tradition and prejudice, of what lurks below and what lies beyond. I have developed the term Burkean Horizontal Sublime, to signify any horizontal space which can be described as capable of creating a perception of terror in the minds of viewers. In this thesis the Burkean Horizontal Sublime is presented to the reader as Britain's coastal edge space because this is the largest and most significant British horizontal space capable of establishing an idea of terror. In this chapter I argue that representation of this edge space can become more meaningful and emotionally charged when perceived through the filter of Burke's aesthetic philosophy. The term horizontal sublime has previously been used by Claudia Bell and John Lyall (2002), to signify worldwide spaces, both oceanic and land-based, which expand horizontally (Bell, Lyall, 2002:71-96). However Bell and Lyall's use of the term does not privilege the contents of the *Enquiry*, nor does it have a specific connection to the coastal borders of Britain.

The eighteenth-century British coastline considered in terms of an identity perceived through association

Before I began any material reflections at the coastline I thought long and hard about how Burke's conception of association could be applied to the coastline and sea, in both the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries. At this time I also searched for books which would deconstruct, in detail, how the British coastline can be interpreted using Burkean aesthetic philosophy, I was forced to conclude that such books do not exist.

Burke states in the *Enquiry, Part Four, Section II*, under the sub-heading *ASSOCIATION* that:

'it must be allowed that many things affect us after a certain manner, not by any natural powers they have for that purpose, but by association; so it would be absurd on the other hand, to say that all things affect us by association only; since some things must have been originally agreeable or disagreeable, from which the others derive their associated powers' (Burke, 1757-59:118).

With this paragraph Burke explains that although some objects have an implicit identity which is either pleasing or distasteful, other objects more neutral to the senses, acquire identity through association. Effectively this means that 'certain objects can become the objective correlates of certain qualities' via association (Rose, 2001:90). In the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries British artists would have perceived the coastline and seascape surrounding Britain as spaces informed by association. According to Christine Riding in *Turner and the Sea* (2013) the maritime subject presented Turner with the symbols for both 'terror and repose' (Riding, 2013:11) because of the 'supreme changeability and elusiveness' of the sea itself (Riding, 2013:11). These Burkean associations with the sublime and beautiful would have imposed themselves upon the coastline at Sheringham which had, then as now, a varied physicality.

Burke heralded the sublime's relationship to the British coastline when he wrote in the *Enquiry, Part Two, Section II*, under the sub-heading *TERROR* that:

'A level plain of vast extent on land, is certainly no mean idea; the prospect of such a plain may be as extensive as a prospect of the ocean; but can it ever fill the mind with any thing so great as the ocean itself? This is owing to several causes, but it is owing to none more than this, that the ocean is an object of no small terror. Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime' (Burke, 1757-59:53-54).

Burke makes two observations in this text which are relevant to the physicality of the East Anglian coastline of the eighteenth-century and how it affected the emotions of those who saw it. The first is that long expanses of land have affect upon the imagination which is 'no mean idea'. This term is slightly ambiguous, but I think it can be argued that Burke saw long expanses of horizontal land as impressive, rather than overwhelming, and untinged with the terror of the sublime. Burke's second observation is that viewing the ocean, adjoining such a landmass, creates feelings in the viewer which are far more intense. This intensity is achieved because the ocean creates for the viewer a feeling of terror which Burke associates with the experience of the sublime.

Reflecting upon why Burke associates the sea, and not the land, with the concept of terror helps to reveal how Burke's enthusiasm for categorizing, aids understanding of his wider theory of the sublime and the beautiful. At Sheringham the idea of space being made up of divergent identities was, and still is, made manifest. In contrast to the imposing nature of the sea, Sheringham's physicality was relatively unremarkable and therefore largely unrecorded in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The town is now a quaint and quiet space, a tranquil seaside resort, which is the antithesis of the sublime. Today Sheringham's character is informed by associative ideas largely connected to leisure. The seaside as a leisure destination rather than as a space to pass through on the way to the harbour and the sea, began evolving in the early years of the eighteenth century. The royal patronage of the future King George IV at Brighton, from around 1783, encouraged wealthy landowners, such as the Upchers at Sheringham Hall, to consider promoting the benefits of sea-water cures and the fashion for taking the sea air (Rouse, 2010:3). Despite such trends by 1801 Sheringham had a population of just 392 fisherfolk and was considered a space of little significance by the culture defining classes of Britain. It had no natural sea defences and a harbour, completed in 1585, had been neglected and allowed to fall into ruin (Wade, 2017:55). The process of Sheringham evolving from fishing village to leisure destination was greatly aided by the arrival of the railway. In 1887 the Midland and Great Northern Railway provided connections from the East Midlands to Sheringham (Brandon, 2012:32). The town further benefitted from the connection made in 1906 to the Great Eastern network, which was linked to King's Cross London (Wade, 2017:56). These technological improvements attracted visitors from the culture defining classes, such as Oscar Wilde (Wade, 2017:54), who wished to take the sea air without being bothered by the noise and showiness of larger resorts such as Great Yarmouth (Brandon, 2012:32). The town of Sheringham therefore developed a genteel character and in 1906 was described in *The Bystander*, by Eric Clement Scott as 'the paradise of the potterer' (Rouse, 2013:15), a description of pleasurable coastal exploration which, I would argue, still holds true.

Sheringham's history and character is also informed by dark associative links to terror because of its proximity to the sea. The associative terror which hangs over Sheringham was particularly prescient during the eighteenth-century when sea travel was extremely dangerous. Shipwrecks were common and, because of the speed with which a ship could become overwhelmed by nature, death could strike 'without the opportunity for confession or absolution' (Payne, 2014:16). In a Christian society this form of death was particularly disturbing and the storm-tossed ship became 'a metaphor for the precarious nature of human life' (Payne, 2014:19). This metaphor was used by artists and would have been widely understood by the general population. The public's interest in shipwreck narratives led eventually to the printing of deluxe compendiums which explored the theme. Most notable in this genre were Archibald Duncan's *The Mariner's Chronicle* (six volumes, 1804–8), J.S. Clarke's *Naufragia* (two volumes, 1805), and J.G. Dalyell's *Shipwreck and Disasters at Sea* (3 volumes, 1812)

(Riding 2013). In the eighteenth-century twelve drowned sailors were washed ashore at Sheringham due to a shipwreck. Because their bodies were buried without due Christian ceremony the souls of the departed mariners were said to haunt the area for decades to come (Brandon, 2012:34).

Invasion by hostile foreigners from overseas was also a real possibility in eighteenth-century Britain. War with Napoleonic France strengthened this perceived threat, which at Sheringham was made plausible by a steep beach at nearby Weybourne, which allowed large vessels to get close to the shoreline (Rouse, 2010:6). Moreover in an age before air travel all journeys, toward the paradoxical possibilities of prosperity and ruin, began by anxious engagement with the overwhelming Otherness of the sea (Payne, 2012:21-22).

However, the coastline of Britain in the eighteenth century offered great opportunity to the culture defining classes because the crisis of post-industrial obsolescence had not yet developed, and seemingly limitless expansion was offered by new and superficially benevolent technologies, at least for the middle-classes. Artists and writers celebrated the new spirit of the age and Britain's 'special relationship with the sea' (Payne, 2012:21), which by association linked sublimity, and the mystery of the sea, to adventurous expansion. Of particular importance to national pride was the perceived steadfast bravery of British seamen, the brilliance of the Naval officer class, and the ominous technological power of British warships. These elements separated Britain from the myriad of dangers and challenges presented by its colonial Other (Thomas, 2014:77).

The diversity of the associative realities imposed upon a dweller in Sheringham, during the eighteenth-century, can only be surmised, no recorded evidence exists regarding aesthetic speculation or appreciation from within this space. However, if Burke's thoughts on how the imagination works are accepted uncritically, then a broad conception of a universal theory of association informing perception is possible. Because Burke's theory uses feelings as a means of understanding, which aids the imaginative recreation of perception, his theory of association means that the sublime qualities of the sea can easily be imagined as destabilizing the safer identity of the land in eighteenth-century Britain.

The Contemporary British Coastline considered in terms of an identity perceived through association

Having researched how the British coastline of the past may have affected perception, especially for those influenced by Burkean conceptions of the sublime. I began considering how many of these past phenomena still informed perception of contemporary coastal spaces. I also looked for examples of Burke's reflections on the human condition which appear to be transferable from the past to the present. Burke states in his *INTRODUCTION ON TASTE* that:

'...the mind of man possesses a sort of creative power of its own;'...'combining those images in a new manner, and according to a different order. This power is called Imagination; and to this belongs whatever is called wit, fancy, invention, and the like. But it must be observed, that this power of the imagination is incapable of producing any thing absolutely new; it can only vary the disposition of those ideas which it has received from the senses. Now the imagination is the most extensive province of pleasure and pain, as it is the region of our fears and our hopes, and all our passions that are connected with them' (Burke, 1757-59:16-17).

Burke's text considers how sensory responses to the world are fashioned by imagination, a cognitive faculty which he argues, has its own creative power. Burke then considers the origins of this power and concludes that it comes from the senses. He then backtracks somewhat and concludes that the creative power of imagination is not a pure sensory response, it is also informed by fears and hopes. This admission is important because Burke implies that fears and hopes are learned responses to stimulus when he states that 'the works of imagination' inform manners, character, action, design, relationships, virtue and judgement. Burke then expands his argument and states that all facets of imagination can be 'improved by attention and by the habit of reasoning' (Burke, 1757-59:22).

Burke's idea that objects acquire identity through a combination of association, the senses, fear, hope, and reasoning is still valid today. The evidence that meaning, is both learned and transferable underpins many twenty-first century texts on semiology and 'is crucial to how adverts work' (Rose, 2001:89). However, in the digital twenty-first century, Britain's 'special relationship with the sea' (Payne, 2012:21) has vastly diminished in importance. The age of empire building is a distant memory and Britain is no longer a colonial power or dominant in the world. Despite these changes the coastline and seascape surrounding Britain is still a space informed by associations with terror due to its proximity to the sea and identity as a border. If Burke's reasoning

on the nature of the imagination is accepted uncritically then Brexit, as an idea, must be added to the associative factors affecting the identity of the British coastline. If Lord Ashcroft is correct in his assertion that Brexit symbolises a psychological retreat away from 'multiculturalism, social liberalism, feminism and environmentalism' (Chu, 2016) then the coastline borders of Britain now have a revitalised defensive and regressive associative identity informed by the imagination. This identity can be explained as an outcome of a societal anxiety shaped by increasing globalisation and the global media. The global nature of digital media means that an increased awareness of economic, military, environmental and, especially after the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, viral threats with origins beyond the shores of Britain, is now possible. For many in Britain the idea of the English Channel becoming a barrier to, rather than a conduit to, Europe is also a terrifying concept. This terror was heightened during the period 2017 to 2021 by the prospect of a closer relationship, across the Atlantic, with Trump's US administration, which enthusiastically endorsed the psychological retreat Lord Ashcroft identified.

All these societal anxieties are exacerbated by the imagination. Therefore, for many contemporary British artists, dealing with associations and symbols as described by Feldman (Feldman, 1972:236), the seascape horizon is a revitalised and powerful embodiment of nature's unknowable Otherness (or character), creating a terror of associative possibilities. These multiple interpretations make the horizon a projection based on human subjectivity which defies logic and ownership, a heterotopic ambiguous metaphor. These contemporary realities mean that it is possible to imagine new philosophical links between the terror of the Burkean Sublime and the contemporary British psyche. Effectively a new context has altered old perceptions and given them renewed meaning. In seascapes the ambiguous horizon's vastness has consequently become a dark vehicle for emotional engagement, an arena informed by the Burkean conception of association and prejudice. Although the sea can be imagined as a giver of resource and health it inevitably is also symbolically linked to the concept of the sublime power it both reveals and conceals. Therefore, the horizon line in British seascape painting still connects the malevolent dark below to the divine above and is, I would argue, amongst the most ideologically loaded graphic constructions ever conceived (Maleuvre, 2011:2). In painting the graphic representation of the horizon, which is often nothing more than a simple line, often dissolving into haze, is an explosive metaphor fizzing over with renewed associative meaning.

The coastline can also still be imagined as a physical space which makes a nonsense out of the artificial separation of the natural and human realms, intrinsic to the attitude of classical aesthetics. The formlessness of the sea, 'once a nexus of horror', (Maleuvre, 2011:239) can be conceived in terms of the central role it played, and still plays, in moving aesthetic debate away from a delight in classical order (Maleuvre, 2011:239). This formless phenomenon clearly exceeds the conceptual limits of classical aesthetics and engages with both twenty-first century apocalyptic fears and the eighteenth-century aesthetic of the sublime.

The British coastline considered in terms of my perception

My reflections upon the nature of the British coastline as an idea infused with Burkean associative meanings changed my perception of this space. The coastline now began to inhabit, for me, a darkly imaginative, historical, and formless arena indicative of what I thought of as the overwhelming power of nature. My new understanding made the coastline more conceivable as a space informed by contemporary human limitations and prejudice. I now imagined the seascape horizon at Sheringham as a soft edged experience of a limit. This unknowable limit was reimagined, by me, as indicating an awestruck acknowledgement of the true proportions of the relationship between the insignificant self, the construct of society and the vastness of nature

Practice-based research into Sheringham and the Sublime

I accessed space which can be defined as representative of the Burkean Horizontal Sublime, almost exclusively, via the North Norfolk coastline. Along this strip of land, just beyond the towns and hamlets, the sublime of the construct, in the form of sea defences, and that of nature, in the form of the sea, battle for dominance. Along the seafront at Sheringham this battle is particularly visual and dramatic. Since 1995 20,000 tonnes of rock armourstone has been deposited on the beach to preserve it against erosion. This armourstone is quarried from Larvik in Norway. Each stone is made from syenite, a rock similar to granite. The stones are foreign, massive and visually awesome invaders into the landscape. Each one is around 250 million years old and weighs, on average, an astonishing 8.5 tonnes. Their presence protects Sheringham from wave attack, but they are profoundly Other and beyond comprehension (Document 7-Sheringham Coastal Protection Scheme 2009).

As metaphors, I would argue, these ancient Norwegian giants can be imagined, once viewed through the Burkean conceptual prism, as symbolic of the realities of globalisation, environmental instability, invasion by the unlike and all that this implies.

They are an obvious embodiment of natural objects which create anxiety in the mind by the laws of Burkean association, forming a contemporary space loaded with Burkean meaning (Burke, 1757-9:149). I suspected from the beginning of this research project that these huge and dark invaders would play a significant role in the material research which was to follow. I photographed them on the 5th October 2015 (the first material activity I undertook in connection with this research) and imagined them vaguely in terms of Burke's conception of compound abstract words. I then began walking in the direction of Cromer along the sand dunes, pondering how my feelings about these Norwegian intruders could be channelled into activity relevant to my research.



Fig 11. Paul Vousden *Sea defences at Sheringham* (2015) digital images.
Indeterminate dimensions

Contemplation at the water's edge

At this early stage of exploration, my contemplative reactions to the Burkean Horizontal Sublime, and attempt to link Burkean philosophy to material thinking, were informed by Philip Shaw. In *The Sublime: the New Critical Idiom* (2006), he pithily observes that the evidence of Burke's senses, what he could 'see, taste, touch and smell' (Shaw, 2006:49) led Burke to conclude that the ocean was sublime because:

"the eye is struck by a 'vast number of distinct points'. With its capacity stretched, so to speak, to the limit, the eye 'vibrating in all its parts must approach near to nature of what causes pain, and consequently must produce an idea of the sublime'" (Shaw, 2006:49).

This text essentially suggests that a lack of a focal point in a composition forces the eye to struggle to take in everything at once. As I walked, I reasoned that the physical reality of moving through landscape was informing my senses, much as it would an eighteenth-century thinker like Burke. I too was informed by a bombardment of physical responses which seemed productive of an idea of the sublime. Looking directly at the sea I was struck by the empirical truth that the vastness of the sea and

the visual information it provides really is too much to process. The struggle of my mind to accommodate such an avalanche of data really does seem to elicit a confusion which is akin to pain. Thinking further about why staring into a seascape, which initially seems so productive of a feeling of emancipation, should lead to an overwhelming feeling of domination made me further consider aesthetic appreciation in terms of Burke's description of 'associated powers' (Burke, 1757-59:118-119). I concluded that the *Enquiry* can be used as an aid to a phenomenological engagement with the world and the sea briefly appeared transformed, in my mind, into a vast apocalyptic action painting.

The search for interesting visual ideas with emotional meaning

Thinking about Burke's intellectual investment in the *Enquiry* reminded me of Jorg Heiser who argues in *A Romantic Measure* that:

"charging a concept with an emotional investment – or examining the 'conceptual' aspects of emotions themselves – is what actually makes the work 'mentally interesting'" (Heiser, 2007:137).

With this statement Heiser argues that art need not be divided between emotionally dry conceptual art and clichéd notions of emotional artistic expression, as defined by Sol LeWitt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* (1967). Instead he imagines a fusion of art which offers emotional impact through an examination of that which creates such an impact in the viewer (Heiser, 2007:137). Heiser's text, which appears in *Romantic Conceptualism* (2007), made me imagine what other basic visual elements I would need to employ in order to affect the senses of others and thereby make my practice 'mentally interesting'. Colour immediately struck me as a basic visual element which affects the senses. Burke states in *Part Two* of the *Enquiry*, under the sub-heading *Section XVI Colour Considered as Productive of the Sublime* that:

'Among colours, such as are soft, or cheerful, (except perhaps strong red which is cheerful) are unfit to produce grand images. An immense mountain covered with a shining green turf, is nothing in this respect, to one dark and gloomy; the cloudy sky is more grand than the blue; and night more sublime and solemn than day. Therefore in historical painting, a gay or gaudy drapery, can never have a happy effect: and in buildings, when the highest degree of the sublime is intended, the materials and ornaments ought neither be white, nor green, nor yellow, nor blue, nor of a pale red, nor violet, nor spotted, but of sad and fuscous colours, as black, or brown, or deep purple,' (Burke, 1757-59:75).

For Burke dark and gloomy colours are productive of the sublime. Cheerful colours, which he describes as soft colours are dismissed by Burke as being incapable of producing impressive representations. However amongst cheerful colours he argues that strong red alone has a representative quality of the sublime. This assertion made me consider the role strong red might play in the representation of a seascape.

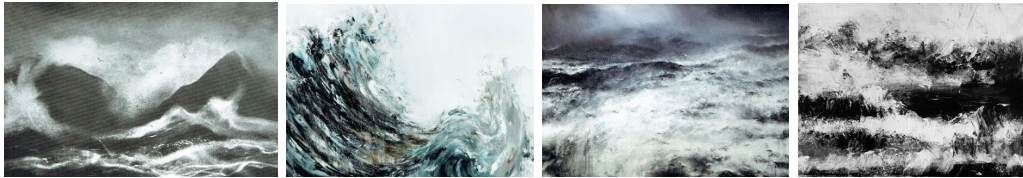


Fig 12. L-R Norman Ackroyd *Inishbofin Sound* (2005), Maggi Hambling *Wave Returning* (2009), Janette Kerr *Holding my Breath II* (2013), John Virtue *Painting No.40* (2012-13)

I explored Burke's thinking by looking for contemporary examples of red depictions of the sea by members of the contemporary British culture defining classes. I found no significant use of red in seascapes by Norman Ackroyd (1938-), Maggi Hambling (1945-), Janette Kerr (1957-) or John Virtue (1947-). This surprised and excited me and I began to consider the associative properties of strong red. The images conjured up in my head were aided by Burke's description of compound abstract words exceeding the power of nature and Milton's 'universe of death' (Burke, 1757-9:55, 152-158). I began to imagine red as an associative symbol for blood and danger. I also became acutely aware that this reflective process was more than just cathartic, it was exciting and energising. The process of internal reconfiguration led to consideration of the sublime's relationship to danger according to Burke. In *Part One* of the *Enquiry* under the sub-heading *Section XVIII The Recapitulation* Burke states:

'...passions which belong to self-preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us: they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure, because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight, I call sublime. The passions belonging to self-preservation are the strongest of all the passions' (Burke, 1757-9:47).

From my perspective, as a visual practitioner applying Burke's principles, this quotation endorses the feeling that the effort to manifest his thoughts can elicit an energising delight in the artist. I reflected that seascape contemplation, especially when filtered

through another's perception on paper, promises the safe 'experience of the threatened self - seeming to overcome or master danger' (Furniss, 1993:25); thereby conforming to Burke's physiological speculations concerning the distinctions between terror and delight. Delight genuinely did strike me as an idea which I was making manifest through the activity of the 'staged conception' of the idea of pain and danger (Burke, 1757-59:36-37). Although excited by the feeling that I was immediately engaging with my research question in its truest sense on a personal level, I was also conscious that my perception of delight needed to be communicated to an audience if it was to exist outside of my consciousness.

Burke states in *Part Two* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *Section XXII Feeling Pain* that:

'...the sublime is an idea belonging to self-preservation. That it is therefore one of the most affecting we have. That its strongest emotion is an emotion of distress, and that no pleasure from a positive cause belongs to it' (Burke, 1757-59:79).

Here Burke is expressing his opinion that the instinct to struggle for survival is sublime partly because of the distress implicit in struggle. In the context of a seascape drawing or painting this implies that the presentation of the emotion of distress can be achieved if the image presented reflects upon this struggle for self-preservation. I reasoned that if this idea could be communicated to an audience, they too would respond instinctively and thereby conjure up associations with the Burkean Sublime unknowingly. I consequently began to speculate upon how the sea at Sheringham could be presented to an audience in terms of a phenomenon which threatens self-preservation. Sandra Escobar, in a text entitled *The Experience of the Negative Sublime : a Terror Heuristic of the Anthropic Action Effects on the Environment* (2015) states that Turner's *The Wreck of a Transport Ship* (1810) produces in the viewer an 'immediate and direct experience of nature, marked by its proximity and ability to engulf' (Escobar 2015).



Fig 13. JMW Turner *The Wreck of a Transport Ship* (1810)

This effect is achieved by dispensing with a distant horizon line and turning the sea into a maelstrom which threatens to spill out of the painting and engulf the viewer. Andrew Wilton in his book, *Turner and the Sublime* (1980), also links Burkean aesthetic philosophy to Turner's vision when he states that 'It may have been the influence of Burke's theory of the terrific sublime that initially encouraged Turner to distort the geographical details of what he saw to express more forcibly such ideas as height, depth and distance' (Wilton, 1980:79).

I therefore decided to follow Turner's example and eliminated a distant horizon line from my sketchbook drawings of the sea (see figs 14 to 16) and exaggerated wave forms. To these drawings I added the associative properties of strong red, thereby turning the sea into a blood and disease-soaked repository, or a metaphor for a fearful culture's distress. This idea was a poetic idea with political underpinnings because it combines via association concepts of nature, disease, nation, history and society with a desire to explore Burke's ideas.

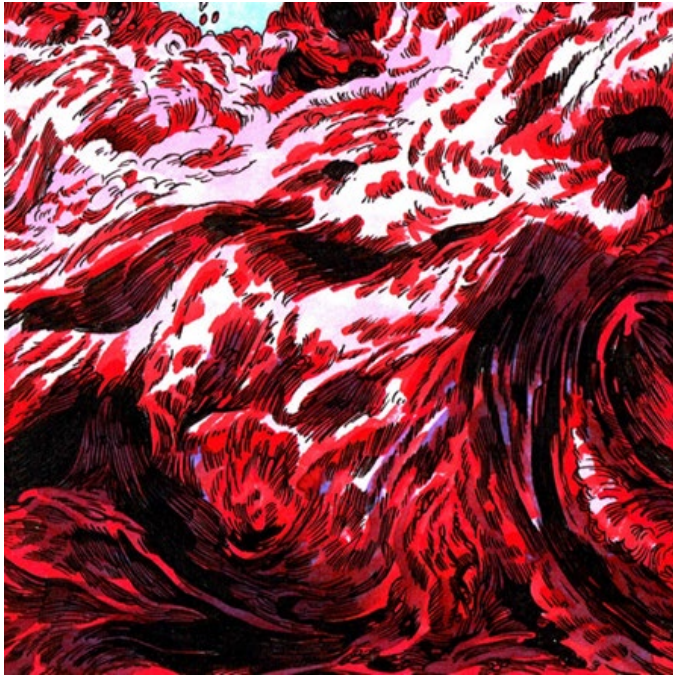


Fig 14. Paul Vousden *Repository of Distress I* (2015) sketchbook drawings. 21cm X 14.8cm

At this time I also began experimenting with digital drawings which spliced together mirror views of the same image (figs 17-18). This action was an oblique visual response to reading Burke's thinking on the inner and outer, psychological, and physical, location of the sublime. I also suspected that the indeterminate size of these new images might prove useful to future experimentation.

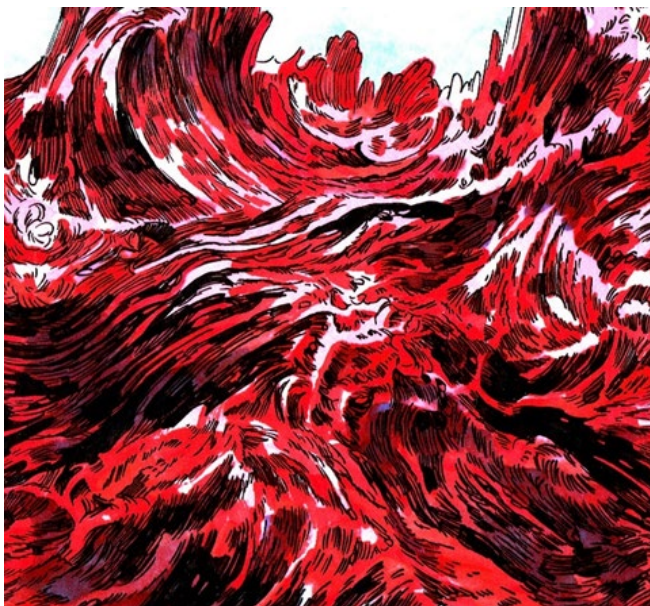


Fig 15. Paul Vousden *Repository of Distress II* (2015) sketchbook drawings. 21cm X 14.8cm

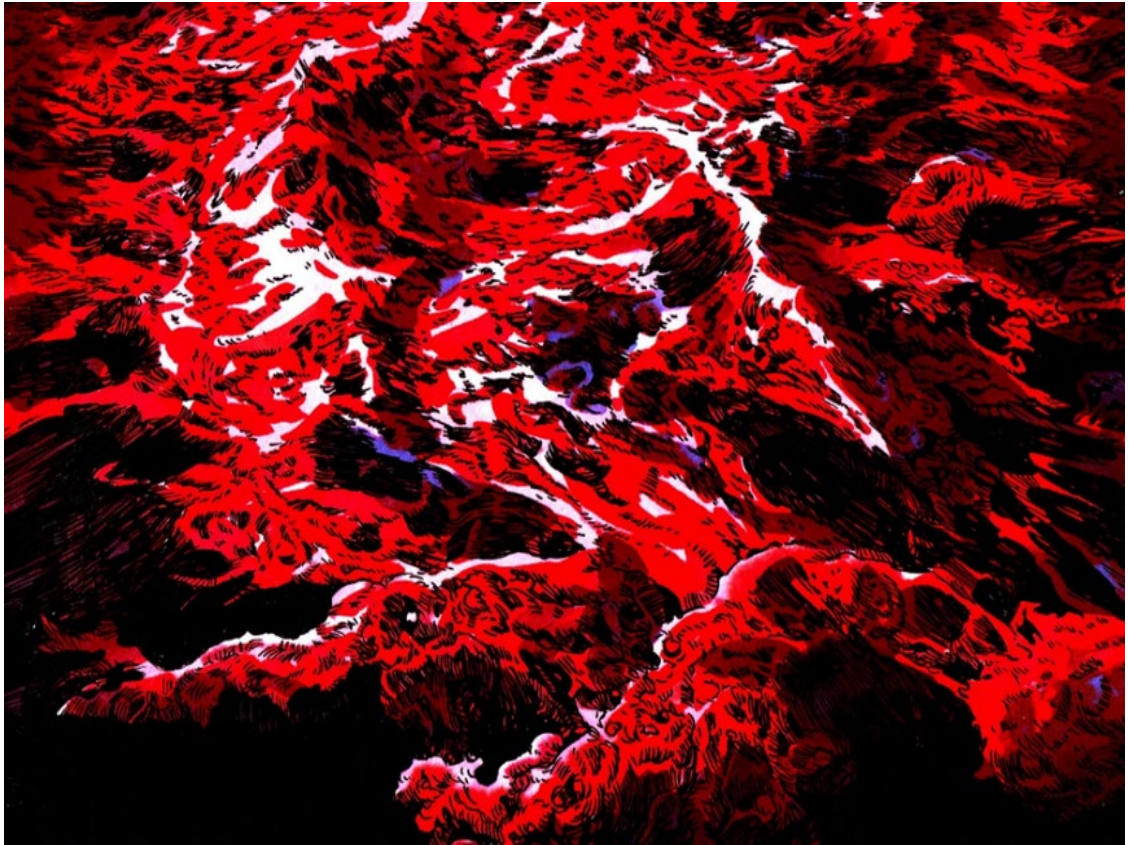


Fig 16. Paul Vousden *Repository of Distress III* (2015) sketchbook drawing. 21cm X 14.8cm

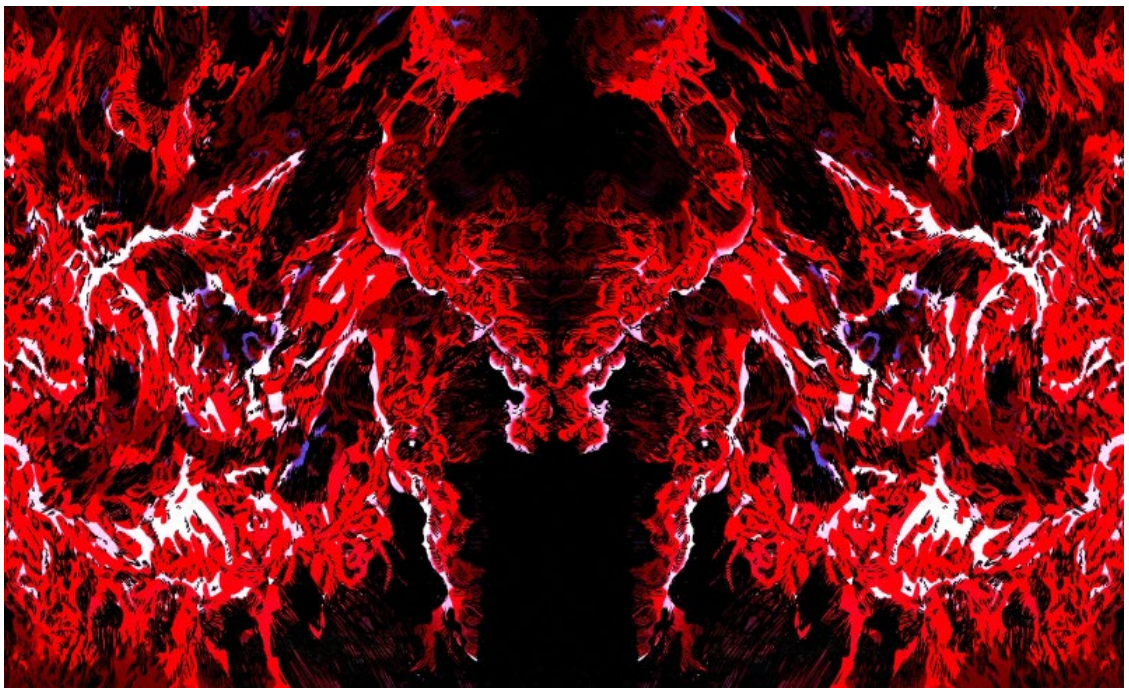


Fig 17. Paul Vousden *Repository of Distress IV* (2015) digital drawing using sketchbook image. Indeterminate dimensions

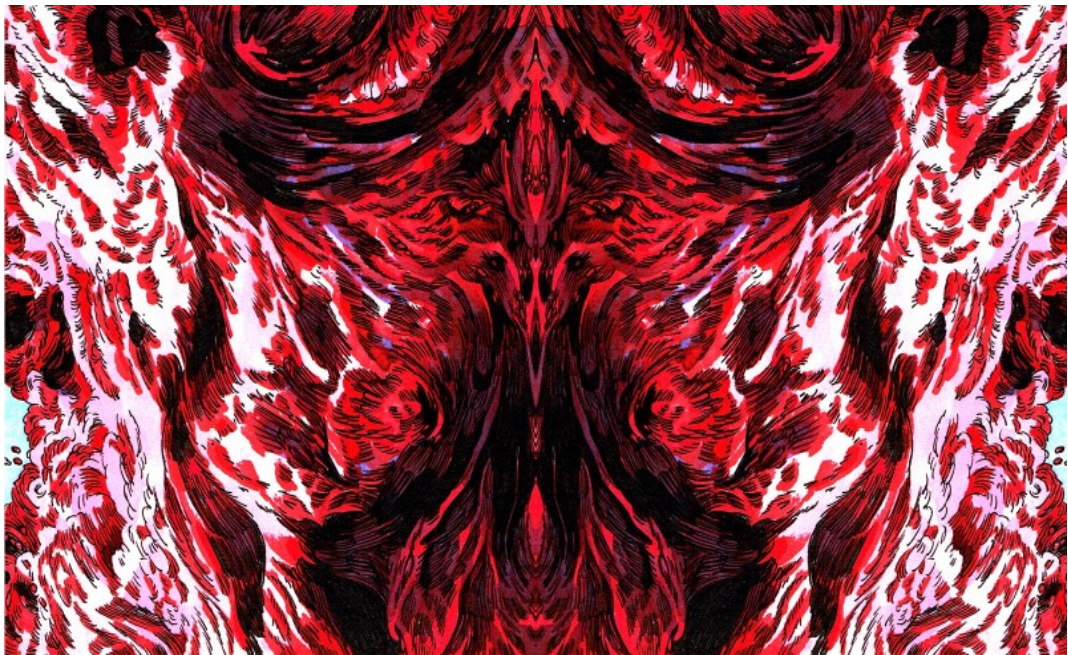


Fig 18. Paul Vousden *Repository of Distress V* (2015) digital drawing using sketchbook image. Indeterminate dimensions

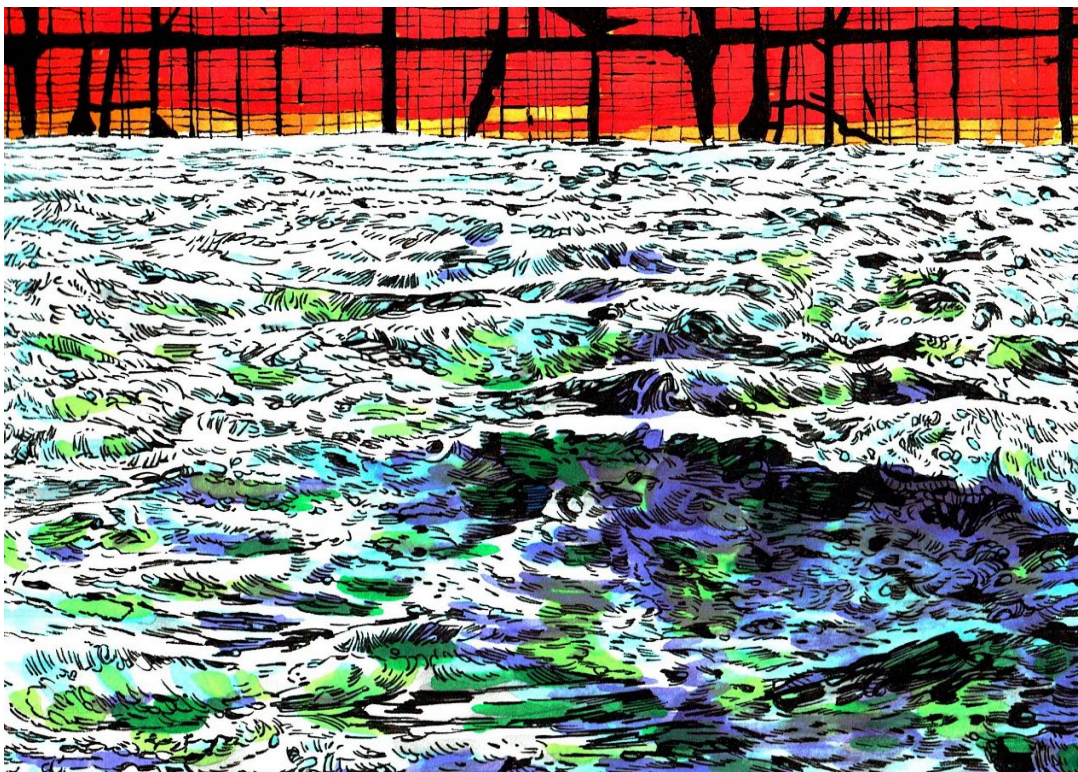


Fig 19. Paul Vousden *Repository of Distress VI* (2015) sketchbook drawing. 21cm X 14.8cm

The idea that the sea is informed by fear (Burke, 1757-59:53-54) led me to produce a number of further drawings which reimagine the seascape at Sheringham as a space whose horizon line is cut off from the infinity beyond by a defensive structure or curtain (fig 20). This idea was also informed by contemporary British political events.

Adam Phillips states in his Introduction to the *Oxford World's Classics* edition of the *Enquiry* that:

'The sublime object is beyond doubt or criticism; the sublime experience is one of domination. Bulls are sublime, oxen are not. Wolves are sublime, but dogs are not. Kings, and God, are sublime, ordinary people, presumably, are not, because objects of contempt and use never can be' (Phillips, 1990:22).

I found this interpretation of the Burkean sublime useful as a means of understanding my own bewilderment at that time. The complexity of the Brexit debate was so far beyond my understanding that it reminded me of the incomprehensible darkness and fragmented formlessness of the Burkean sublime. The absolute certainty of all the leaders of the debate made me question my relationship to them. I regarded these voices as embodiments of Burke's conception of Kings and Gods whose fierceness, indignation and rage gave them the power of the sublime. The recognition that I could use Burkean theory to comprehend my lack of understanding (and therefore my position within and relationship to British culture) struck me forcefully.

My anxiety found expression in the digital drawing *Defence Horizon* (2016) (fig 20). This image combines nature and contemporary British political unease into one vision. The idea of such a landscape drawing which reflects on both external and internal spaces struck me as being potentially 'mentally interesting' (Heiser, 2007:137) to a contemporary viewer. In the foreground purplish blue waves crash upon an unseen beach. Beyond these waves a largely pale-yellow curtain, which appears fragile and battered, struggles to hold back a force which is undefined. Above the curtain black, white and dark blue clouds billow as if to suggest that nature is fighting back against culture, in order to question, or redress, an annexation by logic and reason. Nowhere in this drawing is any attempt made to create hazy out-of-focus effects as the seascape recedes. This rejection of an effect of perspective means that the eye is forced to engage equally with all details in the picture. These graphic details are imagined as attempting to overwhelm the eye which is unable to rest upon a single focal point. This personal response to seascape makes it a text upon which I have written my obsessions (Schama, 1995:12) but it is informed by ideas of association and colour taken straight from the *Enquiry*. The ambiguous nature of the drawing also makes it

readable from differing perspectives thereby allowing the viewer to finish the artwork. The drawing *Defence Horizon II* (2016) (fig 21) continues to manifest the themes of *Defence Horizon*. However, in this interpretation of seascape a horizontal format is adopted and only the colours black, white and red are used to describe form. The effect of these colours is dramatic, and a sense of danger is created due to their extreme right-wing associative meaning. The image attempts to play upon the 'passions belonging to self-preservation' (Burke, 1757-59:47) by implying that the image is associated with a time when Britain was imperilled by the possibility of Nazi invasion. This association happens because the Swastika flag is red, black and white. The wave form depicted is also readable as drawing back before imminently crashing forward and invading the viewer's space.

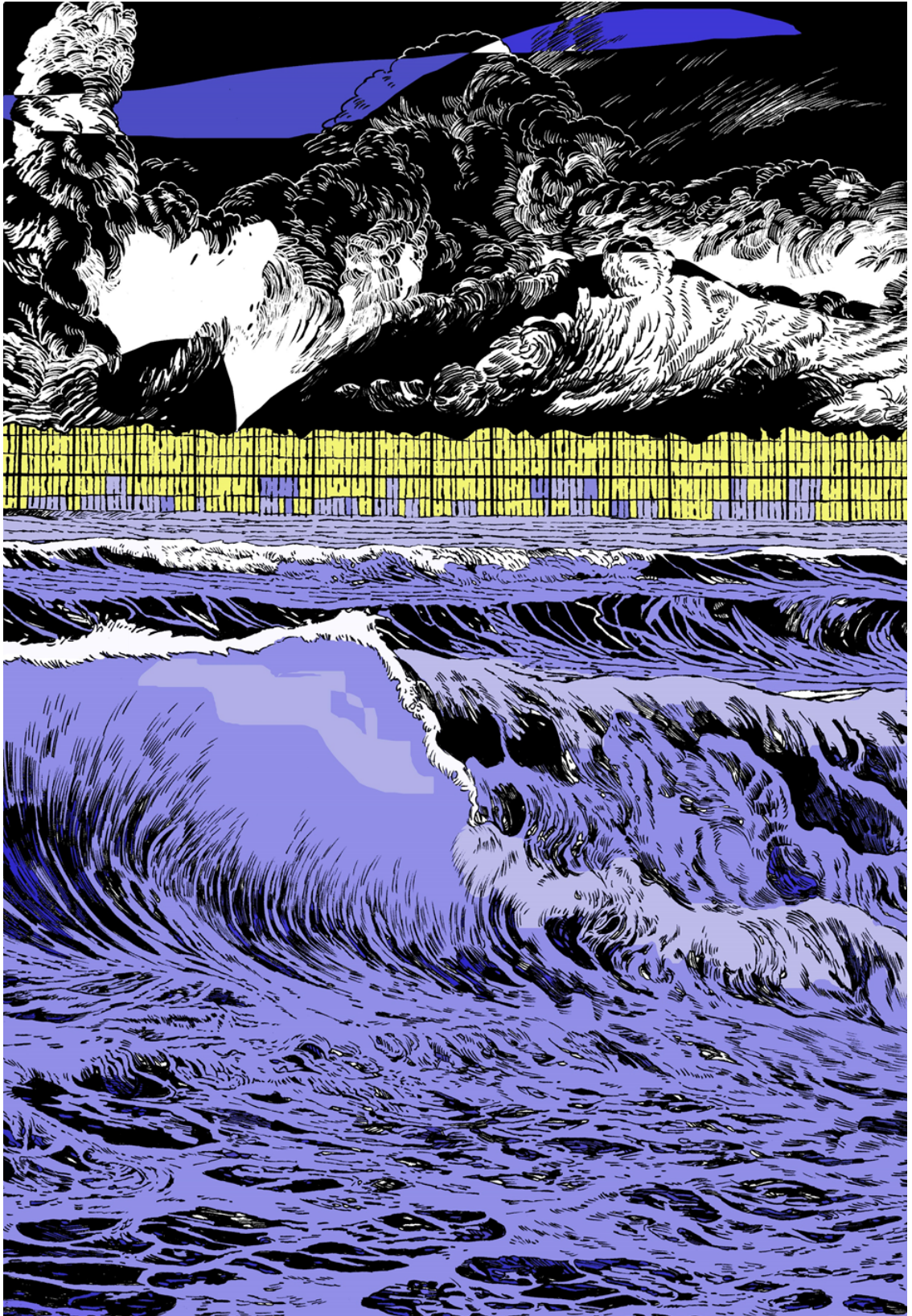


Fig 20. Paul Vousden *Defence Horizon* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 21. Paul Vousden *Defence Horizon II* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

Nature as a great ugly thing

Having considered the sea at Sheringham as threatening Other, I decided to turn logic on its head and consider the sea defences, so often associated with protection, as ominous phenomena. This line of reasoning was largely inspired by two observations Burke makes in *Part Three* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *SECTION XIII, Beautiful objects small* when he states:

‘...great beautiful thing, is a manner of expression scarcely ever used; but that of a great ugly thing is very common’ (Burke, 1757-59:103). He goes on to further state that the sublime ‘always dwells on great objects, and terrible’ (Burke, 1757-59:103).

In these statements Burke equates large and ugly objects directly to the sublime. To my eyes the syenite sea defences at Sheringham are incredibly ugly, massive great lumps in the landscape. They epitomise objects which are ‘great ugly things’ and this obvious conclusion forced me to draw them repeatedly.

In the drawing *Invasion* (2016) (fig 22) I once again combined British unease surrounding the Brexit debate with nature. The drawing shows a jumble of syenite rocks on Sheringham beach. On these rocks, and dispersed within the cracks in this defensive barrier, malformed viral looking ‘somethings’ can be seen. These ill-defined ‘somethings’ are not obvious, they almost blend in with the landscape but they, like the Norwegian sea defences, are Other to the natural landscape. Above these defences another rock formation hangs impossibly in the air and threatens to simply float over the sea defences. This idea of permeable borders makes this drawing a reflection of

the external ideas which were dominating the British media in 2016. Conceptually it is therefore a reflection of a contemporary British landscape informed by a fearfulness of immigration, global uncertainties, and Burke's conception of the sublime.

The drawing also explores some doubts I held concerning Burke's colour theory. Although I considered Burke's ideas concerning the relationships between the sublime, the beautiful, and colour to be reasonably sound overall: I could also remember a trip to Glencoe where landscape seemed to oppose Burke's colour theory. In the Highlands I remembered being overwhelmed by an avalanche of violets, greens, and ochres. These pale colours seemed to contribute to the drama of that landscape. I therefore resolved to use violet, a colour which Burke says is appropriate only to beauty (Burke, 1757-59:106), in a drawing which seeks to express the Burkean sublime. This activity explores through material practice the remembered Glencoe colour effect and its relationship to the sublime according to Burke.

The testing of Burke's colour theory also led me to produce the digital drawings *Invasion II, III and IV* (2016) (figs 23-25) and the oil painting *Norwegian Giant* (2016) (fig 26). These works employ only colours Burke described as indicative of the sublime (Burke, 1757-59:75). Within these artworks the syenite rocks at Sheringham are reimagined as living phenomena which defy gravity and the ferocity of the sea. The sea itself is turned into a maelstrom of white marks on a black background and within this swirling tumult skull like forms can be seen. These forms imply, by association, that the sea contains both death and disease. The sea is essentially reimagined as a 'universe of death' with the ability to engulf the viewer as described by Escobar.

Their production provided me with images which could be compared to the original *Invasion* drawing (fig 22) in order to judge, as objectively as I could, how their creation affected me.

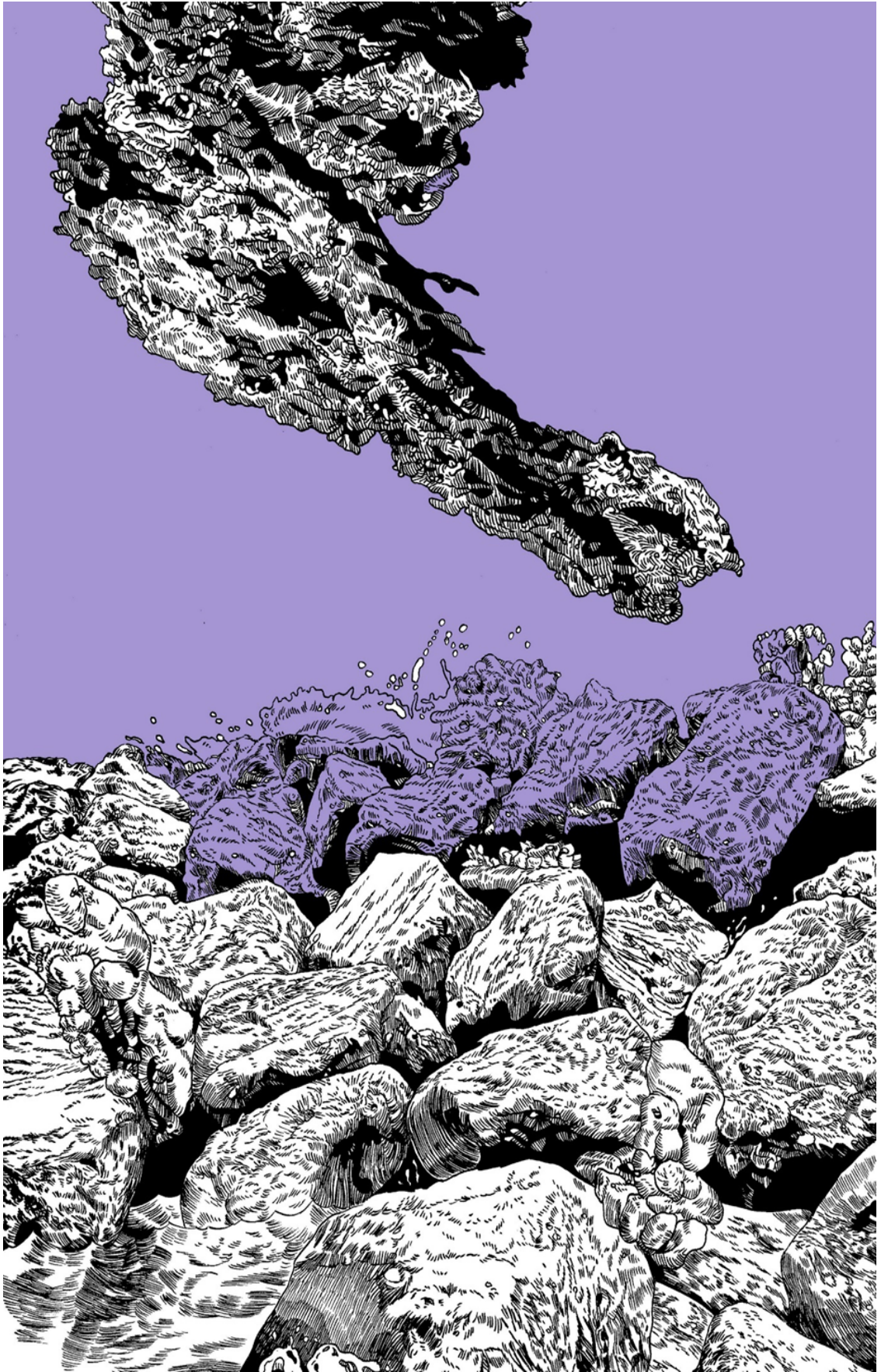


Fig 22. Paul Vousden *Invasion* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

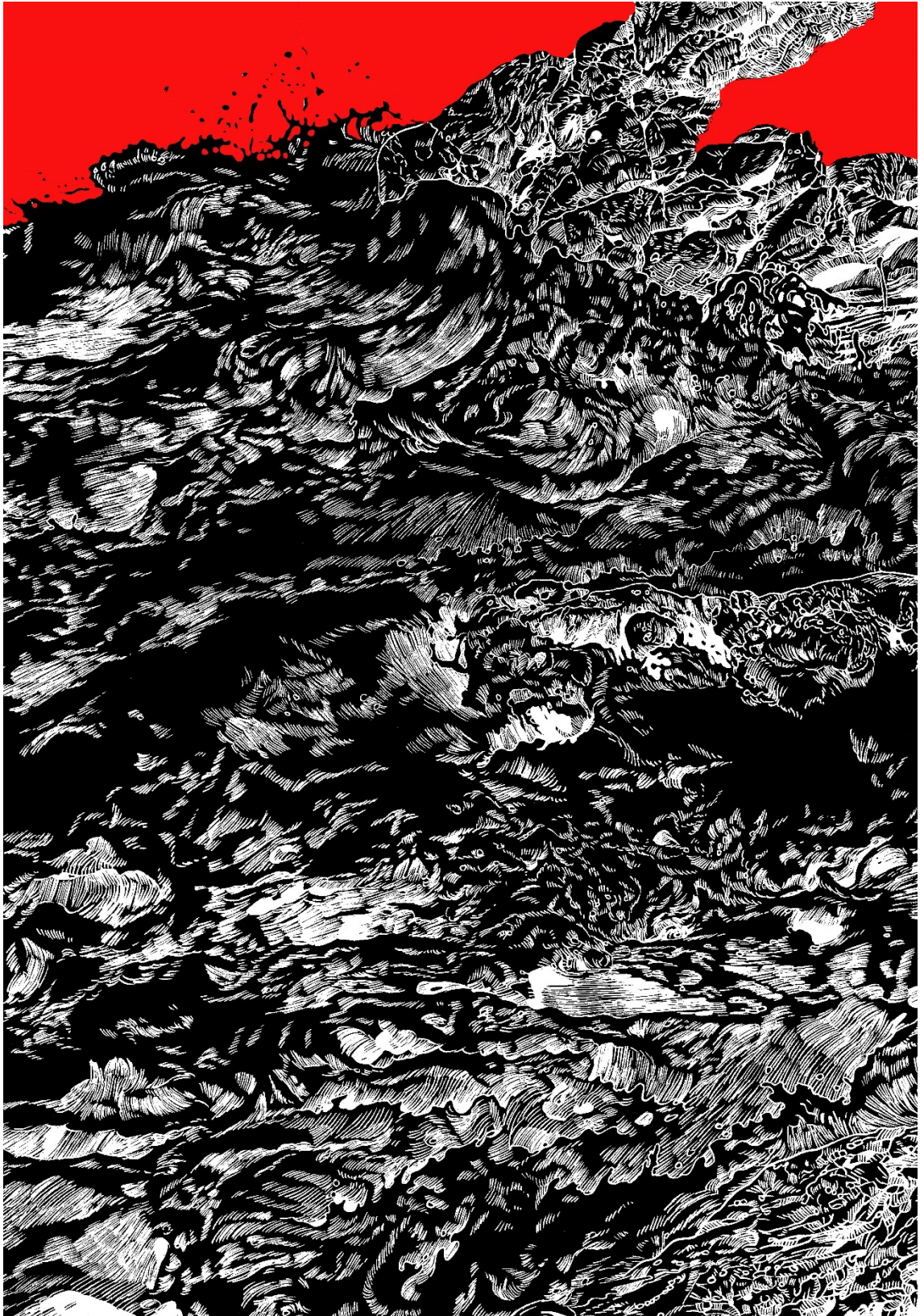


Fig 23. Paul Vousden *Invasion II* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

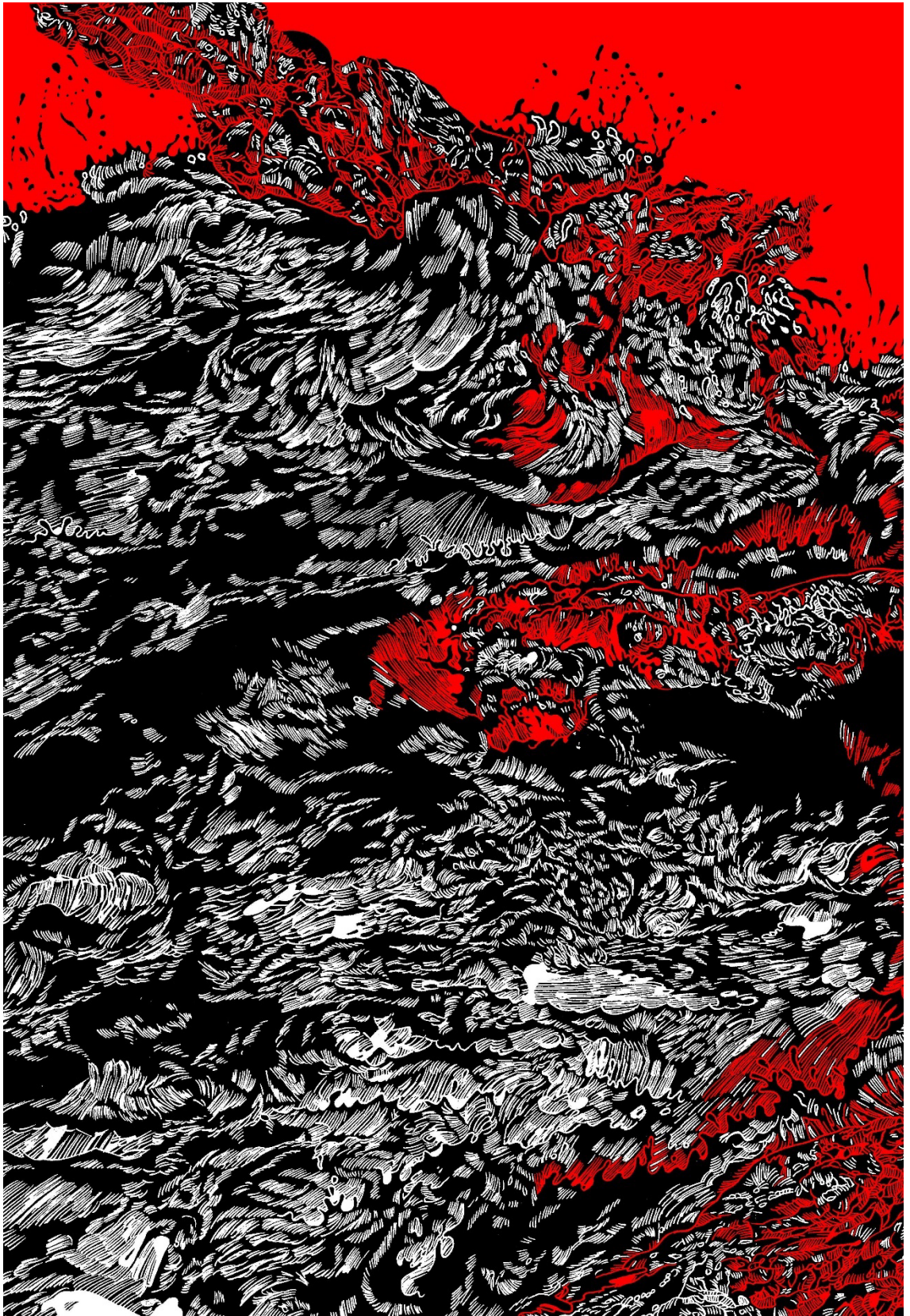


Fig 24. Paul Vousden *Invasion III* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

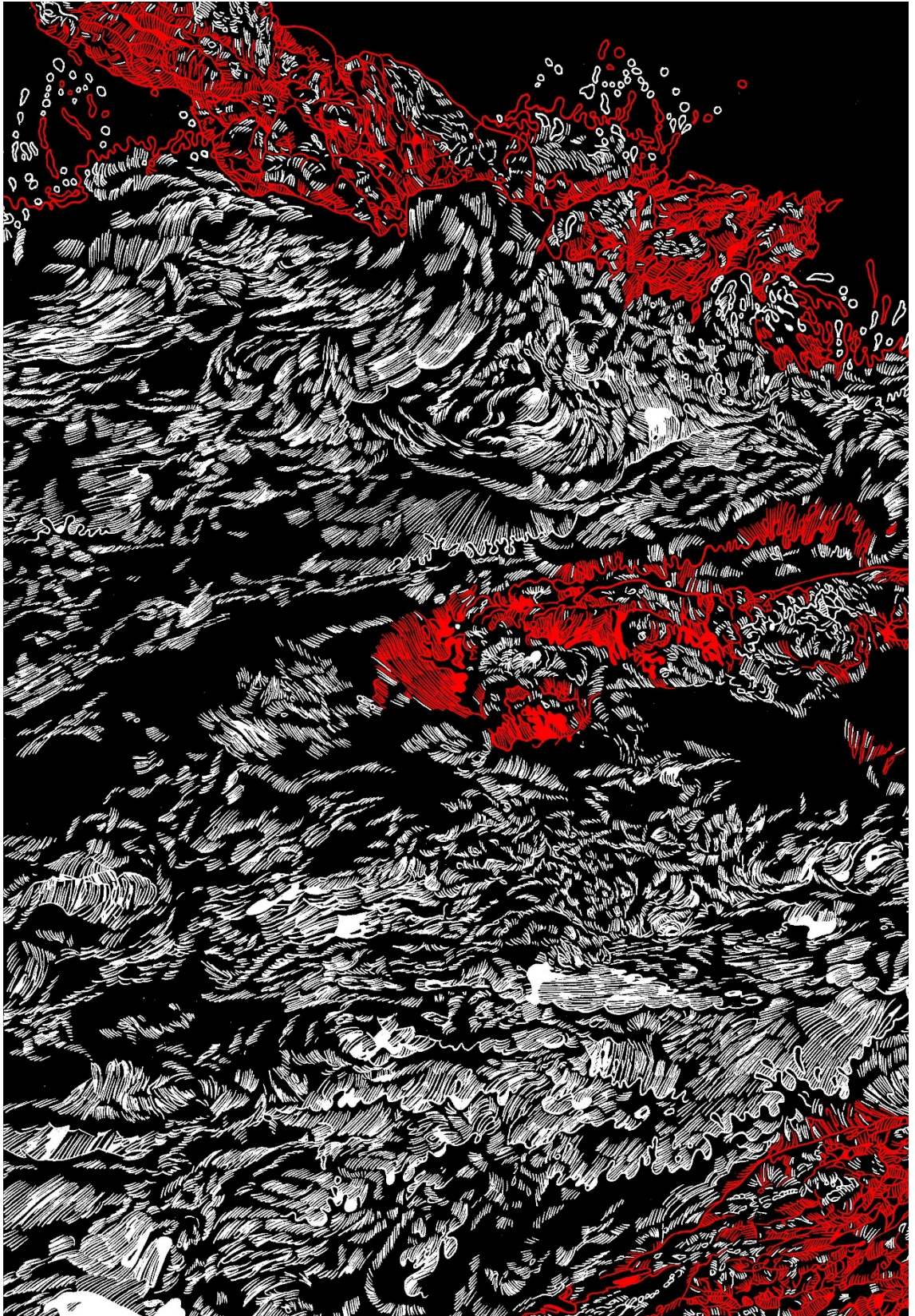


Fig 25. Paul Vousden *Invasion IV* (2016) digital artworks. Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 26. Paul Vousden *Norwegian Giant* (2016) oil on canvas. 61cm by 76cm

During the making of all four artworks I felt the 'self-delight' which Eagleton describes (Eagleton, 1990:65) and I also felt I was exceeding the expectations of representation. Although I was fully aware that the perception of exceeding nature was loaded with self-deceit and derived from Burkean philosophy; nevertheless my imagination felt amplified. This amplification created the feeling that I was groping toward an extremeness of intensity which privileged excitement and the boundless over the bounded, calm, and comfortable (Zizek, 1989:228). I was particularly delighted by the oil painting *Norwegian Giant* which seemed to me to be the most darkly powerful image created at this stage of research. The dark power of the image was hard to explain, I

eventually deemed it to be a by-product of the unpredictable process of painting, which is far less pre-determined than drawing due to its layered nature. This layering process seemed to have allowed me to pile obscurity onto obscurity and thereby intensify the concept of the sublime as a way of thinking about excess (Phillips, 1990:09). The painting also develops the forms invented in the physical and digital drawings which preceded it and this process made the work more extreme. Like many of the images I produced during this period, the painting has a portrait format which is at odds with the horizontal nature of the landscape I was contemplating. This format for representation developed because I already had a vague idea that combining multiple portrait versions of imagery to produce unpredictable horizontal landscapes might lead to interesting outcomes.

A Small Island of Pain: death and the obscure

Philip Shaw states that the Burkean Sublime is an uncertain and contested idea, informed by passion and rhetoric (Shaw, 2006:50). Shaw's emphasis upon rhetoric forced me to consider how words might play a role in enhancing the emotional impact of imagery which seeks to make connections to the Burkean Sublime. Shaw also motivated me to look for statements by Burke which illustrate his understanding of the potential words have to augment imagery. Burke states in *Part Five* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *Section VII How WORDS influence the passions* that:

"In painting we may represent any fine figure we please; but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged; but what painting can furnish out any thing so grand as the addition of one word, 'the angel of the Lord?'" (Burke, 1757-59:158-9).

I interpreted this statement as Burke expressing the surprising belief that representation cannot be enlivened by the addition of text. Later I became aware that the quotation means the opposite of my interpretation, that because painting cannot approach the influence of words, by implication, words can enliven paintings. My misinterpretation of the quote illustrated that when understanding is incomplete, or even erroneous, having an aesthetic philosophy to react to, and explore, creates new artistic possibilities and ways of seeing. I therefore began to consider how words can be added to contemporary British landscape depiction, along the coastline, to heighten emotional impact. This was done in the flawed belief that I was exploring a limitation to Burke's aesthetic thinking rather than demonstrating a strength.

My task was aided by the recollection that Sigmund Freud who, as death beckoned, “described his life as ‘a small island of pain floating in an ocean of indifference’” (Gray, 2013:91). I found this quotation moving both as a reflection of individual internal suffering and as an associative reflection upon the political chaos apparent in Britain due to the Brexit debate. It therefore became, for me, an illustration of how a new context can alter perspective. This idea of altering perspective through new context is an underpinning principle of my research. Therefore the melding of Freud’s quote into one of my landscapes seemed in harmony with the wider methodology of my reinterpretation of the *Enquiry*.

Eventually Freud’s quotation inspired me to produce the digital print *Small Island of Pain* (2016) (fig 31). The print was manufactured partly in response to a project initiated by the academic and artist Carl Rowe. He requested artists at the Norwich University of the Arts to produce works relating to the theme of *Ballot*. The *Ballot* theme was inspired by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy who invited artists from the Bauhaus to respond to a press photograph announcing the outcome of a German election in the Potsdammer Platz in 1924. The idea of uncertainty across a troubled Europe has obvious connections to the UK referendum on June 23rd, 2016. In the print several aesthetic decisions have been taken as a direct response to Burke’s attempt to frame the sublime. For example, the print depicts a boundary area, at Sheringham, where stone defences meet the sea rather than exploiting the effects of a vast stormy seascape. This decision was inspired by Burke’s statement, in *Part Two*, under the subheading *Section III, Obscurity* that:

‘to make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes’ (Burke, 1757-59:54).

With this statement Burke is explaining, to the eighteenth-century reader, that a lack of comprehension of a dangerous object or idea amplifies terror because of the power of the imagination. Burke further states that this affect upon the individual can be countered by acquiring a realistic and reasoned assessment of the true nature of the threat. I imagined the hysteria surrounding the Brexit debate as amplified by a lack of comprehension and so, to fuse landscape to an associated political threat, I took the decision to imply an unseen seascape whose menace is unquantified and therefore more indicative of terror.

A Small Island of Pain: and the consideration of the aesthetic impact of text

In the digital print *A Small Island of Pain*, Freud's quote adds to the emotional impact of the artwork via semiotic association. I felt that because this impact was so important, and so obviously loaded with Burkean associative meaning, that the nature of the typeface used should also be informed by Burke's theories somehow. Because Burke has no views on the relationship between typefaces and qualities of either the beautiful or the sublime, I was aware that achieving this aim was implicitly problematic. Initially I was stumped. Then I began to conceive typefaces as linear constructions. This led me to examine Burke's thoughts about the power of line to extend his aesthetic theory into the theme of typeface design and use.

In *Part Three* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *Section XV Gradual VARIATION* Burke states that:

'...perfectly beautiful bodies are not composed of angular parts' and that a 'change of surface continual and yet hardly perceptible at any point which forms one of the great constituents of beauty (Burke, 1757-59:104-05). He then further elaborates his thoughts by stating his admiration for:

'...the opinion of the very ingenious Mr Hogarth; whose idea of the line of beauty I take in general to be extremely just (Burke, 1757-59:105).

With these statements Burke is expressing the opinion that angular shapes, or lines, are not beautiful. This lack of beauty does not make angular shapes or lines sublime, but it does suggest that the angular has an oppositional associative meaning to the beautiful. Burke then states that gently curving lines or shapes are beautiful. He uses the example of the curves to be found when viewing the neck and breasts of a woman to illustrate his thinking (Burke, 1757-59:105). This analogy has proven controversial and an unhelpful distraction from the essence of Burke's aesthetic argument because it exemplifies the eroticized male gaze. However, Burke also illustrates his thinking by praising William Hogarth's aesthetic treatise *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) in which the 'line of beauty' is a serpentine, or gently curving line (Burke, 1757-59:105). Burke clearly states that he thinks beauty is to be found in lines which gently vary, and he further states that no individual line is more completely beautiful than others (Burke, 1757-9:105).

Burke's thoughts on the power of line inspired me to use Arial Bold text, at the top of the print, *Small Island of Pain* (2016). This text is sans-serif and implies a blunt but

strong tone by virtue of its angularity and lack of decoration. Toward the middle of the image the more decorative Felix Titling Bold, which sits upon a gently curving baseline, attempts to convey a more relaxed and beautiful associative meaning which is in keeping with its descriptive message. These type faces are visual opposites and mirror a series of conceptual oppositions between the sublime and the beautiful which reflect an underpinning principle in the *Enquiry*.

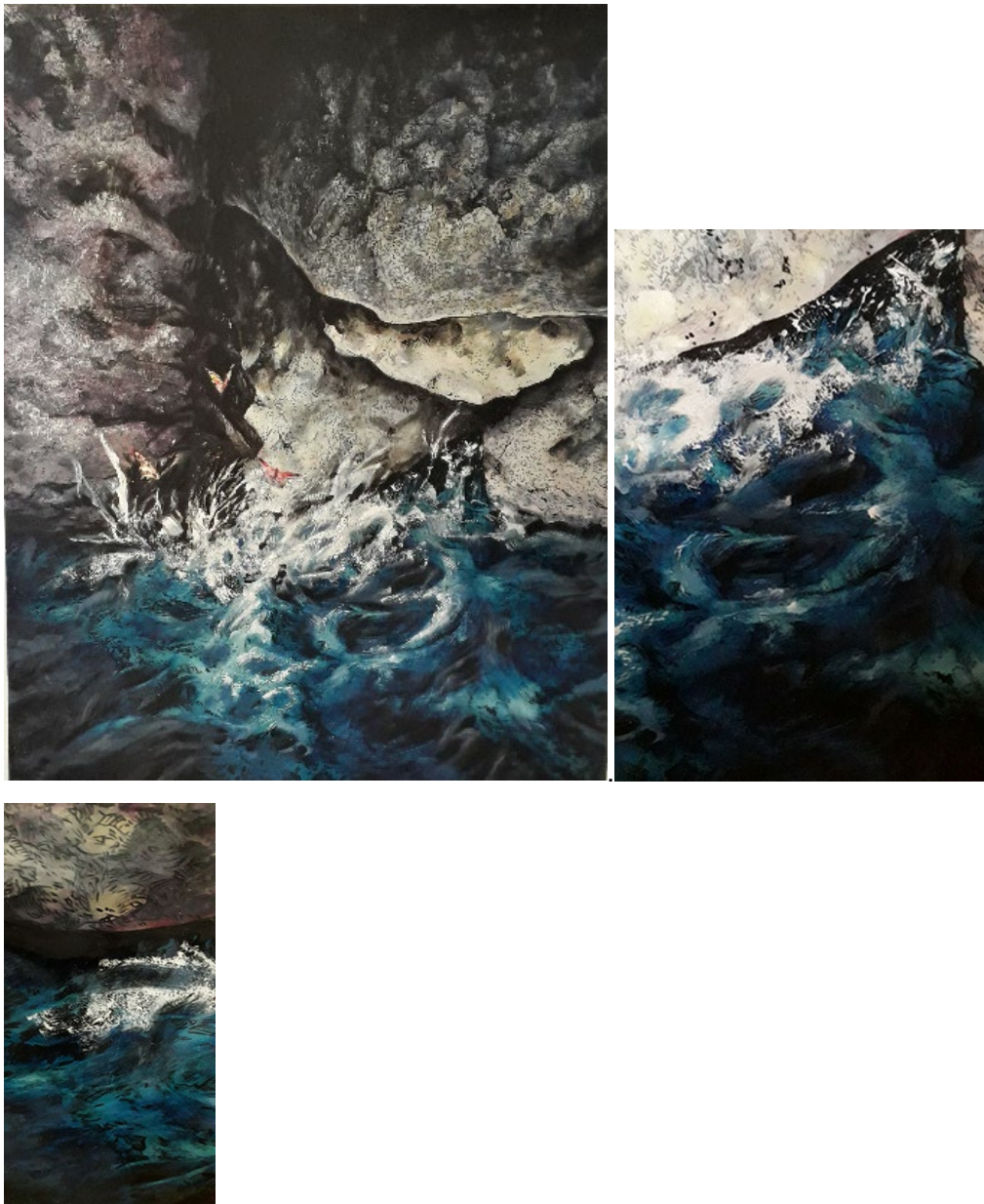


Fig 27. Paul Vousden Preparatory work for *Island of Pain* with details (2016) oil paint on board. 40cm by 51cm

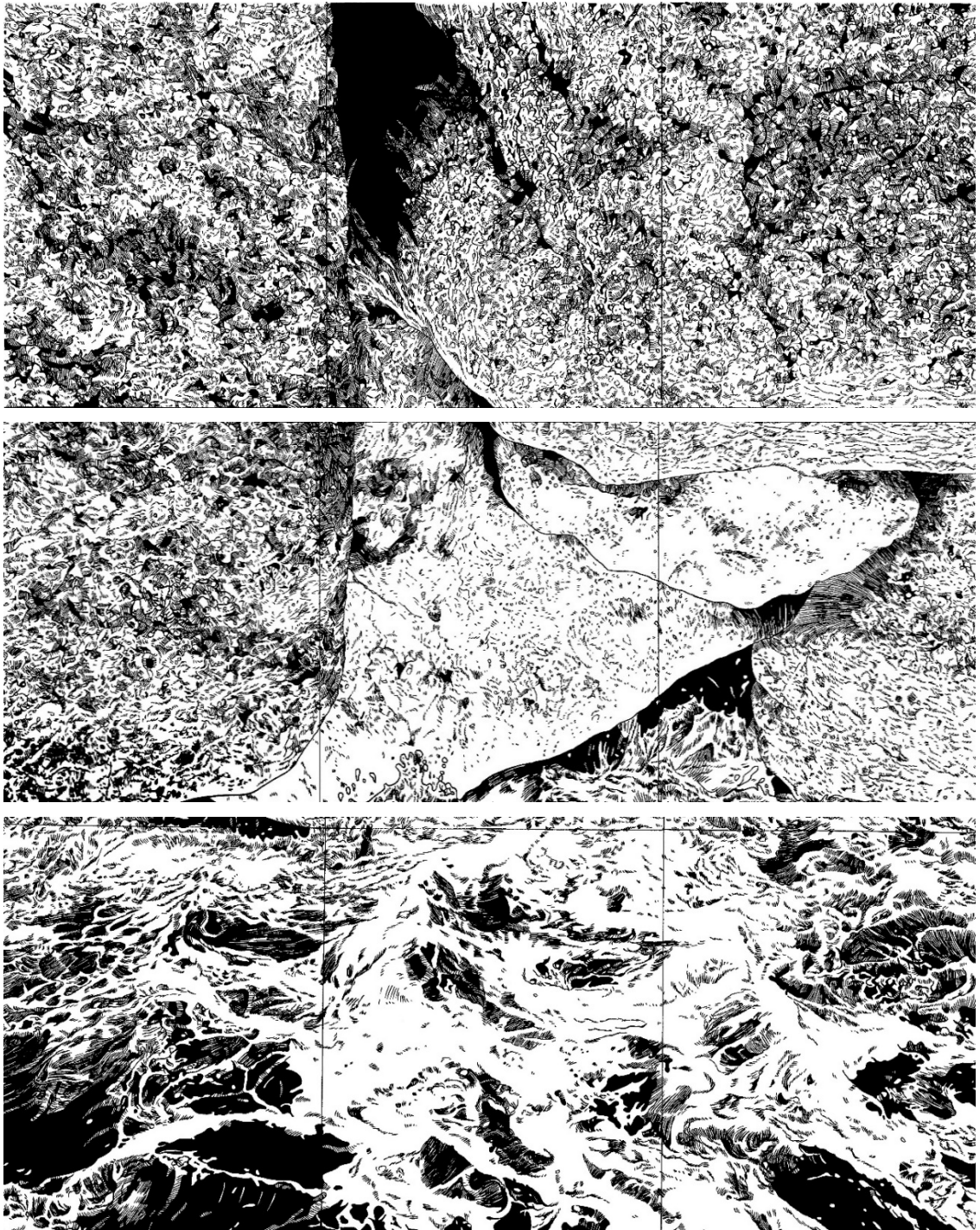


Fig 28. Paul Vousden Preparatory work for *Island of Pain* (2016), ink on paper. 40cm by 51cm

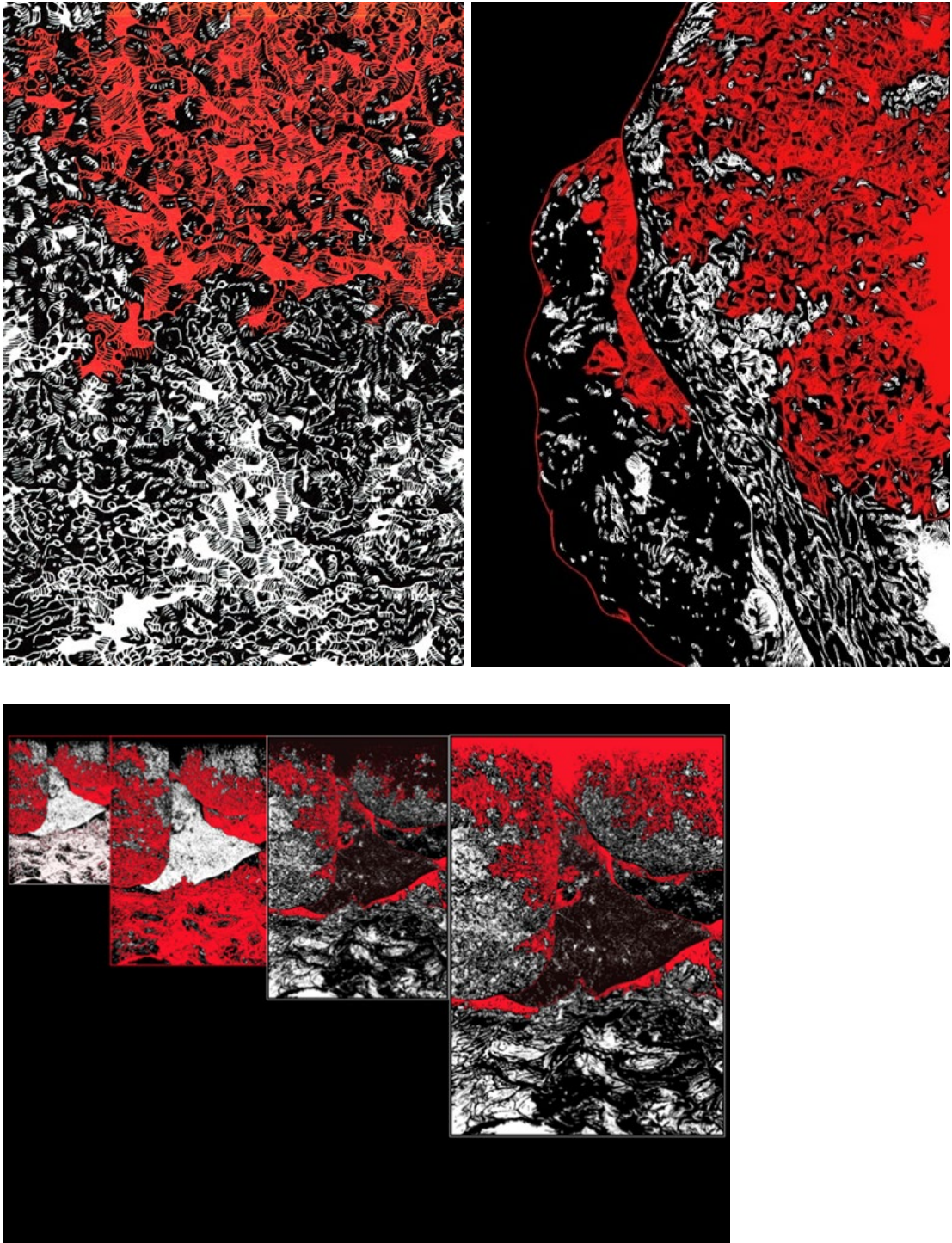


Fig 29. Paul Vousden Preparatory works for *Island of Pain* (2016), digital drawing. Indeterminate dimensions

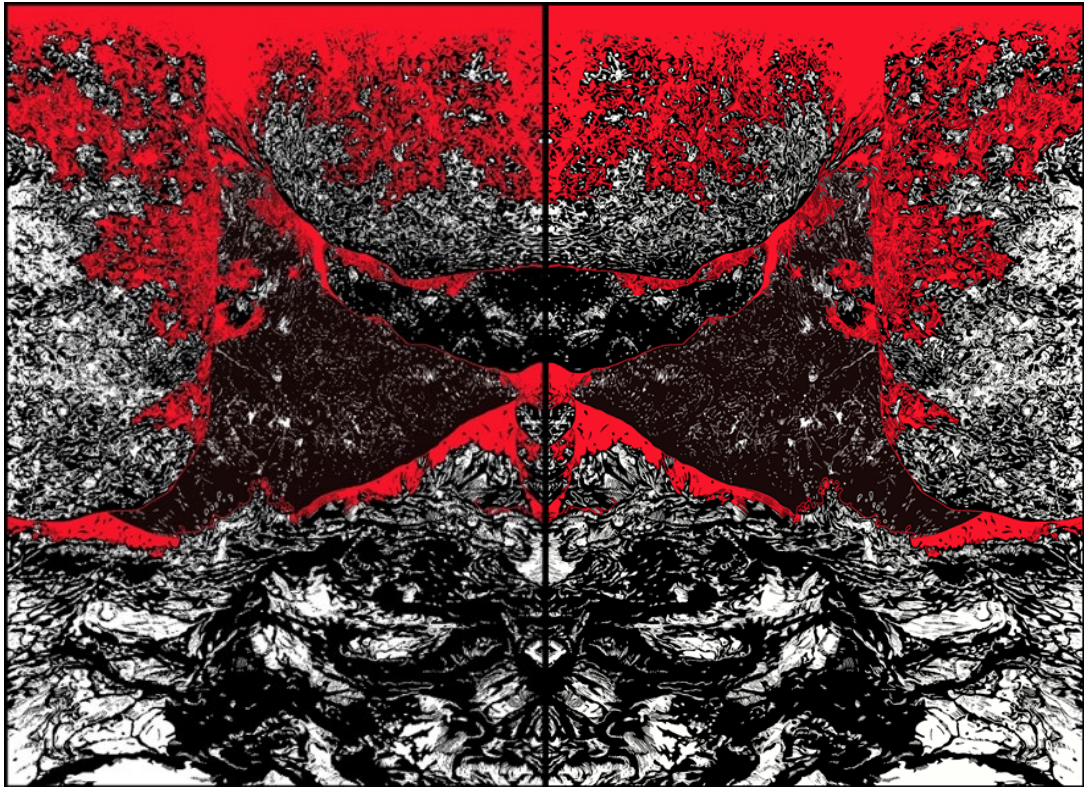


Fig 30. Paul Vousden *Island of Pain Reflections* (2016) digital drawing. Indeterminate dimensions

During the development of the *Island of Pain* design I noticed that by conjoining mirrored versions of the print something exciting and unexpected appeared at the point of abutment. The composition, *Island of Pain Reflections* (fig 30), hinted at the excesses and boundless obscurity of the sublime partly because it was entirely unplanned and therefore not subject to the normal processes associated with reason or intellect. I began to wonder how far I could develop this idea of mirroring in the service of the idea of emotive imagery.

The travels of *Small Island of Pain*

The *Small Island of Pain* print gained access to an international audience via the *Ballot* project. The print was exhibited at the Cork Printmaker's *FIRST EDITION Print Symposium* which was shown between the 23rd and 24th June 2017. The print also featured as part of the *SURVIVAL* festival held in Naples on the 23rd September 2017 at the Contemporary Art Museum. In Norwich the work was shown at the Nunns Yard Gallery between the 10th and the 14th October 2017.

The print measures 35cm by 25 cm and was produced in an edition of twelve. The artwork extends the visual thinking implicit in *Defence Horizon* (fig 20) and *Defence*

Horizon II (fig 21). When producing the drawing for this print, excess as the key to the presentation of the sublime was uppermost in my mind (Phillips, 1990:9). Therefore the coastal defences at Sheringham, and the sea beyond, are reimagined in a deluge of mark making. This mark making evokes, via association, connections to past art movements such as Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, and contemporary movements such as Pop Abstraction and New Romanticism. My excessive use of line pushes form to the limit of comprehension and is also an example of how crowded and confused imagery can be employed to evoke notions of the Burkean Sublime, in contemporary landscape depiction.



Fig 31. Paul Vousden *Small Island of Pain* (2016) digital print. 35cm by 25 cm

Deceit, delight, and suffering

At the Nunns Yard exhibition a member of the public commented that my print was, 'a bit mad looking' and asked, 'what was wrong with me?'. This provocation annoyed me, but it also made me reflect upon how artists are perceived by the public and how hackneyed notions of what an artist is could be exploited for positive critical effect.

Phillips begins his *Introduction* to the *Oxford World's Classics* version of the *Enquiry with* Burke's quotation that:

'A true artist should put a generous deceit on the spectators' (Phillips, 1990:9), and Burke states in *Part One* of the *Enquiry*, under the sub-heading *SECTION XIV, The effects of SYMPATHY in the distress of others that*:

'I am convinced we have a degree of delight, and no small one, in the real misfortunes and pains of others' (Burke, 1757-59:42).

With these words Burke is expressing his belief that delight is felt when misfortune and pain are deceitfully staged conceptions, or safely observable ideas and phenomena which cannot directly harm the observer. Burke's opinion, and the responses I had experienced to *Small Island of Pain*, made me reflect upon how I could more successfully manufacture Burke's conception of delight by creating a presentation of artfully staged distress, and deceitfully staged anxiety, for the enjoyment of cliché enthusiasts and mean-spirited viewers.

Thoughts on the imagination unbound, the terror of possibility and Romanticism

According to Phillips an unconstrained imagination was viewed with suspicion in the eighteenth century. This view he illustrates by stating that the writer Samuel Johnson '...would insist throughout his own work that madness – to which there are several references in the *Enquiry* – always lurked as the consequence of the increasingly fashionable commitment to the imagination unbound' (Phillips, 1990:12). The imagination unbound strikes me as another term for the natural and continual conflict between the ambition of artists to make meaning through art and the fear, associated with this effort, of overreaching and appearing merely ridiculous to audiences. This conflict I term 'the terror of possibility': an expression adopted directly from Phillips who uses it when describing Burke's career and motivations (Phillips, 1990:17). The overcoming of this terror, through material practice, with all of its drawing, erasing and often fruitless labour, appears to strongly support Claire Freeman's theory of the sublime as a speculative encounter with the 'terrible god of chance' (Freeman,

1995:40) and Thomas Weiskel's theory of 'economic states' and the sublime (Furniss, 1993:25).

Derangement and the popular myth of artistic tragedy

Before trying to make art which deliberately 'appeared' to flirt with derangement, I considered it wise to check that Johnson's eighteenth-century belief in a link between creativity and madness had endured into the twenty-first century. Jorg Heiser in *A Romantic Measure* (2007) states that attributes of Romantic power, which are highly abstracted, have been ascribed to 'artists, adolescents, women and the insane' (Heiser, 2007:137). This power Heiser concludes comes from an intensity of feeling derived from alienation, solitude, ecstatic exuberance, self-destruction and melancholia (Heiser, 2007:137-8). Essentially Heiser links disordered thinking to heightened emotion and Romanticism. He also links the presentation of such intensity to artists and their art.

The myth of the artist as Outsider or Other is a powerful and popular idea. Colin Wilson in *The Outsider* (1956), which was reissued in 1997 and 2001, exemplifies this clichéd understanding of the creative instinct. He states that artists are often Outsiders, like Van Gogh, because they have a 'blazing of all the senses, and a realization of a condition of consciousness unknown to the ordinary bourgeois' (Wilson, 1956:89). This special insight and sensitivity is a burden, according to Wilson, and the artist thinks of suicide (presumably on a regular basis) before being saved by the 'universe suddenly making sense again' (Wilson, 1956:89) and giving purpose back to this special individual.

Janette Kerr: her painting style and subject matter explained as Burkean concept

Because I was disappointed by audience reaction to *Small Island of Pain*, I started looking at contemporary British artists who were working with similar subject matter but who were appreciated by audiences. Janette Kerr struck me as a painter who exemplifies how a strong emotional impact can be created by an encounter between contemporary artist, landscape and audience. Kerr is also a validated member of the British culture defining classes who describes herself as having a strong track record of obtaining funding for her practice-based research and giving lectures to businesses, academics, art students and art societies. She has also been President of the Royal West of England Academy (2011-2016) and is an Honorary Royal Scottish Academician and a Visiting Research Fellow in Fine Art at the University of West England Bristol (Routledge 2021).

As a painter of seascapes Kerr appears to have an assured responsiveness to accident and obscure effects in painting. She explores the materiality of gesture within largescale arenas of paint which are pushed, dragged and smeared into existence. These paintings push at the borderlines between abstraction and representation. Her paintings can be understood as arenas of action in which she engages with the Burkean conceptions of terror, boundlessness, darkness, natural power, and the ever-changing instability which the sea embodies. Many of her seascapes seem to spring from the same sense of fascination with depth and movement which are expressed in Jackson Pollocks' *The Deep* (1953).



Fig 32. Jackson Pollock *The Deep* (1953)

Kerr is clearly an artist moved by passions derived from the physicality of the world and this explains her use of *en-plein-air* painting and sketching whilst standing on boat decks in gales. These physical encounters with turbulent seas are described as getting inside her head and creating memories in paint and drawing which map journeys as literal, geographic and metaphorical experience informed by fear and simultaneous exhilaration (Kerr, 2014: 133).

This responsiveness to the exterior world has echoes of Burke's insistence upon the imagination's role as a representative of the senses when encountering the sublime in nature (Burke, 1757-59:17). Within Kerr's seascapes mark making communicates feeling, imagination, and image on a grand scale. Her instinctive need to produce work through an immersive experience acknowledges a debt to eighteenth century Romanticism's emphasis upon the power of fear to energise. Kerr's fear does not rob

her mind of its power to act and reason, instead it motivates her to produce art which is productive of delight as described in the *Enquiry* (Burke, 1757-59:34,53).

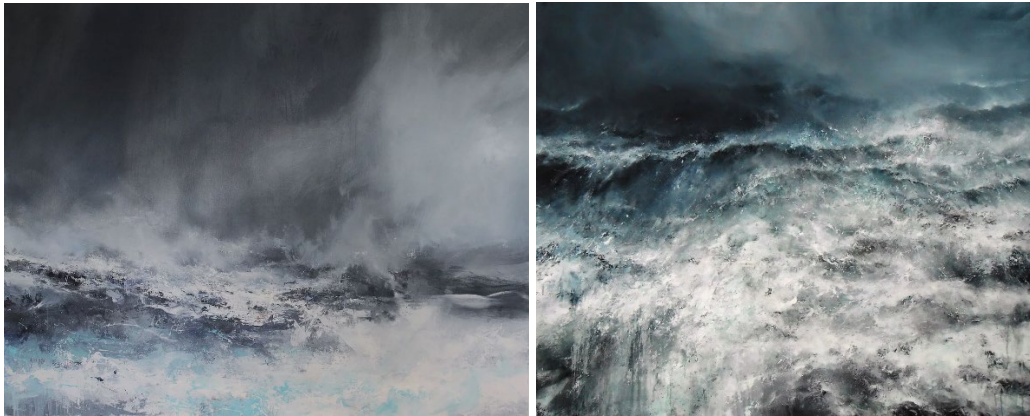


Fig 33. Janette Kerr *Law of Storms I* (2019) and *Holding my Breath II* (2013)

Looking at the paintings *Law of Storms* (2019) and *Holding my Breath II* (2013) it is easy to see how a repeated response to the energy of the sea has resulted in creative behaviours, using a repeated palette of colours, technique and gesture which are a hybrid of physical and mental experience. The physicality of Kerr's painting processes mimics the energy of the sea and creates a material discourse which is acutely felt. This energy seems appropriate to the Burkean conceptions of the imagination being only the *representative* of the senses (Burke, 1757-59:17). I would argue that the bodily felt knowledge that Kerr has embedded in herself, through a repetition of action and experience over years, now means that the sublime is for her a truly transgressive experience. This experience is one in which the artist claims for herself qualities of the sea she contemplates and thereby makes manifest the inward greatness which Burke believed is experienced by poets and orators (Burke, 1757-59:46-7).

Kerr's painting uses the materials of the eighteenth century and conforms to the ideal of what Romantic seascapes can look and feel like in a contemporary context. The example of Kerr inspired me to push more intensively at the boundary between calming representation and wild abstraction.

How to exploit the idea of Burke's rejection of the connections between sublimity, good taste, probity, and sanity

After Nunn's Yard I brooded on the example set by Kerr, the comment that my contribution was 'a bit mad looking', and upon the observation by David Bromwich, that Burke's original contribution to sublime discourse was that he rejected 'utterly the connections between sublimity, good taste, probity, and sanity' (Bromwich, 2014:60).

Because Bromwich implies a credible link between sublimity and an undoing of the links to logic and sanity his observation made me look for ways I could present landscapes which create the perception of ecstatic, or disordered thinking using ideas within the *Enquiry*. One solution to this conundrum had already presented itself through the production of *Island of Pain Reflections* (fig 30). The abandonment of control and the privileging of chance effects in this image had created small areas of imagery devoid of reason. I therefore decided to exaggerate these effects, thereby mirroring Turner's distortion of geographical details and Janette Kerr's love of confused turbulence, to more forcibly express Burkean aesthetic ideas (Wilton, 1980:79) in a new way.



Fig 34. Paul Vousden *Island of Boundless Pain* (2016) digital artwork 42cm by 100cm

The artwork *Island of Boundless Pain* (fig 34) was the result of my attempt to loosen the grip of reason and academic training in the production of landscape depiction. In the artwork multiple abutments of horizontally and vertically mirrored versions of the *Island of Pain*, create unplanned forms and patterns. These visual accidents eat up more surface of the artwork with each repetition of imagery. This process creates surprising and demonic re-imaginings of the coastline at Sheringham which is literally turned upside down and inside out. The overall effect upon the viewer is to imply emotive imagery created by someone driven by strong feelings and the imagination unbound. This deceit aims to fuel the popular but trite idea of the unstable artist who, as an uncontrolled element within society, is akin to the disordering influence of the sublime: threatening 'the continuity of experience and tradition' (Phillips, 1990:15). The

artwork echoes the wild effects created by both Turner and Kerr without imitating either artist.

The serpentine line explored and the concept of the amphitheatre of terror

Burke's emphasis upon the gentle curve of lines also inspired me to explore what happens when the serpentine line becomes tighter and coiled. Burke does not address this issue in the *Enquiry*. He is content merely to privilege the serpentine line over the angular as suggestive of beauty. In the digital drawings *Serpentine Line II & III* (2016) (figs 35-36) I have explored how line changes character as it becomes tighter. The line acquires, via association with the spiral and the spring, energy, power and visual force. These drawings were a delight to make and depict a highly stylised reimagining of a developing storm above a menacing sea. They follow the example of artworks created by Turner and Kerr without imitating either. In *Serpentine Line III* the imagined maelstrom becomes blood red and divided into three. This division of the landscape was inspired by Burke's thoughts on how arbitrary rhetorical unions form powerful compounded abstract words (Burke, 1757-59:150). I used Burke's thinking to create arbitrary visual unions through a tiering of swirling and energised spiralling forms. These forms I imagined as being associative to three differing levels of hierarchy, or menacing natural entities, which compete in a struggle to attack the senses. As this drawing developed the idea of nature as an 'amphitheatre of terror' took hold of my imagination and provided me with an energising sensation of delight.

Reflecting upon these drawings led me to conclude that tight spiral lines have qualities of the sublime, as defined by Burke. The tiering of imagery also struck me as an idea which could become useful as a visual metaphor for the power of the state and the magnificence of the Burkean transcendental sublime, which would develop later in the research. These observations seemed useful to my material practice and modest contemporary extensions of Burke's aesthetic theory.



Fig 35. Paul Vousden *The Serpentine Line II* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 36. Paul Vousden *The Serpentine Line III* (2016) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

How to deceitfully craft tragedy for the dark delight of audiences

I had *Island of Boundless Pain* (fig 34) framed at the Norwich Frame Workshop. The proprietor asked me about the meaning of the image: following my explanation he commented that I 'needed to get out more' and that my work was becoming 'weird' and 'tragic'.

Adam Phillips states that Burke saw terror as 'the heart of the Sublime' (Phillips, 1990:21) and believed that the artistic representation of tragedy produced the thrill of the sublime in the viewer (Phillips, 1990:21). I reasoned that in a contemporary context this thrill, or delight, to use Burke's terminology, need not come from a literal re-imagining of tragic events, as it does in *Turner's The Wreck of a Transport Ship* (1810). The delight of the sublime could be experienced by observing a manifestation of an imagined ongoing tragedy. By the autumn of 2016 the word tragedy also seemed to be on the lips of everyone in Britain opposed to Brexit. Tragedy became such a commonplace word that I felt it must have a positive critical purpose. This enjoyment of a perceived tragedy made me consider how the idea of tragedy could be deceitfully crafted by the artist to create the perception of 'the real misfortunes and pains of others' (Burke, 1757-59:42). My aim was to exploit the dark delight I felt all around me and produce an expression of reality informed by the passions of wider society (Shaw,

2006:50). This aim reflects Burke's emphasis in the *Enquiry* on the presentation of anguish, pain and torment as a means of exciting passion in the viewer. I therefore resolved to employ every visual deceit I could invent to create an image heavily loaded with metaphors relating to personal disorder, Brexit, the seascape and sea defences at Sheringham, and the relationship between shipwrecks and the sublime.

The travels of *The Devil is in the Detail*

The portable and inclusive nature of the *Ballot* project inspired academic staff at the Norwich University of the Arts to consider how they might produce their own 'exhibition in a box'. Research staff within a collaboration known as the *Created and Contested Territories Group* reasoned that individual prints, accompanied by short research statements, could be collated within the boundaries of a box and distributed across the world to positive critical effect. The contents of the *Territories* box were envisaged as questioning the definition of territories and ideas surrounding borders, territorialism and possession. Participation in this presentation of research was open to PhD students and the relatively inexpensive costs involved allowed me to contribute. The project enabled my digital print *The Devil is in the Detail* (2017) (fig 37) to find audiences in Gorebridge, Midlothian at the *Lust and Apple* gallery between the 29th March 2019 and the 17th May 2019. The artwork was also exhibited in Berlin at *CLB Berlin* between 26th April 2019 and 4th May 2019. In Nottingham the print was viewed at the *InDialogue* symposium on the 21st November 2019. In 2020 the artwork was presented to audiences for the entire month of June at the *Museum-Memorial of the Victims of Communism and the Resistance, Sighetu Marmatiei*, in Romania. My print was accompanied by the following supporting short statement which gave it context:

The coastline of Britain is a space informed by ideas of sovereignty and Burkean terror. The digital print, *The Devil is in the Detail* (2017) is inspired by the hysteria arising from Brexit and a British culture increasingly rooted in Burkean conservative cultural values. In my print the sea and rock defences at Sheringham are imagined as barriers to the technologically - driven borderless world of global capitalism, terrorism, multi-culturalism and all that is Other. The image uses tropes of the Burkean Sublime, as reimagined by me, to create an emotional landscape within which the viewer hunts for clues to meaning. Within this image the Devil is literally in the detail. These invented signs to meaning are attempts to communicate a perception of landscape informed by an emotional rebirth of delight in the spectacle of economic uncertainty and cultural fearfulness.

The print plays with the idea of Britain imagined as a 'ship of state' under siege from forces which are Other. Scrutiny of the print reveals that it is a mirrored image within which the horizon line appears twice and has been tipped vertically. This visual construction is used to suggest that the Burkean landscape is always a mirrored image of inner and outer realities which defy logic. The print also conceals, within its maelstrom of marks, a family group enclosed in a box like vessel, this structure is rudderless and drifting toward the sea defences at Sheringham. The haplessness of the vessel implies that those within have escaped from an unseen calamity at sea. The family is obscured by organic viral objects which cling to their flimsy and unstable vessel. On the horizon larger viral objects threaten to overwhelm a thin defensive curtain. The text attached to the print implies, via association, both the slippery nature of the Brexit process and the hidden drama within the landscape. The print aims to extend into the present an eighteenth-century delight in the creation of a spectacle-spectatorship dynamic in which an implied shipwreck, or tragedy at sea, is exploited by the artist to produce a product loaded with sublime delight and associative meaning.

The digital print *The Devil is in the Detail* (fig 37) was described in the Gette Exhibition Catalogue at Lust and Apple as a 'intense digital work hinting at rage and chaos'(Barnes, Lamort, Robertson, Powell 2019) . I reflected on this description and concluded that I had succeeded in using ideas from Burke's text as both guide to perception and conduit to an aesthetic language which evoked a strong emotional response.

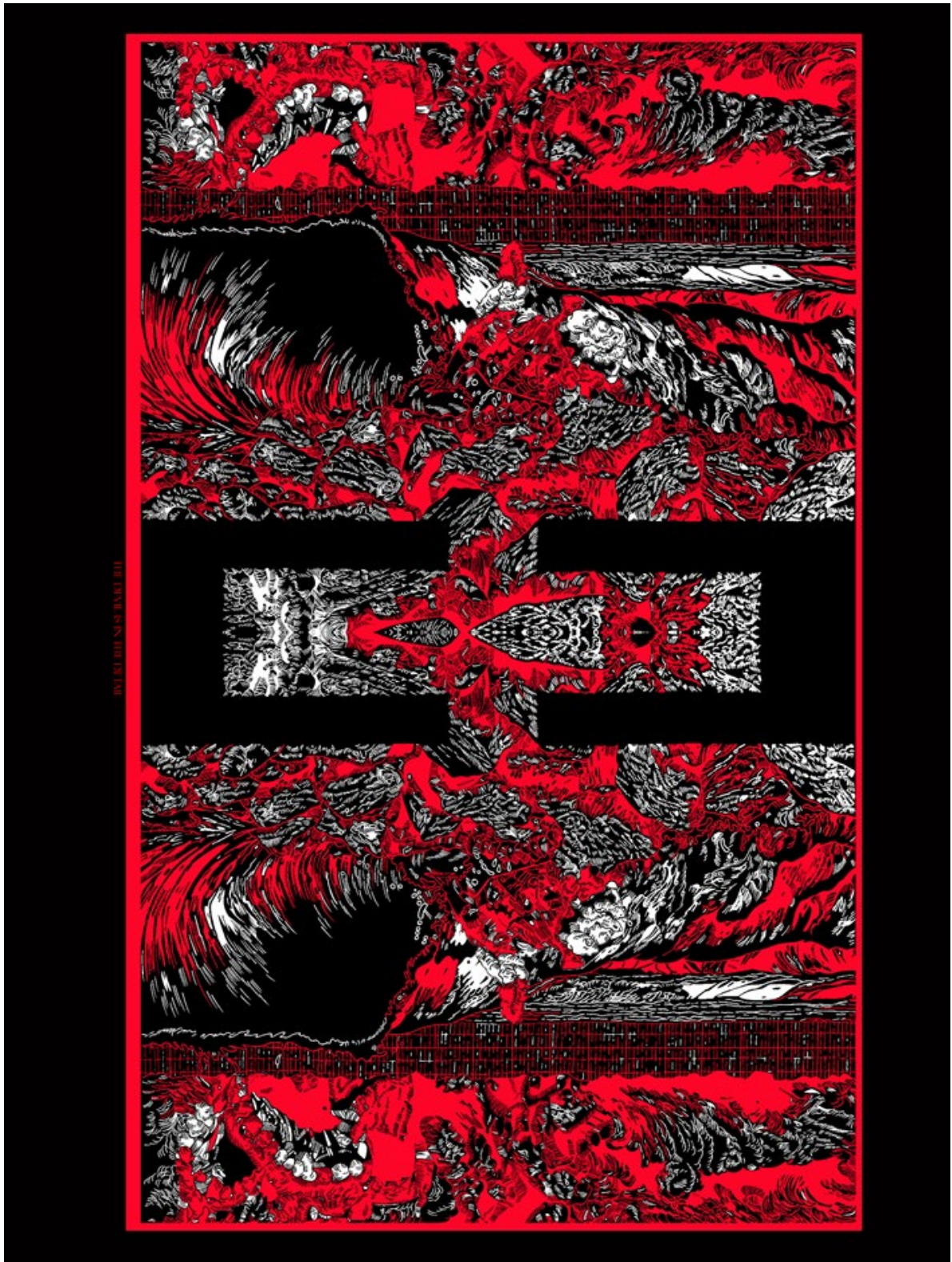


Fig 37. Paul Vousden *The Devil is in the Detail* (2017) digital print 59cm by 38cm



Fig 38. Paul Vousden *The Devil is in the Detail, Purple Version* (2017) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

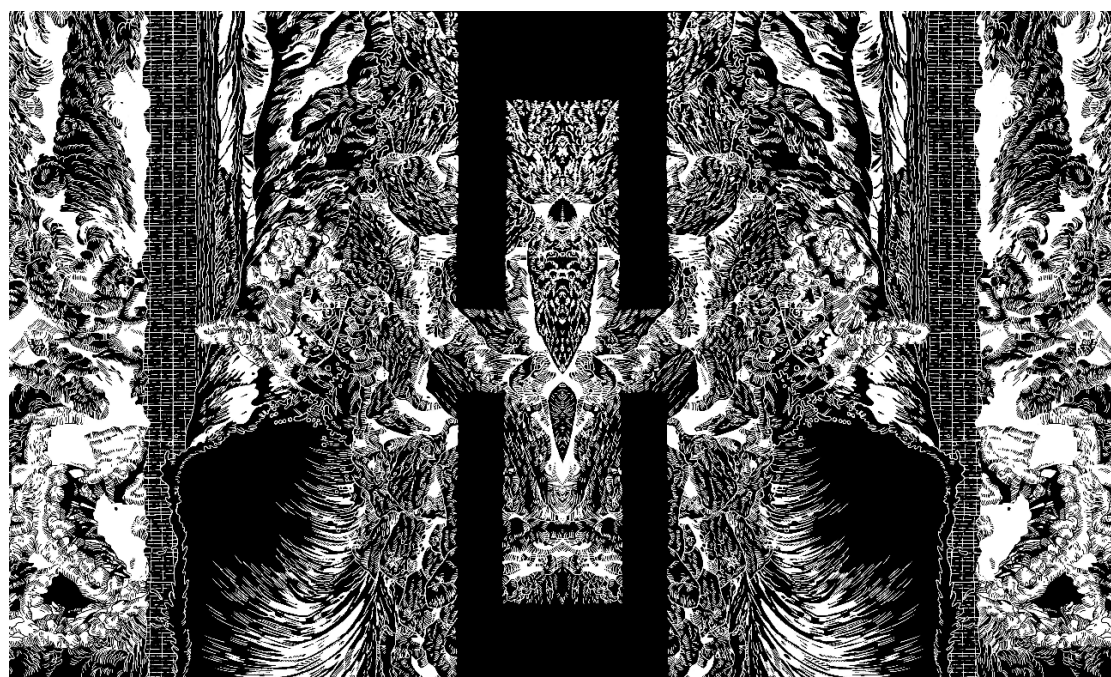


Fig 39. Paul Vousden *The Devil is in the Detail, Black and White Version* (2017) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

Further Seascape Prints

Burke states in *The Enquiry* in his *Introduction On Taste* that:

‘Taste, in its most general acceptation, is not a simple idea, but it is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of imagination, and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty,’ (Burke, 1757-59:22).

This statement means that, according to Burke, we understand the world initially through the physical senses, this physical reality is then processed via our imagination, which is an action requiring the inclusion of a reasoning facility. For an artist, Burke’s hypothesis offers the conclusion that an active imagination is linked to an active intellect. Burke’s statement can also be applied to artworks directly to explain why the most affecting paintings often combine an interesting skill in depiction with a measure of visual obscurity which is deliberately contrived. Such contrivances invite the viewer to finish the artwork by applying their own interpretations, thereby making the viewing process an immersive experience employing sense, imagination and intellect. Both Turner and Kerr employ Burke’s conception of the nature of taste to the painting of seascapes.

The Devil is in the Detail (figs 37-39) seemed to me to be successful because it conformed to Burke’s conception of the nature of taste. The print combines an internalised idea of the Burkean sublime with the idea of an external environment and a contemporary political moment. This combination gives the viewer plenty to explore in terms of imaginative reflection. I then repeatedly investigated these themes in order for the material knowledge created to embed itself within my consciousness, thereby developing my skills as an artist. With each new drawing I enhanced my perceptual experience, and cognitive ability, in relation to the ideas underpinning *The Devil is in the Detail* (fig 37-39). This practice based reflection helped generate the experience and imaginative fuel required for the creation of a large painting which would attempt to present a grand vision of the lessons learnt to date. During the winter of 2017 and spring of 2018 I therefore produced six more digital experiments (figs 40-45) which reflect upon the sea defences at Sheringham as seen through the poetic filter of Burke’s *Enquiry*.

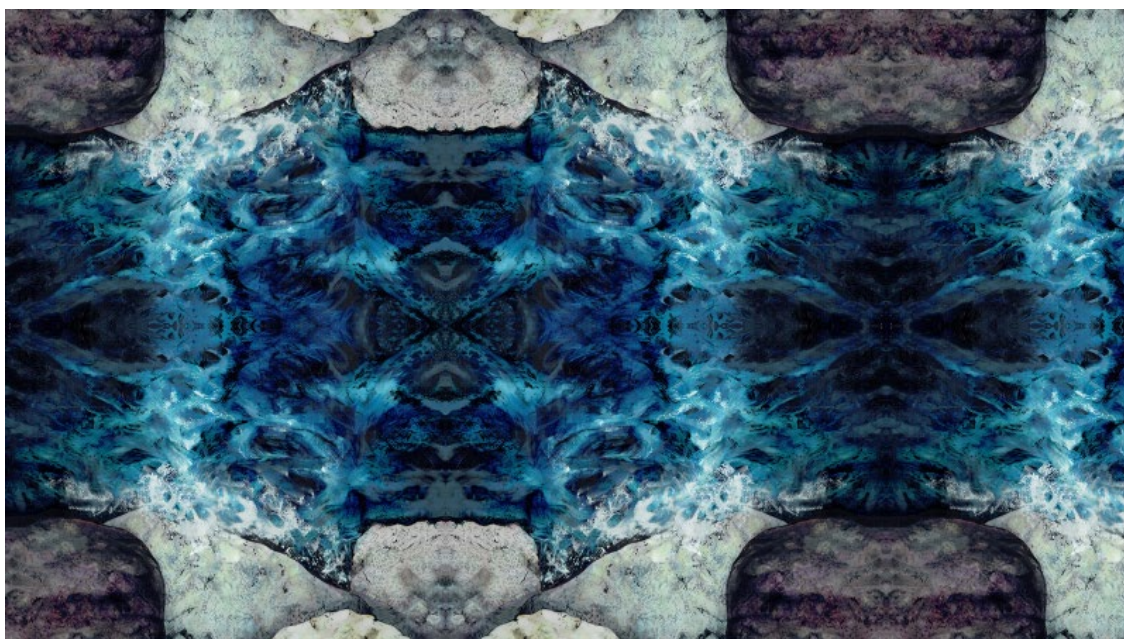


Fig 40. Paul Vousden *The King of Terrors* (2017) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

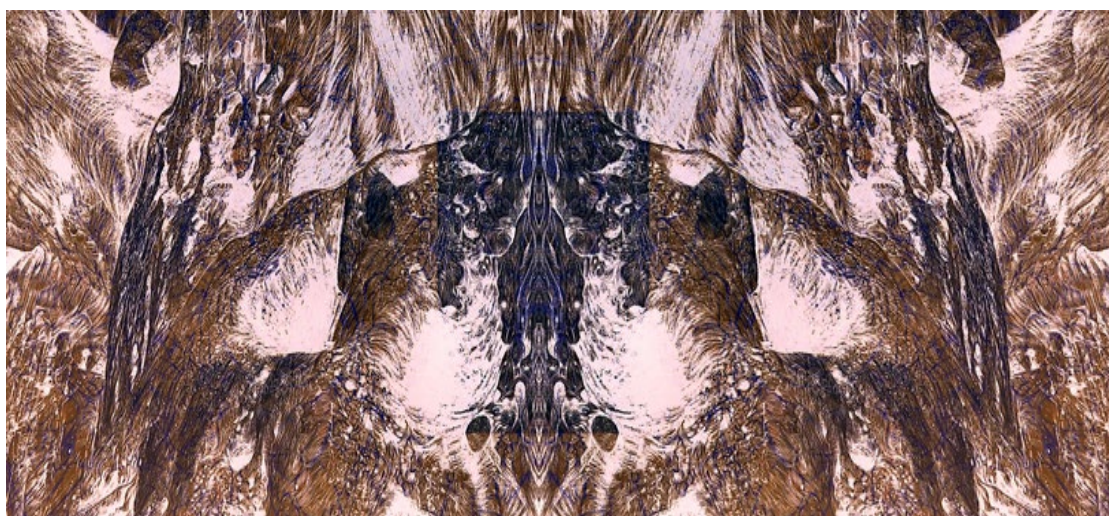


Fig 41. Paul Vousden *The Norwegian Giants* (2017) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

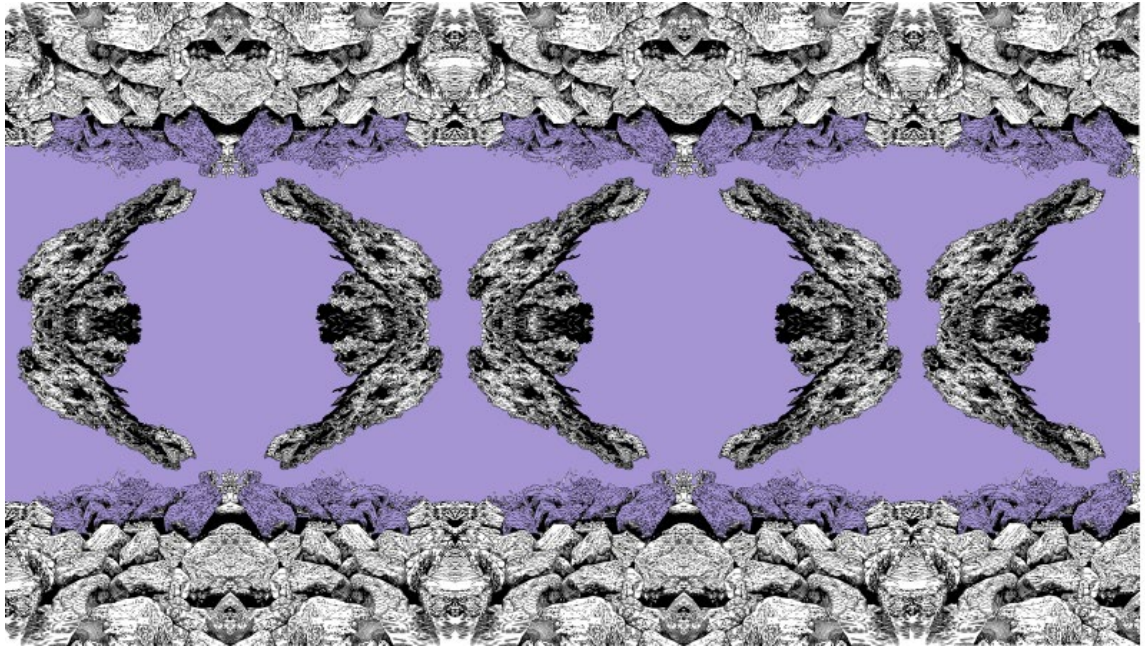


Fig 42. Paul Vousden *Defenders of the Realm* (2017) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

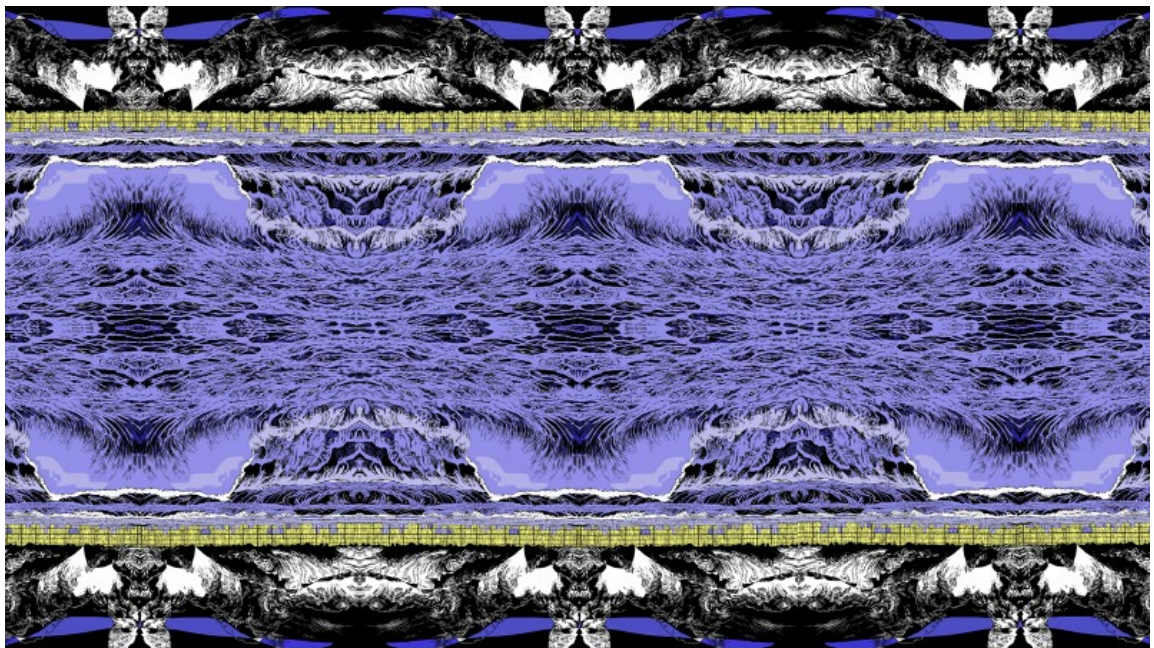


Fig 43. Paul Vousden *The Brexit Horizon* (2018) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

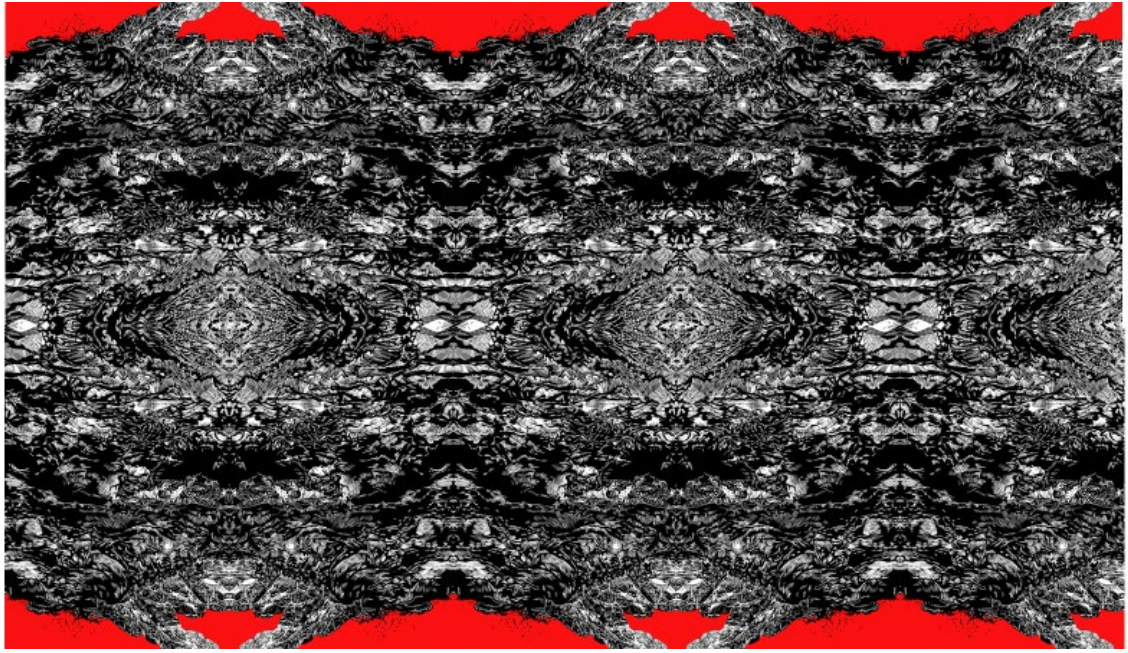


Fig 44. Paul Vousden *The Brexit Horizon II* (2018) digital artwork. Indeterminate dimensions

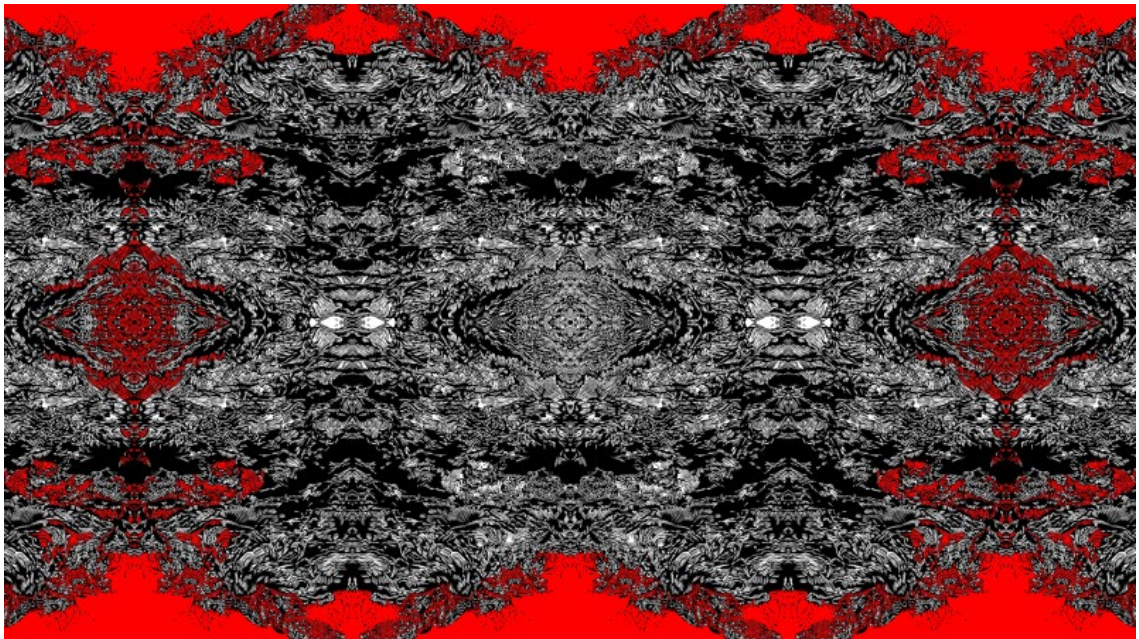


Fig 45. Paul Vousden *The Brexit Horizon III* (2018) digital print. 85cm by 42cm

The Horizontal Sublime



Fig 46. Paul Vousden *The Horizontal Sublime* (2018) acrylic on panel 366cm x 136.5cm

The triptych entitled *The Horizontal Sublime* measures 366cm by 136.5cm and is produced upon eighteen panels, each measuring 61cm by 45.5cm. The painting draws upon previous material research and was imagined as a manifestation of these discoveries applied to a large-scale landscape. The artwork combines Burke's opinions on the exterior representation of the sublime with the interiority of expression. I thought of the painting as a contested territory between eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy, subject and painted object. It is a demonstration of what art could look like if one were to take Burke's *Enquiry* as a handbook for artistic production (White, 2009:71).

A new interpretation of the Burkean Sublime in landscape painting

The painting eschews conventional, perspective based, representation. In the central panel of the triptych, the sea is presented as the embodiment of a hostile other, using

invented white forms, with a splash of red reflected light, on a black background. These forms are reminiscent of those to be found within the *Island of Boundless Pain* (fig 34). They are constructions based upon external observation and internal emotional responses to the sea's assault upon the senses. The central panel of *The Horizontal Sublime* has no horizon line. This deliberate omission echoes decisions taken by Turner, in *The Wreck of a Transport Ship* (1810), and Kerr in *Holding my Breath II* (2013) to create presentations of the sea in which nature threatens to engulf the viewer (Escobar 2015).

The side panels of the triptych, left and right, are depictions of the rock armourstone at Sheringham and the edge space of the sea beyond. The rock formations appear to writhe and dissolve because their painted surfaces are depicted in a maelstrom of painted marks. These marks are based upon observational drawings previously created, refined, and reformed by the imagination, energised by enthusiasm, and informed by the intellect of Burke's aesthetic philosophy.

The painting is unlike any of the digital prints and drawings made before it because of its unprecedented scale and the method of paint application. The wild blurring, smearing, and dragging techniques of painting, employed by artists such as Turner and Kerr, which express elevating awe, sublimity, and mastery over nature, are avoided. Instead of confident expansive expressions in paint, I have attempted to imply terror before nature through tightly controlled gesture in line. The marks I have made are individually small, frenetic, and knowingly suggestive of unease. My deliberate repression of painted gesture, when developed over such a large surface, implies a disciplined and anxious approach to mark making, and a commitment to aesthetic development based upon Burke's proposition that, 'curiosity blends itself more or less with all our passions' (Burke, 1757-59:29). My method of representation is therefore my own and is informed by my powerlessness, both before nature and in society. Rather than confidently capturing nature for presentation to an admiring audience, I have fixated nervously upon the surface details of the seashore and sea defences at Sheringham. My fixation expresses both knowing deceit and the genuine intensity of my imaginative response to seeing, thinking, being and feeling. I have knowingly attempted to project the idea of repression and trembling before nature. This expression of fearfulness, rather than emancipation, communicates the relationship between terror and the sublime as described by Burke in his darkest moments of reflection in the *Enquiry*.

My observations are produced in the bold colours black, red, and white. White is overlaid upon black to produce maximum visual contrast. Black is the background colour upon which all other colours are applied and because of this colour's strong association with darkness, which is magnified by an increase in scale, an effect is created relevant to the sublime (Burke, 1757-59:66,132-3). In small areas of the work red linework is placed over a black background to confuse and disorientate the eye. Everywhere in this painting the picture plane is near the surface, thereby threatening the viewer with an engulfing effect (Escobar 2015). As a totality the visual devices deployed in the painting echo Burke's attempt to assert heroic identity, via an engagement with the aesthetic of the sublime, without engaging with any real danger. Furniss may dismiss this sort of aesthetic engagement as an 'efficacious fiction' rather 'than a genuine transcendence' (Furniss, 1993:29). I prefer to argue that in painting, a fiction created by the artist which successfully produces a desired reaction gives art a functionless power, similar to that which Eagleton describes in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990).

The production of *The Horizontal Sublime* was an experience which initially conformed to Burke's conception of delight. The first nine panels of the artwork, the left half of the triptych, were produced with great enthusiasm and speed. However, in order to create the desired mirrored image, I was forced to employ tracing techniques which were unbelievably laborious, time consuming and monotonous. This tracing process effectively forced me to redraw the same construction four times. However, Burke's thoughts upon the nature of artistic deceit and his general equating of hard work and energy, with a healthy optimistic attitude helped me overcome this challenge.



Fig 47. Paul Vousden *The Horizontal Sublime* (2018) Paul Vousden, acrylic on panel. 366cm x 136.5cm

The painting was initially shown (in a state of near completion) at my Confirmation examination on the 3rd September 2018. During this process, the work was discussed and deemed to be an example of how my curiosity had driven a process in which philosophy had become visual and empirical activity. I also felt that this painting had engaged with several important Burkean conceptions. I had used Burke's conception of nature as an overwhelming and terrible power in the painting. I had also used his thoughts on the usefulness of scale in sublime presentation, his privileging of the idea of obscurity, his colour theory, and his ideas about the relationship between the sublime and broken or rugged surfaces. During the painting process I had also felt connected to the idea of the Burkean Sublime because, from a safe and comfortable distance, I had engaged with a confrontation with an idea of danger. After Confirmation I found myself alone in the examination room and, whilst staring into my painting, I was rewarded with a feeling of Burkean delight and the sudden realisation that the panels in the artwork could be displayed in multiple configurations to create boundless visual possibilities.

A new perspective on the seascape horizon

My artwork *Seascape Horizon* (2018) (fig 49) was the last painting I produced which explores the idea of the horizontal sublime. This experiment evolved as a reaction to the pre-planned production of the triptych *The Horizontal Sublime* (2018). During the making of this artwork I became increasingly aware that the application of flat paint on a flat surface had resulted in a highly controlled double articulation between theory and practice. This material demonstration of visual thinking echoed Burke's attempt to 'impose strict laws and very narrow limits on the recalcitrant material of the passions' (Phillips, 1990:28). However, once the painting was finished, the problems and the dangers implicit in the painting process seemed resolved. After Confirmation I therefore became fearful that future artworks might become impotent repetitions of a safe aesthetic formula. Such repetition would lack any semblance of a Burkean fictional threat during creation and thereby undermine the positive reaffirming of selfhood which is part of the myth of the philosophically self-made individual according to Burke (Furniss, 1993:31). Therefore I began to think about how my next painting could develop beyond a safely resolved reflection of theory into a visual demonstration of Burkean theory emerging from the physical process of practice. I particularly wanted to introduce chaos and chance into my painting but without resorting to aping the gestural expressions of either Turner or Kerr. I felt that chaos and chance were important in my painting to reconnect, in a new way, with the relationship between aesthetics, emotions and a sense of staged danger, as expressed in the *Enquiry*.

Testing Rodolphe Gasche's interpretation of Burke's aesthetic theory

Burke states in *Part Three, Section XIV*, of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *SMOOTHNESS* that smoothness is a 'quality so essential to beauty' that he cannot 'recollect any thing beautiful that is not smooth' (Burke, 1757-9:103). He then expands upon the aesthetic virtues of smoothness by stating that any beautiful object no longer pleases the eye once its surface becomes rugged and broken (Burke, 1757-59:104). Burke then suggests that the 'liveliest idea of beauty' is presented by flowers (Burke, 1757-9:105-06).

Burke's argument made me consider how I could employ a rugged and broken surface in painting to create chance effects in keeping with the concept of a storm-tossed seascape. His words also suggested to me the idea of juxtaposing painting on a ragged surface with passages of highly controlled painting on a smooth surface to evoke the concept of the beautiful. My speculations on the usefulness of Burke's thoughts on surface qualities led me to imagine how the arguments expressed by Rodolphe Gasche in his text, *And the Beautiful? Revisiting Burke's "Double Aesthetics"* (2012) might lend themselves to painting.

Gasche's interpretation of the *Enquiry* privileges the concept that the sublime and the beautiful are intrinsically linked, and that one cannot have one without the other. Gasche's argument suggested to me that painting could be used to explore the possibility that the sublime, as a visual effect, could be heightened when juxtaposed with the beautiful. I perceived Gasche's line of reasoning as being an extension of Burke's conception of compound abstract words, and their powerful effect upon the imagination.

The painting *Seascape Horizon* (2018) (fig 49) juxtaposes the sublime and the beautiful. This is achieved by placing a carefully drawn and delicately rendered collection of flowers into the space of a turbulent seascape. The flowers hang impossibly above the sea and these two elements have no clear relationship to each other. This painting is a visual simile for Burke's interpretation of Milton's 'universe of death' (Burke, 1757-59: 159) because it is inventive, emotive and yet an obscure combination of elements which create a compound abstract expression beyond normal perception.

The flowers are coloured white, pale purple, lilac, pink, pale yellow, pale red, and orange. These colours are suggestive of beauty, according to Burke, and because each colour is also gradually modulated in the petals, the effect of beauty is enhanced

(Burke, 1757-59: 106, 144-45). The drawing of these flowers was produced using photographic reference and was a calm, relaxing and largely unchallenging experience.

By contrast the sea is made up of only two flat colours, lamp black and strong purple. According to Burke both these colours are suggestive of the qualities of the sublime because both have sombre natures (Burke, 1757-59:75). In the process of material production, areas of the painting related to the idea of the sublime, the sea and sky, were produced by applying unblended pigment onto an uneven lamp black background. This method of painting was extremely difficult because no reference was used. Aesthetic success or failure depended upon responding instantly to the ideas of either the obscure infinities of the ocean, or sky. Interpretations of these two obscure entities emerged from my memories of walking along the coastline at Sheringham, and the process of lightly dragging a heavily loaded brush over impasto. Wave forms and clouds were therefore created both from empirical experience and seemingly randomly as paint layers informed each other. The uneven background of the canvas continually dictated hand movements as I sought to follow ridges and shapes in the underpainting. This method of production was unbounded, wildly unpredictable, chaotic, and artistically dangerous. The cloud formations produced by this visual experiment challenge Burkean colour theory because they are created from relatively clear and pale flesh pigment. This pale colouring should not be capable of creating an impression of the sublime according to Burke. The tension produced by this way of painting struck me as a vigorous mental exercise. I felt that for me the canvas could be understood as a safe space upon which I had engaged with the dangerous idea of a deliberately challenging, and risky, painting process and how this could be used to exercise my imagination. After I had successfully, in my opinion, produced a two-dimensional symbol for the fearfulness of the sea and sky at Sheringham, I relaxed and was rewarded by an experience of delight in my accomplishment. These felt experiences repeated the fear and delight I had enjoyed during the making of *The Horizontal Sublime* (figs 46-47) and showed that Burke's conception of the sublime could still be extended and explored to further positive critical effect.



Fig 48. Paul Vousden *Seascape Horizon (detail)* (2018) Paul Vousden, oil paint on canvas. 100cm by 100cm



Fig 49. Paul Vousden *Seascape Horizon* (2018) oil paint on canvas. 100cm by 100cm



Fig 50. Paul Vousden *Seascape Horizon II* (2018) digital artwork made from painting. Indeterminate dimensions

Conclusion to Part Two: the Burkean Horizontal Sublime

In this chapter I have adopted an autoethnographic approach to research into my conception of the Burkean Horizontal Sublime. In pursuit of this aim I have specifically explored how the sea defences at Sheringham can be visually exploited in art practice to suggest both the unknowable nature of the sea's formless power and associative psychological dread. This process of discovery has been engaged with using the Burkean aesthetic themes of associative meaning, vastness of scale, conceptions of depth, chilling darkness, emptiness and terror. These structured limits to perception have proven to be helpful in creating links between reality and artistic presentation which, according to Burke, embody experience and thereby affect reactions. My reflective processes have also resulted in images which experiment with twisting, mirroring, and using a myriad of the lines, both angular and curved, to create imagery. According to Burke's aesthetic theory, these artistic methods of presentation should create in the viewer feelings of energy, anxiety, confusion and movement which are pertinent to the wider themes explored in this chapter. In the next chapter Burke's aesthetic credibility will be further explored in spaces which extend vertically downward.

Two surprising outcomes from my research have been uncovered using art practice in this chapter. The first is that Burke's rather restrictive opinions on how colour informs the passions appears to be flawed. Visual experiments show that although colours can

be divided into light and cheerful or dark and gloomy groups, no implicit reason exists in a contemporary context to suggest that any colour is unfit to produce sublime images. The second discovery is that Burke's equally restrictive opinion that gently curving lines are 'constituents of beauty', which by implication means that terror and the sublime cannot be communicated using serpentine lines, is also flawed and marks a limit to the credibility of his theory of the passions (Burke, 1757-59:104-105).

Part Three

The Burkean Vertical Sublime

Introduction

By the autumn of 2018 I was ready to explore how manifestations of Burke's thinking on the sublime could be produced from vertical spaces. During previous research I had explored an open space, filled with turbulence, movement, energy, fluidity, and associated with nationalist anxiety. I now intended to pursue the themes of Burke's *Enquiry* into a landscape offering the antithesis of these aesthetic values. I was therefore searching for a space associated with Burkean conceptions of terror which was vertical, enclosed, still, solid, cramped, silent and somehow linked to the idea of oppression from within, rather than fear of oppression from without. This new phase of research aimed to further explore the *Enquiry's* usefulness and relevance to contemporary landscape painting.

The search for the vertical sublime

My first attempt to identify a space within Britain which could be used to explore the concept of the Burkean Vertical Sublime was inspired by my memories of James Ward's (1769-1859) enormous painting of the Gordale Scar. His painting, which he entitled *Gordale Scar* (1812-14) is repeatedly described by academics and historians in terms of the sublime, and so I initially thought of this space as a potential arena for material research.



Fig 51. James Ward *Gordale Scar* (1812-14)

My first painting of the subject simply extended the working method I had previously adopted, in *Seascape Horizon* (fig 49) (Part Two). Once again, I used Burkean colour theory to create a visually arresting landscape (Burke, 1757-59:75,144,132-3,144-5) and again I applied flat pigment over an uneven background to discover hidden forms which were revealed, as I responded to the dangerously unpredictable, accidental effects, lightly dragging a heavily loaded brush over impasto creates. In this painting I also developed my idea that compound abstract expression could be manifested by entwining different media and paint application techniques to create a visual equivalence of Burke's conception of compound abstract words. In this artwork I combined oil bar drawing with acrylic and oil painting. This painting excited me during production but once finished I realised it did not explore many of the qualities needed to extend Burkean aesthetic theory via practice. The Gordale Scar space, although visually interesting, was an open space, whipped by the energy of the elements and too closely associated with qualities of the Burkean sublime explored in previous research.



Fig 52. Paul Vousden *Gordale Scar* (2019) acrylic, oilbar and oil paint on canvas. 66cm by 102cm

Classed consciousness in the *Enquiry*, explained in terms of its relevance to my search for a space reflective of the Burkean Vertical Sublime

My initial struggle to identify a Burkean vertical space with a political dimension relevant to Burkean aesthetic theory, and my lived experiences, led me to delve deeper into my perception of Burke's attitude to wider society and taste. In his *Introduction on Taste* Burke reveals how his understanding of the imagination is a classed conception by stating:

'many of the works of imagination are not confined to the representation of sensible objects, nor to efforts upon the passions, but extend themselves to the manners, the characters, the actions, and designs of men, their relations, their virtues and vices, they come within the province of the judgement, which is improved by attention and by the habit of reasoning.' (Burke, 1757-59: 22) [...] 'whilst we consider Taste, merely according to its nature and species, we shall find its principles entirely uniform; but the degree in which these principles prevail in the several individuals of mankind, is altogether as different as the principles themselves are similar' (Burke, 1757-59:22-23).

With these words Burke is making a statement about himself which, I believe, shows him as aware of both his ordinariness as a feeling man and extra-ordinariness as middle-class individual thinker. Such a divided sense of self began to inform my thinking and incongruous aesthetic identity. I began to see Burke's thoughts on taste, imagination and class reflected in the characteristics of artists I personally knew, all of whom I reasoned, must be moved by similar motivations and the inevitable virtues and vices implicit within their classed identities.

The divided nature of Burke's thought process and relevance to the realities of contemporary social stratification weighed down on me. I sometimes reflected guiltily upon my decision to live off my savings and study art and the sublime, following redundancy from my poorly paid retail management job, rather than seeking more appropriate low skilled, re-assimilation into the conventional working-class workplace. I began to wonder if, from a Burkean perspective, my studies were an inappropriate experiment, playing 'fast and loose with the very foundations upon which civilised society depended' (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2001: 85).

These uncomfortable thoughts had a positive critical affect, they made me pine for my past and the meagre rewards of employment. My longing for the security of waged activity made me focus more intently on the relationship between landscape, identity, and labour. I started to wonder if I could celebrate the process of toil through the

production of a British landscape, a vertical space associated with the kind of labour I understood. I imagined this space as offering me a form of redemption from my self-centred academic individualism, and an opportunity to tackle the idea of a picture requiring the application of hard physical work, long hours, intense concentration, toil, discipline, and determination. Effectively I began to imagine a drawing or painting which would require the application of an artistic analogy with working-class manual labour.

Back to work, discovering the Apedale Heritage Centre, and thoughts on toil and tragedy

Eventually I identified a landscape which fulfilled the physical and associative attributes I was searching for. The discovery of a disused coal mine which now functions as the Heritage Centre at Apedale in Staffordshire, offered an opportunity to explore a dark, sometimes cramped, underground landscape which descends vertically and has strong historical connections to working-class privation, oppression and culture. In the *Enquiry* Burke links his understanding of privation, and darkness, to descriptions of death, Satan, suffering, and hell (Burke, 1757-59: 55-65) and it is easy to imagine how coal mining in the eighteenth-century helped create conceptions of hell and the sublime, both above and below ground, as new landscapes were formed by exploitative industry.

More recently, the distress and tragedy associated with the wilfully managed destruction of the mining community, by a powerful elite, has informed the personality of all British mining spaces. This elite was initially the Conservative government of 1979 to 1997, who in 1984 unveiled a pit closure programme which threatened the jobs of the nation's miners and provoked a year-long strike. This strike failed in its objective to save the nation's coal industry, and approximately 150,000 defeated British miners returned to work on 3rd March 1985 (Freese, 2005: 240–246), to await their fate at the hands of the Conservative government, and the National Coal Board. By 2005, and under a Labour government, fewer than 5,000 British miners were still in employment. This dramatic loss of coal mining jobs was achieved despite, in 2004, coal still being required to provide about a third of the U.K.'s electricity. This electricity was largely produced by imported coal from Australia, Colombia, Poland, South Africa, and the U.S. (Freese, 2005: 247). This final link to the idea of a British working-class cohort being managed, controlled, and discarded, helped me to self-identify with a space I had never visited or worked in.

Delving deeper: the Apedale mine considered in terms of my perception

On Saturday 11th March 2019 I entered the lamp room at the Apedale Heritage Centre. I had prepared for this field trip by searching for British art and artists who had previously explored coal mining's subterranean depths, so important to Britain's Industrial Revolution, and had been surprised by how few had produced artworks representing this world. According to Julian Freeman in *British Art. A walk round the rusty pier* (2006) few artists of the eighteenth or nineteenth-century wanted to produce depictions of coal fired new industries because 'they simply weren't money-spinners' (Freeman, 2006: 183). During these same eras no British artist of any significance exploited the sublime aesthetic qualities of coal mining out of personal interest. This omission tells a story of classed indifference to labour and mining. Where artists did depict working class labour, in Joseph Wright's *An Iron Forge* (1772), Ford Madox Brown's *Work* (1852-65) and William Scott Bell's *Industry of the Tyne: Iron and Coal* (1861), labour is staged, sanitised and idealised.



Fig 53. Joseph Wright *An Iron Forge* 1772



Fig 54. Ford Madox Brown *Work* 1852-65



Fig 55. William Scott Bell's *Industry of the Tyne: Iron and Coal* 1861

A lack of interest in mining as a subject worthy of depiction by influential artists in Britain, continued until the Second World War. During this period British society struggled for its very survival and the artists Graham Sutherland and Henry Moore were commissioned, by the government, to paint and draw mining activity. Their artworks can be very broadly described as modernist and heroic portrayals of working-class labour.

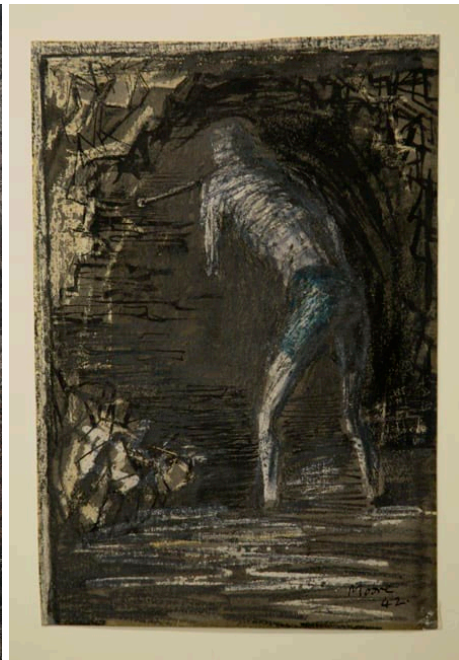


Fig 56. L-R Graham Sutherland *Miner probing a drill hole* 1942 and Henry Moore *Miner drilling* 1942

Although these artists produced interesting and visually dark presentations of mining activity and conditions, their contributions looked a little staged and cosy to my post-modern sensibilities. I felt that the Pitman Miners Art Group, also known as the Ashington Group, offered a more authentic presentation of the mining experience. Norman Cornish (1919-2014) and Tom McGuinness (1926–2006) are arguably the most influential artists to have emerged from this group. Although I greatly enjoyed the expressions of everyday grey drudgery which Norman Cornish stylishly presented, his paintings, although excellent, have limited connection to my perception of terror's associative links to mining environments.

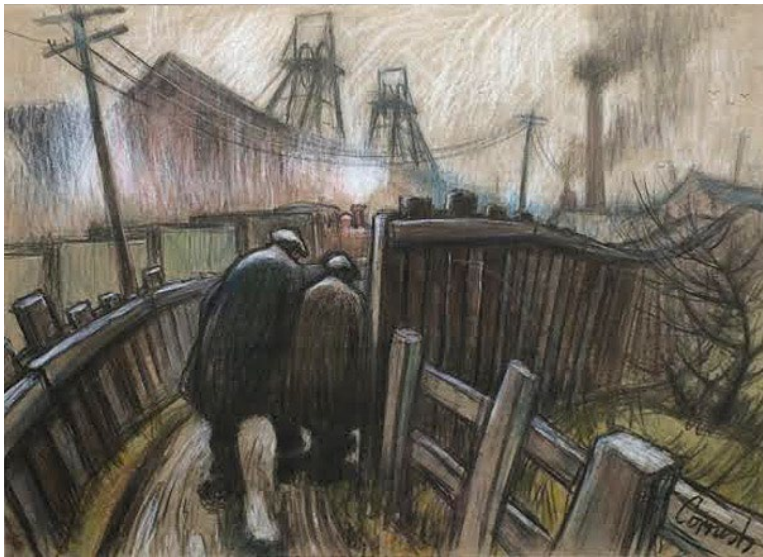


Fig 57. Norman Cornish *Two Miners on Pit Road* (1980s-) acrylic, pastel on paper. 61cm by 84cm

However, in contrast to my measured enthusiasm for Cornish, I was stunned by the artworks of Tom McGuinness, particularly his dark etchings and watercolours. I found the spindly looking miners and the sense of urgency and depth of expression he projected through depiction, almost upsetting to look at. To me the miners McGuinness created looked exhausted and their surroundings terrifying. In *At the coalface* (1978) miners dissolve into their surroundings whilst in *Miners in the cage* (1985) entrapment and claustrophobia are forcefully implied. I would argue that McGuinness succeeds where other artists have failed in making a direct connection to emotive response, space and emotive lived experience.



Fig 58. Tom McGuinness *At the coal face* 1978 and *Miners in the cage* 1985

Despite my discovery of McGuinness, I was unable to uncover an artist who had recently presented the landscape of an inactive mine. For me, this revelation was both a disappointment and a boon. It seemed to suggest that the contemporary subterranean landscape of an abandoned contemporary mine, with all its poignant symbolic meaning, offered a relatively ignored and unexplored territory within which I could make a new contribution to British landscape depiction.

The relative lack of painted representations of mining history meant that I also explored literature to more fully understand the environment I was entering. I read *These Poor Hands* (1939) by Bertie Louis Coombes Griffiths (1893-1974) and George Orwell's middle-class perspective on mining and toil, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). These books helped create a sense of expectation and added to the feeling of excitement associated with entering a space so richly informed by history.

My guide to the underworld

My tour guide was named Jeff and he was an imposing figure, with a strong Yorkshire accent, wide grin and hands the size of dinner plates. Jeff explained that he was an ex-miner who had worked most of his adult life in the industry. He had been apprenticed as a miner after leaving school and had risen through the ranks to become an explosives expert.

The meaning of the term Burkean Vertical Sublime

Burke states in Part Two, SECTION VII, under the subheading VASTNESS that:

'greatness of dimension, is a powerful cause of the sublime' (Burke, 1757-59:66) and that 'there are ways, and modes, wherein the same quantity of extension shall produce greater effects than it is found to do in others' (Burke, 1757-59:66).

With these words Burke is making the important observation that spaces which extend either by length, height, or depth, do so with effects upon the viewer which are *uneven*. Although Burke confesses to the reader that he is far from certain of his reasoning, he nevertheless concludes that an extension of space by length has the least effect upon a viewer, he further states that:

'height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than at looking up at an object of equal height' (Burke, 1757:66).

Effectively Burke is stating that when considering how space expands, the most powerful sublime effect is produced by spaces which extend downwards. I would therefore argue that spaces which extend downwards to grand effect can be termed the Burkean Vertical Sublime. The term vertical sublime, or inverted sublime, has previously been used by Claudia Bell and John Lyall (2002), to signify spaces which expand vertically (Bell, Lyall, 2002:71-96). However Bell and Lyall's use of the term does not privilege the contents of the *Enquiry*, nor does it have a specific connection to mining or the Apedale Heritage Centre.

The entrance to the underworld

Jeff explained that the vertical descent required to explore the deep mine at Apedale would require the ability to tolerate claustrophobic spaces and to crawl in single file. Our party then sauntered confidently out of the brightly lit lamp room and across a work yard warmed by spring sunlight. This warm and bright interlude ended abruptly as we passed through a steel gate and into the almost instantaneous gloom and chill of the mine.

Burke states in *Part Two, SECTION XIV*, under the subheading *LIGHT* that a 'quick transition from light to darkness' (Burke, 1757-59:73) is productive of the idea of the sublime and that 'darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light' (Burke, 1757-59:73).

Burke's words are self-explanatory but I was immediately struck by the relevance of his observation concerning perception as the light of day abruptly ceased and I entered a space I knew had been used daily by miners for decades. I was also aware that for

some miners the space I was now walking through was a dreaded conduit leading to a socially constructed place of oppression.

Burke's relationship to the abyss

Thomas Mann claims that peering into an abyss allows the viewer to experience the forbidden thrill of peering into the darkness of the id (Bell, Lyall, 2002: 92). Mann's conception of the abyss as a conduit to the inner self strikes me as a contemporary extension of Burke's aesthetic philosophy because both thinkers use the senses of the body to inform the imagination and intellect. Mann's use of a merging between the id and dark spaces is a modern equivalent of Burke's use of Christian language to explore the terrors of similar spaces. Both thinkers appear to me to be reflecting anxiously upon God's withdrawal from perception and attempting to reimagine a new form of relationship to fear and spirituality.

Disappointment and consolation

To my disappointment Jeff explained that all drift mines slope into the underworld rather than descending vertically. I had been hoping that a little further into the mine we would enter a cramped miner's cage and plummet into the depths at great speed, but this experience was not to be. Later I imagined how descending in a miner's cage might feel. According to Orwell these cages regularly travelled at speeds of up to sixty miles per hour (Orwell, 1937: 21). I produced a digital drawing which reflected on this imagined experience, *Entrance to Hell* (fig59). This drawing is unremarkable but during its production I had time to reflect on how the process of drawing a landscape, without experience of that landscape, feels like a consolation for an experience unfelt, a life un-lived and is unconnected to the reality of place.



Fig 59. Paul Vousden *Entrance to Hell* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

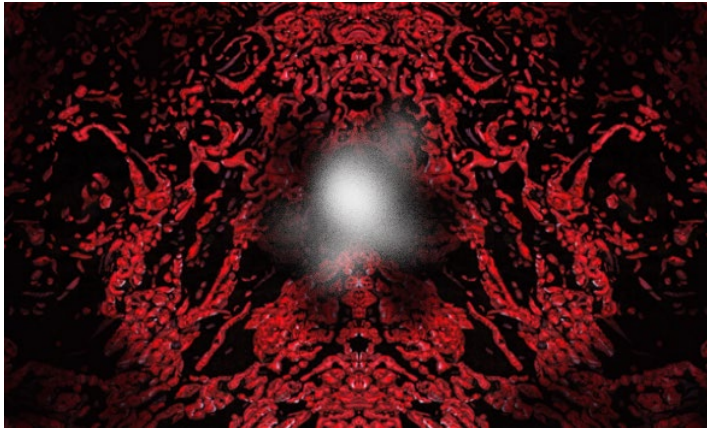


Fig 60. Paul Vousden *Entrance to Hell II* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

An invisible enemy

Jeff then described how coal can be extricated from a drift mine using wagons or tubs which are hauled directly to the surface by cable. He also explained that the mine was well ventilated by a combination of a powerful fan and strategically placed doors which control airflow and remove dangerous gasses. This invisible danger was demonstrated by the placing of a measuring device for toxicity into a known hotspot. This hotspot was a shallow and unimposingly small crevice on the mine floor. Jeff's device dutifully lit up and beeped, thereby signalling a potentially lethal danger. I was struck by the disparity between the physicality and potential deadly reality of this small fissure. The thought that small, unseen pockets of gas can be so dangerous greatly impressed me.

In *Part Two, SECTION II* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *TERROR* Burke makes clear his view that dangerous phenomena, no matter how physically unimposing, or lacking in size, always have a quality of the sublime. He states that 'it is impossible to look on any thing as trifling, or contemptible, that may be dangerous' (Burke, 1757-9:53) [sic].

The idea of an invisible killer waiting in the dark for the unwary slipped unbidden into the background of my imagination and refused to leave. The small digital drawing *Entrance to Hell II* (fig.60) was produced to rid me of this formless invasion of the mind, it failed.

The descents

The gentle descent into the Apedale mine was short lived and came to a halt beside a tiny shelf like opening, almost hidden in the semi-dark, which was cut into the side of

the shaft. To my surprise Jeff then informed us that a ladder awaited us on the other side of this aperture which would take us down into the deep mine.

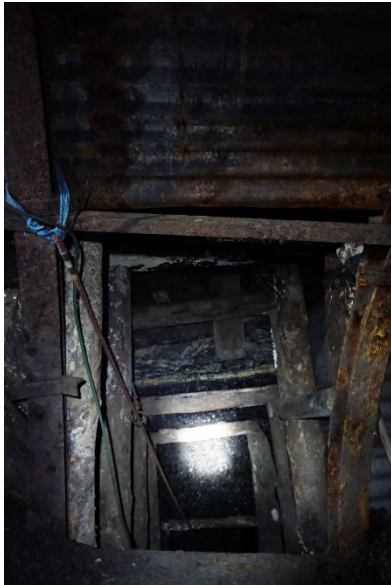


Fig 61. The entrance to the deep mine tour (2019)

The next hour was spent descending more ladders and alternatively crawling, crouching and walking upright along a labyrinth of tunnels cut into the earth.

I was quickly aware of the rapid continual descent of the guided tour and began imagining the mountain of solid rock, flints, subsoil, vegetation and buildings above me. I began to wonder how I could possibly present the concept of the distance between myself and the surface in paint or graphite. I was also surprised by how the mine seemed to alternate between larger spaces constructed from steel and iron, studded with the discarded paraphernalia of twentieth century industry, and cramped, very dark spaces, constructed from wood and stone which resembled eighteenth-century workplaces.

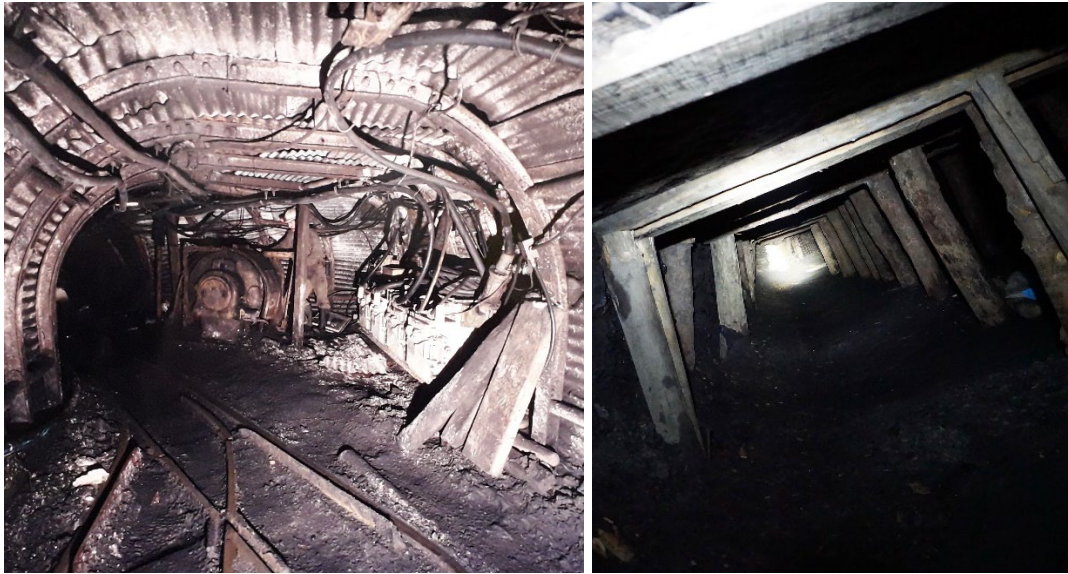


Fig 62. The dual nature of the Apedale mine (2019)

Jeff explained that the cramped shafts were extremely cost effective and just as safe as their more spacious and modern looking counterparts. Passing through these cramped spaces, many of which were barely five feet high, was a strange experience. Jeff's stature meant that he was forced to crawl, as were several men in our party, for fairly long lengths in these parts of the mine

Pride and prejudice

Jeff pointed out that the mine had been privately owned by Aurora Mine Limited until 1998 and that they promoted the practice of cost cutting as much as was legally possible. Jeff stated that the use of small shafts supported by wooden braces had the positive effect of reviving old skills and creating the mine's dual identity. He was obviously proud of the fact that during the late twentieth-century, wooden braces were used in the mine as workers struggled to reach new seams of coal. Jeff was at pains to point out the tremendous effort and strength that was required to manually brace mine shafts, using nothing more than wooden beams, wedges, mallets, and muscle.

In the *Enquiry* Burke makes the sublime experience a classed event which is reflective of the divinely ordained unequal distribution of status and wealth. According to Burke the working classes must toil bodily, whilst middle-class entrepreneurial thinkers, such as himself, labour intellectually. In later life, particularly after the French Revolution (1789) Burke applies the term 'labour' to 'articulate the difference between himself and his political opponents, whom he accuses of laziness, of not engaging in the real, arduous work of political thought' (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2001: 75). According to Burke

radical thinkers and revolutionary politicians are lazy because their compassion for the poor blinds them to the reality that low paid bodily labour is necessary to support God's natural order. Burke also believed, in later life, that pity for the poor was dangerous 'because it might raise the expectations of the labourers and foster resentment when those expectations were disappointed' (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2001: 75).

In the *Enquiry in Part Two, SECTION XII*, under the subheading *DIFFICULTY*, Burke expresses an appreciation for landscapes of labour when he states:

'another source of greatness is Difficulty. When any work seems to have required immense force and labour to effect it, the idea is grand. Stonehenge, neither for disposition nor ornament, has anything admirable; but those huge rude masses of stone, set on end, and piled each on other, turn the mind on the immense force necessary for such work' (Burke, 1757-9:71).

Burke's statement shows he had an appreciation of how constructed landscapes, requiring the exertion of immense physical force, have a natural grandeur linked to the idea of the sublime. I could imagine Burke nodding approvingly at Jeff and thoroughly delighting in the subterranean Apedale landscape.

Reflections on the contemporary classed experience of the Vertical Sublime

My interest in how perception of the Burkean Sublime is divided between appreciation of the distinctions between individual and communal thought and activity, was also aided by reading sections of Gruffudd Aled Ganobcsik-Williams's PhD thesis *The Sweat of the Brain: Representations of Intellectual Labour in the Writings of Edmund Burke, William Cobbett, William Hazlitt, and Thomas Carlyle* (2001). In this text Ganobcsik-Williams argues that Burke was tempted to emphasise his own mental exceptionalism and typicality in his intellectual endeavours which he imagined as an analogy with manual labour (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2001: 14).

In contemporary Britain Burke's theory that an intellectual elite engage with the sublime by accessing an exhilarating energy of the mind, whilst the inferior classes know the sublime mainly through physical toil still resonates. British intellectuals such as Terry Eagleton, when considering the implications of Burke's poor person's version of the sublime, has concluded that aesthetic experience helps to create a hegemony which 'is not only a matter of the political state, but is installed within the labour process itself' (Eagleton, 1990:57). According to Eagleton's interpretation of the Burkean Sublime, the lower classes engagement with physical struggle, and the surmounting of

difficulties through physical toil, has the benefit of an 'agreeableness of labour' (Eagleton, 1990:56-57). Eagleton concludes that for the lower classes 'wrestling with Nature's recalcitrance is itself a kind of socialised sublime' (Eagleton, 1990: 57).

According to Furniss (1993), Burke's blurring of the distinctions between physical and imaginative experience empowers him to present the dynamic workings of the mind with the discomfort of physical labour. This imagined relationship had a particularly strong attraction to me during the Apedale visit because it allowed me to imagine my appreciation of the sublime as a heroic expression of my middle-aged intellectual individualism and connected to my youthful physical labours.

A deluge of sound

To my astonishment Jeff explained that the supporting wooden and steel braces at Apedale were removed, for use elsewhere, after coal seams had been exhausted, and that these used up areas of the mine were then simply left to collapse. I imagined how strange and terrifying it must have been for miners, especially in the late twentieth-century, to hear a distant shaft collapsing. I also imagined the terrifying and overwhelming sound of a mineshaft collapsing at closer quarters. Once safely out of the mine I resolved to revisit the *Enquiry* to see if Burke had made any connections between the sublime and sound.

In *Part Two, SECTION XIX*, under the subheading *INTERMITTING* of the *Enquiry* Burke states:

'...now some low, confused, uncertain sounds, leave us in the same fearful anxiety concerning their causes, that no light, or an uncertain light does concerning the objects that surround us (Burke, 1757-59:77).

These words explain to the reader that uncertain and confused sounds, such as those which are muffled by distance, create fear and anxiety in the hearer via their effect upon the imagination. This effect operates through the sense of hearing rather like the effect of semi-darkness on the visual senses. In both experiences the imagination attempts to fill in the blanks which are either unheard or unseen. Burke also states in *Part Two, SECTION XVII* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *SOUND and LOUDNESS* that:

'excessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terror. The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awakes a great awful sensation in the mind (Burke, 1757-59:75) [sic].

Essentially Burke is saying here that sound also has the power of the sublime when it overwhelms the hearer. Burke's thoughts on sound are interesting but what I found more interesting was the fact that I heard no sounds of collapsing mine shafts during my visit to Apedale and yet the *imagined* noise of such an event affected me.

A deluge of terror

At one point in the tour our party visited the end space of a supported mine shaft and gazed into the dark obscurity of an eerily silent cavern which was totally unsupported. As Jeff illuminated this darkened void with his torch, small shards of rock and wet coal glistened. Thousands of tiny reflections created an impression of a crowded and visually confused rugged surface extension. To my eyes this scene looked like an underground night sky, I was reminded of the night sky paintings by Peter Doig and Van Gogh. I considered the space beyond the safety of supporting pit braces to be magical and defying logic, above all else this space astonished me. This void also genuinely filled me with horror because, as far as I was concerned the darkness beyond could collapse at any minute.



Fig 63. L-R Peter Doig *Gasthof zur Muldentalsperre* (2002) Vincent van Gogh *Starry Night* (1889)

Once back in my studio I tried to recreate the ominous impression I had experienced whilst viewing this void. I began by creating a line drawing in my sketchbook based on the physicality of what I had seen. Dark blues and greys were employed to evoke an idea of gloom and grandeur. Lighter blues and purples suggested the idea of a chaos of reflected light, form, and barely suppressed energy.

The digital sketch *unsupported mine shaft* (fig 65), and subsequent variations of this drawing (figs 66-67), pleased me as graphic representations of the darkened underground space I had experienced at Apedale. Although the drawing was based on

a remembered encounter, in my opinion the image created has a still, silent, and slightly claustrophobic quality. I felt that my artfully presented reimagining of this landscape had an increased sense of threat, and menace, the more I moved away from purely illustrative colours and embraced a poetic, imperfect, or imaginative, sense of colouring. This colouring was complemented by light over dark linework which highlighted the energy implicit in my drawing process, and perhaps hints at the motionless forces I imagined as building up within the coalface. In my opinion my drawing also engages with the Burkean conceptions of astonishment tinged with terror and presents an idea of a space which had the genuine ability to inflict harm. Furthermore I felt this drawing had succeeded in presenting an idea of a landscape informed by darkness, obscurity, and created from a jumble of crowded and confused lines. It also engages with Burkean conceptions of emptiness, silence, ruggedness and depth. Because the image is lacking a fixed point of reference which would give it a comprehensible scale, the void beyond the depicted coal forms and rocks echoes similar dark spaces used in my practice-based research into the Burkean Horizontal Sublime.

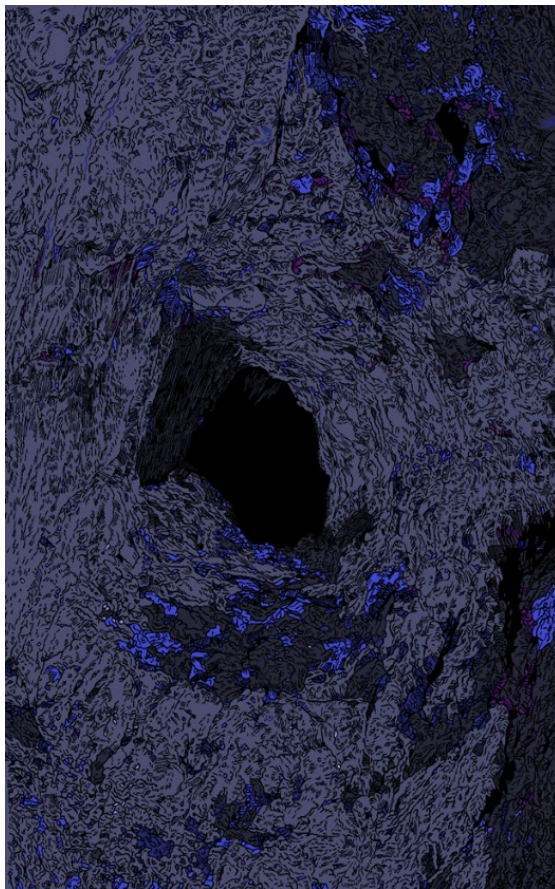


Fig 64. Paul Vousden *The unsupported mine shaft* (2019) digital image using Paint 3D. Indeterminate dimensions

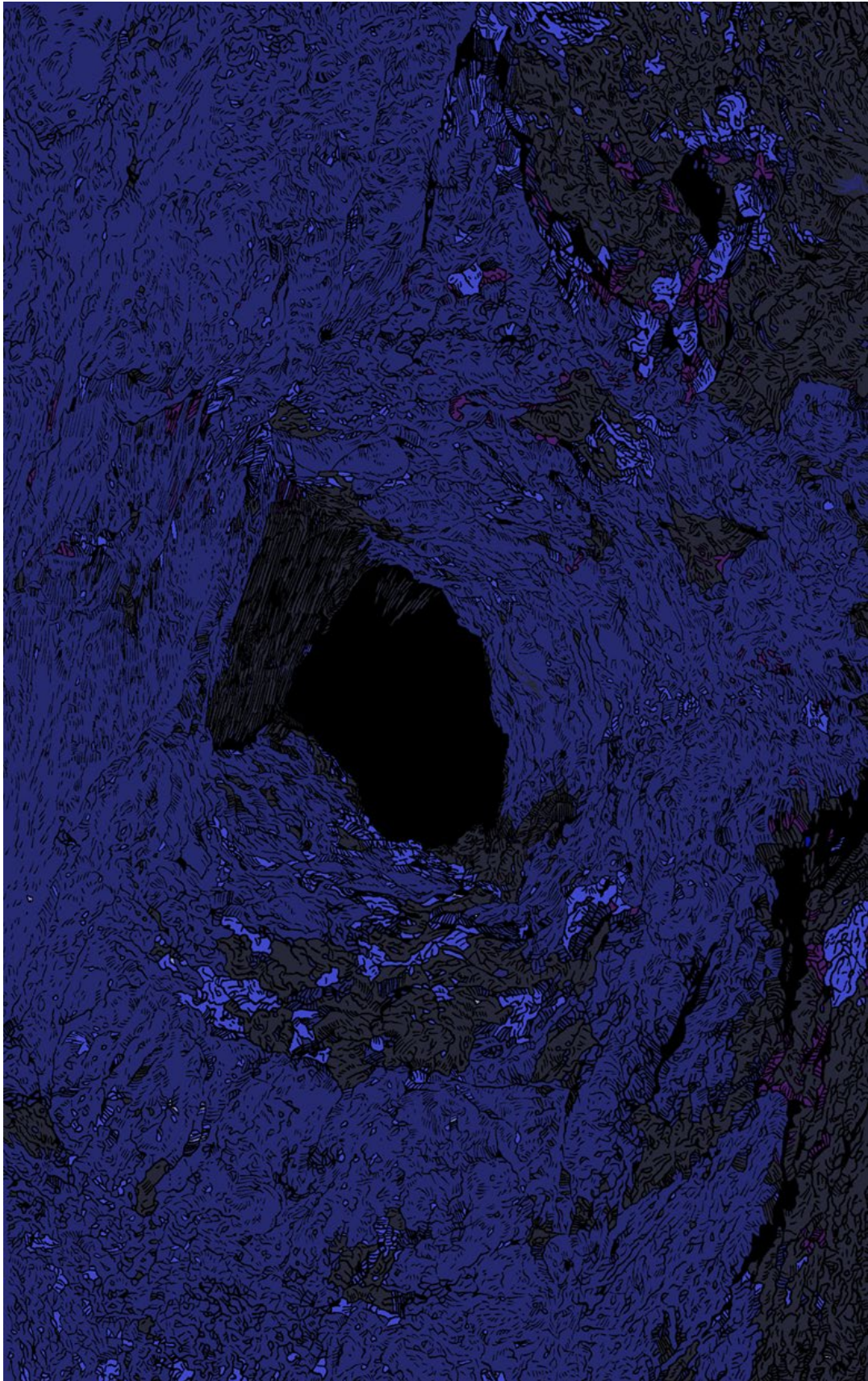


Fig 65. Paul Vousden *The unsupported mine shaft II* (2019) digital image.
Indeterminate dimensions

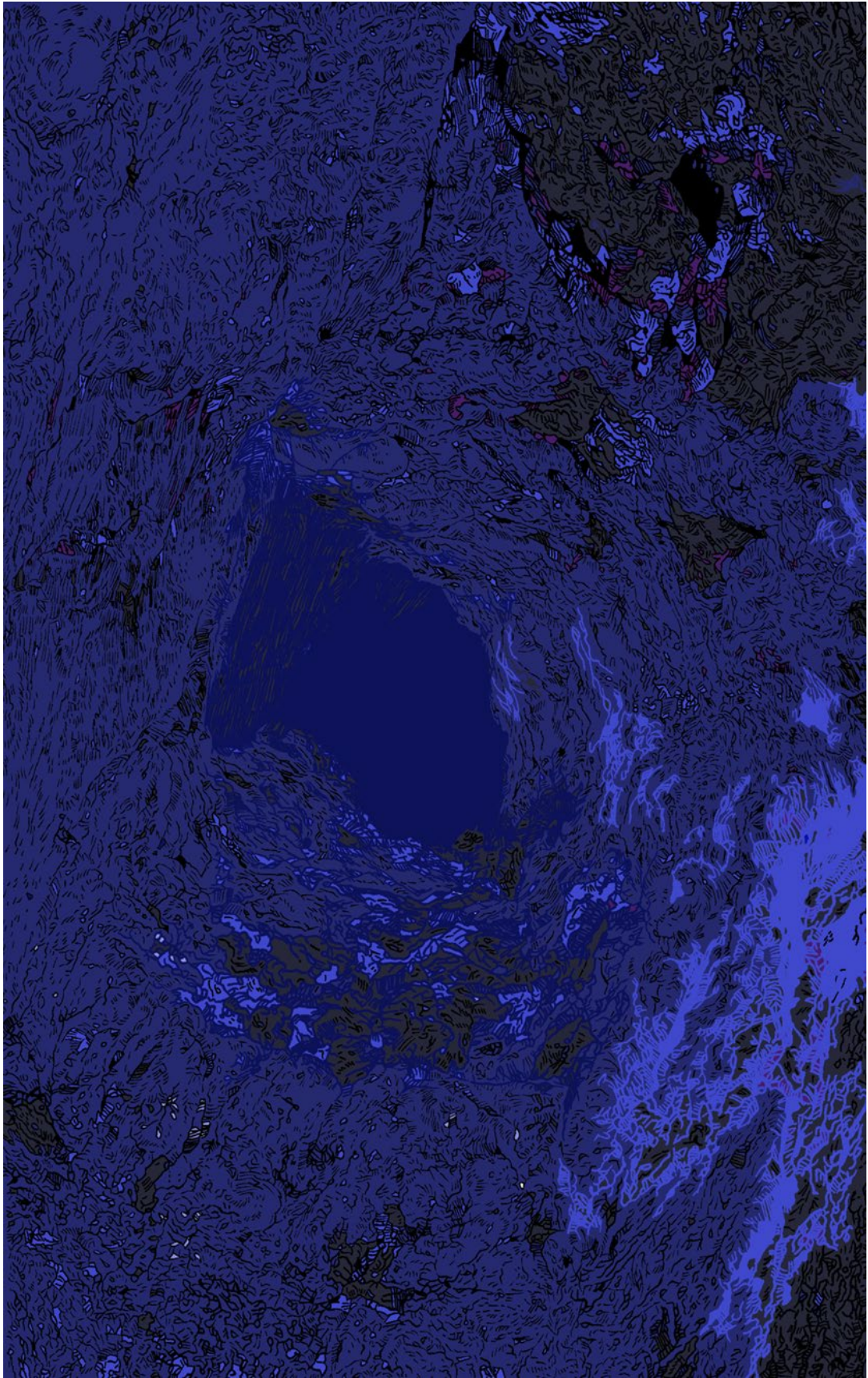


Fig 66. Paul Vousden *The unsupported night sky shaft* (2019) digital image.
Indeterminate dimensions

The power of imperfect presentations of tragedy

To explore further how drawing might more fully facilitate an exploration of Burke's theory of the passions, within the confines of the vertical sublime, I next began considering how I might develop the idea of an imitation of distress in landscape presentation. In *Part Two, SECTION XV* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *Of the effects of TRAGEDY*, Burke states that imitated distresses create pleasure in the viewer because of:

'the pleasure resulting from the effects of imitation; for it is never so perfect, but we can perceive it is an imitation, and on that principle are somewhat pleased with it. And indeed in some cases we derive as much or more pleasure from that source than from the thing itself' (Burke, 1757-59: 43).

So for Burke imitation of distress has artistic value because the process of imitation itself has the potential to create a shared experience between author and audience. The idea that the act of making pictures, linked to distress, can create a conceptual bond between artist and audience struck me as associated to Burke's concept of pleasure resulting from imitation. I further wondered if such pleasure could explain landscape paintings' functionless power when it is linked to tragedy. Burke's emphasis upon the importance of an imperfect presentation also makes explicit the idea that without a human filtering of perception, the presentation of tragedy is limited as an aesthetic event: because it is too real. Marie-Christine Clemente in *The Sublime Dimension of 9/11* echoes this argument in a contemporary context. She states that 9/11 'has an aesthetic dimension, but only to a certain extent, to a certain limit' (Clemente, 2012: 184). This limit is created because as both planes were filmed hitting the towers (a mechanical process devoid of painterly interpretation and imagination) thousands of real human beings lost their lives (Clemente, 2012: 184). Effectively Clemente argues that a technological recording of mass murder is too tangible for the creation of aesthetic pleasure. I would argue that Clemente's contemporary echo of Burke's emphasis upon an imperfect presentation of tragedy suggests that art, with all its flaws and imperfections, can potentially function as a safe way of considering realities which are otherwise too dreadful for contemplation. This trail of thought made me imagine my exploration of the Apedale space as a safe way of engaging with a once dangerous environment and extending perception and presentation between safety and danger.

The positive critical purpose of pain and terror according to Burkean aesthetic theory and their potential relationship to landscape depiction considered

Burke states in *PART TWO, SECTION XXII* under the subheading *FEELING PAIN* of the *Enquiry* that:

‘the idea of bodily pain, in all the modes and degrees of labour, pain, anguish, torment, is productive of the sublime; and nothing else in this sense can produce it’ (Burke, 1757-59:79).

Burke also dwells upon the relationship between pain and terror in *Part Four, SECTION III* under the subheading *Cause of PAIN and FEAR*, he states that:

‘the only difference between pain and terror, is, that things which cause pain operate on the mind, by the intervention of the body; whereas things which cause terror generally affect the bodily organs by the operation of the mind suggesting the danger’ (Burke, 1757-59:120).

Burke’s analysis of how pain invades the mind through the body, whilst terror invades the body through the mind, struck me as analogous to the relationship between landscapes and artists. I reasoned that artists are either affected by landscapes by the process of moving through them physically, in which case landscape invades the mind through the body, or alternatively, the mind dominates landscapes and creates physical responses dependent upon the form of domination adopted. At Apedale I reasoned that two completely different conceptual approaches to this landscape, and perhaps landscape in general, were legitimate. I could either create work which was a response to the physical reality of the immediate experience, or I could create work which was a representation of an idea. After much thought I decided to do both and thereby create representations of experience, psychology and space based on Burkean aesthetic philosophy, which is both empirical and associative.

Thinking about the effects of imitation led me to produce the digital drawing *Labour of torment* (fig 67). In this image four scans of the unsupported mine drawing are mashed together, using PowerPoint, to create an impossibly complex and demonic looking landscape. This landscape attempts to create a psychological rather than physically truthful space based upon the experience of the unsupported mine shaft at Apedale. The aim of this method of presentation was to make an individual reflection of space, and meaning, representative of a wider idea. This idea was that coal mines are implicitly dark, threatening, and sublime spaces informed by Burkean conceptions of

terror and the idea of the abyss being linked to the id, and the mean-spirited conception of lives defined by social stratification. My attempt to fuse the particular to the general was helped by my method of production being informed by Burkean views on the classed experience of the sublime. In effect I turned a landscape into a mindscape. This visual idea is a painting in waiting, eventually, when I have the time and courage, I will attempt it.



Fig 67. Paul Vousden *Labour of torment* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

In contrast to my risk and hardship adverse nature, Jeff's enthusiasm for the torments of labour, both physical and mental, was demonstrated by the stories he told of miners' stoicism. I was intrigued and at times appalled by Jeff's cheerful acceptance of

hardship and he seemed to me to have a genuine love for all I would consider harmful and bad about mining and its history.

The operation of the mind in landscape production considered

During one break in the Apedale descent, Jeff suddenly produced what he called a pig's head. This piece of machinery was a double handled drill bit. According to Jeff, miners would hold this equipment, complete with the extra weight of a drill head, for up to twelve hours in a single shift. He handed me this piece of technology, very deliberately, with one hand. I estimate it weighed nearly twenty kilos and, taken by surprise, I almost dropped it. A grinning Jeff explained to the group that he had seen arms broken when spinning drill heads, operating on coal, unexpectedly hit immovable rock and this immense spinning force became transferred to the hands and arms of a miner. Jeff then stated that in such a circumstance the miner concerned needed to instantly drop the pig's head or face the consequences. The thought of that sudden transferal of spinning energy into human sinew and bone struck me as horrifying. I could not help but imagine the shattering and mashing of bone into muscle and the terror which must accompany the hapless casualty's sudden realization of their predicament. I envisaged the shock and momentary disbelief miners must have experienced as they waited for their reluctant synapses to register incredible pain.

Burke taunts and mocks artists who attempt to imaginatively present ideas of the terrible. He states in *Part Two, SECTION IV* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading *Of the difference between CLEARNESS and OBSCURITY with regards to the passions*, that:

‘when painters have attempted to give us clear representations of these very fanciful and terrible ideas, they have I think almost always failed; insomuch that I have been at a loss, in all pictures I have seen of hell, whether the painter did not intend something ludicrous.’ (Burke, 1757-59:58).

Burke is effectively arguing that painters should be wary of fanciful invention because their imaginations often lead them into the realm of the ludicrous rather than the sublime. His attitude to visual invention seems at odds with the causes of sublimity which he outlines in the *Enquiry*, amongst these are obscurity which is a quality of the sublime linked to the greatness of ideas. Burke pithily equates clear ideas with small ideas and argues ‘that sublimity cannot coexist with clarity’ (Bromwich, 2014: 71).

Burke also argues repeatedly, rather than under a single subheading, that ‘an existence sunk in mere habit and routine – no matter how pleasant it may be’

(Bromwich, 2014: 65) is to be avoided. According to Bromwich, Burke's conception of the imagination invigorates when 'acting as it does on pleasure and pain and affording the mind obstacles or occasions to grapple with, prevents us from declining into that indolence, which would be our constant if we were subject to nothing but the milder sensations' (Bromwich, 2014: 65). Bromwich argues that grappling with complex imaginative obstacles provides a route out of the humdrum and toward sublime experience. From my point of view milder sensations are the realm of the copyist or illustrator of experience, whilst intensity is achieved by daring to move beyond the known, the understood and the seen. Using practice-based research, I tested Burke's contradictory reasoning by producing two drawings of a shaft at Apedale, more or less simultaneously. The drawing *External* (fig 68) is a fairly straightforward view of a section of shaft at Apedale, very little imaginative input was required of me to produce this artwork. During the production of this image I was not particularly challenged, I merely deferred to that which could be seen. However, in the drawings *Internal* (fig 69) and *Internal II* (fig 70) I deliberately attempted to imagine what cannot be seen in Jeff's story, the idea of raw energy ripping through a body and the intensity of pain produced as the horror of this sudden bodily invasion unfurls. In my drawings the idea of pain is imagined as a force unbound, this force is smeared across an Apedale landscape which appears to be alight with intensity derived from the idea of pain and terror. The drawing is a manifestation of the idea of suffering and a secular hell. During the making of this drawing all rules concerning anatomical correctness were abandoned, the form of the human body is lost, it becomes mashed into the background. This visual contrivance takes to an extreme the blending of background and figures I had previously noticed in the details of the Tom McGuinness drawing *At the coal face* (1978) (fig 58).

After producing the *External* and *Internal* drawings I tried to compare and contrast the experiences of material production, and the relative merits of each, as a presentation of themes of the Burkean Sublime. I tentatively concluded that the internal drawings had been more rewarding in terms of a production experience whilst the external drawing had the greater visual coherence and ability to communicate a real space. Effectively I had used my labour to explore the distinctions between physical and imaginative experience and found both to be important but imperfect representations of experience. This finding seemed to agree with Furniss when he argues that Burke's blurring of corporal and imaginative experience allows him to equate this imaginative merging with 'physical labour and pain' (Furniss, 1993: 24).

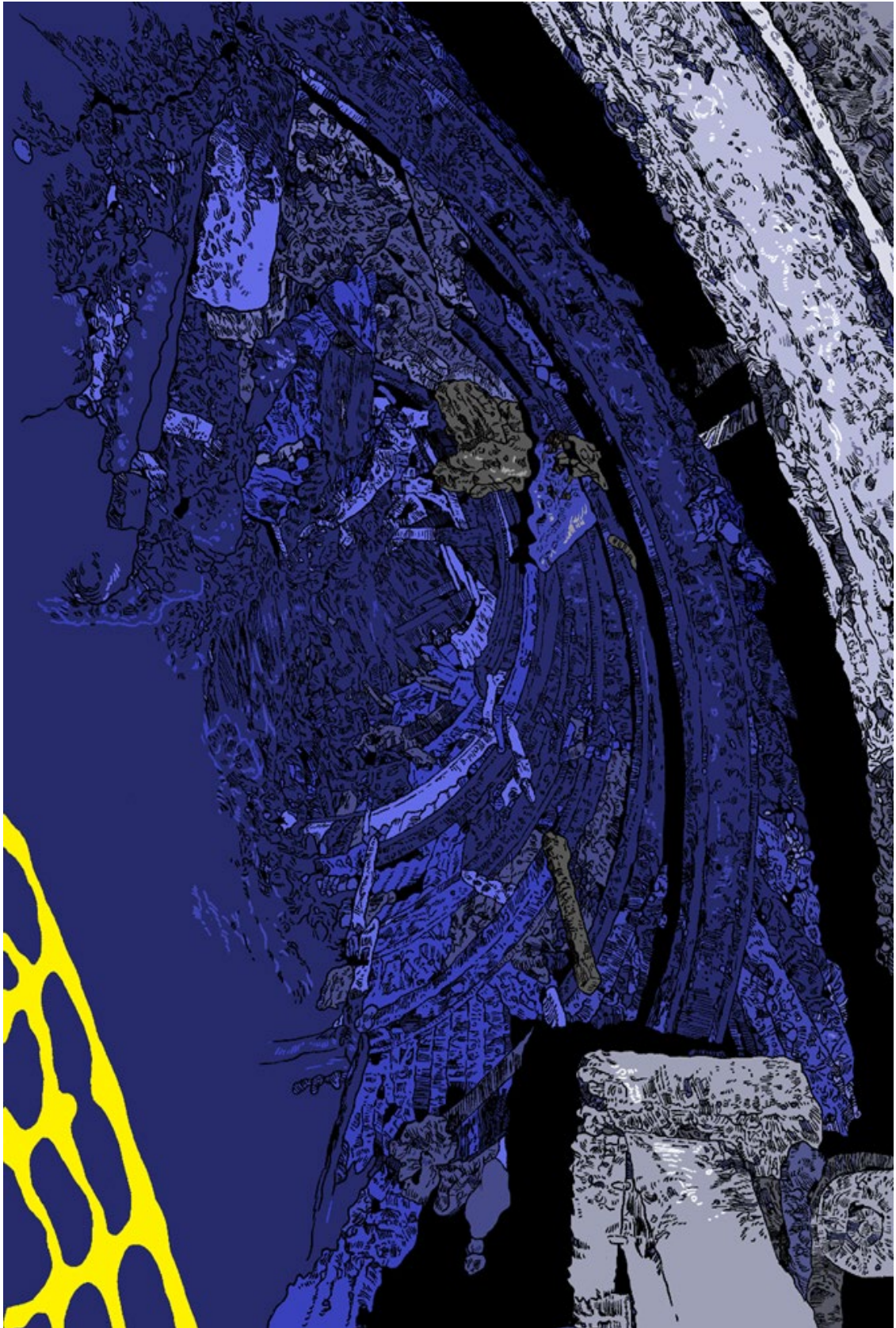


Fig 68. Paul Vousden *External* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

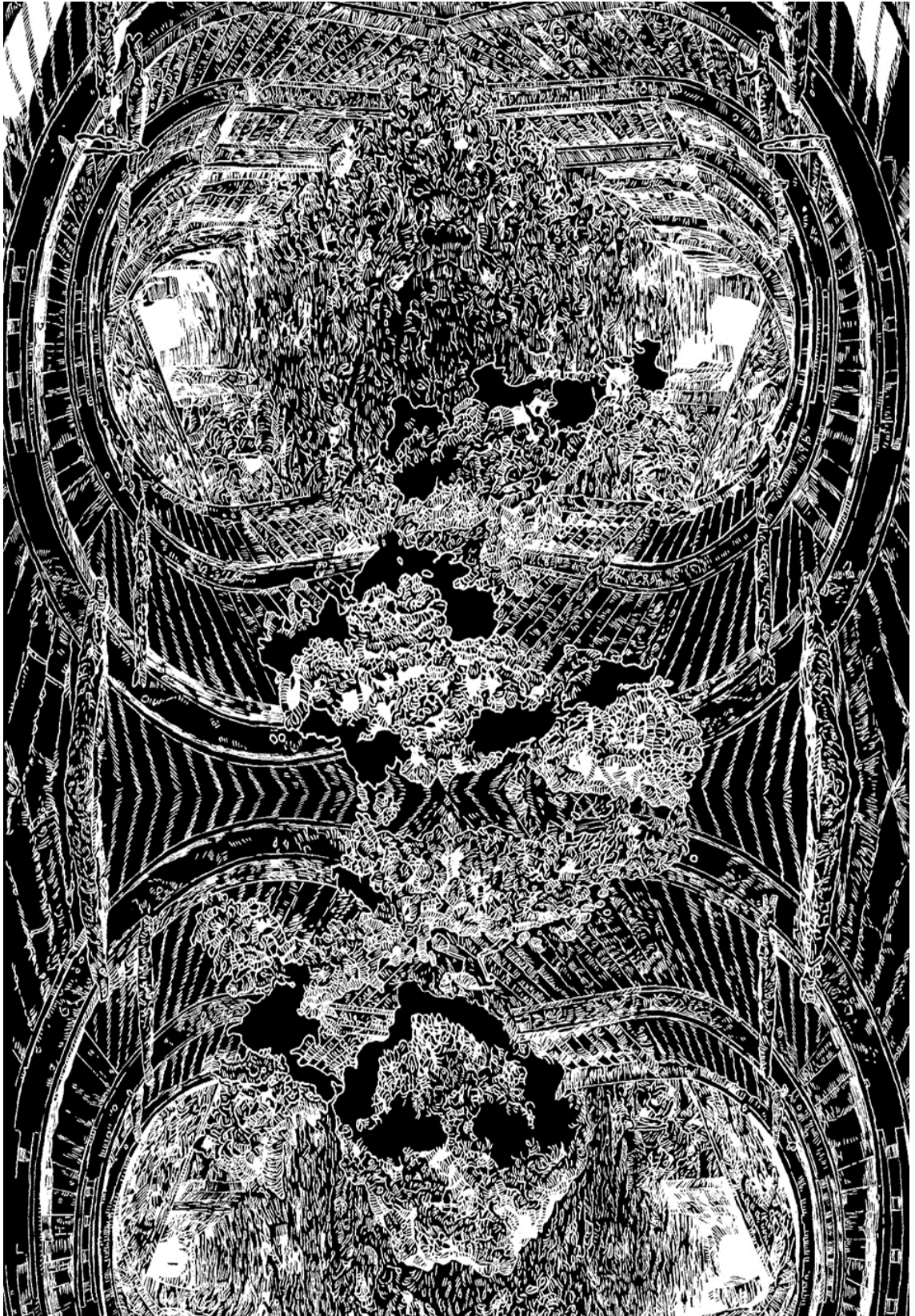


Fig 69. Paul Vousden *Internal* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

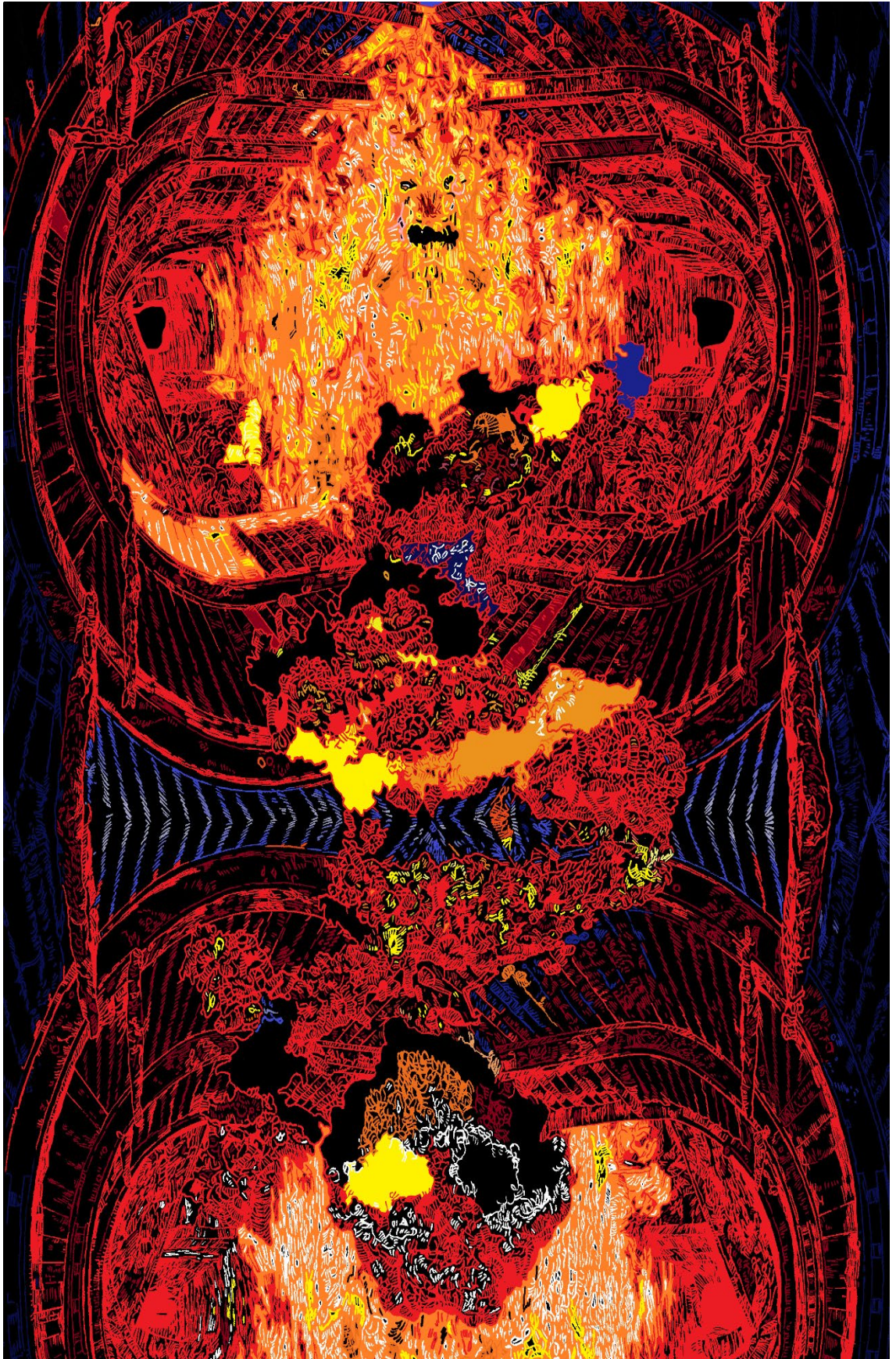


Fig 70. Paul Vausden *Internal II* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

Claustrophobia

Whist crawling through a particularly narrow section of the mine, Jeff suddenly stopped and pointed to an alcove in a shaft where he had been forced to pin down a panicking member of the public who had been overcome by claustrophobia. Again, I noticed Jeff was grinning as he told his story. I suspected Jeff had enjoyed himself during this crisis and I was reminded of a quote from *FEELING PAIN* where Burke simply states that the 'strongest emotion is an emotion of distress, and that no pleasure from a positive cause belongs to it' (Burke, 1757-9:79). Jeff continued to grin.

Eventually I slowly became aware that the process of descent had levelled out. I guessed that after an hour or so our party must have come to the bottom of the mine. Then, almost imperceptibly, I began to lose my sense of direction.

Phillips states that:

"‘Knowing’ is implicitly defined as the setting of limits, and the ‘Sublime’ as the impossibility of knowledge. So certain kinds of absence, what Burke calls privation, are Sublime – vacuity, darkness, solitude, silence – all of which contain, so to speak, the unpredictable: the possibility of losing one’s way, which is tantamount, Burke implies, to losing one’s coherence." (Phillips, 1990:22).

Phillips equates the absence of understanding, and the unpredictability created by privation of the senses, with a feeling of being lost. Within the confines of the Apedale space I now experienced a sense of being totally disorientated and completely reliant upon Jeff’s experience and reasoning. Jeff now had total dominion over me, if he suddenly disappeared, I would be lost.

Lost and empowering space drawings

The digital drawings *Descent*, the *Lost* series and *Landscape as empowering space* (figs 71 – 78) are all responses to the loss of coherence experienced during the Apedale deep mine-tour. Each drawing can be understood as a visual fiction which revisits the empirical experience of being hopelessly lost in this space. These drawings, in differing ways, attempted to exercise my imagination’s reactions to the safe experience of anxiety created during my encounter with the Vertical Sublime. This exercise had the positive outcome of creating drawings which are safe presentations of an already safe experience, but which I imagined to be loaded with associations to danger. Collectively they can be thought of as landscape presentations of an empirical

experience informed by Burke's thoughts on the nature of darkness, privation, obscurity, loss, incoherence, rugged surfaces, and terror.

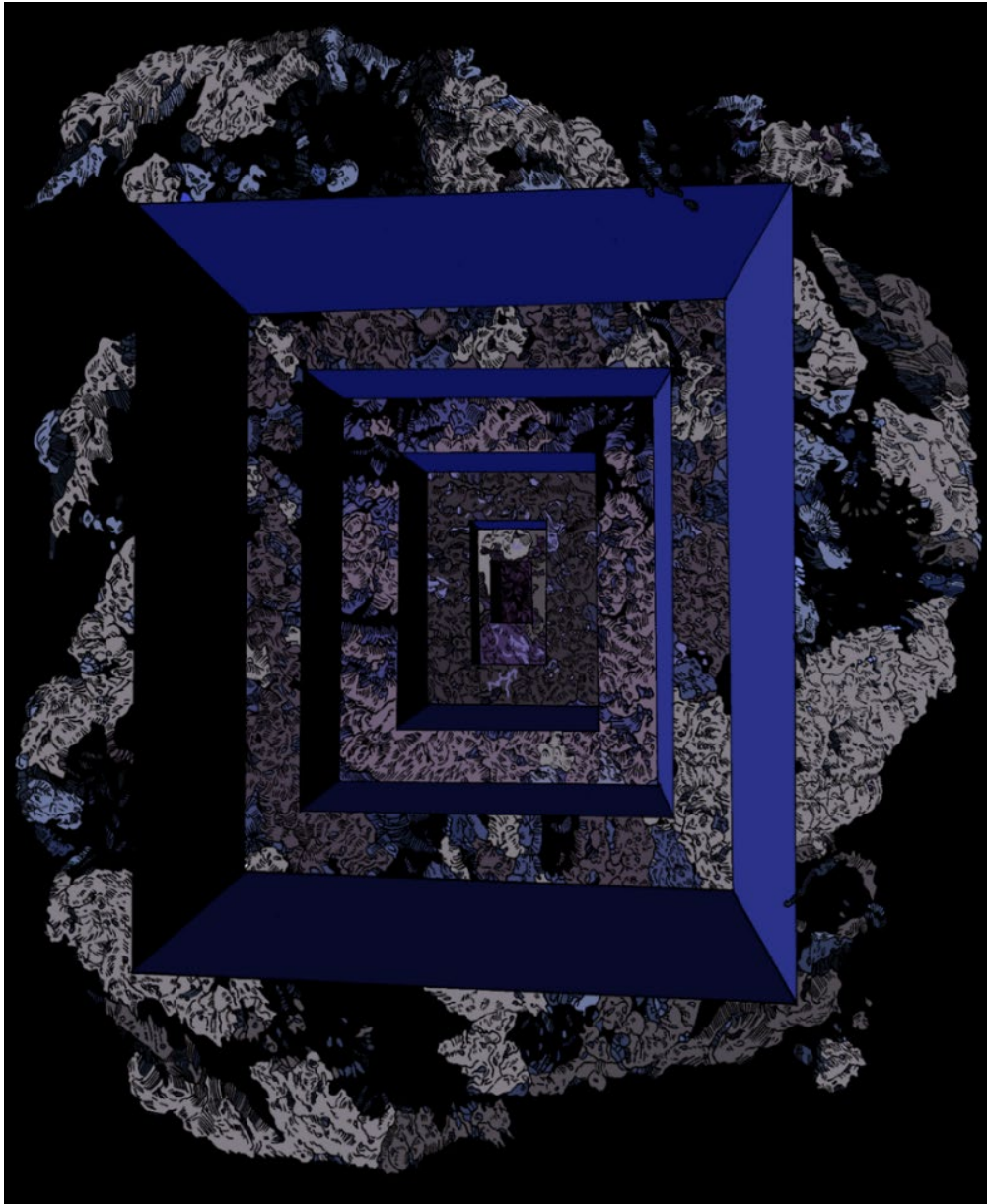


Fig 71. Paul Vousden *Descent* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

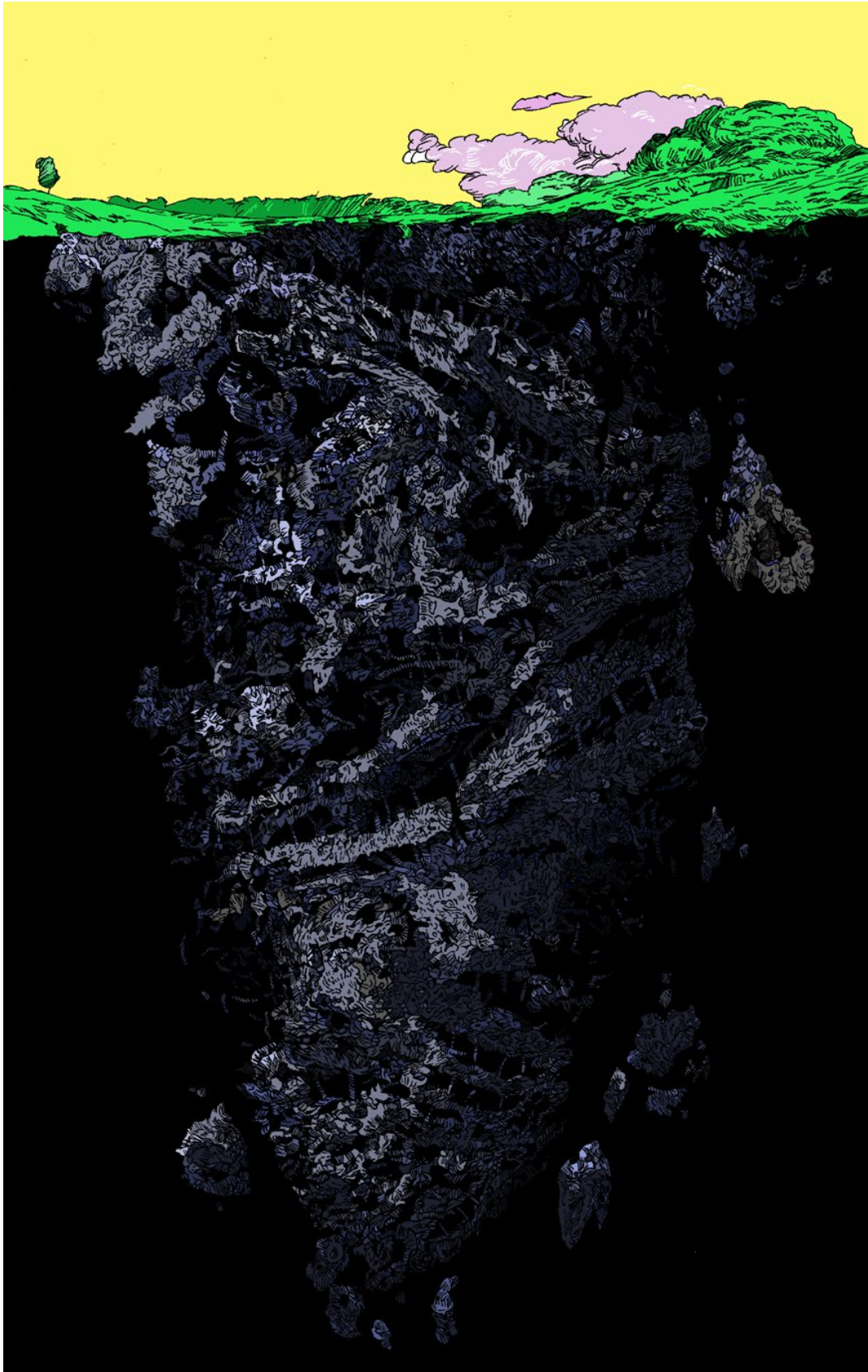


Fig 72. Paul Vousden *Lost* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 73. Paul Vousden *Lost II* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

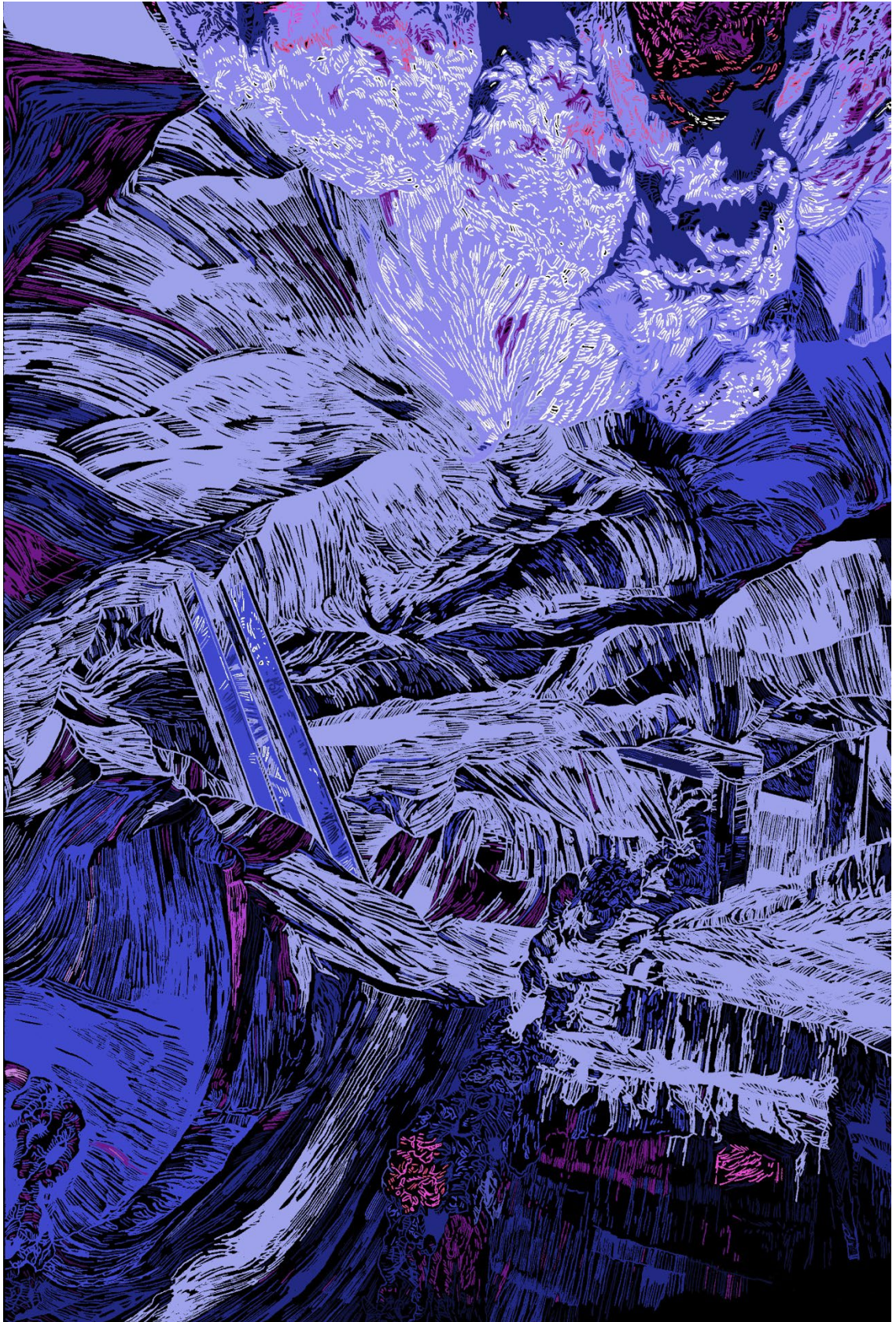


Fig 74. Paul Vousden *Lost III* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

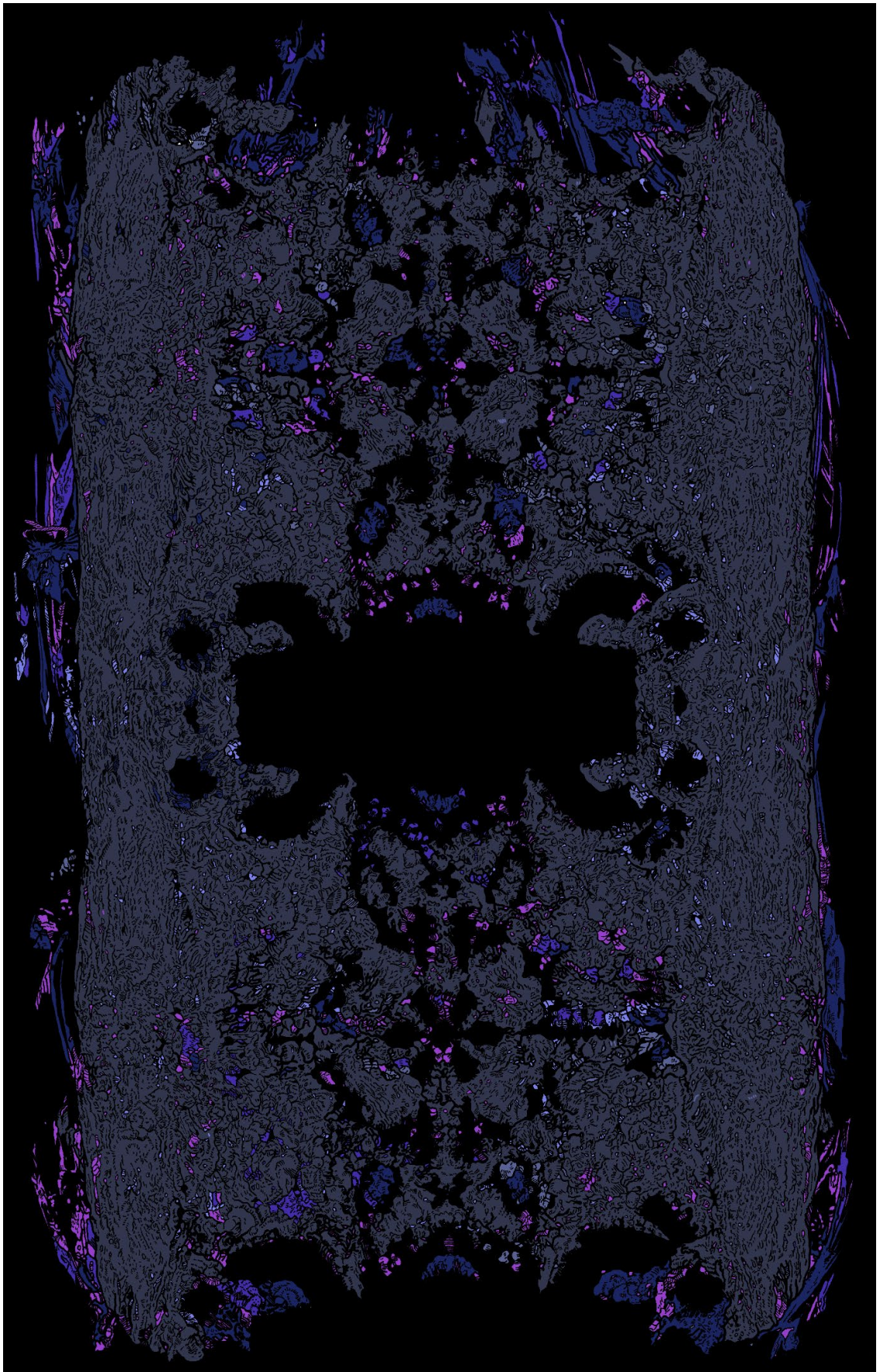


Fig 75. Paul Vousden *Lost IV* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

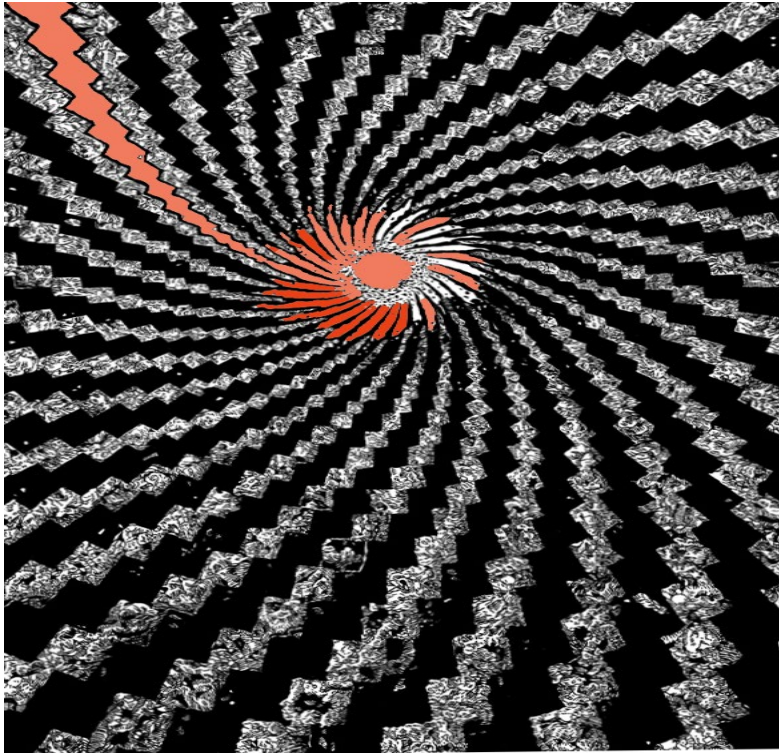


Fig 76. Paul Vousden *Lost V* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

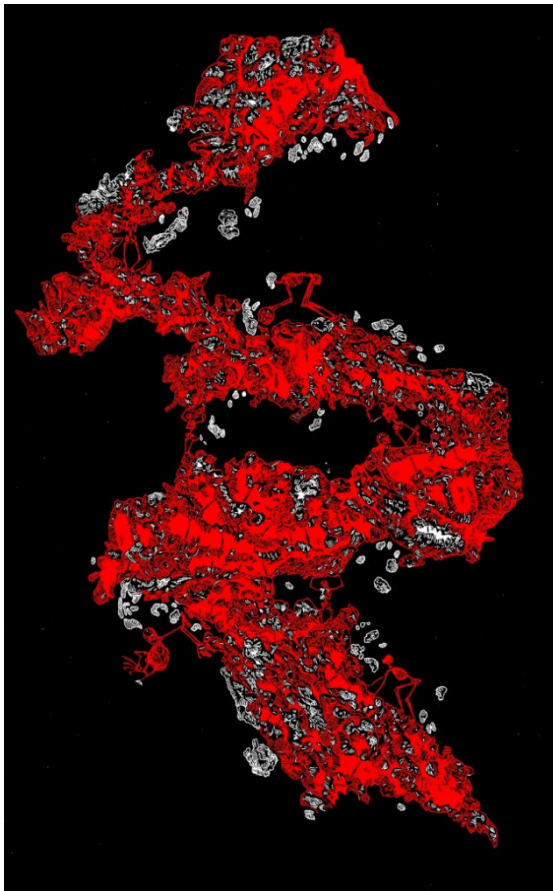


Fig 77. Paul Vousden *Lost VI* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

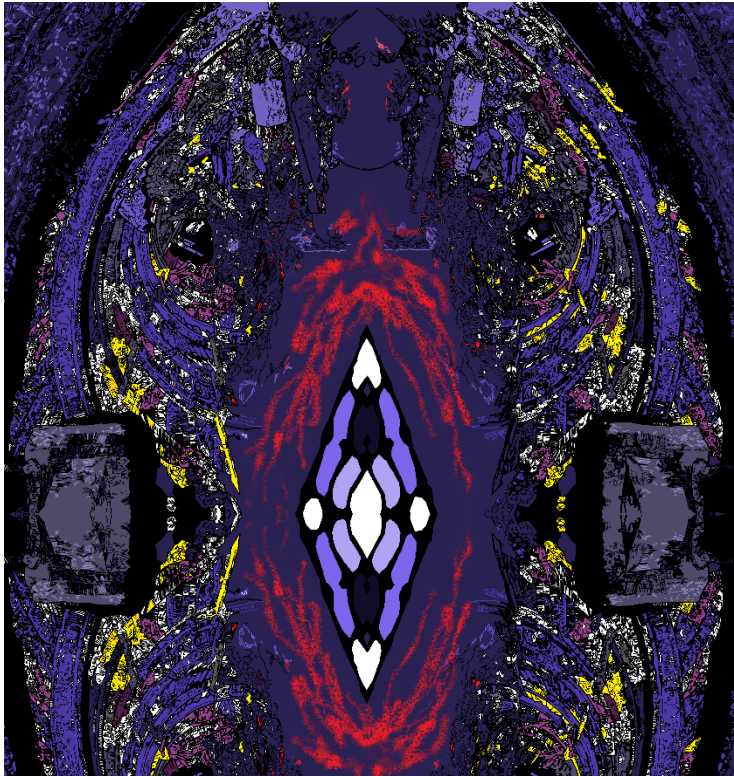


Fig 78. Paul Vousden *Landscape as empowering space* (2019) digital image.

Indeterminate dimensions

Identity and landscape

Jeff obviously relished the retelling of his exploits as a miner. I had the very strong feeling that the Apedale space connected him emotionally back to better times when he felt himself to be empowered. I created the image *Landscape as empowering space* (fig 78) whilst reflecting on Jeff's obvious attachment to the memory of working as a coalminer. I tried to imagine a merging of the Apedale space to a psychological state informed by feelings of lost strength, confidence, security and rootedness. From this uncertain perception I created an ugly hybrid between a skull and a mineshaft. This form is colourfully decorated and very loosely suggests the face of a religious icon; it was inspired by Jeff's attachment to the work ethic and memories of the blurring of barriers between figures and mine in *At the coal face* (1978) (fig 58).

Jeff saved his darkest reminiscence until our party was firmly embedded in deepest part of the mine. He then recalled an incident where debris from a controlled explosion bounced around a corner of a mine shaft into an area full of miners. This safe area was judged to be well beyond the reach of the explosive force and in this unexpected freak incident a miner had his foot instantly amputated. Jeff did not state that he had been responsible for the detonation which resulted in this tragedy, but given his status

as an explosives expert, and the suddenly serious tone in his voice, his role was implied. According to Jeff the unfortunate amputee's screams were so high pitched he still hears them whenever he enters a mine. Jeff's story gripped everyone in the mine tour. I knew this because when he had finished speaking there was an uncomfortable protracted silence. I guessed that everyone felt sympathy for both the injured miner and Jeff. I noticed with a sense of relief that Jeff's grin, which had started to grate, had finally disappeared.

Burke states in *Part One, SECTION XIII of the Enquiry* under the subheading *SYMPATHY* that:

'poetry, painting, and other affecting arts, transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretchedness, misery, and death itself. It is a common observation, that objects which in the reality would shock, are in tragical, and such like representations, the source of a very high species of pleasure.' [...] 'the satisfaction has been commonly attributed, first, to the comfort we receive in considering that so melancholy a story is no more than a fiction; and next, to the contemplation of our own freedom from the evils which we see represented' (Burke, 1757-59: 41).

Burke suggests that the presentation of suffering offers pleasure, and delight, through reflection upon the idea of fictional tragedy and its relationship to understanding of the real world. Bromwich states that our understanding of the world, through pleasures, pains and suffering 'tend to be channelled, according to Burke, into three capital motives of action – sympathy, imitation, and ambition – and it is clear that of the three, sympathy holds the largest fascination for him.' and that sympathy creates a form of delight in the spectator as they imagine another's pain and suffering (Bromwich, 2014: 65). This reflective process appears, to me, to be necessary to communal understanding of what it means to be human, and creates comforting communal pleasure, because reflection alleviates the fear of real tragedy, suffering and ultimately the terror of inevitable, and often painful death, which Burke terms the 'king of terrors' (Burke, 1757-59: 36).

In *Part Two* of this thesis (page 86) I speculated upon how sympathy could be manipulated in audiences by creating imagery which knowingly mimicked obsessive artistic endeavour. Inspired by Jeff's direct delivery of experience I now considered a new approach to landscape representation less reliant upon multiple mark making effects, and more reliant upon Burkean associative meaning to create emotional impact.

After communicating his final personal reminiscence, Jeff led our party on the slow ascent to the surface. As we walked and climbed, I had the feeling we had been bonded by his memories

Once darkness passed into temporarily blinding light the spell of Jeff's life experiences lost their intensity. He later came over to my table to enquire if I had enjoyed my deep mine experience, he seemed smaller, sadder, older and less impressive to me in this new context.

A positive critical purpose for suffering and the construction of an analogy with labour and the power of religious symbolism.

The journey home from Apedale was a time for reflection. I began to wonder how the underground landscape I had just explored could be captured and presented as a representation of sacrifice and suffering. Does distress and suffering generally, I wondered, have any positive critical purpose or meaningful message and, even if it does, could I attempt to express this in an artwork about the Apedale mine?

Burke's understanding of why people experience sympathy for others is informed by his eighteenth century understanding of the concept of God. In Part One of the *Enquiry*, SECTION XIV, under the sub-heading, *The effects of SYMPATHY* in the distresses of others, he states:

'...our Creator has designed we should be united by the bond of sympathy, he has strengthened that bond by a proportionable delight; and there most where our sympathy is most wanted , in the distresses of others' (Burke, 1757-9: 42).

These words show Burke considering the positive critical purpose of suffering. He concludes that sympathy for the distresses of others strengthens the bonds between people and reminds them that they are all designed to react supportively to each other by a higher power. Burke offers the reader a philosophical view of suffering which is part of a divine plan, a plan which is aesthetic and heroically meaningful and expressed by the terrifying power and vastness of both nature and society. In *Religion and the Sublime* (2012) Andrew Chignell and Matthew C. Halteman state that God's "absolute divine power is the implicit referent of so much of Burke's theory that God himself might be seen as 'the occluded hero of the sublime for Burke'"(Chignell, Halteman, 2012: 187). I reasoned that if Burke's 'erotic empiricism' (Phillips, 1990: 11) was a genuine attempt to partially fill the void left by God's withdrawal from perception (Phillips, 1990: 11), then perhaps Burke's insistence on the need to see struggle and suffering, in

others, as linked to heroic labour and a natural order, creates a positive critical purpose for the presentation of suffering. I further reasoned that such presentation by contemporary artists living in a society, still informed by many eighteenth-century conservative values, offers audiences the opportunity to reflect upon their good fortune and delight, in a Burkean sense of the word, in their freedom from the suffering of the poor, both past and present.

Burkean links to the God concept, and the naturalness of the cruelty implicit in social stratification, made me determined to incorporate a cross-like structure into the final visual outcome of my exploration of the vertical sublime. I felt that such iconography was appropriate to use as a descriptive tool for a space like the Apedale mine because within this space, heroic sacrifice was practiced through the processes implicit in classed based rituals of work. Effectively I was now attempting to create a new visual and poetic equivalence for Milton's 'universe of death' as described by Burke, a new union of great and terrible ideas which are almost beyond all comprehension and which form no clear image in the mind (Burke, 1757-59:159). This struggle could not be resolved using reason alone, the process of drawing, and all the unclear but nevertheless strong expressions which drawing can make, was the only original way I could reflect upon reality. The sketchbook drawing *Know thy place*, and the digital drawings *Black, red, and white crucifixion*, and *Dark crucifixion* (2019) (figs 80 - 81) illustrate how I used practice to arrive at a manifestation of my conception of a visual compound abstract expression. These images show how a sketchbook drawing of a mine shaft at Apedale, based on a photograph (fig 62), which depicted a bewildering array of unused mechanical paraphernalia, was turned into a reimagining of Burkean aesthetic themes. This image was twisted around and mirrored digitally in response to the physical feeling of losing all sense of direction at the mine and Burke's belief that the privations of vacuity, darkness, solitude, and silence are not only sublime but tantamount to losing coherence (Phillips, 1990:22). This digital mirroring technique was then repeated until a form emerged which delighted because of its dark aesthetic and associative power. This power is created by repeating the forms of the original sketchbook drawing to the point where an engagement with excess is made manifest.

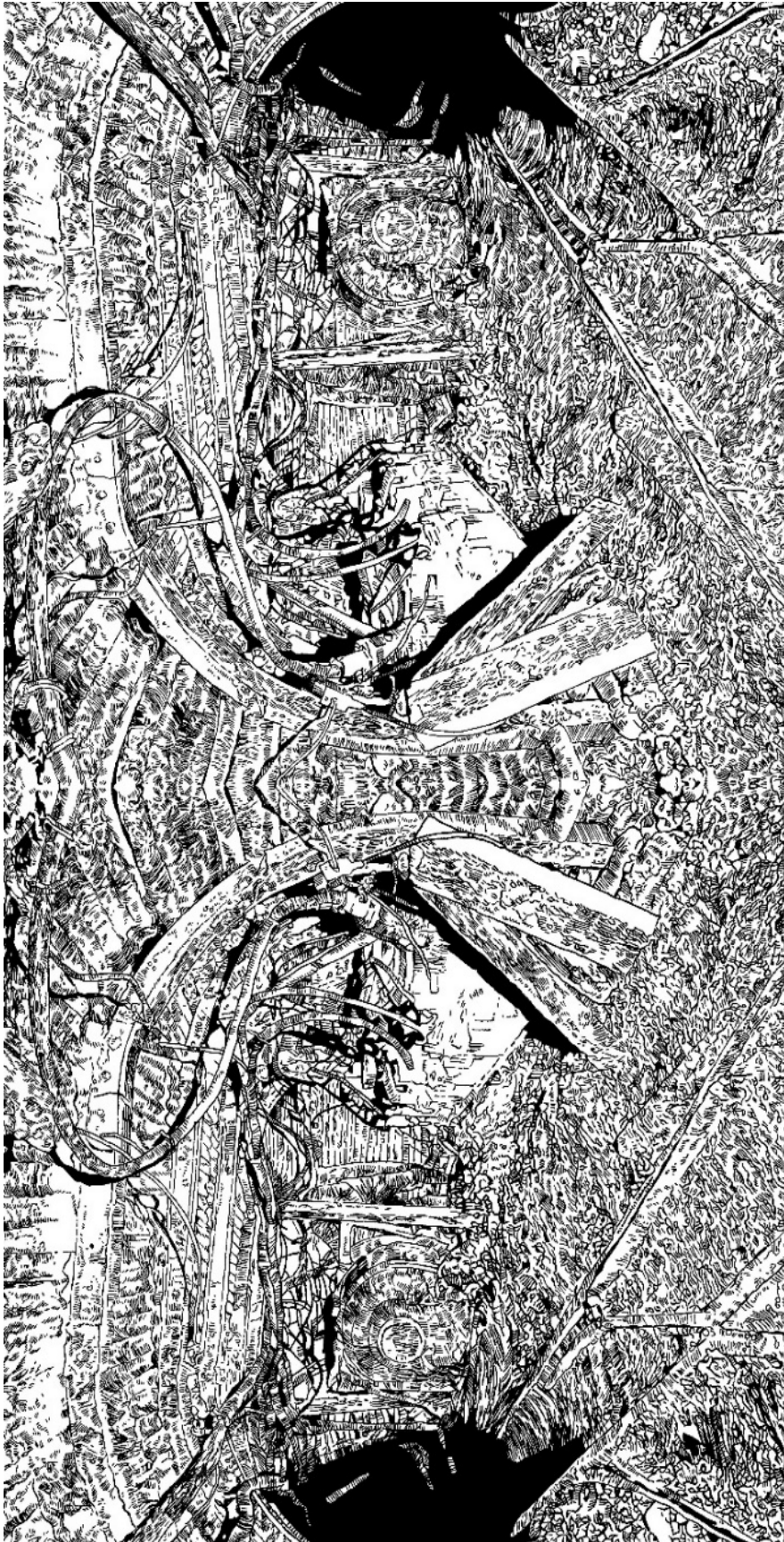


Fig 79. Paul Vousden *Know thy place* (2019) ink on paper. 23cm by 41cm



Fig 80. Paul Vousden *Black, red, and white crucifixion* (2019) digital image.
Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 81. Paul Vousden *Dark crucifixion* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

A final exploration of the Burkean Vertical Sublime

The forms I discovered through the creation of *Dark crucifixion* (fig 81) finally gave me a structure I felt could be used to create a culmination of my research. This structure was inspired by my conclusion that Burke's aesthetic theory could be made manifest by the artistic blurring of bodily, and imaginative, experience within an ambitious largescale landscape drawing. I imagined this drawing as a culmination of my material research into the idea of the Burkean Vertical Sublime, and its potential expression using the subterranean landscape at Apedale. I also envisaged this new drawing as an exploration of both my technical and imaginative limits and as a labour of the intellect, loaded with Burkean associative meaning linked to the reality of social stratification.

The medium I chose to produce this final artwork was black graphite Pierre Noir 2B. This brittle graphite was selected because it has a dusty black quality reminiscent of coal and coincidentally, when sharpened, mimics coal by blackening the hands and clogging the throat and nose. I also prepared for the production of this artwork by purchasing a large piece of cardboard measuring 180cm by 120cm.



Fig 82. Paul Vousden *These pampered hands* (2019) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

I began drawing on the 7th October 2019 and planned to work fifteen hours a week on it until the end of January 2020. I was confident that approximately two hundred hours of labour would easily see this project through to completion, and that the complexity of the image, which would be tonal and highly rendered, would stand as a readable analogy for my manual and intellectual labour.

The first problem I encountered with this drawing was that I realised, once the cardboard was in my small studio, that it was too flexible to be worked on whilst freestanding. I therefore needed to stabilise the surface by affixing it to a wall. I then realised that attaching the card to the only wall it would fit on, in the vertical position, would mean that I would need to work on the lower section of the drawing virtually laying on the floor. I knew I simply could not do this and so, with extreme reluctance, I was forced to attach this vertical manifestation of Burkean thought horizontally onto the stable surface of my studio wall. This meant I had to tilt my head by ninety degrees each time I tried to imagine how my drawing was progressing. Initially this was no problem, but after a few weeks of toil I began to experience mild discomfort followed by actual pain in my neck, and back. As weeks of work turned in to months, I was also astonished by how painful working on the lower portions of drawing became. Because it could not be moved, I often found myself drawing on my knees or crouching like a miner in a tiny alcove.

My second problem was self-inflicted and with hindsight a product of hubris. I made the decision not to grid up my card surface on the first day of drawing. This decision was taken because I was convinced my skills as a draughtsman had moved beyond the need for this technical contrivance. In previous artworks I had found the rubbing out of grid marks tiresome and the gridding process itself somewhat unnecessary. However what I failed to take into consideration was those previous drawings were either less symmetrical, or considerably smaller artworks. My failure to grid my new drawing added unnecessary difficulty to the measuring process implicit in production.

The third problem I encountered with the execution of this drawing was more fundamental and genuinely worrying than either of the initial technical issues. After a few days of labour, I suddenly realised the photograph I was trying to work from, which initially I thought so promisingly overloaded with detail, was a blurred and overexposed image. Normally such a lack of detail would be welcomed by me as an opportunity to stretch the imagination and engage with Burkean conceptions of obscurity and invention. However, I wanted this artwork to be more informed by attention to detail and the labour of rigorous visual interrogation than by poetic reimagining. This

unwanted complication unnerved me and from the beginning made me suspect that this drawing project was simply too complicated to tackle. To make matters worse, I also began to realise that Pierre Noir pencils cannot be erased without leaving an ugly mark on cardboard's surface. This meant I had to proceed with caution as I drew and measure every structure with extreme care.

By the 10th November 2019 I was seriously worried that I had begun a drawing I could not finish, and this feeling was made worse by the fact that every three hour drawing session seemed to end unsatisfactorily with small measuring errors, neck, back, and arm pains, and worst of all, very little progress. I was also acutely aware that drawn structures were out of alignment with marked points in my drawing, which were meant to indicate where vertical and horizontal forms needed to end. These marks (tiny Xs on the card using 2H pencil) were important to the overall structural integrity of the drawing because it relies upon a strong sense of symmetry for its visual impact. Fig 84 shows a typical missed alignment with one of my, very faint but important, drawing markers. Errors such as this made the drawing process increasingly complex and difficult to resolve. Each column, tube, or rail girder needed to be subtly bent, or reshaped, every time I realised my drawing was drifting out of alignment. By 19th November, my drawing process had almost halted completely; fig 85 shows the glacial progress I made in three hours that day. At this low point in my endeavours as an artist I was forcefully reminded that Burke states in *Part Two, SECTION II* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *Terror* that:

'No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear' and that fear 'operates in a manner that resembles actual pain' (Burke, 1757-59:53).



Fig 83. Paul Vousden *Know thy place and be grateful* (in progress 10th November) (2019) black pencil on card. 180cm by 120cm



Fig 84. Paul Vousden *Know thy place and be grateful* (detail showing extent to which verticals in drawing twisted out of alignment due to draughtsmanship errors) (2019) black pencil on card

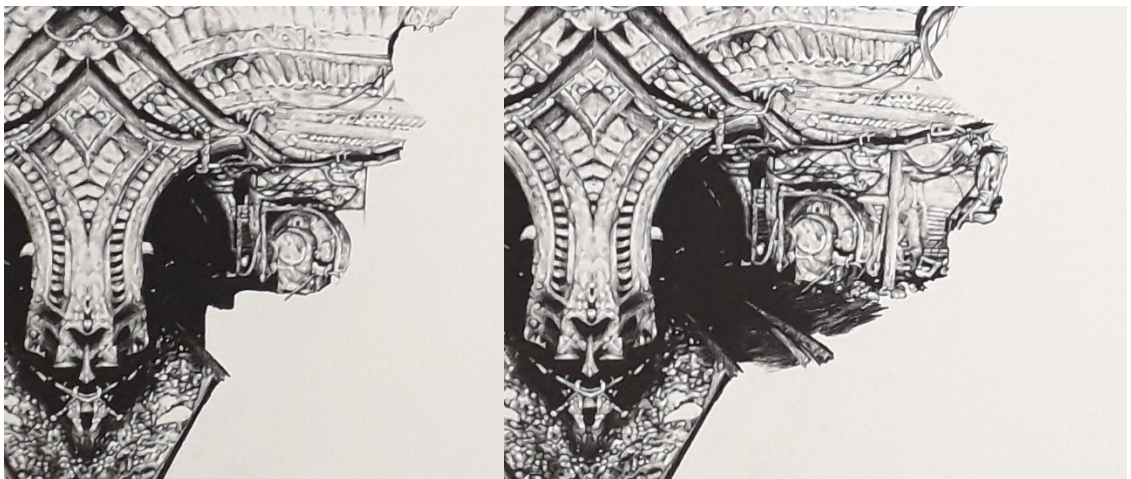


Fig 85. Paul Vousden *Know thy place and be grateful* (detail showing three hours of drawing progress) (2019) black pencil on card

My struggle seemed almost hopeless but the argument by Furniss, where he deconstructs Thomas Weiskel's three physiological phases in an encounter with the

sublime, motivated me to just keep on drawing. Each afternoon my normal perception of the world was confronted by a problem, rather than a phenomenon, which exceeded my ability to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, despite being half convinced I simply could not cope with the problems posed by my drawing project, I continued to labour, day after day, week after week, month after month. By early January 2020 I felt frustration, defeatism, and near despair, turning into a feeling of triumph. I felt I was winning a strange and individual confrontation with a self-created danger and becoming empowered. For me, my drawing activity was creating an image on card which seemed far beyond the boundaries of my capabilities and this thought sometimes astonished me. On more than one occasion I found myself staring at my own drawing as if it were being produced by some unknown stranger.

Weiskel terms the process of a successful encounter with the sublime in which the mind goes from normal perception to a state of crisis, and finally to one in which the mind identifies with and ascribes to itself the qualities it initially finds threatening, or overwhelming, a 'metaphorical transposition' (Furniss, 1993:25). This concept is explored in Part One of this thesis (pages 40-41). During the winter of 2019 to 2020 I felt that through the physical and intellectual process of drawing I had engaged with an experience of 'metaphorical transposition', similar to Weiskel's description. On more than one occasion, generally when taking a break from drawing, I was also aware that I was almost literally, enacting Burke's attempt to assimilate self to object as presented by Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla (1996). In this text it is stated that the Burkean Sublime can be thought of as a series of pulsations of consciousness. In the first of these pulsations 'the conscious mind relinquishes its power over the world it perceives' (Ashfield, de Bolla: 1996:128) in order to open itself to, and imaginatively merge with that world. This suffused state is followed by a secondary pulsation in which 'being overcome leads to an intensification of self-presence and a corresponding re-assertion of the power of the subject over the object' (Ashfield, de Bolla, 1996:128). This action then leads to a final imaginative response in which energy of the sublime is thought of as alternating from that which threatens to that which originally perceives being threatened. This interpretation of Burke's interaction with sublime concepts, and phenomena, mirrors an experience of metaphorical transposition. This realisation made me think about how academics use different terms to describe almost identical conceptions and how the experience of art production questions, and reveals, the truths underpinning these arguments.

A final touch of beauty

By the end of January 2020 I had produced a large and, in my opinion, impressive drawing which I imagined as making visible the sense of menace I felt in the Apedale space.

Only one tiny issue remained for me to resolve in my drawing. I felt somehow, I had to include a symbol within it which would, at least hint at, why anyone would ever work within, and speak fondly of, a mining environment. The obvious answer to this question is that mining environments provided wages and these wages allowed people to rent property, get married, and start families. Essentially access to monetary reward, however slight, allowed people to become established as individuals within a class, community, craft, and experience the more beautiful aspects of rootedness. Bill Jones and Chris Williams make exactly this point about how mining shaped the life of Bertie Coombes in their introduction to his book *These Poor Hands* (1939) (Jones, Williams, 2002: 10-12). I had also discovered the paintings of Norman Cornish, in preparation for my visit to Apedale, and these artworks, collectively resonated an affection for the beautiful aspects of lives rooted within a working-class mining community. Therefore I resolved that somewhere within the Apedale drawing, I needed to include a symbol which would stand for domesticity, rootedness, belonging, happiness, personal growth, and beauty. I consequently painted a small and delicate pink rose, an asymmetrical and organic symbol of beauty in nature and stuck this incongruent image onto the central column of the *Know thy place and be grateful* (2019-2020) drawing. The rose is barely noticeable from a distance, its beauty is overwhelmed by the complex darkness which surrounds it. Despite this darkness the rose, although pale, refuses to, and will never die. It is a tiny compound abstract expression of hope.

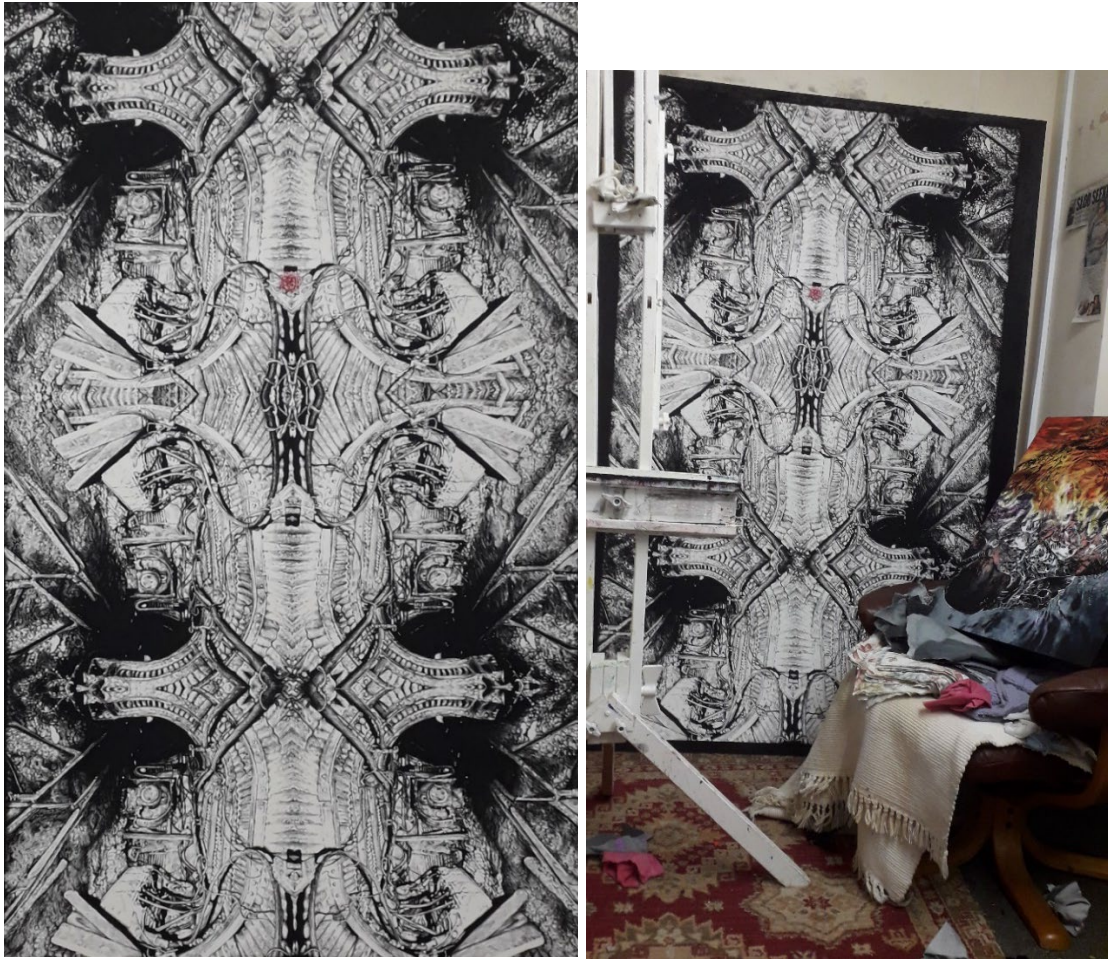


Fig 86. Paul Vousden Studio views of *Know thy place and be grateful* (2019 - 2020)
black pencil on card. 180cm by 120cm



Fig 87. Paul Vousden Exhibition views of *Know thy place and be grateful* (2019 - 2020)
showing scale and eventual lighting of artwork, black pencil on card. 180cm by 120cm

The Abstract Sublime

In my tiny studio the dimensions of my drawing were magnified by a lack of space. Despite this sense of magnification, I knew this artwork was modest in size when compared to many abstract paintings. However, it was hard not to recognise that this artwork also had a relationship to Burkean conceptions of stillness and privation which can arguably be perceived in some abstract paintings. This link to abstraction is formed because the drawing reflects upon a still and silent space, which has meaning because of the lack of presence and activity within it, and an aura informed by all that is not happening within its visual parameters. This nothingness is not a void, because the artwork is obviously figurative. However, rather like the Rothko paintings which Robert Rosenblum describes in *The Abstract Sublime* (1961) as concealing 'a total, remote presence that we can only intuit and never fully grasp' (Rosenblum, 2010: 110), my drawing is also full of remote presences.

Conclusion to Part Three: The Burkean Vertical Sublime

I finished drawing *Know thy place and be grateful* on January 31st 2020, it had taken two hundred and fifty hours to complete. Although I was very conscious of how my experience of the usefulness of the Burkean Sublime had aligned with the struggle for sublimity described by Weiskel, Ashfield and de Bolla, I was also aware that my struggle had been a hybrid experience in which I had encountered, amongst other aesthetic dangers, my limitations as an artist (Furniss, 1993:25) (Ashfield, de Bolla, 1996:128). The completion of this chapter of research had therefore changed me because I had created something which seemed, at least for a while, a virtually impossible task. The extension of my own possibilities had also altered how I thought about the role and meaning of art production. Art's functionless power now appeared to have purpose which was more than a philosophical struggle to grapple with and overwhelm a safe or imagined danger. It had become, in this research, a real physical struggle and test of will, a mixture between sublimity of the mind and the physical labour of art production reflecting on a neglected British space. I was now ready to abandon the Burkean conceptions of privation and the abyss to seek out their opposites, Burkean conceptions of magnificence and power.

Part Four

The Burkean Transcendental Sublime

Introduction

The following chapter maps and contextualises the trajectory of my practice-based research between February 2020 and early August 2021. This research reflects on internal spaces and external landscapes which expand upwards and on how Burke's *Enquiry* can be usefully employed in artistic practice to understand and reimagine such places. It was informed, and changed, by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to the outbreak of this disease, I had been looking forward to beginning my new phase of research by visiting Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey and exploring its solemn and splendid interiority. I hoped that this empirical exploration of a manmade space could be used to materially research and demonstrate how Burkean conceptions of magnificence, power, wealth, and religious conviction could be usefully grouped together, and linked to the conception of presentations of a reality which draws the eye skyward.

Prior to the pandemic, I had planned to photograph and sketch architectural details within Lady Chapel. From these information gathering processes I imagined producing an oil painting full of sharply observed details. However, the appearance of Covid forced me to rethink my plans because travelling became firstly genuinely dangerous and then periodically prohibited by lockdown rules implemented during 2020 and 2021. Therefore the pandemic took away the physical experience of gathering accurate visual data on the interiority of Lady Chapel. This unforeseen development forced me to seek out visual references taken from books, to stand in for the data-gathering experience. Very quickly it became apparent that this second-hand data was poor in quality; images collected had no detail in their shadows and were far too small to create anything of size and presence from. This realization created a temporary obstacle to the continuation of my research.

However, this misfortune had the positive effect of forcing me to use my imagination more than I had planned. The following chapter shows how Covid forced me to develop my thinking on what the upward gaze of the artist can mean when processed as a way of looking informed by the *Enquiry*. The pandemic also extended the period of practice-based research, prior my engagement with the Lady Chapel space, by

about ten months. During this time I produced a series of paintings which reflected upon natural spaces nearer to home, and spaces I knew well from past empirical encounters. This divergence from a direct engagement with Lady Chapel allowed me to develop a visual language for landscapes invaded by, and changed by, terrifying viral threats. During the development of these paintings, and drawings, my conception of what the Burkean Transcendental Sublime could mean also changed. Extremes of scale were added to the list of qualities I associated with this term because the reality of the world around me was suddenly informed by a terror which exists on a microscopic scale. This change in what lived reality can mean made me realise that different ways of considering the Burkean Sublime, different combinations of his aesthetic reflections, only serve a positive critical purpose when they have a relationship to current events.

The following chapter plots why and how I contended with Burke's thoughts on an upward gaze and magnificence, power, wealth, religious conviction, and extremes of scale during the global pandemic of 2020 to 2021. This text also shows how these circumstances forced my painting style to develop beyond that which had dominated my thinking before the pandemic. My research activity also shows how, in responding to a threat which could not be seen, my painting became freer than it would otherwise have been. This freer approach to painting resulted in a 'sketchier' method of painting which facilitated more invention and engagement with obscurity than would otherwise have been probable. This progression, in its turn, allowed me to return to my original intention of producing a painting which explores the space of Lady Chapel but in a completely different way to that which I would have imagined prior to the pandemic.

Introducing a new direction for my research

In late February 2020 I briefly paused my picture making to review the artworks in my studio. In horizontal spaces I had explored landscape entirely through natural forms and in vertically downward spaces I had explored an arena created by the power of the construct extracting a natural fossil fuel. Burke states in the *Enquiry* that sublime spaces can be defined by 'length, height, or depth' (Burke, 1757-59:66), therefore, to complete my research I had to consider the Burkean Sublime's usefulness to contemporary artists reflecting upon spaces and landscapes which expand upwards. This proposed new direction of research did not mean I could simply look upwards and record uncritically whatever randomly drifted into view. To make my actions, and thought processes contributions to knowledge, and to demonstrate the full potential of the *Enquiry* to contemporary painting, I had to create new visual extensions to Burke's

aesthetic argument not already covered in previous research. I therefore resolved, before the pandemic, that this new exploration of space would engage with the concept of place as a manmade projection of the sublime, an entirely manufactured and magnificent fantasy of power.

Considering the process of gazing upwards, and how this can be useful to artists influenced by Burkean conceptions of the sublime

During my visit to Apedale I had been struck by how the experience of exiting the mine, travelling in an upward direction, especially ascending steep ladders, had differed from the experience of descent. I noticed with interest that members of my tour party chatted more cheerily as the tour came to an end. As the light from the outside world beckoned, spirits seemed to lighten.

Thomas Mann considers how an upwardly directed gaze creates associative meaning linked to the transcendental, and the sublime, when he argues that medieval cathedrals can be thought of as expressions of humanity's appreciation of sublime power. He states that the concepts of goodness, and the upward direction associated with the visitor's gaze, are often conflated in religious spaces. For Mann, medieval cathedrals create spaces in which the lofty ideas of Victorian ideals, high church, and God, form a 'static pyramidal structure of world order' (Bell, Lyall, 2002:92). He argues that such places are effectively counterpoints to the vertical abyss associated with 'the darkness of the id' (Bell, Lyall, 2002:92). Mann's argument that the magnificent architecture of cathedrals acts as a counterpoint to the darker instinctive impulses of the individual's inner self resonated with me. I had experienced a mysteriously intoxicating, and uplifting feeling, a counterpoint to individualistic despair, whilst visiting similar solemn and splendid communal, and hierarchical religious spaces. In such spaces I had also experienced the negative, but somehow comforting feeling that world order is both oppressive and eternally fixed.

Burke held a similar viewpoint to Mann regarding magnificent religious spaces and their ability to conjure up extraordinary lofty conceptions and feelings. However, Burke's argument is somewhat obscured and confused by an insistence that extensions of space impress the viewer with varying degrees of sublime effect. He states in *Part Two, SECTION VII* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *VASTNESS*, that extensions of length have the least effect upon viewers. Burke then tentatively considers the sublime effects of height and depth and concludes that:

'height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice , than at looking up at an object of equal height, but of that I am not very positive' (Burke, 1757-9:66).

Based on Burke's wider argument in the *Enquiry*, his conclusion that looking down into an abyss is more sublime than looking upwards, shows Burke considering the sublime from the perspective of an empiricist. I would argue that he considers both types of space according to the physical effects of viewing and how these stimulate the imagination. Burke concludes that the idea of slipping and falling into an abyss creates a stronger effect of terror than the safer experience of looking upwards. However, he does not articulate this clearly to the reader, nor does he immediately explore the associative implications of the imagination's reaction to each physical action. Burke's argument is surprisingly undeveloped and the admission that he is uncertain about such a fundamental principle of the sublime, in relation to the physical and psychological experience of space, demonstrates a temporary and uncharacteristic lack of rigour. This conceptual weakness in the *Enquiry* intrigued me. I began to wonder if my completed research project, which is led by visual investigation and designed to form a final exhibition of outcomes, might eventually illuminate gradations of sublime presentation and thereby add weight to, or perhaps undermine, Burke's conclusions.

Despite Burke's unclear gradations of sublime spaces, his consideration of the sublime effects of looking upwards mirrors Mann's because Burke is also instinctively drawn to the idea that the upward gaze leads to thoughts of spaces loaded with religious significance. This is demonstrated, three pages after Burke's assessment of extensions of space, when he considers, in *SECTION IX* under the subheading *SUCCESSION* and *UNIFORMITY*, the 'grand effect of the isles in many of our own old cathedrals' (Burke, 1757-59:69) [sic]. Burke explores the sublime effect of an upward gaze when he argues that an artificial infinity is created when uniform pillars appear in succession, as they do in cathedrals, and the eye becomes fooled into the 'idea of their progress beyond their actual limits' (Burke, 1757-59:68). In this argument an upward gaze is implied because it is physically next to impossible to look at a progression of supporting pillars in a cathedral without the eye being drawn upwards into their soaring effect of a progression into an artificial heavenly infinity.

A contemporary perspective on the significance of a raised gaze

My dissatisfaction with Burke's assessment of the sublime effect experienced when looking up, led me to look for contemporary thinking on this idea. Dr Colin Ellard

considers the associative power of an upward gaze in *Look Up: The Surprising Joy of Raising Your Gaze* (2016). Ellard argues that when we look upwards the visual parts of our brains react differently to when we direct our attention downwards or interact with events in front of us. He argues that human brains have several distinct systems for processing 'the graspable interaction space of the lower visual field' and a completely different system for processing 'the visual field above the horizon' (Ellard, 2016). Ellard then goes on to argue that according to the work of the neuroscientist Fred Previc, in the *Dopaminergic Mind in Human Evolution and History* (2009), 'upward deviations of the eyes' stimulate an area of the brain which specializes in the comprehension of what he calls 'extrapersonal space' (Ellard, 2016). Previc states that the stimulation of this visual system is in the same area of the brain responsible for 'religious experiences, meditative activity, dreaming, and probably any kind of artistic or creative activity' (Ellard, 2016). According to Previc such activities encourage 'us to reach beyond the bounds of nearby time and space into the infinite and eternal' (Ellard, 2016). Ellard ends his text on the power of the upward gaze by considering architecture. He states that manmade spaces such as massive cathedrals, courthouses, or corporate headquarters, convey power, wealth, and strength partly because they 'cause us to crane our heads in awe and to engage with the infinite'. He concludes that the verbal associations which commonly conflate ideas of spirituality, morality and religion with the overhead demonstrate the power of the upward gaze (Ellard, 2016).

British painters considered who have employed the sublime and encouraged an upward gaze

After the discovery of the links between neuroscience and looking, I began to search for significant British painters of sublime landscapes and spaces whose work encourages the viewer's eye to divert upwards for aesthetic and psychological effect. The painters briefly considered here do not represent a comprehensive or in-depth analysis of artists who have engaged with 'extrapersonal space' (Ellard 2016). They merely demonstrate that notable British artists have engaged with a way of looking which encourages the viewer to consider conceptions of magnificence, power, wealth, and religious conviction. I have therefore, very briefly, considered the work of four British artists, one from the nineteenth century and three from the present - John Martin (1789–1854), Gordon Cheung (1975-), Glenn Brown (1966-) and Raqib Shaw (1974-). Each artist in this list, may or may not have been influenced by Burke, but in each case their work and the decisions taken in the construction of some of their artworks can be more wholly understood and appreciated by viewers after reading the *Enquiry*.

John Martin employed the visual device of arranging his landscapes to draw the viewer's gaze upwards in many of his epic visions. His painting *The Coronation of Queen Victoria* (1839) (fig 88), which measures an impressive but not overwhelming 238cm by 185.4 cm, is set in Westminster Abbey and illustrates this visual effect. The painting's central theme of the young Queen's coronation, and her helping of an aged nobleman to his feet after a fall, is almost lost on audiences because the viewer's eye seems almost forced to follow the upward extensions of pillars and fan-vaulting within the religious architecture which dominates and dwarfs all those below.

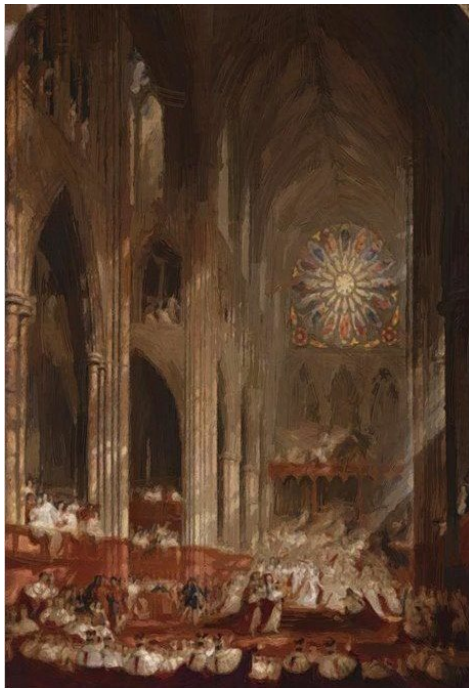


Fig 88. John Martin *The Coronation of Queen Victoria* (1839)

The Great Day of His Wrath (1851-53) (fig 89) is a larger artwork measuring 196.5cm by 303.2cm and is arguably the culmination of Martin's use of conflation between an upward gaze, religious feeling and apocalyptic terror. This painting illustrates a catastrophe prophesied in the *Book of Revelation* in which mountains, rocks, and the remains of a destroyed city, descend upon a populous below who imagine this frightful end as a means of escaping the face of God.



Fig 89. John Martin *The Great Day of His Wrath* (1851-53)

Martin's importance as an artist was revived by a major exhibition of his work *John Martin Apocalypse* at Tate Britain 21st September 2011 - 15th January 2012. The accompanying publication *John Martin Apocalypse* (2011), edited by Martin Myrone, has just over forty examples of paintings and prints in which a device such as thunderbolt, wildly dramatic cloud, mountain range, huge building, or shaft of light appears in the top third or quarter of the picture plane. In all these works Martin has carefully designed a landscape, which he could not have possibly seen, for dramatic effect. Martin appears to be reflecting upon the Burkean conceptions of magnificence, power, wealth, and religious conviction throughout his career. In the text *The abyss that abides* (2011) Milne in Myrone considers the career and influence of Martin, observing that:

'...capturing sights and experiences at the very edge of reason, and perhaps beyond rational thought, the Sublime has in fact been revived in contemporary culture. Situated at the limits of conventional thinking, the Sublime may, in a strictly Burkean sense, offer the possibility of aesthetic elevation' (Milne, 2011:53).



Fig 90. Glenn Brown *The Tragic Conversion of Salvador Dali (after John Martin)*(1998)

The idea of 'aesthetic elevation' is also a theme explored by Glenn Brown in the painting *The Tragic Conversion of Salvador Dali (after John Martin)* (1998) (fig 90). This painting was produced on a canvas measuring 222cm by 323 cm. This colossal artwork creates a sense of awe in contemporary spectators because of the sheer magnitude of Brown's vision. The surface of the painting is meticulously smooth and appropriates from Martin's *The Great Day of His Wrath* (1851-53). However, in Brown's reimagining the sufferings of humanity are absent and the fallen city has been replaced with a brightly glowing futuristic one, untouched by destruction and placed far into the background. The repositioning of the city in Brown's painting amplifies the scale of the gravity defying rocks in the painting's foreground. These rocks draw the viewer's gaze upwards. Colour is used in much the same way advocated by Burke, gloomy browns, blues, and expanses of matt black dominate the foreground, whilst in the background destruction is implied with a red light cast from a sun which looks down over rocks, and sea. According to Milne, Brown's painting is 'a vision of a world unaffected by the power of nature' in which 'the false promise of science' has become a new saviour (Milne, 2011:56).

Gordon Cheung also produces apocalyptic paintings which dwell upon the relationship humans have to the idea of a controlling God. These artworks are multimedia collage paintings in which the stock market is now reimagined as a replacement for God. Cheung's paintings appear to be created over backgrounds taken directly from stock

listings found in the *Financial Times*. Over these backgrounds, which he describes as omnipotent, Cheung paints epic imaginary landscapes which often contain appropriated imagery from science fiction or nineteenth-century paintings. This union of narrative over an omnipotent power is not an arbitrary union. Instead it often aims to project a vision of the world as shaped by terrifying greed, violence, and a lust for convenience. Paul Hobson in *Hacking into the present: the Apocalyptic imaginings of Gordon Cheung* (2009) states that:

‘the use of stock listings newsprint as a ground is intended by Cheung to evoke the invisible yet omnipresent digitised, data saturated framework – a simulated reality a la *The Matrix* – that constructs, mediates and limits our conditions of possibility at the beginning of the twenty-first century’ (Hobson, 2009:5).

Hobson terms Cheung’s paintings as examples of ‘post-modern techno-sublime’ (Hobson, 2009:6). He then speculates on their relationship to transcendental thinking by stating: “if a Romantic landscape painting typically takes you on a transcendental experience which brings you closer to God then what would ‘the techno-sublime’ bring you closer to? If it is a God, then what shape would that take?” (Hobson, 2009: 13).

On the surface of these visions Cheung applies paint using a skilful combination of airbrush and impasto techniques. Often the colours he uses are synthetic and lurid, leading to descriptions of his artworks as ‘cheaply sublime, like computer-generated fractal Romanticism’ (Milne, 2011:56).



Fig 91. Gordon Cheung *Rivers of Bliss* (2007)

Like Brown, Cheung has also appropriated from Martin. In 2007 he produced twenty-four paintings based upon Martin’s engravings of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667–1674).

In the painting *Rivers of Bliss*, 76 cm by 122cm, (2007) (fig 91) a huge dome hovers above a lone figure on a mountain top. The dome appears to contain an overwhelming wealth of stock listings or financial data. At the top of this dome the sun blazes down and illuminates the darkness below. The viewer's gaze is drawn heavenward toward the top of the dome and the blinding sun beyond. This landscape exists in more of a psychological space than a real space, it is a mindscape. Such mindscapes can be presented by artists like Cheung and Brown as analogies for realities drawn from the conceptions of the terror implicit in an encounter with the extraordinary and the other-worldly. Such presentations of encounter draw strength from Burke's argument that inquest can extend beyond that which can be experienced and comprehended (Burke, 1757-59:158).

Raqib Shaw also creates paintings which are appropriations from the history of art which he transmutes and sets into fantastical spaces and landscapes which he cannot have seen. In his painting detail is often taken to an extreme which overwhelms the eye. This overload of detail is achieved using acrylic liner, enamel and sometimes rhinestones on birchwood. His most complex paintings are created using assistants who create vivid depictions of luxury objects, architectural details, and landscapes, devoid of any trace of the human hand. These assistants work within the complex designs Shaw creates. In *The Adoration (after Jan Gossaert)* (2015-16) (fig 92) Shaw replaces the Virgin and Child with a blue coloured version of himself, covered in bright red flesh wounds which on his hands are so deep they reveal the bones holding his naturally depicted Jack Russell. These central figures are attended by several magi with gaping mouths and hyena features. Around and above this group, small birds, insects and skeleton like creatures cavort and fly. The overall effect of Shaw's wild reimagining of Gossaert's painting is astonishing because it combines extreme complexity, which requires thought and planning, with nightmarish invention. This invention, according to Matt Price in *The Anomie Review of Contemporary British Painting* (2018) questions 'the adoration of false idols' and critiques the complex history which artists had, and still have if they become commercially successful, with powerful patrons (Price, 2018:122).

Shaw's method of production is also astonishing because it appears physically and mentally exhausting. His magnificent profusions of carefully outlined forms are created by stain glass paint which form tiny barriers on the surface of his compositions into which liquid enamel paint is poured and worked, using porcupine quills, to create effects of shadow and texture. Therefore all the details within these pools of enamel are produced, either by the artist or his assistants, by bending over and reaching into

flat horizontal spaces. Because of the scale of Shaw's compositions, *The Adoration* measures 177cm by 161.8cm, this bending, stretching, and working process must be back breaking within a short time. The discomfort implicit in Shaw's working method means that immense physical effort and willpower go into each picture. Burke equates difficulty with awe inspiring ideas in the *Enquiry* when he states in *Part Two, SECTION XII* under the subheading *DIFFICULTY* that:

'another source of greatness is *Difficulty*. When any work seems to have required immense force and labour to effect it, the idea is grand' (Burke, 1757-59:71).



Fig 92. Raqib Shaw *The Adoration (After Jan Gossaert)* (2015-16)

Shaw is described by Price as an 'unquestionable genius' however he also comments that 'Shaw sees himself as a tormented, depraved soul, and his life in the studio as a macabre parade of excess and degradation' (Price, 2018: 122). Shaw's artwork

combines many qualities of the Burkean Sublime to great effect and the power of his imagery can be easily understood by considering his paintings using the themes of astonishment, awe, difficulty, divinity, obscurity, magnificence, profusion, power, and terror as described in the *Enquiry*.

In *The Abstract Sublime* (1961) Robert Rosenblum considers the work of artists who engaged with the Romantic experiences of awe, boundlessness, divinity, and terror. He then begins to reflect upon how inequalities of scale create poignant contrasts between 'the infinite vastness of a pantheistic God and the infinite smallness of His creatures' (Rosenblum, 2010: 110). Rosenblum argues that a Rothko, with its huge glowing voids and tiers of light, acts like a presentation of a transcendental landscape. Rosenblum concludes that when viewing a Rothko, all the viewer can do is let the painting lead them beyond reason and into the realm of faith which can be termed the Abstract Sublime (Rosenblum, 2010: 110).

More than two hundred and fifty years before Ellard's research, Burke explicitly conflates an analogy for religious feeling, and an upward gaze into the sublime of infinity, when in *SECTION XIII* under the subheading *MAGNIFICENCE* he states:

'Magnificence is likewise a source of the sublime. A great profusion of things which are splendid or valuable in themselves, is magnificent. The starry heaven, though it occurs so very frequently to our view, never fails to excite an idea of grandeur. This cannot be owing to any thing in the stars themselves, separately considered. The number is certainly the cause. The apparent disorder augments the grandeur, for the appearance of care is highly contrary to our ideas of magnificence' (Burke, 1757-59:71).

Within this statement Burke is making several important claims about the aesthetic of the sublime and its relationship to magnificence which can, if followed, inform artistic practice. His clear statement that magnificence is sublime, and that looking up into the stars creates thoughts in the viewer which are magnificent, shows Burke using aesthetic philosophy to deal with astonishing empirical sensory overload. He also expresses the intriguing opinion that disorder, when combined with an extreme multiplicity of form, heightens the impression of magnificence. The idea of painting being informed by sensory overload is impossible to overlook in the work of all the artists cited in this text. Their examples of an engagement with excess, influenced me and allowed me to calmly reflect upon the effects of visual repetition on a scale which defies comprehension, and to safely categorise awe and bewilderment as concepts of the sublime and transcendental.

A new vision of the imagination unbound: the Burkean Transcendental Sublime

The combined observations of Burke, Ellard, Mann and Previc, and the artworks of Martin, Brown, Cheung, and Shaw convinced me that a feeling, derived from looking upwards into certain types of spaces leads to a reflection on power, magnificence, and religious belief. This reaction was important when considering how reality itself is often perceived and needed some sort of signifying term to categorise it. Previc uses the term 'extrapersonal space' (Ellard 2016) to signify a perception of space which pushes the imagination beyond contemplation of the humdrum and the everyday. Like Previc I was searching for a term which goes beyond that which is ordinary and understood. However, unlike Previc I was searching for a term which could be understood as derived not from neuroscience, but from a study of Burkean conceptions of the terror of the sublime.

I created the term Burkean Transcendental Sublime to define spaces whose dominant feature is that they can be associated with transcendental concepts gleaned from the *Enquiry*. In Britain, I would argue, many religious and politically significant spaces and landscapes have, as well as an obvious physical presence which draws the eye skyward other-worldly, and supernatural associative meanings which can dominate perception. Such spaces are exciting and challenging psychological arenas for artists' imaginations because they have the potential to move beyond the physical limitations of known places and explore links between terror, space, authority, and magnificence. Within such spaces the power of compounded abstract thought can be formed from a union, often 'an arbitrary union' (Burke, 1757-59:150) of aggregate and simple abstract words to create landscapes which are obscure conceptions of the mind, but nevertheless, reflect a real emotional impact derived from the physical experience of Burkean terror. Such mindscapes can be seen but they are also analogies for realities drawn from the conceptions of the terror implicit in an encounter with the extraordinary, the other-worldly, the supernatural, the digital and, perhaps the darkest and most terrifying of all conceptions, the superhuman. Such presentations of encounter extend into the artists' domain and draw strength from Burke's argument that inquest can extend beyond that which can be experienced and understood. Burke uses the examples of God, angels, devils, heaven, and hell to demonstrate how perceptions of reality can take root within the mind without ever being empirically experienced, and yet still greatly affect the passions (Burke, 1757-59:158). Such concepts, I would argue, are at least as conceptually delightful, using the Burkean sense of the word, for artistic practice, as those associated with both the horizontal and the vertical sublime.

The term Burkean Transcendental Sublime is not used by either Bromwich, Freeman, Furniss, Gasche, Phillips or Shaw in their reinterpretations of the *Enquiry*. These published authors are aware of Burke's importance to Romantic art, and how this art form reflects the value of human existence by drawing strength from 'its own self-delight' (Eagleton, 1990:65), whilst simultaneously scorning rationalism and utilitarianism. However, I would argue that they all seem more enamoured by passages in the *Enquiry* which privilege Burke's relatively non-spiritual empiricism, rather than his repeated expressions of a vision of the sublime which goes beyond earthly empirical experience. Shaw, for example, typifies this collective attitude when he states that Burke refuses to address the issue of whether the sublime is a product of the mind, or of matter, because of 'his instinctive empiricism: a mode of thinking that restricts enquiry to that which can be verified by experience' (Shaw, 2006:53). How Shaw justifies this claim when he must also know that the Burkean Sublime includes such otherworldly concepts as the sacred, the transcendent, (Phillips, 1990:22) and the concept of the sublime as an idea bound up with 'authority as a species of mystification' (Phillips, 1990:15) is open to speculation. Therefore, the term Burkean Transcendental Sublime appears to be without significant contemporary precedent.

How Lady Chapel became identified as a sublime space filled with power, magnificence, and transcendental meaning

I created the term the Burkean Transcendental Sublime, from a group of aesthetic issues identified in the *Enquiry* before Covid-19 struck Britain. Images of Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey astonished my eye and seemed to offer me the prospect of an upward gaze into a space overloaded with obscure details and transcendental meaning. I originally imagined these details being held within angular Cubist like shards, a visual reference to Burke's opinion that angular shapes have a relationship to the senses which is not beautiful and very rarely found in nature (Burke, 1757-59:105). These shards I imagined as soaring heavenward and mimicking the structure of Lady Chapel's walls and ceiling. This way of thinking was partly inspired by having seen Clive Head's painting, *Looking Glass* (2014) at the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts (fig 93). The example of Head's highly realist take on Cubism fired my ambition to try to produce a fairly large, but not huge, painting which would show how I too could employ a realist's eye within a complex and magnificent space for dramatic visual effect.

As an experiment I produced two Cubistic style drawings of the chapel ceiling to try to get used to shattering form (figs 94-95). Both drawings are crude and only vaguely

conceived because they were produced from poor quality internet images. At this stage in my research I was unconcerned by the lack of finish in these drawings because I had yet to visit the actual site. I then began planning for a trip to London to gather all the information I was going to need to complete my research. Just as my plans were nearing completion something unexpected and terrible happened.



Fig 93 Clive Head. *Looking Glass* (2014)

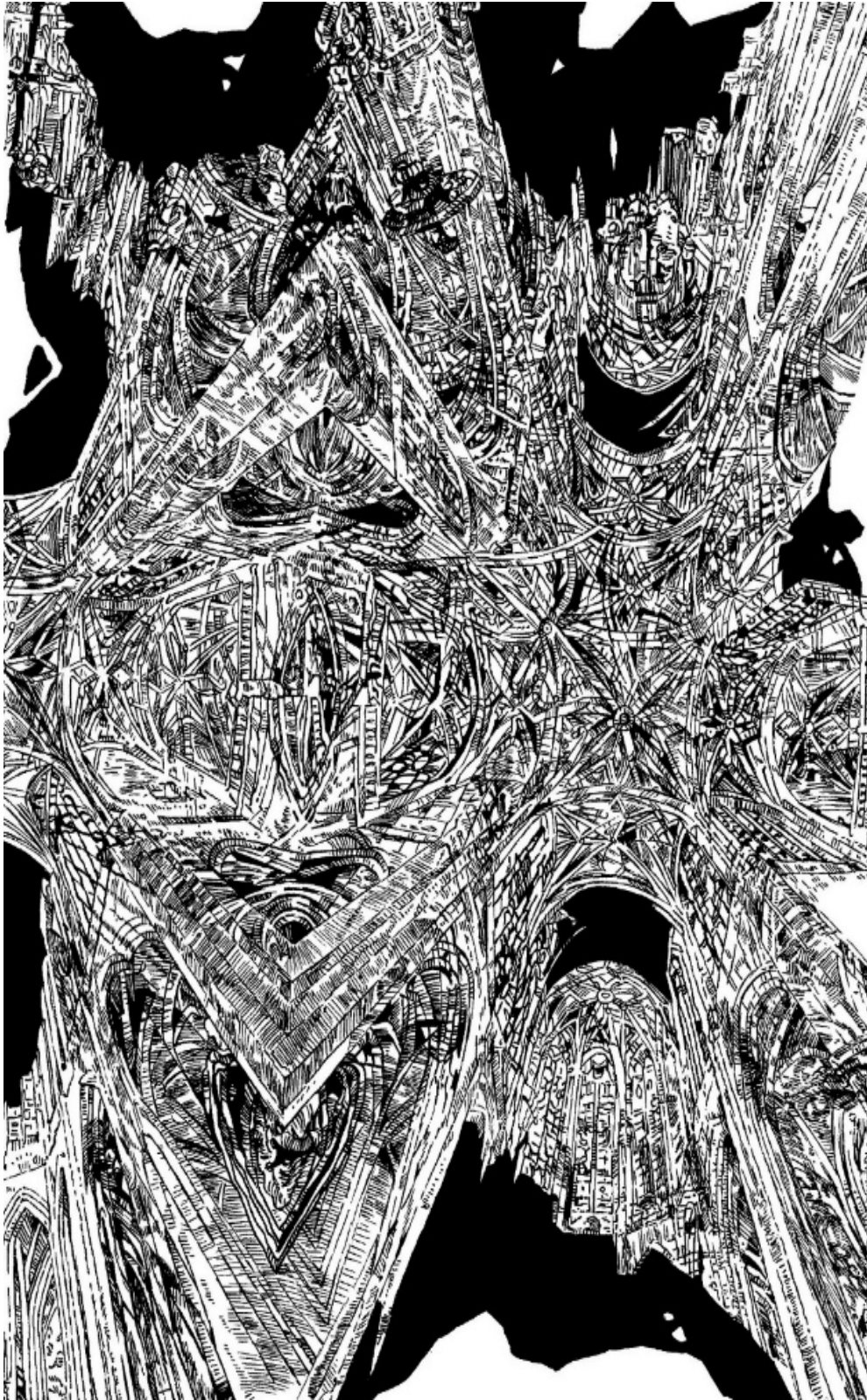


Fig 94. Paul Vousden *Lady Chapel Experiment* (2020) ink on paper. 21cm by 29cm



Fig 95. Paul Vousden *Lady Chapel Colour Experiment* (2020) digital drawings.
Indeterminate dimensions

How Covid-19 augmented my conception of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime

The initial invasion of Britain by Covid-19 came as a shock to most people. I was initially astonished and terrified by the arrival of this new virus, which quickly mutated from vague threat into a real killer. For me one of the worst features of this new predator from nature was that it demonstrated an implicit flaw in worldwide interconnectivity and undermined my faith in a brighter future informed by human progress.

By the 11th March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the threat from Covid to be on the scale of a pandemic, and on the same day a £12 billion package of emergency support, was announced by the British government, to deal with an expected largescale invasion by this unseeable enemy (Embury-Dennis, 2020). By 23rd March Britain was in lockdown. My plans to visit Lady Chapel for research purposes were now put on hold indefinitely and I began to wonder how I could possibly proceed with my studies.



Fig 96. Justin Mortimer *Zona* (2016)

During this initial lockdown period I was also struck by the unreality of the situation. Each night the BBC News presented me with an ever more other-worldly and apocalyptic picture of extraordinary national and planetary decimation reminiscent of a Justin Mortimer landscape which had inexplicably come to life. By the end of March I was fully aware that I was now witness to a serious event in which the power of the human construct was being humbled by the power of nature. Covid-19 now seemed to be an invisible and overwhelming force, a destructive and terrifying entity, a bringer of isolation, regulation, fear, and the spectral idea of disease which, for an unknown number of people, would transmute into a life-threatening encounter. The world

appeared to have gone mad, to have turned upside down and been ripped apart. I began seeking solace in the *Enquiry*.

Burke states in *Part One, SECTION XIV* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *The effects of SYMPATHY in the distresses of others* that:

‘there is no spectacle we so eagerly pursue, as that of some uncommon and grievous calamity; so that whether the misfortune is before our eyes, or whether they are turned back to it in history, it always touches with delight’ (Burke, 1757-59:43). He further states in *Part Four, SECTION VII*, under the subheading *EXERCISE necessary for the finer organs* that;

‘if the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror is not conversant about the present destruction of the person’[...] ‘they are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquillity tinged with terror; which as it belongs to self-preservation’ (Burke, 1757-59:123)

Burke’s thoughts on how vicarious experience and spectacle can be presented to create delight when safely framed, as it is in a painting, especially a painting informed by a *past* historical danger, made me realise that the pandemic, although extremely unwelcome, offered future survivors a new vision of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime. This would be because survivors of the pandemic would have been witnesses to an extraordinarily senseless and pointless catastrophe. A catastrophe which demonstrates the power of nature to go beyond the normal bounds of human reason and compassion, and to destroy indiscriminately and mercilessly.

Despite my initial apprehension my experience of Britain’s first lockdown was not particularly traumatic. Burke’s *Enquiry* helped me rationalise my anxieties and my student status afforded comfort because I was not forced to mingle with colleagues or public. During this first period of lockdown the widespread acceptance of restrictions on civil liberties by the public demonstrated the unseen power of the state. This reality made me consider how I could create a depiction of the battle for dominance between nature and state; entities which were both powerful and oppressive in ways which I found difficult to comprehend.

This incomprehension drove my visual curiosity back toward the huge scale associated with Westminster Abbey, which I imagined as embodying the power of the state but could not visit, and toward an infinitely small, microscopic viral threat, which I could not see. My search for meaningful artistic action, which could reflect upon the relationship

between these two conceptions, was therefore complicated by ideas outside of normal scale which could not be physically experienced. Despite these difficulties I still wanted to link the associative meaning of an upward gaze to the invisible battle for dominance between the natural and the unnatural or manmade.

I looked for ways to create art reflective of this new situation by exploring Burke's appreciation of the sublime qualities of the miniscule. Burke states in *Part Two, SECTION VII* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *VASTNESS* that:

‘as the great extreme of dimension is sublime, so the last extreme of littleness is in some measure sublime likewise;’ (Burke, 1757-9: 66) and that, ‘in tracing which the imagination is lost as well as the sense, we become amazed and confounded at the wonders of minuteness; nor can we distinguish in its effect the extreme of littleness from the vast itself’ (Burke, 1757-59:66).

With these statements Burke is expressing the opinion that anything which exists on a scale which astonishes the imagination, whether huge or tiny, is an extreme visual and conceptual experience. Essentially, he is saying that at the heart of the sublime experience is the notion of both vastness and the infinitely small. Bell and Lyall in *The Accelerated Sublime* (2002) term the infinitely small as the inverted sublime because they reimagine this conception ‘as the inverse of vastness’ (Bell, Lyall, 2002:190). Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe simply states, in his *Introduction to Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime* (1999), that Burke believed the beautiful to be human in scale, whilst the sublime was ‘out of scale and threatening’ (Gilbert-Rolfe, 1999:11).

Throughout April 2020 I reimagined a vision which would exist outside of real, or ordinary scales of space and understanding. I was aware that this conceptual process was implicitly Burkean because it had its origins in the material evidence of my senses, my fears and imagination. I therefore began to conceive an extraordinary landscape painting which would transcend logic, a wildly ambitious view of the interior of Lady Chapel, which would lift and magnify my inventive processes, and reflect upon the fictional reality of a world turned dark and invaded by out of scale monstrosities. These perversions of nature, I imagined as both analogies for Covid-19, and as embodiments of the Otherness of the unseen superhumans who exist within such magnificent hierarchical spaces.

The wolf's lair invaded: preparatory paintings for my final artwork and their relationship to the year of terror

The challenge of going beyond that which can be seen, and creating new forms, or malformations, to express lived experience which visually exceeded the power of nature (Burke, 1757-9:158), now became central to my newly augmented conception of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime. Looking at the inventive examples set by Brown, Cheung and Shaw made me realise that giving form to these thoughts required reflection, and preparation, and so I embarked on a period of study which aimed to clarify and develop my visual thinking. This development could not deal directly with the interiority of Lady Chapel, because I could not travel to London. However, photographs gleaned from the internet, did seem to provide enough information on the very simple forms of the graphic heraldic banners within Lady Chapel to create work from, and so I resolved to use these fragments to visually connect a landscape I already knew, with the constructed power which the Chapel signifies. This melding together of constructed power, and nature's power was a direct response to the wildly unexpected new reality I found myself inhabiting.



Fig 97. Paul Vousden *Fantasy of power* (original photograph shown beside painting) (2020) oil paint on canvas. 90cm X 90cm

My initial attempts to create symbolic representations of Covid-19, and the unknowable Otherness of the powerful, who suddenly seemed less powerful and subordinate to nature, was helped by searching for these visual ideas using oil paint. I chose this

medium because I had no clear notion of what such a manifestation in landscape would look like. So I hoped to find these extraordinarily felt forms using a slow and easily transformable medium. I hoped this method of working would create interesting, and ideally astonishing, manifestations of my felt, and thought, conceptions of power in a landscape. Because Burke states that he believes power to be sublime and tiered into gradations which end with God (Burke, 1757-59:64), I groped to find a visual equivalent to these sentiments.

I began my experiment by ripping the heraldic banners out of Lady Chapel, a space associated with power, and placing them in the sky above Glen Affric, a space I associate with the transcendental because I intend my ashes to be scattered there, along with those dear to me, after death. The new landscape created by this arbitrary union of the mind was imagined as a thought repository only and not as a setting for an exhibitable artwork striving for aesthetic merit. The section of Scottish space used in this thought experiment is rugged and informed by deep shadows loaded with writhing brushwork. These elements are indicative of some of Burke's ideas on the sublime, but more importantly, especially at this early stage of research, the landscape consists of a few easily drawn lines which create simple slabs of rock forming strong, tiered, stage-like structures. These easily constructed tiers served the useful purpose of creating a playful visual space within which I could invent forms freely, unconcerned by the complications of perspective. Within my painted landscape laboratory I felt free to imagine out of scale and slightly sinister looking flowers, and viral forms, which became increasingly menacing as I worked my way up the picture plane. These invented forms do not blend into the environment, they are alien and imagined as evocative of Burke's idea of power as a terrifying force.



Fig 98. Paul Vousden *Fantasy of power*, details (2020) oil paint on canvas. 90cm X 90cm

On the horizon line, which is very stage like, I erected elevated and hovering heraldic bannered altars to power. The central one of these is rooted into the rocks of the landscape by an obscure form which is placed at the front of the altar like structure. This form is reminiscent of an organ, possibly a lung. From this pinkish lump grows a trachea like structure which leads to a purple representation of the Covid-19 virus.

Although I was fond of the grotesque nature of my central altar I found it hard to ignore the fact that the graphic representation of Covid-19 was not particularly visually menacing or elevating. To my eyes, even blowing the virus up to an impossible scale could not detract from the fact that it resembled a bouncy beach ball with stumpy blobs sticking out. I immediately decided, based on the visual evidence of my painting, to cease reimagining the virus literally. Below the central altar I therefore began imagining another symbol for Covid-19 which was far more visceral, sinister, and in keeping with the idea of power's associative links to terror. This new manifestation of nature's darkness slithered and writhed, it had a beak like head which could bite, a bloated body which could digest, and fat, formless, tendrils which could sting. This new malformation was visually satisfying, its form was firmed up with the production of the digital drawing *Other* (fig 99). This process gave me a springboard from which to produce other transcendental manifestations of an idea, which I felt, was far too loaded with deadly menace, and interchangeable with the concept of the Otherness of superhumans, to resemble anything which could bounce.



Fig 99. Paul Vousden *Other* (2020) digital drawings. Indeterminate dimensions

My new manifestation of malevolence delighted and bit deeply into my imagination. Although I had found this form using the accidents, and the very slow translucent

processes that the application of oil paint on canvas allows the artist, I now had the basic building blocks of a visual idea which needed to be quickly refined. I therefore stopped painting in oil and began drawing. *Highland Hellscape* (2020) (fig 100) is the first landscape drawing I produced. Although this drawing was produced from a photograph of Glencoe, due to travel restrictions created by Covid, it is nevertheless a landscape I have visited many times and have empirical knowledge of. This knowledge made the drawing process easier and allowed me to quickly produce a landscape in which the eye is once again drawn upward toward gigantic, and monstrous, somethings. These somethings are beyond understanding and cling to rock faces like totems or perhaps manifestations of an imagined deity's wrath. I developed the drawing digitally using exuberant and strong colours in Paint 3D to produce the digital drawing *Highland Hellscape II* (2020) (fig 101). This strong use of colour was influenced by the example of Cheung's poster-like palette of 'pinks, violets, yellows and greens' (Hobson, 2009:5). Once this drawing was completed I felt ready to paint with real intentions of creating a exhibitable Burkean transcendental artwork.



Fig 100. Paul Vousden *Highland Hellscape* (2020) black ink on paper. 24cm by 28cm

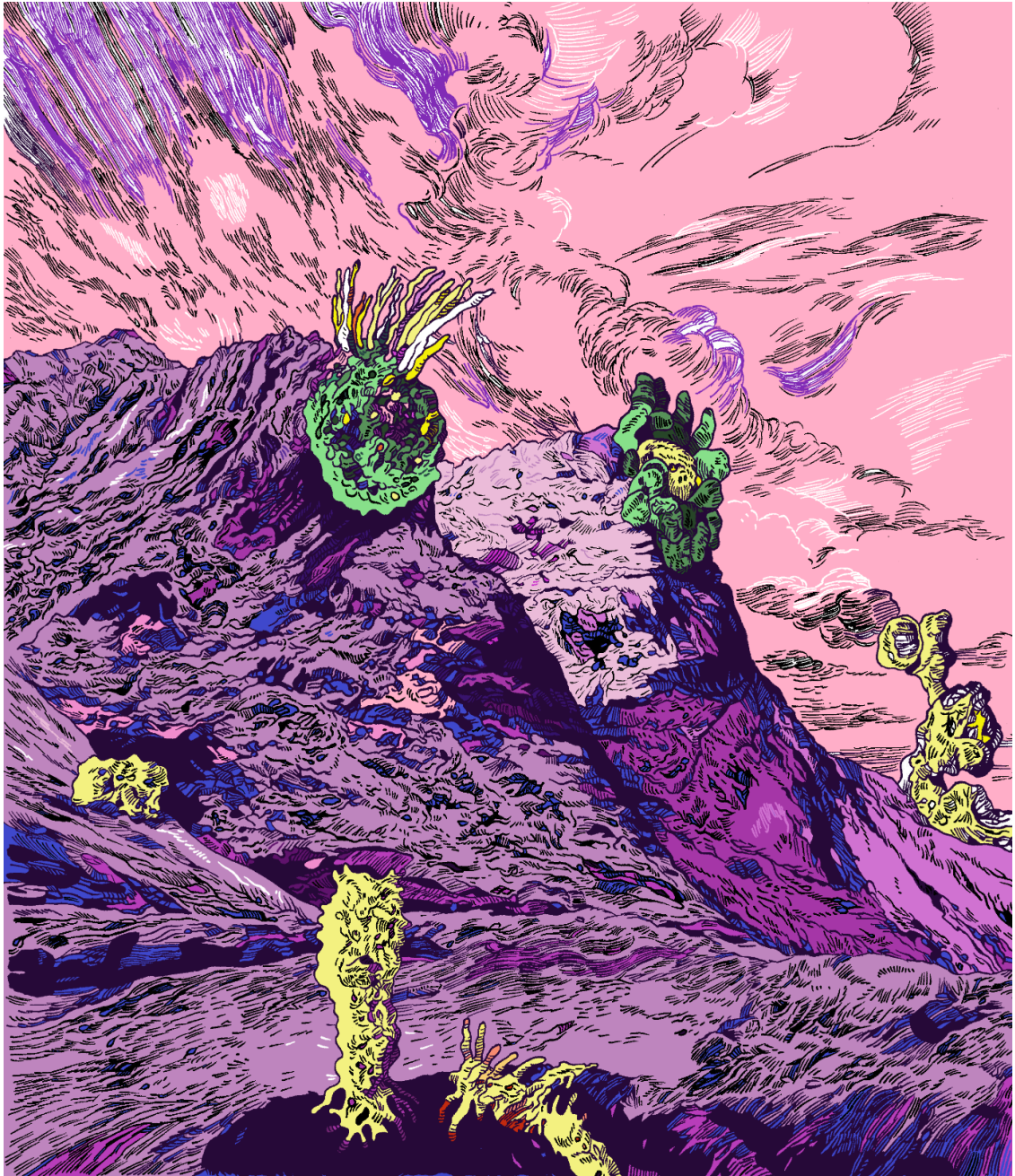


Fig 101. Paul Vousden *Highland Hellscape II* (2020) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

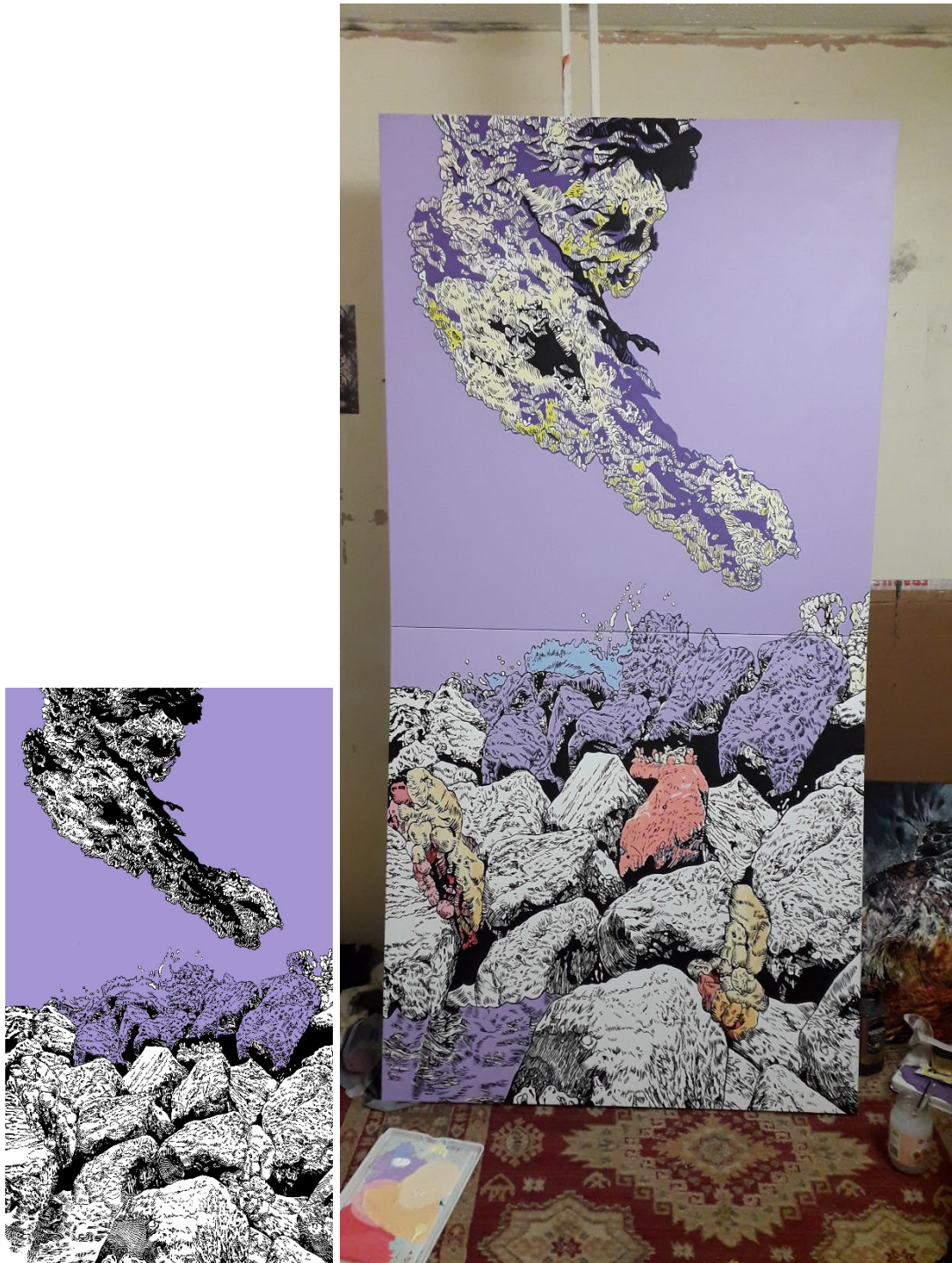


Fig 102. Paul Vousden *Death is coming* (2020) acrylic, on canvas. 200cm by 100cm

My first landscape painting, produced in lockdown Britain, was derived from a digital drawing I had previously created from a reimagining of the sea defences at Sheringham. This drawing now appeared readable as a premonition of a viral infection floating over Britain's porous border, whilst depositing huge, disease causing, blobs of something onto the redundant sea defences below. During the process of scaling up, and essentially copying my drawing onto two one metre squared canvasses, I became

aware that exactitude and visual coherence are easily achieved when working from such a thoroughly planned image. This made the painting an extremely enjoyable and uplifting experience which felt deceptively spontaneous. My illusion of spontaneity made the painting of this artwork quick, at least by my standards, and both canvases were completed within thirty six hours. After completion, the painting's floating formation, which draws the eye skyward, now struck me as looking eerily like a Chinese dragon, or an astonishing phantom of the imagination. Stylistically the artwork is informed by Burke's thoughts on the use of strong colours, I painted using unmixed black and white acrylic and where pale colours, associated with the beautiful, are employed, they are painted in flat unblended slabs to create a strong effect of colour (Burke, 1757-59:114). The artwork is informed by the themes of the Burkean Sublime because it is a response to a subject which astonished me and which, if actually encountered could theoretically inflict terror, pain, suffering and possibly even death. The painting is also a reflection upon my inability to understand why Britain's island status did not afford the nation similar benefits to those enjoyed by Australia and New Zealand.

During Britain's first lockdown, which lasted throughout the spring and summer of 2020, Shaw's analysis of the *Enquiry* as 'a work of experimental psychology' (Shaw, 2006:53) seemed totally validated. In this period the *Enquiry* enabled me to comment upon, without taking part in, or being too badly affected by, the horror and chaos which began unfolding in Britain and around the world. Burke argues in Part Five, SECTION VII of the *Enquiry*, under the sub-heading How WORDS influence the passions that:

'there are many things of a very affecting nature' (Burke, 1757-9: 158) such as famine, death and war, 'which can seldom occur in the reality, but the words which represent them often do: and thus have an opportunity of making a deep impression' (Burke, 1757-59: 158).

Burke's argument that rarely experienced extreme events can profoundly shape consciousness struck me as especially comforting. I found myself taking real solace from painting *Death is coming* (2020) (fig 102) because it was a safe presentation of a terror I had high hopes of never encountering. Burke fuelled my optimism further in his analysis of consciousness by stating that there are other ideas that 'have never been at all presented to the senses of any men', such as 'God, angels, devils, heaven and hell', but which nevertheless have a profound 'influence over the passions' (Burke, 1757-59:158). With this statement Burke is arguing that the sublime can go beyond empirical understanding and into realms of the never experienced, whilst still exerting a

powerful influence over understanding of ourselves, and of the society we inhabit (Burke, 1757-59:158). This argument gave me real hope that the Covid experience would remain something I could comment on vicariously.

My first experience of Covid-19 entering a real space occurred when one of my mother's friends, whose house I had visited over a thirty year period when running errands, succumbed to the disease. This actual death, in early summer and just as the threat seemed to be diminishing, stung me. I responded by producing the drawing *Flowers for Thelma* (2020) (fig 103). This digital drawing is a genuine emotional response to real loss, the eye is drawn upwards in this work towards a symbolic representation of the hidden killer. Apart from this visual device the work moves beyond that which can be expressed with my words. Burke states in *Part Two SECTION IV* of the *Enquiry* under a subheading *Of the difference between CLEARNESS and OBSCURITY with regard to the passions* that:

'ideas of eternity, and infinity, are among the most affecting we have, and yet perhaps there is nothing of which we really understand so little, as of infinity and eternity' (Burke, 1757-9:57).

Lockdown was lifted shortly after Thelma's death but my mother was too afraid of infection to risk attending her funeral. In an effort to lift spirits and exploit, and replicate, the uplifting feelings I had experienced whilst producing *Death is coming* (2020) I decided to produce a painting within a set time limit of twenty four hours because I was starting to believe that painting faster might energise and thereby create a feeling of empowerment and magnificence during the act of creation. Using the digital drawing *Viral Summer* (2020) (fig. 104) as a guide, I began work on a landscape which was also imagined as a face of infinity.

Anger is not an emotion Burke reflects upon in the *Enquiry*. As a natural response to the extremes of nature this omission is inexplicable. The painting *His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020* (fig. 105) is informed by a cold and controlled anger. This painting attempts to extend the emotional range of the *Enquiry* by applying material practice. Using just black, white, red and purple paint I strove for painted spontaneity in an effort to create an image which was informed by the aesthetic contents of the *Enquiry* and which was readable as 'a work of experimental psychology' (Shaw, 2006:53). My second aim was, in a limited associative way, achieved by making the painting resemble a Rorschach test. I had earlier noted that Hobson describes Cheung's compositions as evoking 'the jagged psychological projections of the Rorschach test' (Hobson, 2009:6) and this observation made me realise that I

shared this characteristic with Cheung. The resulting painting, at least to me, looks sinister and focussed rather than wild or spilling over with unrepressed energy. If the painting communicates anger at all it is definitely of the cold and controlled variety. This painting does not look up to, it looks directly at imagined malevolence.



Fig 103. Paul Vousden *Flowers for Thelma* (2020) digital drawing. Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 104. Paul Vousden *Viral Summer* (2020) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions



Fig 105. Paul Vousden *His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020* (2020) acrylic paint on canvas. 100cm x 100cm

Following my experiment with time and its effects upon the application of paint, I produced *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape* (fig 106). This painting was produced using the digital drawing *Highland Hellscape II* (fig 101) as a guide and was initially conceived as another twenty-four hour painting.

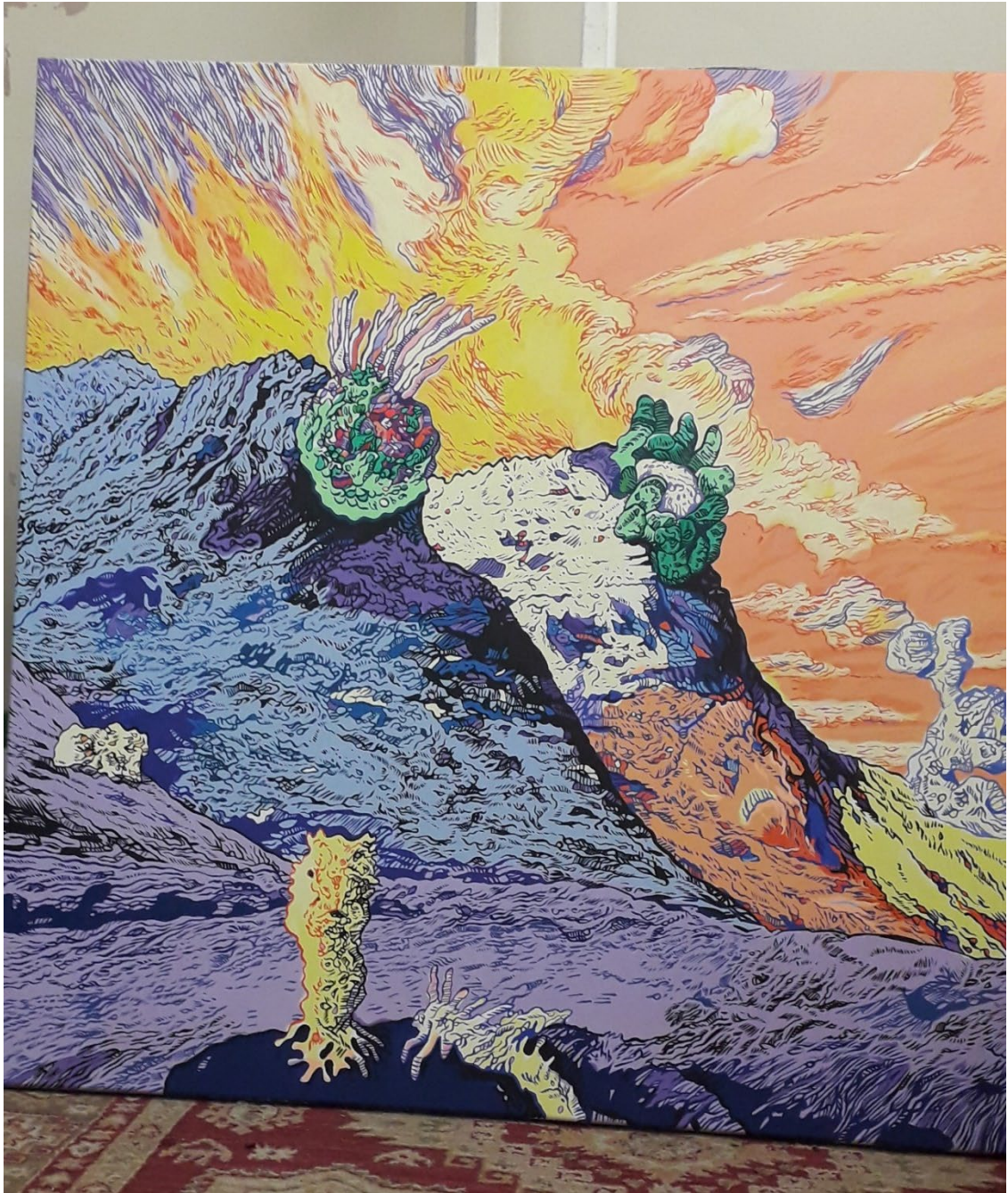


Fig 106. Paul Vousden *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape* (2020) acrylic paint on canvas. 100cm by 100cm

Despite my complete inability to paint within my set time frame, painting more swiftly, using a drawing as a template which showed exactly where each, supposedly spontaneous, paint application needed to go, did seem to reward me with an experience of elevating energy. I was also aware that by adopting a painting technique which was very graphic, many of the technical issues associated with realism ceased to be relevant. This had the positive effect of liberating my imagination and potentially facilitating the creation of future paintings from unclear, visually weak, or blurred

photographic sources. Whilst painting rapidly, the positive and uplifting feeling I was experiencing bled through me and into the colours I was mixing and applying. Burke's colour theory seemed inappropriately restrictive during this process, and so I asserted myself and produced a painting using far brighter colours than the darker blue and purple colours used in the initial digital sketch of the same scene (fig 101). The resulting artwork seemed to me to be more surprising because of the application of colours deemed inappropriate by Burke for sublime effect. With the benefit of hindsight I realised I had been moving toward a complete break with Burke's colour theory for some time. Initially this process had happened using single colours, or in insubstantial digital drawings. The painting *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape* (2020) was significant to my development as a painter because it was the first time I had melded the huge and lofty themes of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime, with a brash and colourful painting technique using multiple colours. When the painting was finished I felt that I had stumbled upon another way of expressing compound abstract expressions of Burkean thought which added a new aesthetic dimension to his conception of the sublime. I felt this painting had a boldness and immediacy similar to that of an advertisement or Pop Art painting. I also imagined that it was now readable as an extraordinary landscape which draws the viewers gaze upwards whilst questioning, rather than glorifying, faith and hierarchy.

Throughout the summer and early autumn of 2020 I produced more drawings and paintings which refined and reflected upon the challenge of going beyond that which can be seen. The *Wreckage* drawings (figs 107-108) are typical of how I used material reflections on local landscapes to develop and solidify forms which defy logic and which move toward definitive manifestations of transcendental invaders, or inhabitants, of Lady Chapel. Both drawings show a view of Blakeney and a wrecked ship, being invaded by viral somethings. In the sky above this wreck, which I imagined as symbolic of a battered ship of state, something huge and dreadful is gliding slowly inland. This dreadful form draws the eye skyward.

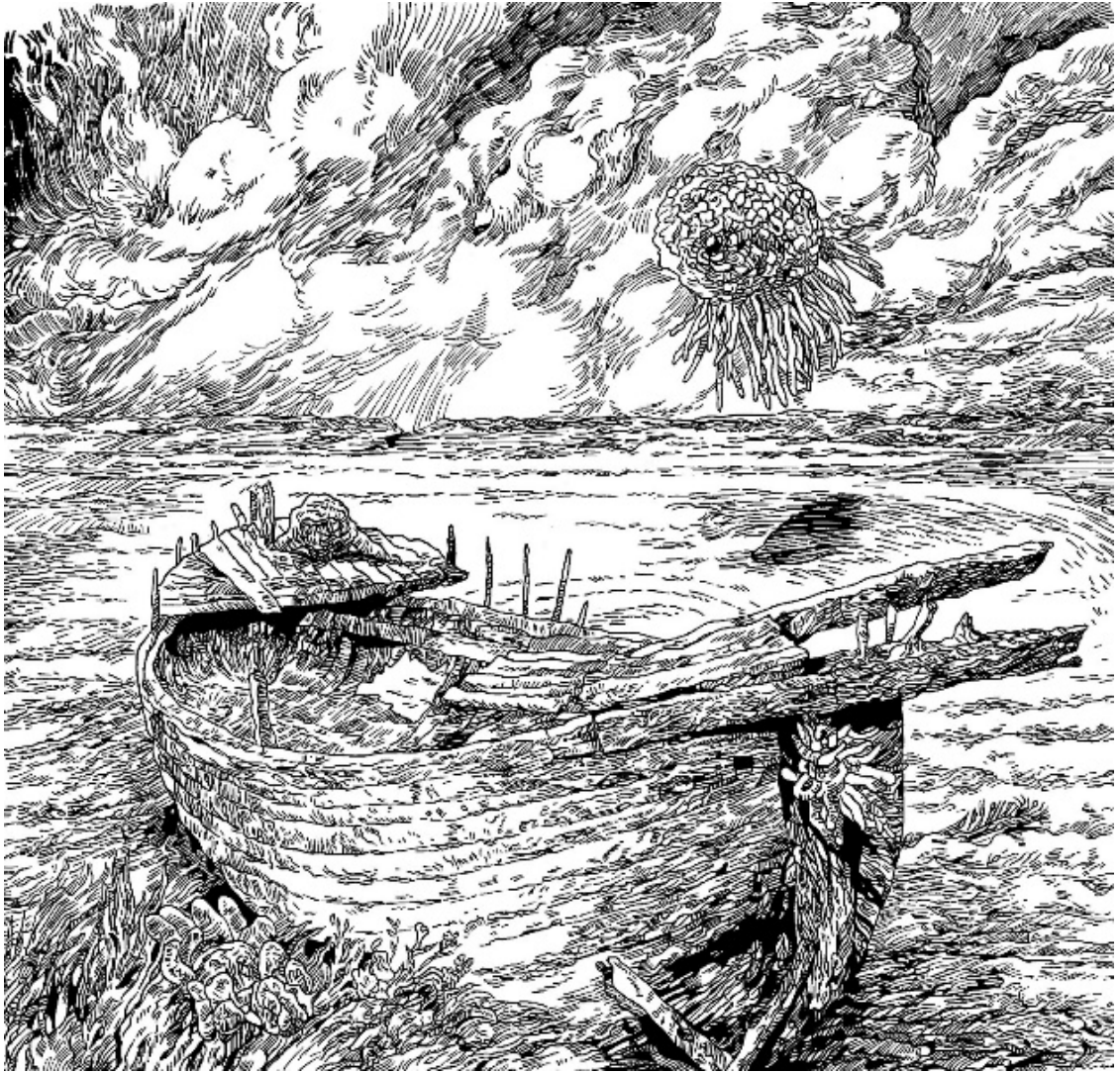


Fig 107. Paul Vousden *Wreckage* (2020) ink on paper. 29cm by 28cm



Fig 108. Paul Vousden *Wreckage* (2020) digital image. Indeterminate dimensions

Other drawings were produced, which tried to create astonishing somethings with which to visually electrify the internal space of Lady Chapel. These drawings started to be informed by disquieting reports in the media about the possible impacts of Covid 19 variants.

The idea that a coronavirus variant would reignite the pandemic seemed a frightening possibility. Nevertheless I was aware that Burke states in *Part Two, SECTION II* of the *Enquiry*, under the subheading *TERROR* that, ‘fear being an apprehension of pain or death, [...] operates in a manner that resembles actual pain’ (Burke, 1757-59:53). A few pages later, under *SECTION V* and the subheading *POWER*, Burke elaborates on the relationship between death, pain and terror when he states:

'the idea of pain and above all of death, are so very affecting, that whilst we remain in the presence of whatever is supposed to have the power of inflicting either, it is impossible to be perfectly free from terror (Burke, 1757-59:59).

With these statements Burke is making the reader unequivocally aware that terror, created from the proximity of a force which is theoretically capable of imposing harm, affects the imagination rather like the experience of actual physical pain (Burke, 1757-59:53). Burke's thinking made me wonder how long fear of hypothetical variants would inform my life and terrorise the psyche of the British public. The oil painting *Variants of the sublime and beautiful* (2020) (fig 109) is the last painting I produced during 2020. This artwork seeks to find forms capable of acting as embodiments of the idea of viral threats assuming unnatural proportions and creating a state of heightened fearfulness, or altered consciousness. This painting seeks to make manifest Burke's presentation of the sublime as a terrifyingly powerful force which is linked to an instinct for self-preservation in the face of threatening nature.

I began working on this image during the gloom of Autumn 2020. Using a willow tree's trunk, which can be seen from my studio window, I reimagined this form smashed, ravaged by disease, and hanging impossibly upside down. The altered nature of the trunk was created by painting it yellow. Next to this form, a cherry tree trunk is shown close to but slightly behind the willow, to create an illusion of receding space. This second tree trunk is painted with a sickly rose red colour and is disfigured by a blob of which clings to, and is imagined as burrowing into, the surface of the tree. The illusion of depth is further enhanced by a third tree. This last form is painted fairly naturalistically but this illusion of naturalism is shattered by huge blue tendril waiving virus like forms, and a dark purple evening sky. I then produced, within twenty four hours, a rapid mirror image, in acrylic, of the oil painting below. In this new panel there is no groping for form and rapid linework replaces tone. The vast majority of these lines curve elegantly over very pale underpainting. Dramatic effects such as dark shadows are ignored and the image produced, although based on exactly the same subject matter as the oil painting, combines conceptions of Burkean beauty with the subject matter of the sublime. The upper panel of this new painting is a more beautiful variant of the darkness of the oil painting below.



Fig 109. Paul Vausden *Variants of the sublime and beautiful* (2020) oil paint and acrylic paint on canvas. 90cm by 180cm

My Return to Lady Chapel

Armed with the inspiration Burke provided I returned to the internal space of Lady Chapel for a final reckoning with Burkean themes of magnificence, power, wealth, vastness, infinite smallness, religious conviction, the power of the upward gaze and terror. This time I felt ready to surmount the difficulties of painting a space which represented the power of the state but which I had not visited, using only limited and poor quality visual reference. This confidence had been created by exploring the visually obscure ideas of pain and fear and turning these into a series of bold paintings which I deemed to be full of energy, imagination and empowerment. A further thought from the *Enquiry* pushed me forward to create this final manifestation of the Burkean sublime. Burke states in *Part One, SECTION SEVENTEEN* of the *Enquiry* under the subheading AMBITION that:

‘whatever either on good or upon bad grounds tends to raise a man in his own opinion, produces a sort of swelling and triumph that is extremely grateful to the human mind; and this swelling is never more perceived , nor operates with more force, than when without danger we are conversant with terrible objects, the mind always claiming to itself some part of the dignity and importance of the things which it contemplates’ (Burke, 1757-59:46).

Why Lady Chapel embodies my conception of the Burkean ideas of magnificence, power, wealth, and religious conviction

Strict hierarchical spaces are sublime, in a Burkean sense, because they make those that visit them, who are outside of mechanisms of power implicit in such spaces, think about their comparative smallness, mortality, and insignificance. Such constructed spaces demonstrate that the Burkean Sublime has a utilitarian function linked to the maintenance and enforcement of law and order. Often such spaces also reflect the power of their inhabitants by being visually magnificent.

Lady Chapel is so overwhelmingly magnificent because it embodies Previc's conception of ‘extrapersonal space’ (Ellard 2016) and the British state's socio-anthropological underpinnings. The present Chapel was founded by Henry VII, who violently seized the English crown in 1485. The Chapel was designed to emphasise the founder's power and to act as a burial place for himself and his successors. Since Henry VII's death many other British Kings and Queens have also been buried within Lady Chapel. These include Edward VI, Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, James I,

George II and his consort Caroline of Ansbach. This royal cohort makes Lady Chapel a mausoleum to the exceptionally privileged and the extraordinarily powerful.

The Chapel's magnificent interior is designed to dominate all those who enter this space. This interior was built between 1503 and 1516 at the equivalent contemporary cost of at least twenty-one million pounds using calculations derived from both *Treasures of Westminster Abbey* by Tony Trowles (2008) and the Bank of England's inflation calculator, (Trowles, 2008:126). All costs were paid by the crown and the monarch's access to such vast monetary resource demonstrates, now as then, that some individuals wield superhuman like power which is unimaginable to the majority. Such power is demonstrated repeatedly throughout the chapel with visually impressive, and extraordinarily expensive displays of architectural innovation. The chapel's fan vaulting is particularly impressive and 'fans spring from pendants rather than from the walls' (Trowles, 2008: 126). This innovation in fan vaulting is further enhanced by transverse arches whose tops disappear into the vault above for artistic effect (Trowles, 2008:126). All of these architectural features delight the eye and conjure up associations with magnificence.

The overwhelming architectural complexity of Lady Chapel is further enhanced by its enormous, heavenward soaring, painted glass windows. These were originally designed by Bernard Flower and were heavily decorated, on the lower sections, with Tudor badges (Trowles, 2008: 126). Only fragments of the originals exist now but at the time of their creation the message implicit in these windows must have been crystal clear to any visitor to the chapel. They triumphantly proclaimed that this space belonged to the King and the God who appointed him. Nevertheless, judging by the evidence of photographs, the windows in their current form still serve a sublime effect by drawing the viewer's eye heavenward whilst flooding the chapel with coloured light.

Despite the magnificent visual effects of the fan vaulting, wild decoration, and the windows, I believe that the most impressive and visually magnificent addition to Lady Chapel are the heraldic banners. These banners are literally visual representations of power which hang from the chapel walls and draw the eye, possibly more than any other element in the chapel, heavenward. The banners represent those that are chosen to manifest the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, an order of knighthood established by George I in 1725. Membership to this elite cohort is only granted to establishment figures and in recognition of military or political service. Effectively these banners represent some of the most powerful members of the British society. This tiny cohort fascinates me because their influence and wealth is beyond all imagining.

These people have superior power and this power is sublime because it is terrifying to ordinary people like me. However, Burke saw power and its implicit ability to dominate and by implication terrorise as a virtuous force which maintains societal cohesion. He states in *Part Two, SECTION III* of the *Enquiry*, under the sub-heading *OBSCURITY* that:

‘despotic governments, which are founded on the passions of men, and principally upon the passion of fear, keep their chief as much as may be from the public eye. The policy has been the same in many cases of religion. Almost all the heathen temples were dark’ (Burke, 1757-59:54).

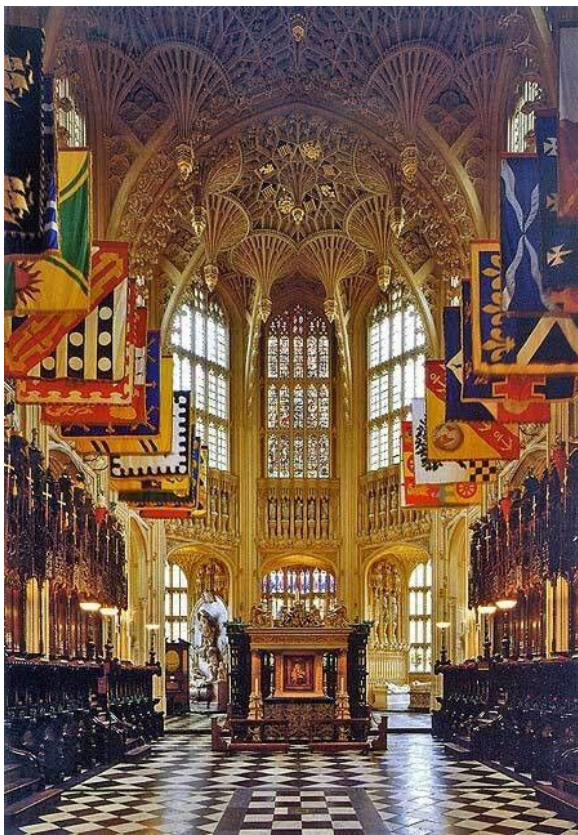


Fig 110. *Lady Chapel*

This statement shows Burke considering the links between governance, religious faith, ignorance, darkness, and the power of the sublime. He elaborates on this relationship when in *Part Two, SECTION V*, under the sub-heading *POWER*, Burke argues that natural power has an ‘unmanageable fierceness’ (Burke, 1757-59:61) which is terrifying and that the ‘power which arises from institution in kings and commanders, has the same connection with terror’ (Burke, 1757-59:62). He then explains to the reader that this link with natural terror is why kings and queens ‘are frequently addressed with the title of dread majesty’ (Burke, 1757-59:62). Effectively Burke is arguing that an implicit

link exists between the effect upon the senses of encountering terror in nature, in its many and varied forms, and terror in the construct.

In *Part Three, SECTION X* of the *Enquiry*, under the sub-heading *How far the idea of BEAUTY may be applied to the qualities of the MIND*, Burke argues further that the minds which cause admiration 'are of the sublime kind' (Burke, 1757-59:100) and 'produce terror rather than love' (Burke, 1757-9:100). He goes on to argue that 'great virtues turn principally on dangers, punishments, and troubles, and are exercised rather in preventing the worst mischiefs, than in dispensing favours' (Burke, 1757-59:100-1).

Burke is suggesting a direct connection between institutions of power and the terror of nature as expressed by an imperfect human condition (Burke, 1757-59:62). Effectively he is equating the ability to dominate others who are apt to indulge in folly, with a superior understanding of the nature of virtue and the authority of the sublime. In the next page of the *Enquiry* he deliberately creates an associative link between nature's power, the physical control of the human construct and a higher transcendental power by stating that God's benign authority is likewise terror inspiring because:

'no conviction of the justice with which it is exercised, nor the mercy with which it is tempered, can wholly remove the terror that naturally arises from a force which nothing can withstand. If we rejoice, we rejoice with trembling' (Burke, 1757-59:63).

For Burke power is a tiered and terrible concept which ultimately cannot be questioned because, in its highest form, it is beyond empirical understanding. Therefore for the individual to have any kind of a relationship to natural, manmade, or ultimate power, requires faith rather than objective analysis of what power is and how it operates. This interpretation of the *Enquiry* reinforces the conviction that a purely objective expression of reality is not part of the theory of the sublime and that the sublime is always an expression of reality informed by the passions of wider society (Shaw, 2006:50).

I believe Burke's argument implies that spaces which represent power are connected, under the direction of the culture defining classes, to the idea of an analogy for perfect order and significance. Such spaces are rarely physically experienced by those without influence and therefore become imaginative conceptions linked to an idea of terrifying power. These ideas are created only when the boundaries between terror, self-awareness, religious fervour and virtuous political conviction become blurred in epiphanies of grandiose nationalistic transcendental aspiration. For me, Lady Chapel appeared to embody my imagination's longing for the perfect British constructed space. I imagined this perfection as being derived from the associative meanings of an

upwardly directed gaze into an extraordinary and utopian presentation of astonishing sublime magnificence, power, order, and significance.

Lady Chapel invaded by nature and the Burkean Transcendental Sublime made manifest



Fig 111. Paul Vousden first sketch of *Lady Chapel invaded* (2021) ink on paper. 20cm by 29cm

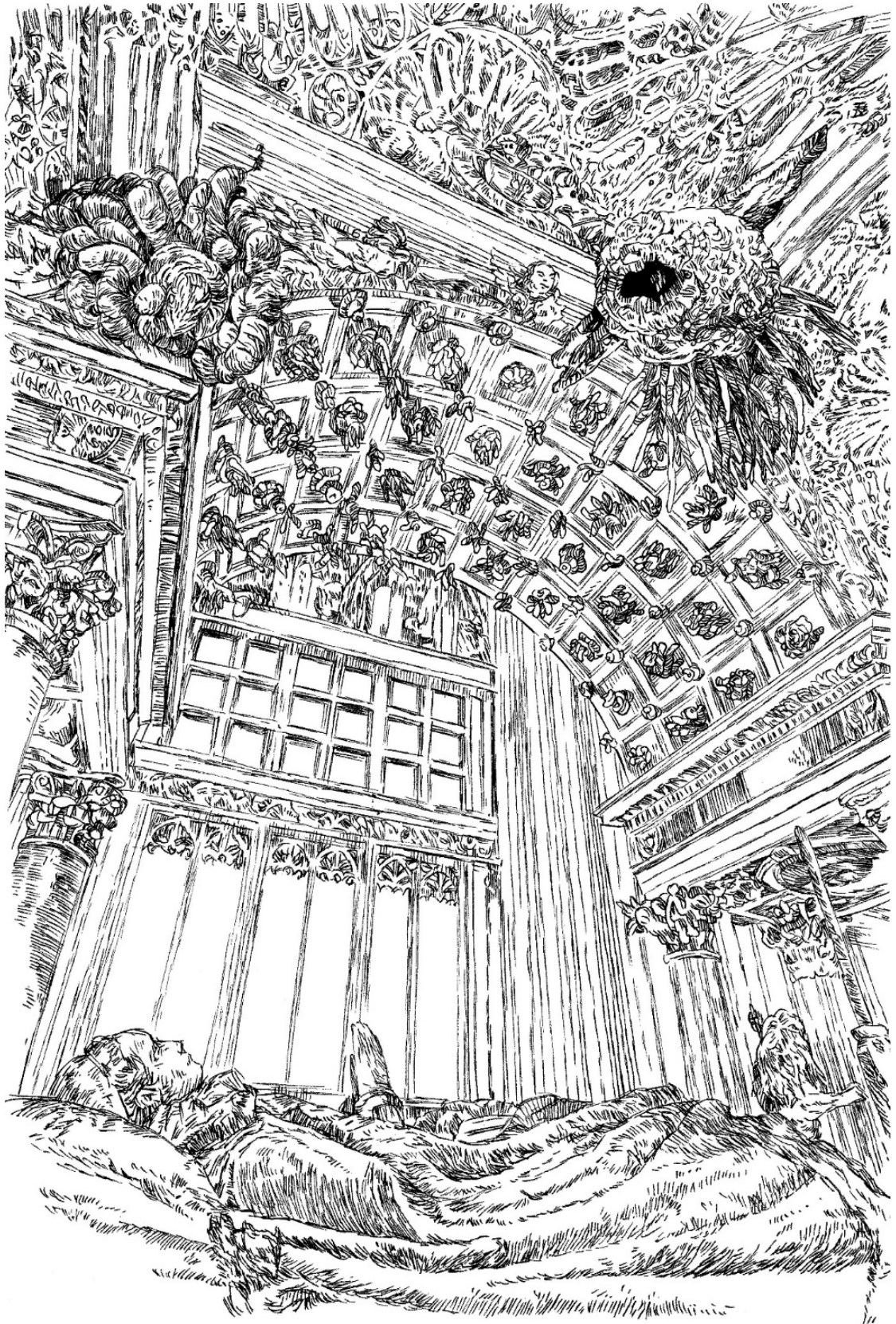


Fig 112. Paul Vousden second sketch of *Lady Chapel invaded* (2021) ink on paper.
20cm by 29cm

At the start of 2021 I began producing sketches which visualised the battle between the power of the British state and that of nature. In these drawings a profusion of architectural detail suggests the astonishing power, wealth and magnificence of the construct, whilst ideas of spirituality, morality and religious conviction are suggested by employing an upward gaze (Ellard, 2016). However, within these spaces dedicated to the sublime power of humanity, nature at its most astonishing and terror inducing is also present. These natural rivals to power are confusing and obscure creations inspired by my fear of the Covid pandemic and the Otherness of the very powerful. By developing forms in earlier paintings and drawings I now visualised danger as a fictitious combination of a pus filled purple plague buboe, with a sucking, fish like mouth. To this Burkean conception of delight I added Hans Holbien's anamorphic skull, which I appropriated from his painting of *The Ambassadors* (1533). I reimagined this sixteenth-century symbol of mortality as iridescent green wings, which allowed the bloated buboes to hover above the viewer and trail yellow and pink stinging tendrils threateningly downward. This amalgam of horrors places many visual compound abstract expressions of fear together and mirrors Burke's conception of how compounded abstract words are formed from a union, often 'arbitrary union' of aggregate and simple abstract words (Burke, 1757-59:150). The forms created from my arbitrary unions seemed to be in keeping with my conception of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime and the obscure contemporary horrors engulfing Britain.

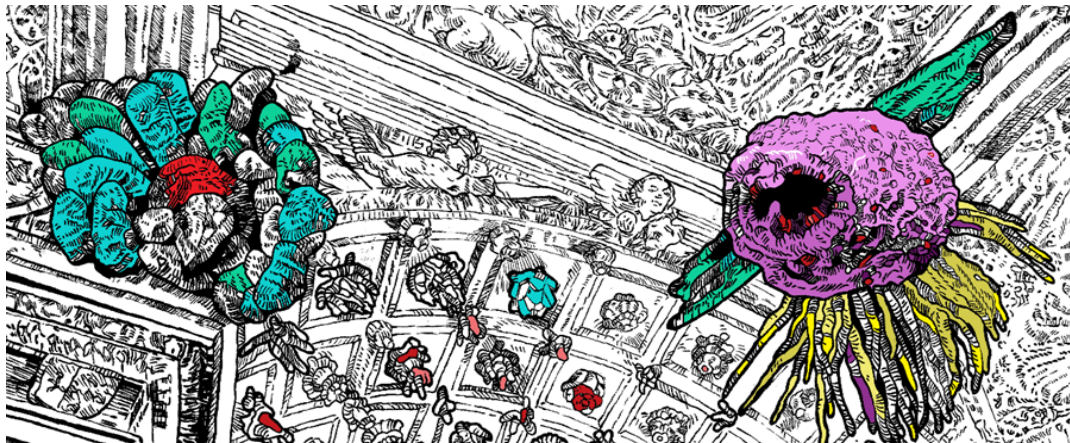


Fig 113. Paul Vousden third sketch of *Lady Chapel invaded* (2021) digital drawing. Indeterminate dimensions

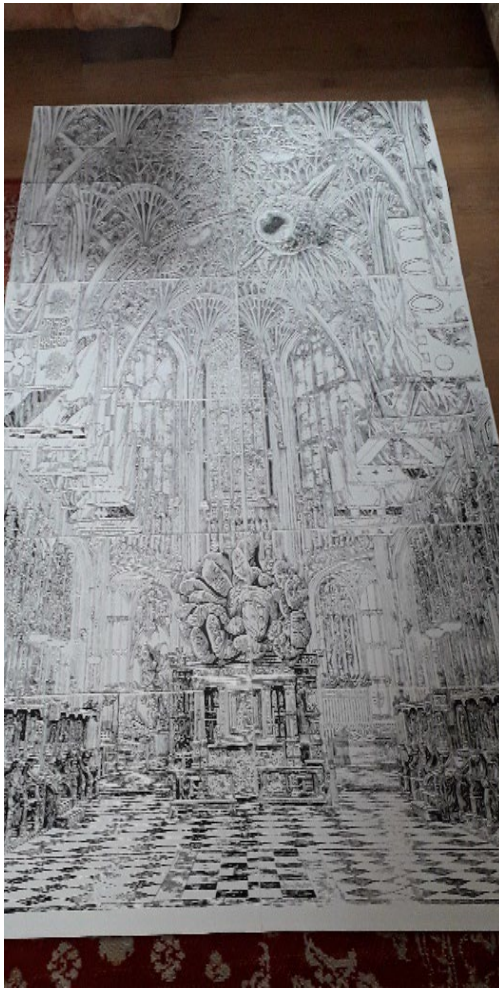


Fig 114. Paul Vousden *Fantasy of Power* cartoon plan (2021) ink on paper. 123cm by 85cm

I next produced the elaborate line drawing *Fantasy of Power* (2021) (figs 114-118). In this cartoon, which is a plan for a painting, lines standing in for brush marks of paint. The cartoon is divided into 12 sections and because the 6 canvasses I had chosen to paint on are just over twice the size of the cartoon, lots of tolerance for the vagaries of invention or miscalculation are accommodated in this design.

The purpose of this cartoon was to make my eventual painting process as easy and free from technical drawing issues as possible. This freedom was imagined as allowing me to paint rapidly and enjoy the positive and uplifting feeling, akin to magnificence and power, I had previously experienced.

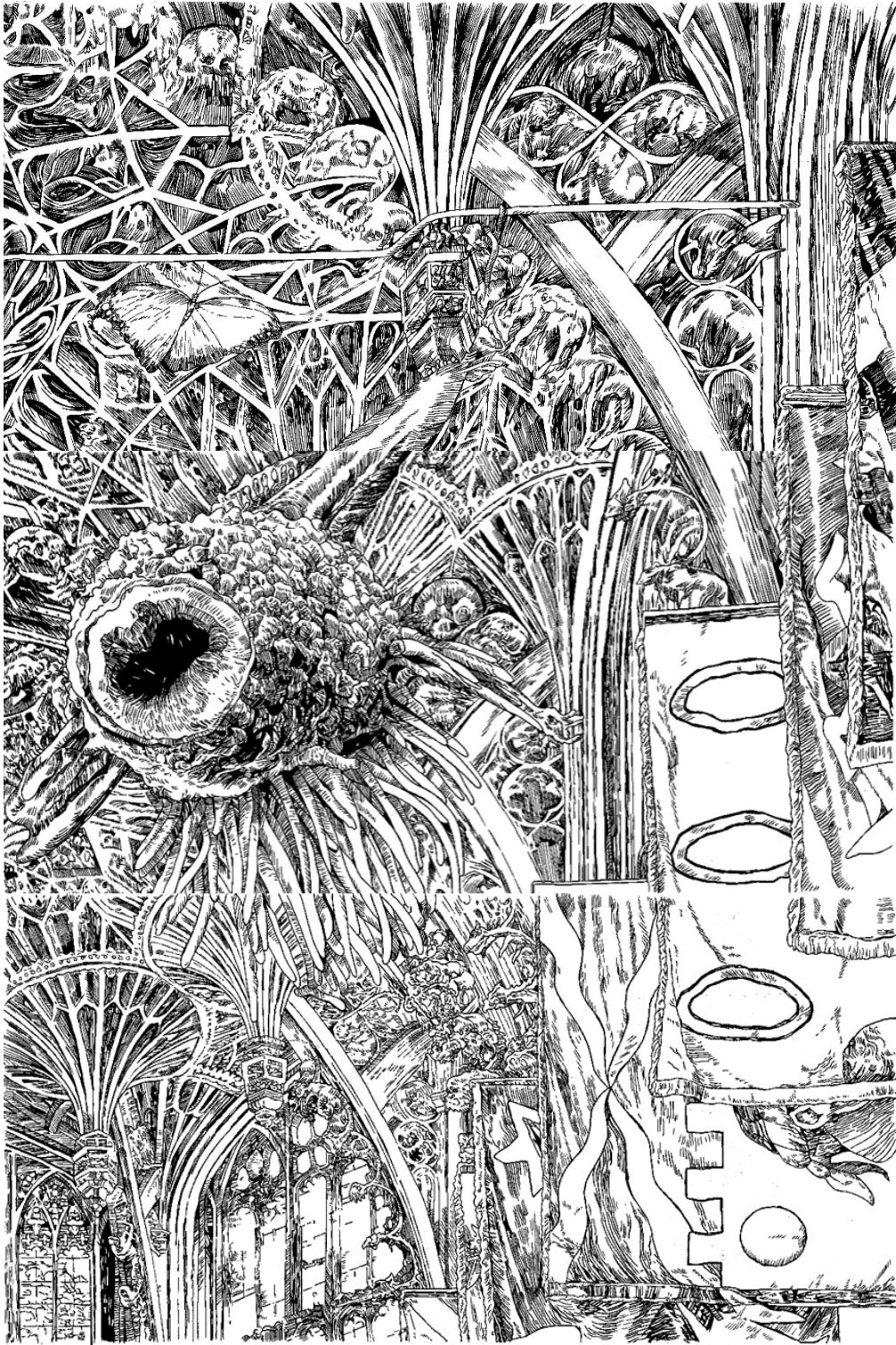


Fig 115. Paul Vausden *Fantasy of Power* (2021) cartoon details of three paper panels.
3 x 42.5cm by 20.5cm

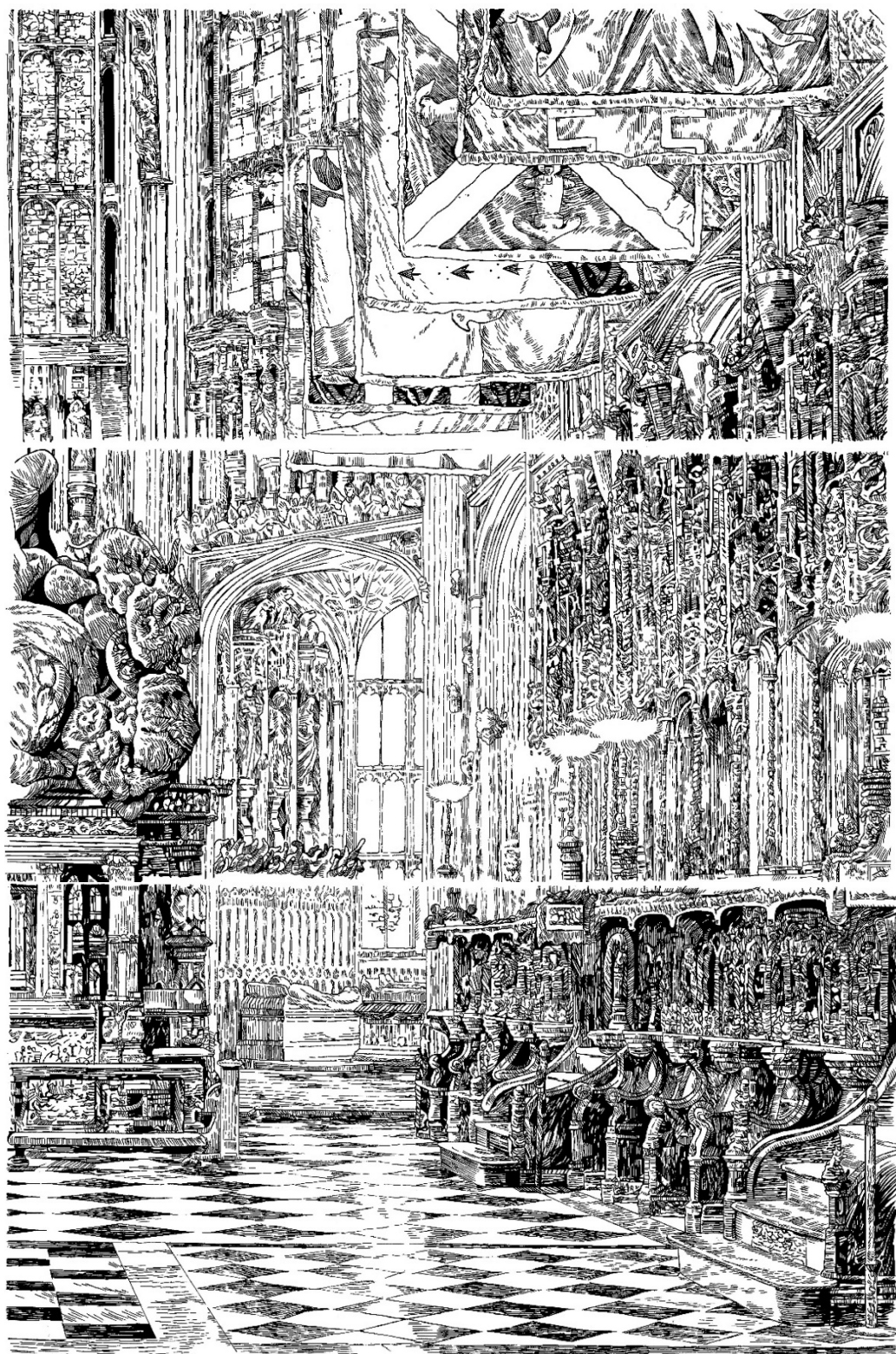


Fig 116. Paul Vausden *Fantasy of Power* (2021) cartoon details of three paper panels.
3 x 42.5cm by 20.5cm

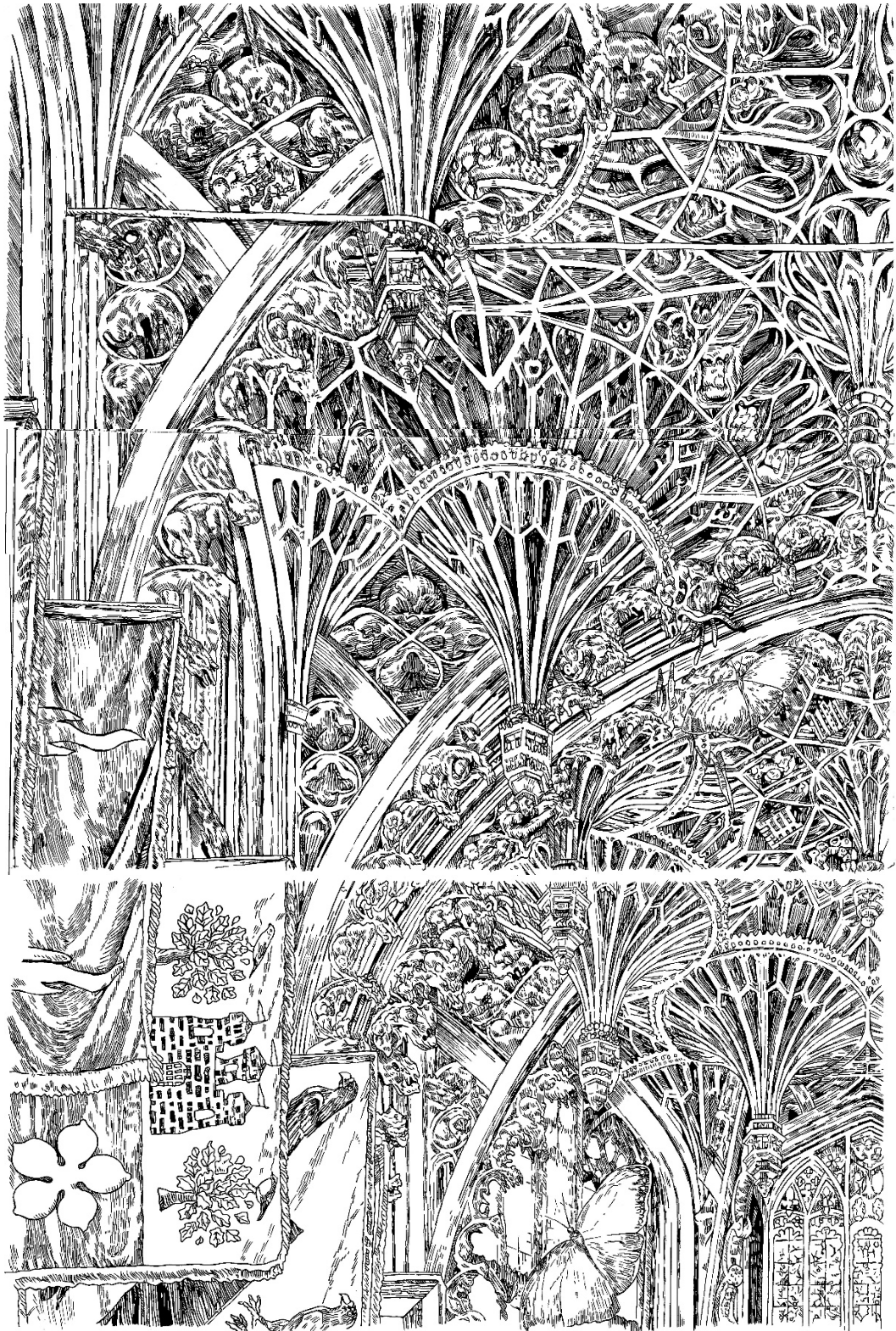


Fig 117. Paul Vousden *Fantasy of Power* (2021) cartoon details of three paper panels.
3 x 42.5cm by 20.5cm

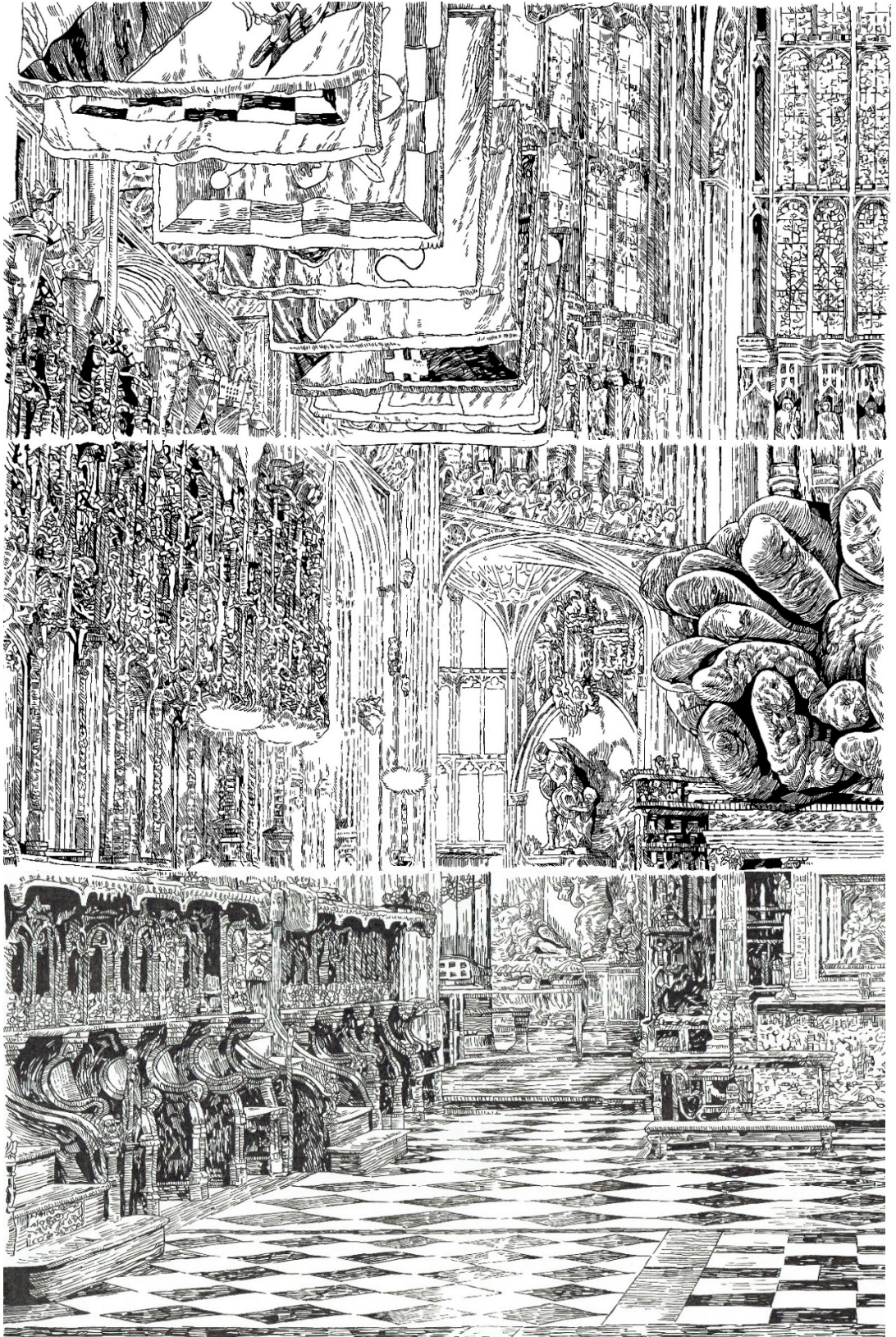


Fig 118. Paul Vouden *Fantasy of Power* (2021) cartoon details of three paper panels.
3 x 42.5cm by 20.5cm



Fig 119. Paul Vousden details of my loose painting process (2021). Acrylic on canvas. 90cm by 90cm



Fig 120. Paul Vousden details of my loose painting process (2021). Acrylic on canvas. 90cm by 90cm



Fig 121. Paul Vousden image showing painting in progress (2021). Acrylic on canvas. 90cm by 90cm



Fig 122. Paul Vousden image showing the gulf in scale between my original reference material and the painting in my studio (2021). Acrylic on canvas and digital print on paper. 180cm by 180cm and 19.5cm by 28cm



Fig 123. Paul Vousden *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence* (separated view) (2021).
Acrylic on canvas. 270cm by 180cm

The painting *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence* (2021) engages with the Burkean conceptions of magnificence using a profusion of architectural detail. The painting suggests both the power of the state and the imagined power of God under attack by drawing the viewer's gaze into the painting and then upward toward the heavens. This reaction is aided by deploying obscure, repulsive and terrifying viral forms which attract the eye strategically. The journey of the eye which these forms encourage is aided by the tricks of perspective and repetition which Burke states he admires in cathedrals

(Burke, 1757-9:69). This journey is also aided by beautiful yellow and orange butterflies which challenge the darker power of the sublime around them and visually restate Gasche's 'double aesthetic' which questions the power dynamic between the sublime and the beautiful other (Gasche, 2012:26).



Fig 124. Paul Vousden *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence* (2021). Acrylic on canvas. 270cm by 180cm.

Despite my meticulous preparations many of the brush marks in this painting are sketchy and ambiguous and do not clearly describe form which simply cannot be seen in the comparatively tiny and poor-quality reference material I used due to Covid restrictions. However, because so much of my painting was constructed from encounters with my imagination, forms became finished by a process which was often the result of a felt, rather than rationally thought, moment of encounter between paint, canvas, eye, hand, and the emotive influence of Burke's aesthetic philosophy. This fusion of inner responses to outer ideas makes manifest the questions Burke's account of the sublime raises concerning the relationship between mind and matter. Burke's reluctance to state decisively if the sublime is a quality which resides in objects, in subjective responses to objects, or in an interaction between mind and object (Shaw,2006:53) is turned into artistic action in this painting.

Fantasy of Power and Pestilence (2021) was produced using an absolute minimum of modelling and its confident and speedy execution makes the artwork sketchier than anything previously attempted on a large scale. Because Burke argues that the aesthetic of the sublime is enhanced by an engagement with obscurity, formlessness and an unfinished quality (Burke, 1757-9:70), my economical use of tone and reliance upon loose drawing has a connection to the sublime which is amplified by the painting's large scale. My sketchy and loose technique also allowed me to overcome the technical problems associated with a highly finished representation of things, such as a symbol for the pandemic, which are unseen conceptions of the mind. This manner of painting had evolved from earlier work, in particular from my drawings.

Conclusion to Part Four: the Burkean Transcendental Sublime

Throughout 2020 I had developed a way of painting which responded to the new context of a British society struggling to come to terms with lockdowns and microscopic viral threats. Burke's flawed treatise helped me deal with this new reality by providing a rational explanation for the perception of terror, and suggested various aesthetic actions, or ways of thinking, which I could take to alleviate, conquer, and visualise empirical terrors which I could not safely experience or see. The activity inspired by Burke's speculations resulted in the development of a freer, and faster, painting technique. This process stopped me becoming immobilized by fear and reaffirmed my imaginative identity as an artist.

During this period of research I also explored Burke's argument regarding the sublime power of extensions of space and concluded that Burke's reasoning superficially privileges empirical thinking over imaginative thinking. This leads Burke to argue that

looking down into an abyss is more sublime than looking up into the heavens. This is despite his firmly articulated imaginative belief in an *omnipotent* God and the naturalness of a terrifyingly sublime social order which was, and still is according to Ellard and Previc, associatively aligned to conceptions of power, virtue and an upward gaze (Ellard, 2016). This research helped develop my conception of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime and enabled me to extend Burke's reasoning using painting to create a contemporary articulation of 'an active response to an internal and/or external danger' (Furniss, 1993:25-29).

The knowledge acquired through research, has made me confident enough to conclude that within my practice, the act of looking upward has associative meaning which is as terrifying as staring into the abyss because both induce ekstasis. This is because magnificence and tragedy are outside normal experience; both defy probity and possibly even conventional conceptions of sanity (Bromwich, 2014: 60) whilst aligning themselves with the Burkean Sublime. In the next chapter my research will be considered in terms of its alignment with wider contemporary artistic practice.

Part Five

Introduction: the bigger picture

Previous chapters have focussed on research into the Burkean Sublime and how this process affected my artistic perception and representation of British spaces. Where appropriate I also considered how British painters, working in similar spaces to myself, can be better understood and appreciated using Burkean aesthetic philosophy. This chapter situates my research in the broader context of contemporary artistic practice, particularly in relation to influential contemporary painters of landscape and artists who are associated with the contemporary use of the term sublime. It also considers how landscape can be depicted by artists who prefer digital media, illustrative manga and graphic means of expression, and asks the wider question; what are the key concerns in global contemporary landscape depiction? These disparate ways of seeing, thinking and visualising are utilised in this text to demonstrate the distinctions and similarities between my use of the comparatively tightly defined Burkean Sublime and wider, more ambiguous notions of landscape and sublimity in contemporary global culture.

Landscape painting and depiction in the Twenty First Century

In the introduction to *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism* (2019) the art critic Barry Schwabsky argues that contemporary artists naturally see the world through academic filters informed by a 'profound debt to the intellectual upheavals of the past' (Schwabsky, 2019:25). These upheavals include Romanticism, and the idea of the sublime. The publication showcases some of the most influential landscape painters of the early twenty-first century. Within the text eighty-two internationally renowned artists, from twenty-five countries, who represent the culture defining class of landscape painters, are examined and grouped under six themes or chapter headings. *Landscape Painting Now* (2019) constitutes an authoritative, although by necessity simplified, world review of contemporary landscape painting which is validated by Thames and Hudson publishing as well as an influential cohort of artists, critics and academics. I have used the categories of landscape art described in this publication as a way of approaching contemporary landscape paintings' relevance to the themes of my research.

The headings used to categorise artists within *Landscape Painting Now* (2019) are *Realism and Beyond*, *Post Pop Landscapes*, *Constructed Realities*, *Abstracted Topographies*, *Complicated Vistas* and *New Romanticism*. In the contemporary age

none of these labels are as authoritative as those from past eras when painting could be divided into clearer, smaller movements which described the activities of a much smaller collective of artists and artworks. The lack of absolute meaning attributed to contemporary art movement labels is also a result of such classifications not referring to 'categories of painting or painters', as in the past, but rather to 'themes that intersect' practice (Schwabsky, 2019:25). This means that two or three, possibly even all the themes described in *Landscape Painting Now* (2019) may be applicable to a single artist (Schwabsky, 2019:25). The process of exploring how intersecting aesthetic themes inform practice is further complicated by political issues which affect the lives of many contemporary artists. These political issues can be expressed using multiple aesthetic approaches but increasingly, in the 21st Century, painting articulates fears over climate change, migration, pollution, technological development and the nature of power. Nevertheless, the six headings described by Schwabsky are worth exploring to understand the approaches which dominate contemporary landscape painting. These categories can also be used to demonstrate the relationship between the themes, anxieties and aesthetic approaches which intersect my research and its relationship to some of today's most celebrated digital and graphic representations of space.

Realism and Beyond

Realism and Beyond refers to landscape painting in which the artist's primary concern is exploring the tension between the appearance of the 'real' three-dimensional landscape and the two-dimensional painted idea of the landscape. Within this oeuvre of painting artists struggle to obtain a near agreement between the thing and the idea of the thing using illusionism to serve the idea of realism. Antonia Lopez Garcia typifies how dedication to the cause of narrowing the gap between seeing and presenting, using paint and canvas, can create astonishing artifacts.



Fig 125. Antonia Lopez Garcia *View of Madrid from Vallecas Fire Tower* (1990-2006)

The painting *View of Madrid from Vallecas Fire Tower* (1990-2006) consists of six pieces and once fully assembled measures a colossal 250.5cm by 406cm. The scale of Garcia's painting gives this artwork an impressive physical presence which helps to overwhelm the viewer. Because Garcia paints en plein air, his work takes a great deal of time to create as he battles against the elements in search of those details which elude photography. This rigorously physical working method, which deliberately omits photographic intervention between experience and presentation, means that his painting synthesises the experience of light, shadow and weather effects. These effects have a seasonal quality and the changing of the seasons partly accounts for the nearly two-decade long labour value associated with Garcia's view of Madrid. This value astonishes me and conforms to Burkean conceptions of the power of ambition, difficulty and magnificence to motivate extraordinary effort in the service of an intense quest for visual verisimilitude (Burke, 1757-59:46,71). According to Schwabsky's definition, Garcia is the epitome of a realist painter because both his working methods and his accomplished resemblances illustrate the poignant 'disconnection' between 'image and reality' (Schwabsky, 2019:24). This disconnection is described by Schwabsky as a 'paradox' which gives realist paintings today a 'sense of Romantic yearning' and melancholia (Schwabsky, 2019:24). In my research the disconnection, and paradox, between realist signifier and signified is explored for the purpose of creating melancholic reverence, using labour value and illusionism, primarily in *Part Three* of this thesis which culminates with the artwork *Know thy place and be grateful* (2019-2020) (figs 86-87) (page 157). This artwork could not be produced on location or without photographic reference, however it was produced on a scale pertinent to Burkean conceptions of sublime ambition and has an extraordinary labour value.

Mario Rossi is a contemporary Scottish painter whose aims and working methods are very different to those of Garcia. Although Rossi's figurative paintings have an obvious principal connection to visual verisimilitude, they are studio creations which are informed by political concerns over environmental damage, migration, and romantic notions of the sublime of nature. Therefore, it can be argued that Rossi's practice is an example of one which typifies how an amalgam of themes, may intersect contemporary landscape presentation.

In the painting *Le Radeau (The Raft)* (2001) Rossi uses vastness of scale, the painting measures 243cm by 396cm, and the associative power of the seascape horizon to accomplish a contemporary revitalisation of the romantic nineteenth-century shipwreck narrative. *The Raft* (2001) echoes the same sense of outrage and empathy for the powerless which underpins Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-19) (fig 126).

This earlier painting reflected on the themes of nature's violence, manmade horror and the fatal consequence of poor leadership for those considered expendable by an inept captain and his senior officers. Rossi's raft reflects on broadly similar themes. His contemporary seascape considers nature's violence, the sense of horror created by this violence and the consequences of political decisions by a powerful and severe elite on the powerless, the expendable and desperate.



Fig 126. Theodore Gericault *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-19)

In Rossi's acrylic reimagining of the shipwreck narrative no wild, energetic or impassioned brush marks are visible, and the overall execution of the painting suggests use of an airbrush which gives the image a dispassionate and very slightly mechanical quality. However, movement is suggested in the painting through the artful use of a horizon line which slopes upwards from the left to right creating a destabilising, lurching effect. The middle ground of the painting consists entirely of a bluey, green and brown expanse of impassive sea. In the foreground an absent figure is suggested by the inclusion of an abandoned red airbed which floats, wreck-like, in the shallows. The viewer is left with the uncomfortable impression that a body has been engulfed, by a now calmed, impassive and deadly sea. This tragedy is made more poignant because the implied victim is anonymous and therefore able to stand as a metaphor for all victims of the sea (Stewart, 2018). Rossi's paintings are realist artworks which take realism into the beyond.



Fig 127. Mario Rossi *Le Radeau* (2001)

The themes of Otherness, fears over the impact of migration and disaster at sea underpin the narrative of *Part Two* of this thesis. These issues are considered explicitly between the sub-headings *The eighteenth-century British coastline considered in terms of an identity perceived through association* (page 52) and *Practice-based research into Sheringham and the Sublime* (page 58). The themes of Otherness and fears over the impact of migration and disasters at sea underpin much of my own work, for example in the *Defence Horizon* drawings (figs 20-21) and the *Invasion* drawings (figs 22-25).

Post Pop Landscapes

The term Post Pop Landscapes refers to images of external spaces which do not assume 'an original relation to a given terrain but one that is situated from the get-go in relation to a ready-made image of place (Bradway, 2019:91). In these landscapes depictions of space are considered as already 'subsumed into mass culture' and 'ripe for incorporation into the Pop repertoire' (Bradway, 2019:91). Often such landscape paintings incorporate a deliberately heightened use of colour, almost as if nature had adopted the brashness of mass commercial culture or has found itself suddenly lit by fluorescent lights. This form of landscape painting often shares a directness and boldness which gives the genre an immediacy of execution indicative of Pop culture.

Jonas Wood's Post-Pop Landscapes, according to Bradway, often overwhelm the eye with a bombardment of purposefully intense flat colours set within bold graphic shapes which mimic, without overtly illustrating, the experience of reality. Wood describes his

own practice as evolving from the less radical landscapes of David Hockney and Alex Katz. Both these influential painters, from a previous generation, continue to paint images which Bradway includes in the Post Pop Landscape category. These paintings insist on the artifice of the image and 'suggest the possibility of a collaborative pas de deux between self and nature' (Schwabsky, 2019:24). The process of 'give and take' Schwabsky describes echoes Burke's insistence on the sense of transgression and elevating awe which can be felt by the artist whilst viewing the sublime of the natural, or manmade. This experience is the important and empowering element which I, and many other artists, seek to communicate through representation (Burke, 1757-59:149).

According to the critic Ian Chang, Wood extends earlier conceptions of Post Pop landscapes by using an imagination informed by the screenshot. This new 'modernism of the screenshot' [...] 'requires neither computer nor camera' because the artist has become the painterly embodiment of these devices (Bradway, 2019:93). This process of embodiment allows Wood to go beyond the artful distortions of previous artists and see landscape more as a collection of brightly coloured and boldly depicted fragments of reality which can be hammered together in a near arbitrary manner for symbolic and dramatic effect.

Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe (2014) is an example of Wood's digital way of seeing. In this painting he isolates a dark, angular and very graphic view of the New York skyline, and the Hudson River flowing in the background, within the structure of a container pot. Near the apex of this container a beautiful sky at either sunset or dawn is shown. Unlike the sharply and darkly depicted city below, this pale yellow, orange and pinkish red area has gently undulating forms within it which may depict either low level clouds or perhaps the silhouettes of ridges or mountains. Crowning the entire structure is an aloe which Bradway suggests may be a 'self-referential' symbol because the aloe is known for its ability to take root and thrive wherever they are transplanted (Bradway, 2019:116). The overall effect of this painting could be described as a stylish and powerful contemporary balancing act between the sublime, the beautiful, the internal and the external mirroring. The image also makes manifest Burke's conception of the role compounded abstract words (Burke, 1757-59:150) can play in presentation, this idea is first explored in, *In the beginning: a paralysing excess of implication* (page 7-8).



Fig 128. Jonas Wood *Maritime Hotel Pot with Aloe* (2014)

Because both Hockney and Katz often model forms, using line work over flat layers of paint, their artworks often have a graphic quality reminiscent of Manga. Hockney acknowledges in *Hockney – Van Gogh: The Joy of Nature* (2019) the influence of Van Gogh to his practice. Van Gogh acknowledged his indebtedness to Japanese artists very explicitly by tracing and copying Utagawa Hiroshige *The Sleeping Dragon Plum Tree* (1857) and amassing a huge collection of colourful Japanese woodcuts known as crepons. Many of these images were bought from Siegfried Bing who would later play an important role in the launch of another *linear* method of representation the Art Nouveau Movement (Naifeh, White Smith, 2011:556).



Fig 129. L-R Utagawa Hiroshige *The Sleeping Dragon Plum Tree* (1857) and Vincent Van Gogh *Flowering Plum Tree after Hiroshige* (1887)



Fig 130. David Hockney *A Closer Winter Tunnel* (2006)



Fig 131. Alex Katz *Reflection 7* (2008)

The terms Manga and Anime graphic landscapes describe landscapes which appear either in Japanese manga novels and comics, or those that appear as backdrops to action in Japanese anime animated films and television. Both forms of depiction have a definite aesthetic style which shares the boldness, prismatic colour and simplified forms characteristic of Post Pop Landscapes. Contemporary Manga inspired landscapes also often make use of dramatic perspective and have an emphasis on drawn linework. The roots of this can be found in Japanese woodblock prints of artists such as Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) whose *Red Fuji* (1830-32) is one of the most instantly recognisable Japanese images ever produced.



Fig 132. Katsushika Hokusai *Red Fuji* (1830-32)

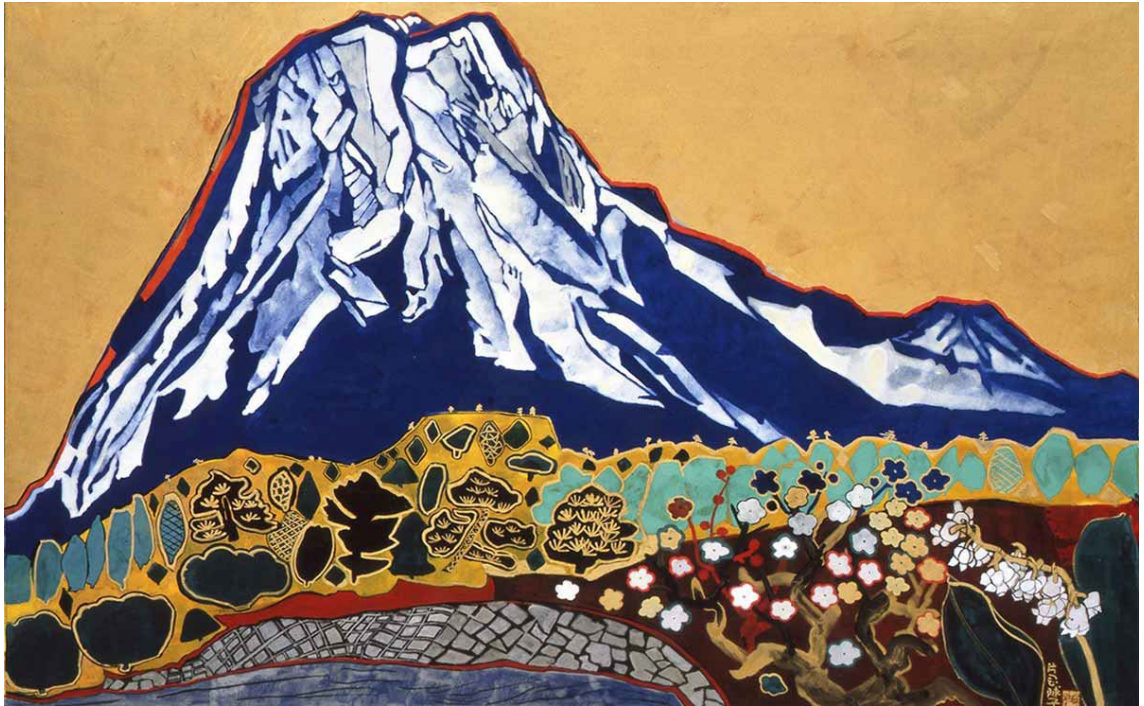


Fig 133. Tamako Kataoka *Auspicious Mount Fuji* (1991)

The Japanese artist Tamako Kataoka (1905-2008) is described by Jes Kalled as an artist who combines traditional Japanese imagery with an eye-catching style reminiscent of the Pop Art aesthetic (Kalled 2020). I would argue that her landscape paintings are a collaborative endeavour between self, painterly conceptions of beauty, sublimity and a sense of reverence for nature. Kataoka's *Auspicious Mount Fuji* (1991) juxtaposes jagged lines with undulating, strong darker colours, softer lighter ones and differing scales for dramatic effect. There is no empirical evidence to support the theory that she ever read the *Enquiry* or had knowledge of Burke's aesthetic theory. However Burke's belief in the link between 'the laws of nature' and their connection to the excitement of the passions is a universal observation on the human condition rather than a concept Burke alone can communicate (Burke, 1757-9:1). Burke states in his *Introduction on Taste* that there exists 'just as close an agreement in the imaginations as in the senses of men' and this statement appears to be one explanation for the completely unplanned visual similarities between my paintings, the Post Pop landscape aesthetic and Manga inspired landscapes. However, unlike the artworks of either Hockney or Katz many contemporary Manga artists embrace dystopian landscape depiction to communicate fictional drama and emotions which aid the narratives of comics and films.

In my research the existence of a theory of the passions is considered under the sub-heading Burke's *Enquiry* considered as a potential handbook for contemporary cultural

production (pages 5-7), and the painting *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape* (2020) (fig 106) this artwork occupies a visually similar, but conceptually much darker, space to Kataoka's vision of Mount Fuji.

Constructed Realities

For Bradway Constructed Realities is a term used to describe paintings which 'highlight their own constructedness' and 'never let you take too seriously the old picture-as-window idea' (Bradway, 2019:209). This form of painting reminds the viewer that any constructed proposition about landscape or space is also a proposition about making and framing (Bradway, 2019:209).

The term Constructed Realities evolved from a thesis written in 1966 by Peter I. Berger and Thomas Luckmann entitled *Social Construction of Reality* in which they argue that reality is an experience which is 'neither objectively given by the world itself nor' [...] 'conjured by oneself alone' (Bradway, 2019:207). Instead the authors proposed that reality is constructed in a piecemeal manner from 'an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values, beliefs, myths, and so forth' (Bradway, 2019:207). This interpretation of truth argues that what we believe is real is always an intersubjective amalgam of ideas created by groups of people. Because differing cohorts hold diverging belief systems Berger and Luckmann were able to claim that individual groups of people have less in common with other groups than one might otherwise suspect (Bradway, 2019:207). Bradway argues that such divergences profoundly impacted landscape depiction between the two world wars and that art in this era was often used to reinforce supposedly utopian visions of social order. He also claims that after World War Two the idea of art serving 'total social order' lost credibility (Bradway, 2019:207). In Bradway's interpretation of landscape contemporary Constructed Realities refer to 'limited spaces of rigor' in which the artist often comments upon, rather than overtly aligns with, the constructed interpretations of reality associated with the society they inhabit (Bradway, 2019:207).

The artist Alison Elizabeth Taylor creates Constructed Realities from unexpected juxtaposing of cut and painted pieces of wood, veneer and fragments of photography. Her labour-intensive practice extends the tradition of marquetry in which she creates astonishing landscapes with a three-dimensional effect. Taylor's landscapes explore how the inexorable expansion of human society into the desert surrounding Las Vegas is changing the character of this space and creating what she calls the 'urban sublime' (Bradway, 2019:220). Her landscape *Only Castles Burning* (2017) (fig 134) shows what can be achieved visually using her hybrid technique. Within this artwork the eye

and imagination are disorientated by a series of seemingly arbitrary unions which collectively create a signifier for a rock formation in the foreground. The whole composition appears to exist under a toxic looking sky and is described by Bradway as a deliberate attempt to create 'an estrangement between her images and her vehicle' using disconcerting artifice (Bradway, 2019:207). I would argue that Taylor's use of artifice and union is powerful largely because of the way many photographic elements and wood grains in her work leap forward and disturb the carefully crafted sense of perspective. Taylor's practice is also intersected by environmental concerns and a personal reimagining of the romantic and the sublime.

In my research the estrangement and artifice between subject and vehicle is repeatedly explored to create similar disconcerting effects. Although no marquetry or collage has been used in my research, the painting *Gordale Scar* (fig 51) uses three diverse approaches to paint application and representation to destabilise space and create an effect of estranged from real space in a similar manner to Taylor's visions.



Fig 134. Alison Elizabeth Taylor *Only Castles Burning* (2017)

Abstracted Topographies

According to Bradway the term Abstracted Topographies refers to paintings which consider landscapes as places in which the spatial possibilities of abstract pictorial space encounter embodiments of the experience of vision. These types of landscapes vacillate between figuration and abstraction. Cecily Brown, described in *Art Forum* by Kaelen Wilson-Goldie as 'one of the highest-profile British painters for almost a quarter of a century' (Price, 2018:22), is a landscape painter whose work is relevant to this category. In *Help! Help! Another Day!* (2016) she created a vast seascape measuring just over 1008cm in length from collected images of shipwreck paintings and a 'thumbnail sized digital picture of Gericault's *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-19)' (Price, 2018:22). The scale of this artwork enabled Brown to completely immerse herself in the experience of a presentation of terror in which the language of things is constantly informed by a maelstrom of figurative becoming and collapsing. This 'blurry zone between the nameable and the abstract' is an arena of experience informed by perception, bodily action and intellect (Price, 2018:22). The physical and mental experience of my practice-based research suggests to me that the complexity and scale of Brown's painting must be exhausting to produce, every articulation inhabits a razor thin conceptual position at the very edge of what painting can achieve. There is no relaxation in a Brown painting, no carefree and thoughtless splashing about with paint or comforting attention to detail. Price suggests that at this edge of possibility Brown invites the viewer into the painting and challenges their imaginations with a swirling jumble of marks which writhe like pitiless waves or desperate passengers, degraded by their acts of cannibalism, on a pathetic raft which is in effect an open prison (Price, 2018:22). This example of an Abstracted Topography is another work that references Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1818-19) and is strongly intersected by the sublime themes of nature's terror, privation, horror, horizontal vastness and the painting tradition of Romanticism.



Fig 135. Cecily Brown *Help! Help! Another Day!* (2016)

My research constantly explores how painting and drawing can become a means to explore the 'blurry zone between the nameable and the abstract' (Price, 2018:22). Throughout the production of my three main research outcomes *The Horizontal Sublime* (figs 46-47), *Know thy place and be grateful* (fig 86-87), and *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence* (fig 124), the experience of visual creation was informed by challenges of presentation, which are neither illustrational nor entirely abstract, on a large scale. In these works canvas and card became arenas of experience informed by perception, bodily action, intellect, the cultural legacy of Romanticism and Burkean conceptions of terror.

New Romanticism

Bradway defines New Romanticism as contemporary landscape painters whose practices embrace a new 'postmodernist' vision of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Romanticism. This revival is informed by the past but is more than a reanimation of props from the past. The movement began attracting cultural interest on an international scale when the prestigious gallery Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt hosted the exhibition *Ideal Worlds: New Romanticism in Contemporary Art* (2005). The catalogue for this exhibition argues that 'neo-Romanticism is everywhere, in the artists' studios in London, New York, and Berlin' (Hollein, Weinhart, 2005: 17). It suggests that this new art movement is 'a key moment in modern art' which has emerged as a comforting reaction to instability and anxiety created by the pressures of 'turbo-capitalism' (Hollein, Weinhart, 2005:17 - 18). Hollein and Weinhart argue that young artists are now drawn toward a 'yearning for an intact world' and use their imaginations

to create 'havens of safety' because many now feel that 'a better life' can only be achieved in the 'world of the imagination' (Hollein, Weinhart, 2005: 17).

Peter Doig's affinity with Romanticism has led him to be considered one of the leaders of the new Romantic spirit. His insistence on the medium of painting as opposed to installation, performance or video seems to add to his otherworldly quality and the artist himself has made the telling comment that painting is 'ultimately a hopelessly romantic thing to do' (Wienhart, 2010;123).

I would argue that Doig's preference for painted landscapes links him to early romantics such as Caspar David Friedrich. Both artists see the natural world as a stage from which to project the transcendental. Neither are interested in a description of real topography and both use landscape to represent something far greater than itself. Doig is also clearly influenced by both Burke and Kant and draws inspiration from his childhood which was spent surrounded by the monumental Canadian landscape.



Fig.136. Caspar David Friedrich *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818)

Doig's starting point for his imagery is often photographic but once this mechanical springboard has passed through his filters of imagination and contemplation the finished result has long since been stripped of its merely narrative origins. Doig's painterly technique aids the process of turning photographic origins into manifestations of memory and transcendental thought.

Lunker (1995) is a Doig painting I have seen in the John Martin Exhibition *Apocalypse* (2012). What I remember very clearly about that viewing experience was my astonishment at Doig's depth of mark making, his thin and seemingly endless washes of translucent paint, unmodified drips and splatters. I was also drawn into the artwork by the visible under drawing (which cannot be seen in reproductions) which revealed itself intermittently throughout the painting. These elements added drama and a sensation of the passage of time to the artwork through the event of creation. This

cumulative expression of energy and action, spread out over a canvas measuring 200cm by 266cm was viscerally impactful. I vividly recall being connected with the painting, the Romantic idea of the painting and the actions of the painter.



Fig 137. Peter Doig *Lunker* (1995)

Anselm Kiefer is described in *Landscape and Painting Now* (2019) as the creator of some of the most haunting, monumental, darkly romantic and political paintings of the last fifty years. His early artistic activity was heavily influenced by the inevitable trauma of growing up amongst the ruins of post-war, post-Nazi Germany. As an art student he was also influenced by the more positive contact with his tutor Joseph Beuys (Bradway, 2019:160). Later his practice became informed by reflections on the Jewish Kabbalah, Mesopotamian mythology, atomic energy and Elizabeth of Austria (Arasse, 2001:19). Kiefer's practice is obviously a partial reaction to alienation and a relationship to the sublime themes of vastness, power, terror, obscurity, difficulty and ideas of infinity. Laura Gascoigne has noted Kiefer's alignment with Burkean themes. She argues in *When did the Sublime become an extended environmental guilt-trip* (2016) that Kiefer is a strange omission from the *Tremors of the World* (2016) exhibition which claimed a revival of interest in the Burkean Sublime was informing contemporary culture (Gascoigne 2016).

Simon Schama describes Kiefer's landscapes as looking like the 'cauterised ruins of the earth' (Bradway, 2019:160). This reaction to his painting is in response to the astonishingly layered physicality of his artworks which incorporate slabs of acrylic, oil paint, glass, ash, concrete, soil, straw and lead. These physical elements are often added to with ambiguous signifiers such as books, typography, flowers or twigs which aid the narrative and give the painting a constructed appearance. Often the narrative underpinning Kiefer's landscapes is also layered. For example *der Morganthau Plan* (2012) appears on a superficial visual level to be a violently executed field of

wildflowers. These flowers appear ravaged and in a state of decline throughout a colossal canvas measuring 280cm by 570cm. The title of the painting refers to an ill-conceived American plan which was made public in September 1944 which proposed turning post-war Germany into a pastoral society. The plan, if implemented, would have resulted in mass starvation within Germany and was a propaganda coup for the Nazis. As a result German resistance was bolstered with the inevitable incalculable loss of life.



Fig 138. Anselm Kiefer *der Morgenthau Plan* (2012)

Drawing and New Romanticism

Although Tacita Dean is mostly known as an artist who makes film works, she trained originally as a painter. The drawings shown below (fig 139) could be regarded as a postmodernist vision of Romanticism which affect and astonish because they take the narrative of the sea as threatening other and transform it into performative gesture based on mark making in negative. Dean states that the flux of the sea lends itself to blackboard drawings because the drawing, redrawing and erasure leads to constant transition. These drawings are always made in situ and can never be fixed because any fixative would instantly remove the chalk (Greer, Royoux, Warner, 2006:26-27).

As she draws the artist states that she sees her work unfolding like a storyboard and often incorporates into the finished artwork time indicators and even shot directions. In 2002 Dean produced *Chere petite soeur (Dear little sister)* on two 243.8cm by 487.7cm blackboards; the artwork is based on the film by Marcel Broodthaers and shows a boat caught in a storm. In the second blackboard drawing the boat appears to sink. The artist chose to copy the images from negatives because she found the positives too

difficult to read. Thereby technically making the process of creation astonishingly difficult, as she worked from a negative translated into a positive using a negative means of mark making (Greer, Royoux, Warner, 2006:26-7).



Fig 139. Tacita Dean *Chere petite soeur (Dear little Sister)* (2002)

Complicated Vistas

Bradway argues that the label Complicated Vistas can be applied to imagery where all the aesthetic and many of the political concerns associated with contemporary landscape depiction meet. Essentially it can be thought of as a term which describes painting informed by lessons learnt from the traditions of Romanticism, Realism, Abstraction, Pop and Social Construction. It is therefore a complex term informed by

many intersections of influence and which argues that all single art movements are inadequate as expressions of the contemporary age. This perceived inadequacy is because the contemporary age is one of extreme complexity, inconsistency and incongruity.

Bradway claims that vistas are essential to the meaning of Complicated Vistas because the undoubted complexity of modern living does not create such an inescapable labyrinth of realities that all artistic vision is hopelessly and irrevocably lost. He argues that artists still possess the ability to see beyond the immediate complexities of the sense space they inhabit and which Ellard defines as the 'lower visual field' (Ellard, 2016) (page 163). This ability to look beyond the near view and into 'the distance' [...] 'or the imagination' means looking for panoramas which are often challenging because such vistas are often created by internal complications which inform the 'attitude with which one sees' (Bradway, 2019:311). Such visions of the real are implicitly informed by critical reflection, an enchantment or disenchantment with the real which often results in the creation of a 'fantastical absurdity' infused with an 'enigmatic openness to interpretation' (Bradway, 2019:313). Therefore, Complicated Vistas are landscapes which transcend the real.

Bradway cites Kay WalkingStick as a painter of Complicated Vistas best known for her landscape diptychs of the United States which she began creating in the 1980s. This format was derived, according to the artist, from the desire to extend her brightly coloured and boldly depicted views of the American outdoors into an expression of inner or spiritual meaning. Her working method seems to have been inspired by religious diptychs and a sincere belief that painting has a spiritual quality which artists are able to express whilst honouring the beauty of nature. She argues that drawing and painting imprints form in the brain, this imprinting metaphor is allied to an assimilation between object and the mind (Ashfield, de Bolla, 1996:128). WalkingStick also cites her biracial heritage (Cherokee and Scotch-Irish) as giving her a sense of divided identity which attracts her to the diptych format.

In the painting *Danae in Arizona, Variation II* (2001) the left panel of the diptych depicts a boldly painted desert landscape. A glowing pink sky illuminates purple, rose and dusty pink mountains. The middle and foreground portrays desert rocks and undulating barren ground which are both rendered in dramatic dark browns, shades of burnt sienna, yellow ochre, green and orange mixed with varying degrees of pink and white. To the right of this stage like composition an unseen sun, hanging low in the sky, illuminates the scene. On the right panel a female silhouette, rendered entirely in

gold leaf, sits with open legs in a void of orange and green. This enigmatic graphic shape represents a mythical Greek princess awaiting the favours of Zeus. According to WalkingStick the dual panels represent the coming together of sensory and spiritual comprehension which occurs when viewing landscape. WalkingStick is an artist who combines reflections on reality with the brashness of Pop using romantic themes in constructions which celebrate both landscape and the original inhabitants of landscape.

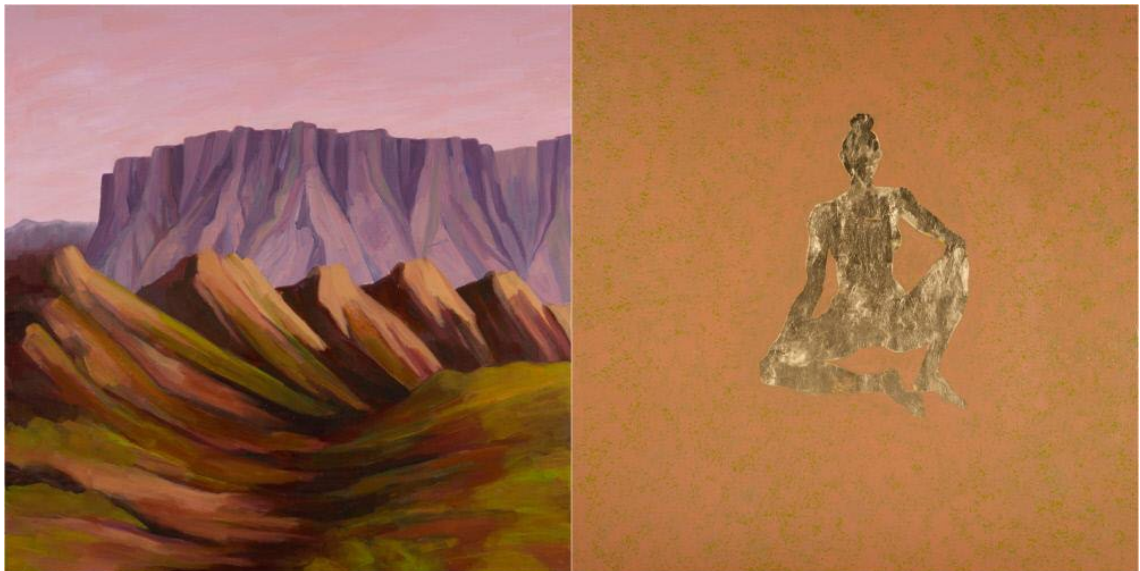


Fig 140. Kay WalkingStick *Danae in Arizona, Variation II* (2001)

In the production of *Variants of the sublime and beautiful* (fig 109) I adopted the diptych format. This was done because I was attempting to manifest different ways of presenting a single vision of the sublime and beautiful. My vision had nothing to do with spiritual comprehension but had a strong connection to sensory responses to terror and feeling.

The technological reimagining of landscape

The dehumanizing effect of the human construct, its ability to make viewers feel small and insignificant is a reoccurring theme in contemporary landscape depiction. In painting such alienation intersects many practices, Gordon Cheung (pages 166-168) above all others bases his landscapes in a reality in which economic structures dwarf individual human aspiration. However, painting is not the only way effective messages about the relationship between power and landscape can be expressed. For example Olafur Eliasson exploited the vast space of the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall by addressing the contemporary sublime through his *The Weather Project* (2003). In this work the artist, known for being a compulsive examiner of horizons, orbs and spheres of vision, can be seen attempting to bring the awesomeness of nature directly into the

art gallery by creating an extraordinary, thoroughly unnatural, man-made sun by suspending a massive semi-circle of light from a mirrored ceiling. The magical effect of this technological sublime construct is, on first encounter, evocative of the romantic tradition of attachment to nature and seems to conform particularly to Burke's emphasis on the power of the upward gaze, strong light and a romantic attempt to create the finite with the appearance of the divine. However, Eliasson is keen to disrupt this transcendental experience by allowing the viewer to walk behind the sun, exposing the technological sub-structure of the installation, this change of perception draws attention to the technological means by which the artist creates his presentation (Morley 2011). Eliasson is therefore clearly informed by the grandeur and power of the Burkean Sublime, but only as a starting point, an intellectual sub-structure from which he builds up his own visual argument.



Fig 141. Olafur Eliasson *The Weather Project* (2003).

Digital landscapes and the sublime

Roy Ascott argues that with the birth of the digital era a new 'order of disorder' has been created and through worldwide networks the contemporary landscape artist can now encounter planetary creativity (Ascott 1990). This new field of sublime encounter was unimaginable in the eighteenth-century.

Andreas Gursky's huge digital landscapes and interior spaces are inspired by a grand vision of what digital photography can achieve. In *The Sky over the Garbage Dump*, also known as *Untitled XIII Mexico* (1999), Gursky takes as his inspiration the environmental impact of Mexico City's garbage. In this apocalyptic image, which measures almost 275cm x 213cm, the viewer is confronted by the complete desolation of the natural environment. In this landscape Gursky condenses an unpalatable reality into one vast and spectacular image and gives a master class in how eminent importance can be conceptually attached to the excluded. By stripping the landscape of the presence of people who depend on the garbage of Mexico City for a living the artist draws attention to the plight of those who struggle to survive on the leftovers of the consumer spiral, (Bohme,2008;79): those who are largely powerless and alienated.

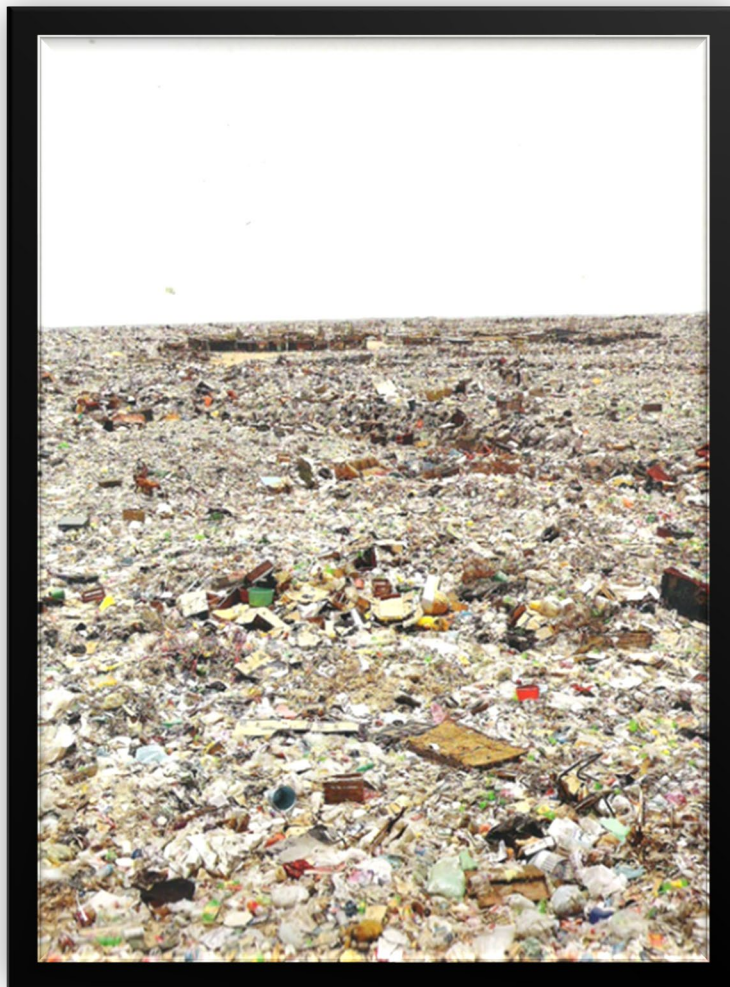


Fig 142. Andreas Gursky *The Sky Over the Garbage Dump* (2002).



Fig 143. Andreas Gursky *Brasilia Plenary Hall II* (1994)

In her text *Andreas Gursky and the Urban Age* (2008) the critic Francesca Ferguson sees the artist as a creator of icons in an urban age of megacapitalism and globalization. For her the sheer scale of Gursky's photographs confronts the viewer with a sense of the contemporary sublime. She then goes on to make the argument that in the global economy our increasingly networked and interconnected realities leads inevitably to a sense of deindividuation (Beil, 2008; 19). In effect she is saying that the increasingly digital economy, which never sleeps or lessens its pace, has no need of central nodes and exists outside of space heralding the beginning of the end of space. In the huge digital work from 1994 *Brasilia Plenary Hall II* 186cm by 226cm, Gursky depicts a contemporary space which is one of the world's many nuclei of decision-making floating in a sea of darkness, this internal space can be read as just another tiny cog contributing to the electronic ether which has its circumference everywhere and its centre nowhere.

The notion of manmade power structures which deindividualize and make viewers feel small and insignificant is a reoccurring trope of the sublime. It is evident in the work of anime artist and director Toshiharu Mizutani, responsible for the dystopian and futuristic cityscapes in the Japanese animation film *Akira* (1988). Stefan Rieckes states that *Akira* developed from a manga idea about the destruction of Neo Tokyo, a megacity which replaces Tokyo after the Third World War. In the film the power of a darkened 'world of the imagination' is presented to audiences. This world is one where those connected to a high-security military research centre have their power

emphasised visually through the use of the architecture they inhabit and the lighting they work under. The importance of manmade projections of wealth, authority, magnificence, and power in the effort to dominate the powerless is explored in *Part Four* of my thesis and in the sub-section *Why Lady Chapel embodies my conception of the Burkean ideas of magnificence, power, wealth and religious conviction*.

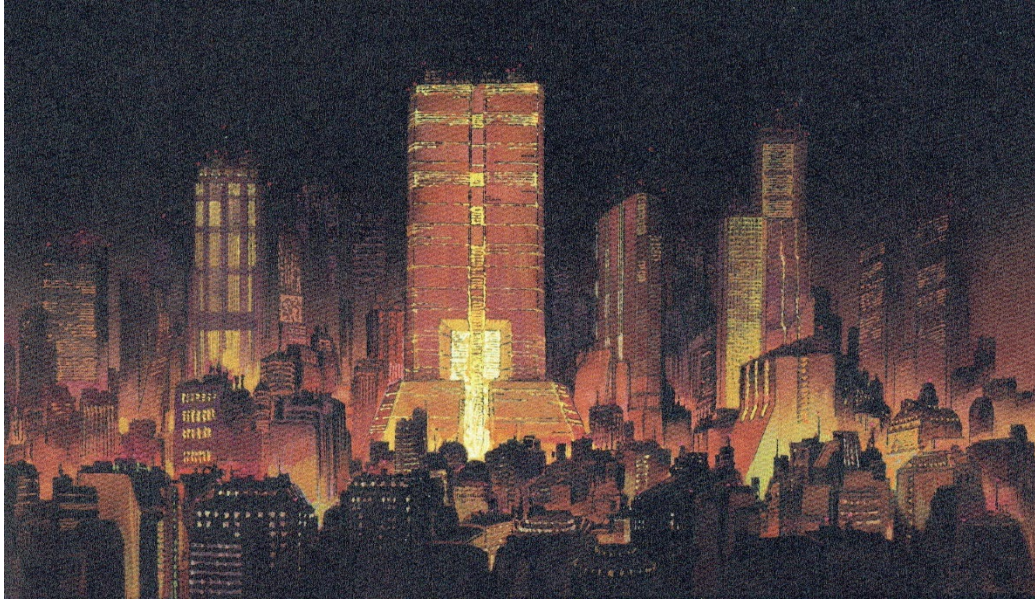


Fig 144. Toshiharu Mizutani *cut no. 954* (1988)

Dan Holdsworth and the digital sublime

Holdsworth argues that landscape 'is a space which extends infinitely in front of you – yet which also extends or mirrors our own internal space', this internal space he defines as 'the human mind (Kennedy, 2018:225). His conception of landscapes' potential conforms to the Burkean Sublime when Holdsworth responds to 'the power or size of nature' and 'nature's capacity to strike us with fear, terror, awe and astonishment' (Pajaczkowska & White, 2009: 134).

In the series of digital works known as *Blackout* (2010) Holdsworth explores the harsh landscape of Iceland. He emphasises the Otherness of this landscape by digitally 'reversing out a grey world bleached by overexposure' (Morton, 2018:229). Because most of the images in the series focus upon the area close to the recently active volcano Eyjafjallajökull, nearby glacial ice is darkened by basalt-black dust and grit. This means that when Holdsworth applied his reversing and bleaching process, darkened glaciers turned brilliant white whilst cloudy sky turned empty black. The effect of Holdsworth's technique is astonishing; glacial landscapes become abstracted and unearthly. Oliver Morton argues in *After Utopia* (2018) that when these images are given the added power which comes with printing on a large scale, most are 226cm by

177cm they exceed comprehension and become as timeless and unbounded as eternity (Morton, 2018: 232).

Morton concludes by stating that the jaggedness, play of light and shadow of Holdsworth's *Blackout* series 'all speak of Burke's sublime' (Morton, 2018:233). He then both qualifies and emphasises anew Burke's relationship to Holdsworth by stating that he feels the images have no point of entry and that without 'Burke's conflation of terror and safety' Holdsworth's digital representations seem to mean 'both less and more' than the Burkean Sublime. This unease is created because Morton feels both outside of and trapped within Holdsworth's visual strangeness (Morton, 2018:233).

In my research I have consistently explored how the seen can be presented as the felt via the creation of the visually strange. This working process has been the result of a deliberate attempt to create visual unease and tension. My exploration of partial or total reversing techniques in paintings, or digital drawings, has been employed mainly using white lines over black or coloured backgrounds. This way of working is the reverse of most graphic images which tend to employ darker linework over lighter backgrounds. My process of linear reversals appears extensively in *Part Two*; beginning with the *Defence Horizon* drawings (figs 21-22) and concluding with the production of *The Horizontal Sublime* (figs 46-47). This research outcome combines monumental scale with white drawing over black, or red throughout its presentation of strangeness. In *Part Three* the same technique of reversal reappears briefly in *Labour of torment* (fig 67) *Internal* (fig 69) *Lost II* (fig 73) *Black, red and white crucifixion* (fig 80) and *Dark crucifixion* (fig 81).



Fig 145. Dan Holdsworth *Blackout 17* (2010)

Conclusion to Part Five

Despite the inclusion of a chapter entitled *New Romanticism in Landscape Painting Now* (2019), Edmund Burke and his *Enquiry* are not directly referenced in Schwabsky's and Bradway's text's 368 pages. This omission does not mean that the contemporary painters cited have no relationship, or interest, in the themes of the sublime or beautiful as described by Burke. However, what Burke's omission does mean is that none of the artists represented put the contents of the *Enquiry* front and centre in their practices to highlight how Burke's conception of terror can still inform art perception, and the act of looking and painting. Nevertheless Schwabsky makes the telling, almost Burkean, comment that 'the image of nature, displayed in all its artifice' is 'in essence, a metaphor for painting itself' and that the interaction between painters and landscapes 'can be a metaphor for our relation to nature' (Schwabsky, 2019:25). These sentiments echo the arguments of Burke (Burke, 1757-9:149), Rosenblum (Rosenblum, 2010:112) and the findings of my research. So the question must be asked why in an age informed by the threat of imminent environmental collapse, in an era of rapid and often destructive social, technological, and political uncertainty isn't Burke's *Enquiry* more explicitly central to contemporary landscape painting? One answer to this question could be that Burke's aesthetic concerns are so embedded into visual culture that the explicit term Burkean Sublime, rather like the sublime itself, has regenerated since the eighteenth-century into new guises and contexts.

Conclusion

The Contemporary Sublime exhibition

My practice-based research concluded with an exhibition of outcomes in EAST Gallery Norwich. This exhibition was open to the public, University students and staff from 5th to 23rd October 2021. The gallery has cultural reputé and the power to act as a giver of authority and cultural validation to artworks displayed. This power comes from the gallery's pristine physicality and the legacy of past public exhibitions. Within the EAST Gallery many important members of the culture defining classes have exhibited including Grayson Perry, Sir Alfred Munnings, Anthony Caro, Cornelia Parker, Susan Hiller and John Stezaker.

I directed the planning and hanging of *The Contemporary Sublime* exhibition, working alongside the curator Claire Allerton and gallery technician Ben Alden. During these processes the shape and size of the gallery impacted upon where works could be positioned but throughout, I tried to create an interesting bombardment of images which would reflect the multifaceted nature of my research and the many ways Burkean aesthetic engagement can nuance appreciation and presentation of various kinds of British spaces. Care was taken to create two spaces where people could sit and reflect upon the work displayed, the first of these was positioned in the area of the gallery dominated by the three final outcomes of my research whilst the second was placed in front of my sketchbooks. The experimental nature of the exhibition was also highlighted by a prominently displayed text which explained the theme of my research and my conclusion that an eighteenth-century theory of passion could stimulate new ways of seeing and feeling contemporary British spaces.



Fig 146. Exterior of East Gallery NUA (Andi Sapey 2021)

Andi Sapey took most of the digital photographs shown in Part Five Section 2. His brief was to record the viewing experience of someone walking into and around the gallery space.



Fig 147. Exhibition view of *Norwegian Giant* and *The Devil is in the Detail* looking left at entrance to gallery (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 148. Exhibition view of *Lost IV*, *Flowers for Thelma*, *His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020*, looking right at entrance to gallery (Andi Sapey 2021)

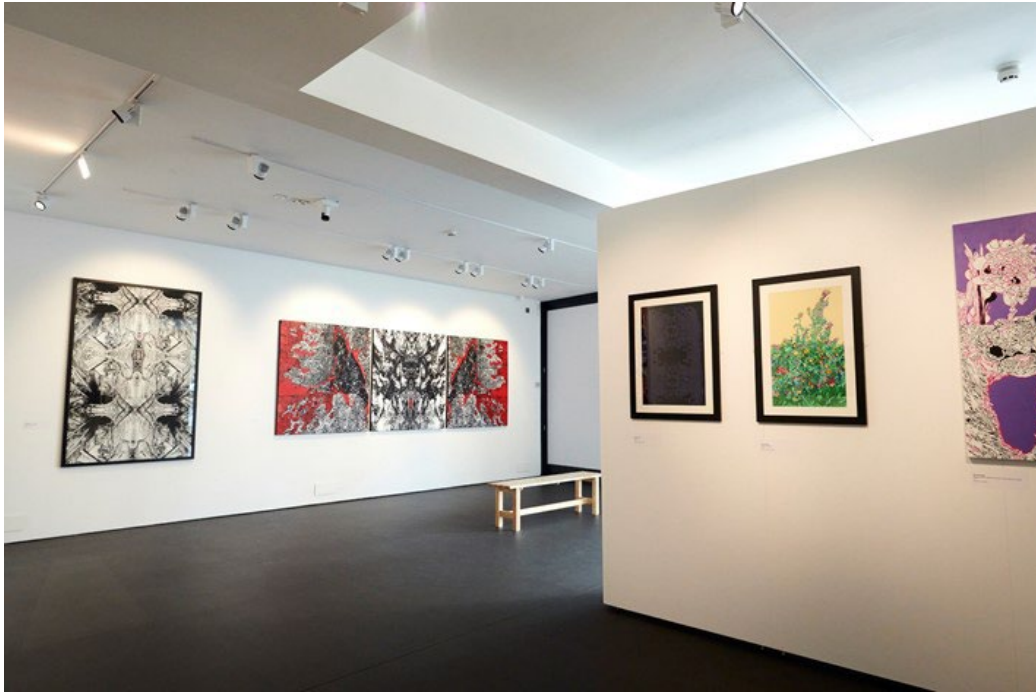


Fig 149. Exhibition view of *Lost IV*, *Flowers for Thelma*, *His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020*, *Know thy place and be grateful* and *The Horizontal Sublime*, looking forward and to the right at entrance to gallery (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 150. Exhibition view of *Lost IV*, *Flowers for Thelma*, *His great wrath: twenty-four hours in the Summer of 2020*, *External*, *Highland Hellscape II*, looking backwards after entering gallery space (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 151. Exhibition view of *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence*, looking left after passing *Lost IV* (2021)



Fig 152. Exhibition view of *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence*: details (Andi Sapey 2021)

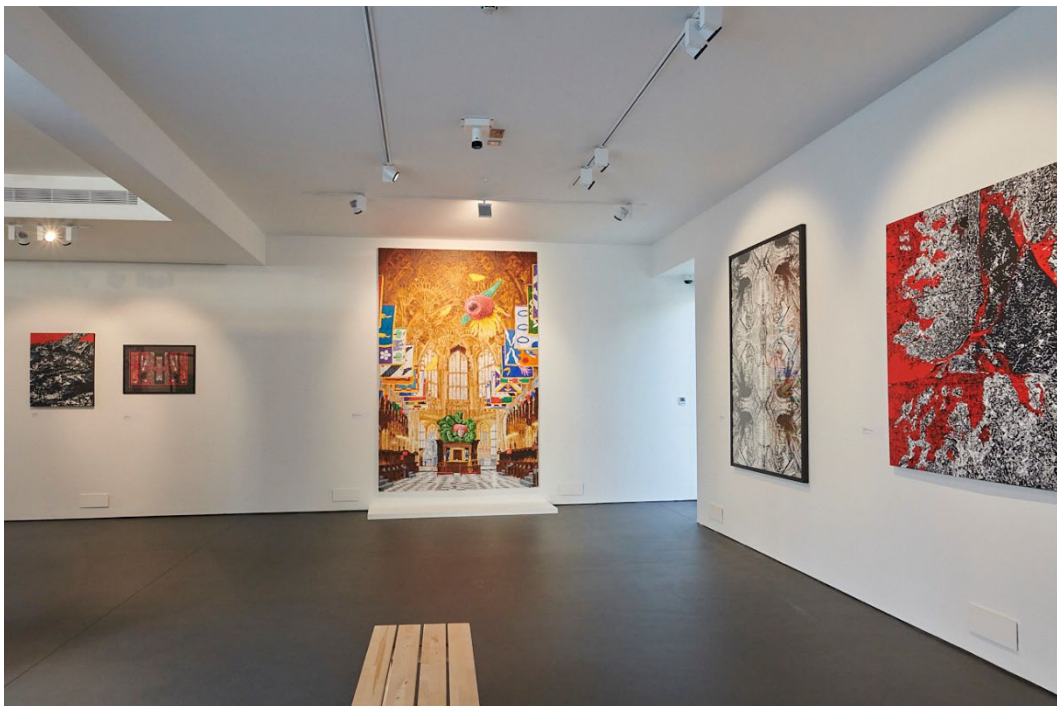


Fig 153. Exhibition view of *Norwegian Giant*, *The Devil is in the Detail*, *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence*, *Know thy place and be grateful* and *The Horizontal Sublime*, looking left from first seating area (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 154. Exhibition view of *Know thy place and be grateful* and *The Horizontal Sublime*, looking from just behind viewing bench (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 155. Exhibition view of *Know thy place and be grateful* (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 156. Exhibition view of *The Horizontal Sublime* (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 157. Exhibition view of *The Horizontal Sublime*: details (Andi Sapey 2021)

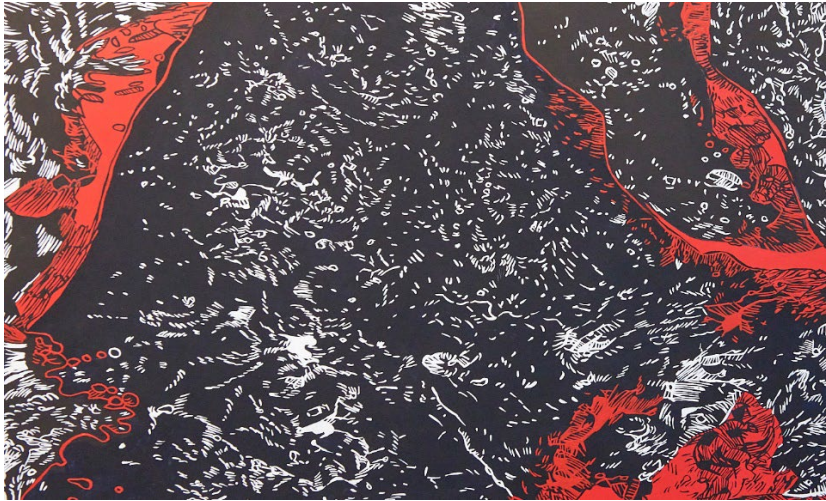


Fig 158. Exhibition view of *The Horizontal Sublime*: details (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 159. Exhibition view of *Artist's Statement*, *The unsupported mine shaft II*, *Death is coming*, *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape*, *Seascape Horizon* and vitrine with sketchbooks and second seating area. View from first seating area looking toward central partition (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 160. Exhibition view of central partition displaying *Death is coming, The unsupported mine shaft II* with *Know thy place and be grateful* and *The Horizontal Sublime* (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 161. Exhibition view of *Death is coming, The unsupported mine shaft II* and *Artist Statement* (Andi Sapey 2021)

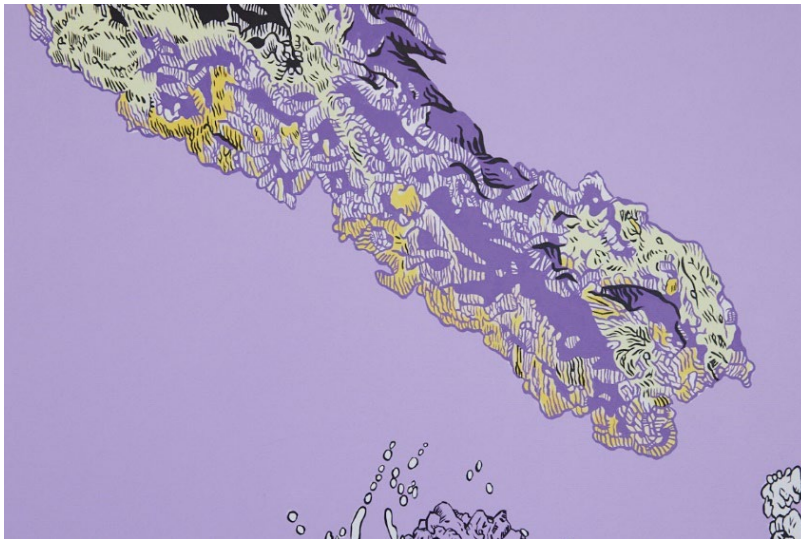


Fig 162. Exhibition view of *Death is coming*, details (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 163. Exhibition view of *Defence Horizon*, *Gordale Scar* and *Variants of the sublime and beautiful* (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 164. Exhibition view of *Defence Horizon*, *Gordale Scar* and *Variants of the sublime and beautiful*, looking directly at artworks (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 165. Exhibition view *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape* and *Seascape Horizon* (Andi Sapey 2021)

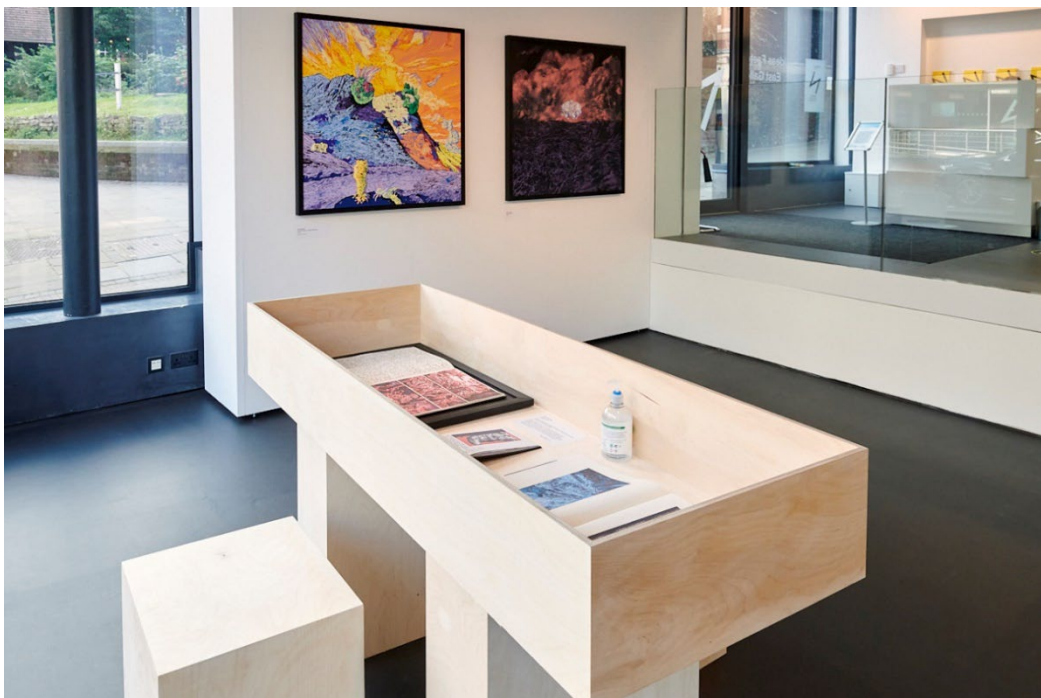


Fig 166. Exhibition view of *Thirty-six hours in a Highland Hellscape* and *Seascape Horizon* with open vitrine containing sketchbooks in foreground (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 167. Open and framed sketchbook in vitrine - exhibition view (Andi Sapey 2021)

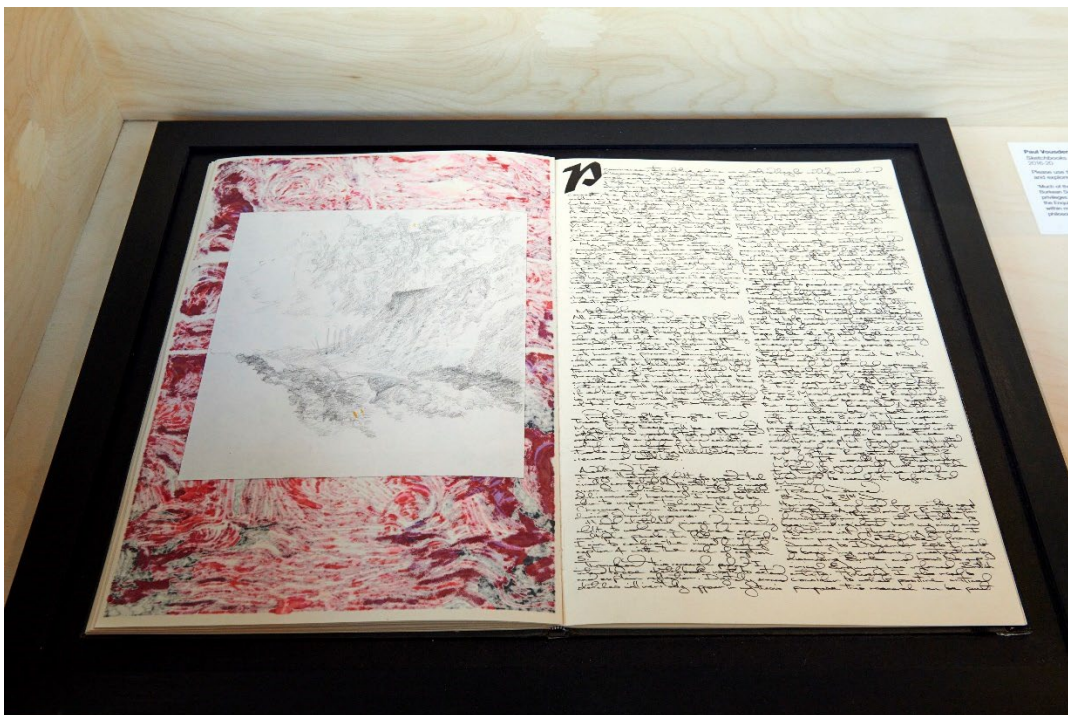


Fig 168. Open and framed sketchbook in vitrine - exhibition view (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 169. Open and framed sketchbook, small sketchbook and unframed sketchbook in vitrine - exhibition view (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 170. Open and framed sketchbook in vitrine - exhibition view (Andi Sapey 2021)



Fig 171. Open vitrine - view looking back toward first viewing bench (Andi Sapey 2021)

Audience responses to this exhibition were generally very positive. The most favourable reactions came from fine art students who seemed to identify with the artworks on display. One student returned to the exhibition repeatedly and made himself conspicuous by spending (according to gallery assistants) three hours taking notes from my sketchbooks.

I was persuaded to capture comments from visitors in a comments book toward the exhibitions end. Previously I had not dared try this method of obtaining feedback because it invites unpredictable and potentially unhelpful or hurtful encounters. The following scans show comments between Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th of October. These comments I have broken up into passages of text which demarcate emotional responses, which I highlighted in crimson from aesthetic, which I highlighted in yellow. I have also highlighted in orange any mention of the importance of my sketchbooks and used blue to highlight comments which relate to cultural value. From earlier conversations and the evidence of the comments book I think that students, in particular fine art students, were emotionally engaged with the *Contemporary Sublime* exhibition. On more than one occasion I was told that I had 'made it ok to paint and draw again'. All fourteen written responses to the exhibition use emotional wording, ten make favourable comments about purely visual issues whilst half make comments about the exhibition in relation to wider culture. Five contributions also directly

reference my use of sketchbooks and their usefulness in building up a dialogue between artist and audience.

Amazing work - sublime
truly it is the word to ~~the~~
describe these
such beautiful intense detail
to get lost in and the
sketchbooks are a wonderful
insight into the process

Beautiful works + especially
colour schemes, especially the
'Thirty Six hours in a Highland
Hellscape' in almost apocalyptic
feeling to the scene so much
movement + detail both exciting
and unsettling!

Fig 172. Page 1 of comments book. 21cm X 15cm

V. unusual colours - trippy but
interesting - kind of 60s influence
but definitely modern! From the Gamy
Kaleidoscopic psychedelic Zone
I know 'cos I was there
- Hell's Granny

Wonderful work inspired by Burke! Love the
brighter colours and the contrast of the darker
imagery! The sketchbooks are so interesting
and I could have spent all day looking at them!

Inspiring! Jester & Jannings

wonderful! Trippy and creepy, lots
of texture and interesting use of colour.
Reminds me of H. R. Giger's works on
Alien in some ways.

Fig 173. Page 2 of comments book. 21cm X 15cm

Final reflections on the importance of my research question

Throughout this project I have argued that paintings and drawings reflecting on the nature of landscapes and space can be more than instinctive transmutations of reality into artistic expression. In this research project I have looked at several contemporary British environments and proposed the idea that one effective way for artists to reflect on, and organise, the essence of spaces would be to consider them using Edmund Burke's eighteenth-century theory of the passions.

My hypothesis was explored between late 2015 and the summer of 2021, using *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757-59) almost like a handbook for art production. By employing Burke's treatise I was able to reflect upon the relationship painting, and drawing, have to terror and Burkean notions of delight, in the depiction of internal spaces and external landscapes. My approach to research reflected the fact that I am an artist, rather than an academic, art historian, or philosopher. However, rather like some academics and philosophers, I also deliberately aimed to embrace the emotional reflexivity and psychological activity Burke displays in his treatise which links written knowledge to felt knowledge. My interest in felt knowledge was motivated by a desire to move my responses to representation beyond a straightforward reproduction of that which can be observed and toward a representation of a deeper phenomenological truthfulness. I imagined myself attempting to rise to the challenge of an engagement with the extreme, and by formulating various methods of representing the sublime, conquer both the terror of my own psychic structure and the terror implicit in the hostile chaos of a turbulent world. To achieve this vision of personal sublimity I proposed the question, to what extent can Burke's aesthetic philosophy, as defined in the *Enquiry* (1757-59), be used as an applied methodology in the production of Burkean contemporary spaces and landscapes? I approached this issue autoethnographically and by melding the mediums of painting, drawing, and reflective writing. This methodology was adopted because I hoped Burke's theory would allow me to create a pathway of recorded experience showing how artists can still use eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy to intensify and contextualise art practice.

A summary of how I have used Burke's subjective and empirical approach to aesthetic speculation and how this speculation relates to contemporary Britain

In this re-evaluation of Burke's aesthetic treatise to my artistic practice, and potentially to other artists, I have shown how the *Enquiry* can offer a flexible guide to perception which is intellectually stimulating and physically immersive. I have also demonstrated,

by recording my activities, that this book also offers a compact, accessible, treatise full of emotive, aesthetic, and psychological insights pertinent to the experience of landscapes and spaces. Burke's guide to perception privileges the sublime over the beautiful and essentially explores how far the physical qualities of extensions of space may be applied to qualities of the mind. My research has sought to document how the *Enquiry* can aid the creation of portrayals of space through encounters with the duality of internal reflection and external sensory experience. These insights have informed my artworks and been used in various combinations to reveal how contemporary physical spaces can be conceived in terms which create ideas of visual pleasure and pain. Because the *Enquiry* privileges the 'effects of awe, horror and terror' (White, 2009:75) the text has also provided me with a guide, or limit to perception, around themes which move analysis of the sublime away from the object and toward the perception of the beholder (Morley, 2010:15). This structured limit to perception has proven to be helpful in creating links between reality and artistic presentation which are focussed and organised. Burke's organised and structured way of looking has helped to lead my imagination away from impassive illustration and toward engagements with excess, intensity, terror and passion.

My engagements with excess are relevant to wider artistic practice because I have shown, using my art practice as an example, how Burke's aesthetic theory can be used to create artworks which are both subjective and records of an empirical approach to aesthetic speculation. Burke's idea that the body can be thought of 'as a neutral or passive receptor of phenomena' (White, 2010:77), and his instructive theory of how various passions can be derived from 'natural and uniform principles' (Burke, 1757-59:22) have furnished me with a way of engaging intellectually, emotionally and physically with spaces and images. This knowledge has allowed me to think about the Burkean Sublime and how the limitations of his aesthetic speculations can embody experience and thereby affect audience reactions to artworks. Such knowledge is potentially valuable to contemporary artists interested in creating paintings or drawings which reflect upon Romanticism in contemporary art practice.

Final conclusions on my practice-based research into the Horizontal, Vertical and Transcendental Sublime

In this research project I have explored three distinct spaces, the sea defences and seascape at Sheringham, the dark depths of the Apedale mine, and the imagined sinister magnificence of Lady Chapel. All these spaces astonished me visually and all

offered me the vicarious thrill of creating safe presentations of differing forms of Burkean terror (Burke, 1757-9: 36).

At Sheringham the unknowable nature of the sea's unseen power, its vast scale, depth, chilling darkness, emptiness, formlessness and associative psychological meaning provided the imaginative inspiration for my engagement with the sea as an object of terror. This expression of fearfulness communicates the relationship between terror and the sublime as described by Burke in his darkest moments of reflection in the *Enquiry*. The painting *Horizontal Sublime* (2018) (figs 46-47) visually manifests how Burke believes the effect of the sublime can be presented using the themes of nature, blackness, strong flat colours, ruggedness, obscurity, magnitude, and ambition.

The artwork uses only three colours, black, strong red and stark white, and is produced on eighteen panels. These panels are covered with thousands of lines which depict the sea and sea defences at Sheringham from a mirrored and twisted perspective. This twisting, mirroring, and the myriad of the lines which lead the viewer's eye around the painting create, according to Burke's aesthetic theory, a feeling of energy, anxiety, confusion and movement. This activity aims to echo the sentiment of Rosenblum in *The Abstract Sublime* (1961) when he states that sublime effects can be achieved in paintings which fill the void with 'a teeming unleashed power' (Rosenblum, 2010: 110). Because these panels are capable of being displayed in multiple configurations this painting also has the potential to suggest boundlessness. Burke argues that boundlessness can be suggested by presenting the viewer with just a fragment of an object which is dark, confused and uncertain (Burke, 1757-9:58) and my painting makes manifest his view. This possibility of boundlessness is aided by the graphic nature of the artwork and by keeping the picture plane near the surface, thereby making any configuration of panels threatening to the viewer with an engulfing effect like that described by Escobar (Escobar 2017).

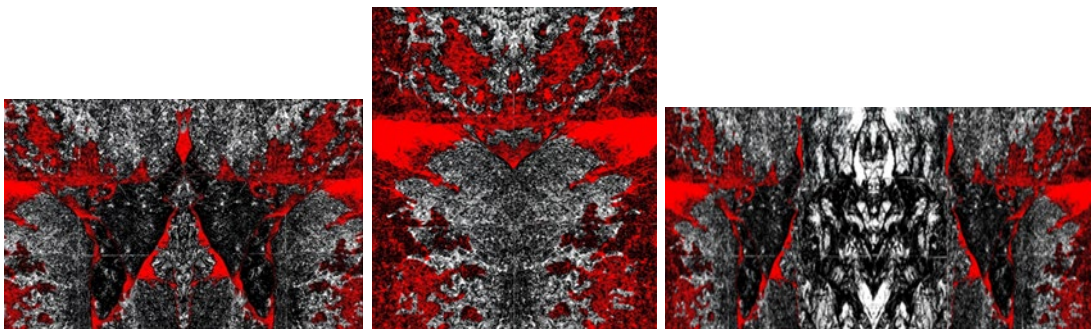


Fig 174. Paul Vousden multiple configurations of the *Horizontal Sublime* (2018) acrylic on panels

During the painting of this artwork the Brexit process also made me view the space depicted as a symbolic representation of unease associated with a specific British historical period. The painting is therefore also informed by a political sense of anxiety because its subject matter has an associative meaning connected to issues of a new sense of national identity which many believe symbolises a dark, confused and uncertain psychological retreat from liberal values (Chu, 2016). My attempted fusion of contemporary feelings to Burke's eighteenth-century aesthetic demonstrates how the past can inform the present and make art production more emotionally engaged with a contemporary reimagining of landscape.

My drawing of the Apedale drift shaft *Know thy place and be grateful* (2019-2020) (figs 86-87) suggests terror by reflecting on redundant machines of labour, their silence, and the emptiness of the space they inhabit. The stillness of this drawing symbolises the lack of those that once busily inhabited this underground space. This subterranean landscape is also informed by a history of privation and access to the sublime experience through the extreme of labour. During the making of this drawing my perceptions of this mine remained relatively unchanged because the destruction of the coal mining industry in Britain had been achieved long before I visited the Apedale site. My Burkean perception of this space was therefore informed by conceptions of tragedy which allowed me to reimagine one of its empty drift shafts as an intensively laboured hybrid between a Rorschach test and a crucifix. Because my drawing of the Apedale mine is an obscure reimagining informed by a presentation of darkness, solitude, and silence, it possesses qualities which, according to Burke are terrible privations (Burke, 1757-9:65). Darkness is especially disturbing and, in this drawing, shafts disappear into black voids. The potential act of concealment implied by this darkness is akin to a symbol for dread and creates a space for the imagination to consider the passion of fear (Burke, 1757-9:54). Therefore I have concluded that dark, empty, and silent landscapes embody psychological qualities of the Burkean Sublime (Burke 1757-9:65) which my final drawing of the Apedale space makes manifest. This drawing and the research which made it possible have also demonstrated to me that, to the best of my knowledge, no other contemporary British artist has used the medium of drawing to reflect upon what such redundant spaces say about identity, labour, and privation as a form of Burkean Sublimity.

In my final painting *Fantasy of Power and Pestilence* (2021) (fig 124) invented and obscure objects of terror haunt large tracts of space which follows the physical structure of the Lady Chapel only in its overall design. In this artwork uniform pillars are employed to extend the impression of space as suggested by Burke in the Enquiry

(Burke, 1757-59:69). However because the Covid pandemic stopped me visiting this site and forced me to use second-hand poor quality visual references, much of what is depicted in my painting is created from moments of feeling. This pandemic therefore made me re-evaluate how I perceive space and utilise the *Enquiry*. The extreme physical minuteness of the virus, and its huge impact to life, and liberty, also made me realise that truth in painting is not simply a straightforward representation of what can be seen. Sometimes, painting can only get close to the phenomenological truth of an environment by subverting scale and creating an imagined transmutation of reality which combines aesthetic theory with the unreality of lived experience and feelings of disbelief. These moments of disbelief and feeling were informed by Burke's intellectual observations and my absorption in the act of painting. The resulting activity is constructed from thousands of individual marks using a wide selection of colours to suggest confused and crowded imagery loaded with richness and profusion. This profusion of imagery aims to agitate the mind and create within it a multitude of indistinct yet powerfully felt reflections on magnificence, power and terror (Burke, 1757-59:71-2). This painting therefore comes close to resembling a Kantian manifestation of the Mathematical Sublime. However, the sketchy, loose and felt nature of this artwork provided me with ways of thinking about painting Lady Chapel, and the seemingly unrepresentable nature of the pandemic, by engaging with ambiguity, openness and unfinishedness. These qualities helped give me an extension to perception which enabled me to transcend normal representation. This ability to inhabit a more imagined space appears to manifest the argument by Bromwich that the Burkean Sublime defies good taste, probity and even sanity (Bromwich, 2014: 60). In this painting a safe engagement with danger, and power is suggested through its subject matter. The painting is a 'dreamwork' which is both emotionally engaged with a terrifying period in British history, and intellectually detached from its horror because I was able to use the *Enquiry* like a defensive mechanism for dealing with otherwise unpalatable realities.

My research also considers the dynamic between the natural sublime and the constructed sublime and how these elements battle for dominance within landscapes and internal spaces. Because Burke makes such little distinction between the sublime power of nature, society, and the imagination, I have reimagined extensions of space at Sheringham, Apedale and Lady Chapel by reflecting on all these forces. This research has resulted in the creation of a large-scale painting which manifests the Burkean Horizontal Sublime as a space dominated by natural elements; a highly laboured drawing which considers the Burkean Vertical Sublime as a space invaded by the mining activities of man; and an ambitious final painting which imagines the Burkean

Transcendental Sublime as a manmade construction invaded by nature. The altered relationship between the sublime of nature and that of the construct in these artworks demonstrates how contemporary circumstances, in this case Brexit, social stratification, and the Covid pandemic, can reanimate the relevance of the *Enquiry* to contemporary landscape depiction. These destabilising pressures made me realise that different ways of considering the Burkean sublime, different combinations of his aesthetic reflections, serve a positive critical purpose when they have a relationship to current events. As if to illustrate my hypothesis Luke White states in *The Sublime Now* (2009) that the sublime is a concept which orientates 'much modern and contemporary art to the extreme and unrepresentable, the disharmonious and the frightening' (Pajaczkowska, White, 2009:2).

Within all three spaces objects loaded with the potential to inflict suffering are shown, these intrinsically dangerous extensions of space therefore aid the staging of the sublime idea (Burke, 1757-9:53). All three artworks can be called portrayals of the Burkean Sublime because they are all linked to the fictitious reinventions of spaces and landscapes associated with danger, fear, tragedy, obscurity, power and magnificence (Phillips, 1990:15-21).

Conclusions on how an eighteenth-century aesthetic philosophy has changed me

In Parts Two to Four of this thesis, I have shown how quotes from the *Enquiry* can create imaginative Burkean transmutations of contemporary spaces. The process of trying to inhabit Burke's aesthetic reflexivity within these spaces has created ways of seeing and thinking about being within spaces which, for me, would otherwise have remained unperceived. Using Burke's aesthetic speculations I have been able to invent, adapt, and produce paintings and drawings which manifest new immersive, and sometimes physically demanding, creative behaviours. The physicality of my drawing, and painting processes, the long hours of drawing and painting over large surfaces, have also seemed to create a material discourse which is acutely felt through the body and seems appropriate to the Burkean conceptions of the imagination being only the representative of the senses (Burke, 1757:17). Over time I have also realised that Burke's aesthetic speculations enhance the experience of production, turning art production from passive escape from imperfect reality and into a safe, but active and energising confrontation with real life, this confrontation is process driven and emotionally charged.

The most unexpected consequence of the learning process implicit in art production has been that the *Enquiry* has helped me overcome difficulties, and anxieties, as the world around me became increasingly terrifying and informed by bewildering threats and dangers. For example when the Covid pandemic halted my studies I used the treatise to think through this period of turmoil. Essentially Burke's thoughts on how a principled code of aesthetics is linked to ethics has shown me how individuals can achieve a feeling of sublimity through struggle, labour, both physical and intellectual, and ambition. This argument appears to me to be apolitical yet important to the understanding of the human condition and has helped strengthen my will when problems and obstacles seemed insurmountable. Burke's emphasis upon the positive aspects of labour and struggle have also had the effect of enabling a reimagining of my impulse to produce art as an expression and satisfaction of a longing for transcendence over felt, and experienced, meaninglessness, weakness, and fear.

By overcoming self-imposed aesthetic problems and reflecting upon external threats I have inadvertently used Burke's *Enquiry* as a vehicle for strengthening my conception of the self and detaching this conception from the 'deadening experience of modern life' (White, 2009:80). Rather like Burke, I have become a spectator who desires spectacle 'not in order to watch the triumph of virtue but simply to watch' (Bromwich, 2014:61). Therefore Burke has played a significant role in my transformation from uninformed working-class redundancy victim to informed artist with a vision of the sublime. This vision of the sublime has literally changed how I see the world and understanding of my place in British society.

How my relationship to the Burkean Sublime has developed during this research project

Initially my material practice tried to follow Burke's aesthetic speculations as closely as possible and in an uncritical manner. This was because I initially imagined my exploration of the *Enquiry* as a means by which I could discard, as much as is possible, the immediacy of my sense perception, and way of seeing, and replace these with Burke's aesthetic speculations. I thought that by replacing my thought processes with his, art would emerge which would be enriched by an intellect which clearly towers above my own. I also thought that Burke offered me a more intense and exciting way of being in the world. His argument that by surrendering consciousness to perception, the delightful thrill of the sublime can energise the artists' self-presence, seemed to offer a portal to a better, and more dramatic sublime reality. Paul Crowther's account of the Burkean sublime sums up the psycho-physiological usefulness of Burkean

philosophy, to the contemporary artist, by stating that the Burkean existential sublime could be considered a countermeasure 'to the deadening experience of modern life' an effective antidote to the closing down of the self in the face of stifling outside stimuli (White,2009:80).

I would also argue that by using Burke's *Enquiry* as a foundation for this research project I have been able to avoid the problematic potential to create what Estelle Barrett refers to as 'auto-connoisseurship' or superficial self-validation (Barrett, 2007:135). This avoidance of extreme introspection has been achieved by creating a dispersed authorship in my material practice between myself and Burke. This methodology was inspired by Barrett's interpretation of Michel Foucault's essay *What is an Author* (1969). In this text it is argued that cultural production is so regulated by institutional regimes and apparatuses, it becomes senseless to focus on the author as sole creator of meaning (Barrett, 2007:138).

With hindsight the hubris implied by my belief that a theory of the passions could be made manifest so easily, that I could simply read the *Enquiry*, eject my own personality, anxieties, and limitations, and acquire almost instant Burkean sublimity, and a complete understanding of the nature of terror, seems credulous. However the dazzling prize of extending my understanding of aesthetic speculations into an imagined exact theory of the emotions temporarily blinded me. My almost unreasoned faith in the power of Burkean aesthetic speculation became tempered during research into the various contemporary reinterpretations of Burke's sublime. This development was because, as I read the thoughts of Phillips, Furniss, Bromwich, Shaw, Gasche and Freeman, I discovered that the Burkean sublime is a contested concept and that part of the strength of Burke's aesthetic speculations is that they are open to multiple legitimate interpretations. In my research various arguments from all these authors have nuanced my understanding of the *Enquiry*. Often these nuanced views are combined and added to via the expressive intent of my own thoughts and art practice. As a collective these authors can be said to have contributed to my multifaceted interpretation of the Burkean Sublime.

The *Enquiry* has been at its most useful to my art practice when considering the power of obscurity to evoke ideas and feelings. Burke's conception of compounded abstract words as words which do not create in the mind a clear representation of the object signified but rather an 'affection of the soul' (Burke, 1757-59:152) has led me to explore the visually complex themes of nature, class and death in my practice-based research. By relating these ideas to Burke's thoughts on the sublime in extensions of space I

have discovered that his treatise has the power to frustrate and agitate the imagination. This frustration can be explored using drawing or painting to create multifaceted visual fictions which condense Burkean conceptions of social conditions, experiences, and extensions of space into complex and meaningful images based on real encounters. In my research into the Burkean Horizontal Sublime the terror of nature informed my activity, class informed my exploration of the Burkean Vertical Sublime and death informed my conception of the Burkean Transcendental Sublime.

The multifaceted usefulness to artists of Burke's text can also be explained by the fact that there are one-hundred sub-sections within it between PART I and PART V of the treatise. Each sub-section contains an individual observation relating to the nature of either the beautiful or the sublime. This multiplicity of viewpoints can be recombined and reimagined by readers from various backgrounds to aid understanding of the various contexts they inhabit. My research shows how the *Enquiry* can therefore be said to reflect a utilitarian aesthetic philosophy which is open ended and offers multiple ways of enhancing the intensity of the experience of seeing and thinking. As time passed, and this project developed, a dialogue began to emerge between myself and Burke. This dialogue emerged through the production of drawings and paintings inspired by different combinations of Burkean thought within different spaces and developing contexts.

How my research into the *Enquiry* led me to conclude that the artist's sketchbook is an important arena for engagement with the sublime

Much of my research into, and reimagining of the Burkean Sublime took place, in its initial phase, in my sketchbooks. Burke privileges the unfinished or unrefined nature of sketchbook work above finished paintings in the *Enquiry*. In no text I have read is this observation explored and reflected upon from the viewpoint of an artist. In *Part Two*, *SECTION XI*, under the subheading *INFINITY* in pleasing *OBJECTS* Burke states:

'Infinity, though of another kind, causes much of our pleasure in agreeable, as well as of our delight in sublime images. The spring is the pleasantest of the seasons; and the young of most animals, though far from being completely fashioned, afford a more agreeable sensation than the full grown; because the imagination is entertained with the promise of something more, and this does not acquiesce in the present object of the sense. In unfinished sketches of drawing, I have often seen something which pleased me beyond the best finishing; and this I believe proceeds from the cause I have just now assigned' (Burke, 1757-59:70).

These words can be interpreted as an extension of the idea, first expressed by Longinus, that inward greatness comes from nature, which Burke believes leads to self-intensified presence, which itself then needs to be framed somehow to communicate perception. This perception, according to Burke, engages the imagination most fully when something more is promised, when it is open ended, unresolved, or still in development, as it is within the pages of the artists' sketchbook. Essentially Burke is arguing that because the aesthetic of the sublime is enhanced by obscurity and formlessness, the sketched image has a connection to the sublime despite its physically small scale. Burke's thinking about the power of the sketched image changed how I perceived the importance of my sketchbooks during this research project. Under his influence I began to see mine as an important arena within which the framing of the experience of the sublime can take place and become the embodiment of 'thinking through practice'. I would also argue that part of the visual power of a sketchbook comes from the profusion of disordered ideas, energy and images which are often held within its pages. The apparent disorder and great profusion of activity held within my sketchbooks are valuable to me because they represent the unfinished beginnings of artworks yet to be completed. Ferguson states that 'Burke sees the aesthetic object as valuable not for the labour that produced it but for the labour it will produce' (Furniss, 1993: 29) and this argument can be applied directly to my sketchbook drawings. Therefore, according to Burkean interpretations of art practice, I have concluded that a finished painting may still have an important function in framing the terror of the sublime, but it is not necessarily unrivalled by the vaguely conceived sketchbook drawing which inspired it (Burke, 1757-9:70-71). This view of the sketchbook also subverts the notion of a hierarchy of meaning implicit within traditional art practice and has led me to try to present my sketchbook work to audiences as if it is an equal partner to other artworks. Initially I tried to achieve this aim by framing an opened sketchbook and presenting it rather like a painting on a wall. This method of presentation appeared to discourage interaction from audiences.



Fig 175. Paul Vousden sketchbook mounted in frame (2016) ink on paper. 54cm by 72cm

How my research into the *Enquiry* led me to conclude that there are significant limitations in his aesthetic theory

The dialogue which the *Enquiry*'s multifaceted nature has encouraged also led me to deliberately break and diverge from Burke's less convincing aesthetic theories. This process of visual dissent was entirely led by practice-based research. During the drawing and painting process I have demonstrated that an exact theory of the passions can never be fully realised, either by artists or by philosophers, because passion is implicitly informed by obscurity. Despite this fundamental flaw in Burke's aesthetic argument, some useful contributions to knowledge have been achieved because I have discovered the usefulness of partial truths and partial understanding to perception and art production.

From 2016 onwards, in images such as *Invasion* (fig 72) I began questioning Burke's rather restrictive opinions on how colour informs the passions. Although I would agree that colours can be divided into two distinct groups those which are light and cheerful and those which are dark and gloomy, I have concluded that there is no implicit reason why any colour is unfit to produce sublime images. My paintings *Death is coming* (fig 102) and *Variants of the sublime and beautiful* (fig 109) mark a final abandonment of my adherence to Burkean colour theory. These paintings even seem to suggest that

bright and cheerful colours can amplify the horror and sense of menace that a painting may project. I would conclude that this effect is a visual extension of Burke's own argument that compounded abstract words are at their most impactful when they are created from the joining together of unexpected elements such as Milton's 'universe of death' (Burke, 1757-59:159).

As time has progressed my use of line has also undermined Burke's very simplistic assertions that beautiful forms are created from gently undulating lines whilst strength and greatness can be expressed using strong deviations or angular lines (Burke, 1757-59:105,113,140). Although this argument may also be partially true, I have demonstrated repeatedly, in this practice-based project, that gently undulating lines can be extremely powerful as they lead the viewer's eye and imply movement, direction and energy. In artworks such as *Lost III* (2019) (fig 74) or *Highland Hellscape II* (fig 101) gently undulating lines speak of barely contained menace rather than beauty.

The Burkean sublime considered as an aesthetic form of empowerment

The multiple facets of Burkean aesthetic speculation have their roots in the eighteenth-century but the main themes Burke explores are concepts which continue to have strong relationships to twenty-first century perception. I have argued, using the example of my material research, that the oppositional nature of the sublime and the beautiful, their gendering and relationships to pain and pleasure, the delight produced by the idea of safe presentations of terror, the relationship to astonishment of horror, and how labour evokes a classed access to sublime feelings, are all concepts which are useful to contemporary British art practice. This does not mean that these concepts are either equally useful, or universally helpful in an instructional sense to contemporary practice. What it does mean is that the main themes of the *Enquiry* can be either accepted or rejected by artists and thereby make a positive critical contribution to artistic practice. In a contemporary British context this means that Burke's aesthetic ideas can act as a form of aesthetic empowerment, for artists and those interested in aesthetics, with roots in the eighteenth century.

The ending of this research project does not mark the end of my interest in Burke's aesthetic speculations. Rodolphe Gasche, in *And the Beautiful? Revisiting Burke's "Double Aesthetics"* (2012) is a text which still strikes me as offering my art practice, new and visually interesting reinterpretations of the relationship between the beautiful and the sublime. Gasche's argument that 'that the sublime and the beautiful are intrinsically linked, (Gasche, 2012:26) and Burke's conception of the evocative nature of compounded abstract words (Burke, 1757-9:150) have already inspired me to begin

work on a new digital drawing which I will attempt to turn into an oil painting. The theme of a divided self and its relationship to landscape and insight is something I have considered repeatedly when considering the attractiveness of Burke's aesthetic theory to my practice. I would argue that in the *Enquiry* Burke achieves a balance between the impulses of the body, the mind and the emotions to understanding of the perception of the sublime. This holistic approach to perception mirrors closely how I think about creating paintings or drawings of landscapes and internal spaces. *Hybrid* (2021) is my latest drawing and it combines pale and muted colours with black and dark blue colours, it blends soft undulating lines with more jagged forms, and outer impressions of landscape with the inner fear of unseen viral infection. This artwork aims to manifest a double aesthetic which I will eventually turn into a largescale painting.



Fig 176. Paul Vousden *Hybrid* (unfinished) (2021) digital drawing. Indeterminate dimensions

Throughout this research project I have been inspired by Burke's attitude to research and have concluded I share his risk averse nature, interest in aesthetic theory and love of categorisation. My thesis ends with a statement by Burke which encapsulates exactly how I feel about my enquiry into perception. Burke states in *THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION* that:

'If an enquiry thus carefully conducted, should fail at last of discovering the truth, it may answer an end perhaps as useful, in discovering to us, the weakness of our own understanding. If it does not make us knowing, it may make us modest. If it does not preserve us from error, it may at least from the spirit of error, and may make us cautious of pronouncing with positiveness or with haste, when so much labour may end in so much uncertainty' (Burke, 1757-9:4).

Bibliography

Araki, Hirohiko. (2015) *Manga in Theory and Practice: the Craft of Creating Manga*. San Francisco, VIZ Media , LLC.

Arasse, Daniel. (2001) *Anselm Kiefer*. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd

Ascott, Roy. (1990) *Is There Love in the Telematic Embrace?* Available from: <http://www.academia.edu/740563/Is-there-love-in-the-telematic-embrace.html> [Accessed 17 Feb 2022]

Ashfield, Andrew and de Bolla, Peter (eds) (1996) *The Sublime: A Reader in Eighteenth Century Aesthetic Theory*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Barnes, William and Lamort, Lucy and Robertson, Paul and Powell, Neil (2019) *Gette Exhibition Catalogue*. Available from: <http://www.createdcontestedterritories.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Gette-Exhibition-Catalogue-002.pdf.html> [Accessed 19th April 2022]

Barrett, Estelle and Bolt, Barbara. (2007) *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London, I.B. Tauris & Co

BBC (2016) *Sympathies over death of jobseeker David Brown*. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-38237562.html> [Accessed 12th January 2018]

Beil, Ralf and Fefsel, Sonja. (2008) *Andreas Gursky Architecture*. Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag

Bell, Claudia and Lyall, John. (2002) *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity*. Westport, Praeger Publishers

Bohme, Gernot. (2008) *Architecture: a Visual Art? On the Relationship between Modern Architecture and Photography*. In: Beil, Ralf and Fefsel Sonja ed. *Andreas Gursky Architecture*. Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag

Belleguic, Maud and Rossi, Mario and Stewart, Judith. (2003) *Strangers to Ourselves*. Hastings Museum and Art Gallery

Bolt, Barbara. (2007) *The Magic is in Handling*. In: Barrett, Estelle and Bolt, Barbara ed. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London, I.B. Tauris and Co, pp. 27-34

Bradway, Todd. (2019) *Landscape Painting Now: From Pop Abstraction to New Romanticism*. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd

Brandon, David. (2012) *The East Anglian Coast*. Stroud, Amberley Publishing

Bromwich, David. (2014) *The Intellectual Life of Edmund Burke: From the Sublime and Beautiful to American Independence*. London, Harvard University Press

Bulman, May. (2018) *Food Bank use in UK reaches highest rate on record as benefits fail to cover basic costs*. *Independent*. Available from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/food-bank-uk-benefits-trussell-trust-cost-of-living-highest-rate-a8317001.html> [Accessed 21 August 2019]

Burke, Edmund. (1757-59,1990) *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

Cambridge, Ellie. (2018) *On The Rise? Who is Ben Bradley, why has he resigned and what were his vasectomy comments?* *The Sun*. Available from <http://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5359614/who-ben-bradley-resign-mansfield-mp-vasectomy-comments> [Accessed 21 August 2019]

Cannadine, David. (2020) *Westminster Abbey: a Church in History*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press

Chignell, Andrew and Halteman, Matthew. (2012) *Religion and the Sublime*. In: Costelloe, Timothy ed. *The Sublime: from Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 183-202

Chu, Ben. (2016) *Ben Chu: Why did people really vote for Brexit? If we don't face the psychological reasons, we'll never bring Britain together*. *The Independent*. Available from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-eu-referendum-why-did-people-vote-leave-immigration-nhs-97104071.html> [Accessed 30th April 2018]

Clemente, Marie-Christine. (2012) *The Sublime Dimensions of 9/11*. In: Pierce Gillian ed. *The Sublime Today : Contemporary Readings in the Aesthetic*. Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing , pp. 163-187

Coastal Management Unit (2009) *Document 7- Sheringham Coast Protection Scheme*. Available from <http://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/3090/sheringham-coast-protection-scheme.pdf.html> [Accessed 17 Dec 2015]

Combes Griffiths, Bertie Louis. (1939) *These Poor Hands*. London, Victor Gollancz Ltd

Doran, Robert. (2015) *The Theory of the Sublime from Loginus to Kant*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Cusack, Tricia. (2012) *Art and Identity at the Water's Edge*. London, Routledge

Davis, Ben. (2013) *9.5 Theses on Art and Class*. Chicago, Haymarket Books

Dissanayake, Ellen. (1990) *What is Art For?* London, University of Washington Press

Eagleton, Terry. (1990) *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing

Ellard, Colin. (2016) *Look Up: The SURPRISING Joy of Raising Your Gaze*. Available from: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mind-wandering/201607/look-the-surprising-joy-raising-your-gaze.html> [Accessed 5 June 2020]

Ehrman, Bart. (2009) *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question – Why We Suffer*. New York, Harper Collins Publishers

Embury–Dennis, Tom. (2020) Tom Embury-Dennis: *Coronavirus: A timeline of how Britain went from 'low risk' to an unprecedented national shutdown*. *The Independent*. Available from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-uk-timeline-deaths-cases-covid-19> [Accessed 25th June 2020]

Emlyn Jones, Timothy. (2014) *The PhD in Studio Art Revisited*. In: Elkins James ed. *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*, 2nd ed. New Academia Publishing, pp 97-127

Escobar, Sandra. (2015) *The Experience of the Negative Sublime: a Terror Heuristic of the Anthropic Action Effects on the Environment*. In *Facing Our Darkness: Manifestations of Fear, Horror and Terror*, Laura Colmenero-Chilberg and Ferenc Mújdricza (ed.). Oxford, Inter-disciplinarypress, pp. 173-182

Exner, Eike. (2022) *Comics and the Origins of Manga: A Revisionist History*. London, Rutgers University Press.

Feldman, Edmund Burke. (1973) *Varieties of Visual Experience: Art as Image and Idea*. New York, Prentice-Hall Inc, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Harry N. Abrams Inc

Felluga, Dino. (2015) *Modules on Lacan: On the Structure of the Psyche*. Available from: <http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/psychoanalysis/lacanstructure.html> [Accessed 23rd August 2019]

Ferguson, Francesca. (2008) *Andreas Gursky and the Urban Age*. In: Beil, Ralf and Fefsel Sonja ed. *Andreas Gursky Architecture*. Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz Verlag

Freeman, Barbara Claire. (1995) *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction*. London, University of California Press

Freeman, Julia. (2006) *British Art: A walk round the rusty pier*. London, Southbank Publishing

Freeze, Barbara. (2006) *Coal: A Human History*. London, Arrow Books, Penguin Random House

Furniss, Tom. (1993) *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender and Political Economy in Revolution*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Ganobcsik-Williams, Gruffedd Aled. (2001) *The Sweat of the Brain: Representations of Intellectual Labour in the Writings of Edmund Burke, William Cobbett, William Hazlitt, and Thomas Carlyle*. University of Warwick institutional repository

Gasche, Rodolphe. (2012) *And the Beautiful? Revisiting Edmund Burke's "Double Aesthetics"*. In: Costelloe, Timothy ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 24-36

Gascoigne, Laura. (2016) *When did the sublime become an extended guilt-trip* [Internet], April 2016. Available from: <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/when-did-the-sublime-become-an-extended-environmental-guilt-trip/> [Accessed 20 January 2022]

Gilbert – Rolfe, Jeremy. (1999) *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime*. New York, Allworth Press

Gray, John. (2007) *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*. London, Penguin Books

Gray, John. (2002) *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*. London, Granta Books

Gray, John. (2013) *The Silence of Animals: On Progress and Other Modern Myths*. London, Penguin Books

Greer, Germaine and Royoux, Jean-Christophe and Warner, Marina. (2006) *Tacita Dean*. London, Phaidon Press Ltd

Heath, Malcolm. (2012) *Longinus and the Ancient Sublime*. In: Costelloe, Timothy ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 11-23

Heiser, Jorg. (2007) *A Romantic Measure*. In: Kintisch, Christine and Seifermann, Ellen ed. *Romantic Conceptualism*, Kunsthalle Nurnberg, Kerber, pp. 135-149

Hobson, Paul. (2009) *Hacking into the present: the Apocalyptic imaginings of Gordon Cheung*. In: *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Walsall, Cornerhouse Publications

Hoffmann, Roald and Boyd Whyte, Iain. (2011) *Beyond the Finite: The Sublime in Art and Science*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

Hope Nicholson, Marjorie. (1959) *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: the Development of the Aesthetic of the Infinite*. New York, Cornell University Press

Hollien, Max and Weinhart, Martina. (2005) *Ideal Worlds: New Romanticism in Contemporary Art*. Hatje Cantz

Inman, Phillip (2014) *Britain's richest 1% own as much as poorest 55% of population*. The Guardian. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/15/britains-richest-1-percent-own-same-as-bottom-55-population> [Accessed 12th January 2018]

Johnson, Ian, Walker, Marc (2016) *Teenager desperately seeking work took his own life after being belittled by Jobcentre staff*. The Mirror. Available from: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/teenager-desperately-seeking-work-took-9405164.html> [Accessed 12th January 2018]

Jones Bill, Williams Chris. (2002) *Introduction*. In: *These Poor Hands*. 2nd ed. Cardiff, University of Wales Press

Kalled, Jez. (2020) *25 Famous Female Painters in Japanese Art*. Available from: <http://www.japanobjects.com/features/female-painters.html> [Accessed 29/03/2022]

Kennedy, Madeleine. (2018) *Dan Holdsworth in conversation with Madeleine Kennedy*. In: Robinson, Alistair ed. *Mapping the Limits of Space: Dan Holdsworth*. Berlin, Ganske Publishing Group, pp. 219-227

Kerr, Janette and Payne Christiana. (2014) *The Power of the Sea: Making Waves in British Art 1790 – 2014*. Bristol, Sansom & Co Ltd

Kristeva, Julia. (1989) *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*. New York, Columbia University Press

Levin, Yuval. (2014) *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine and the Birth of Right and Left*. New York, Basic Books

Llewellyn, Nigel. (2012) 'Project overview', in Llewellyn Nigel and Riding Christine (eds) *The Art of the Sublime*, Tate Research Publication. Available from: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/project-overview-r1117556> [accessed 10 March 2018]

Llewellyn, Nigel, Riding, Christine. (2013) 'British Art and the Sublime', in Llewellyn Nigel and Riding Christine (eds.), *The Art of the Sublime*, Tate Research Publication, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/christine-riding-and-nigel-llewellyn-british-art-and-the-sublime-r1109418>, accessed 19 December 2021

Lipsey, Roger. (1988) *The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art*. Boston, Shambhala Publications

Lister, Sam (2018) *Tory MP Ben Bradley apologies for suggesting unemployed should get vasectomies*. *Independent*. Available from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/conservative-vice-chairman-youth-ben-bradley-apology-unemployed-vasectomies-a8163151.html> [Accessed 20 January 2018]

Lotz, Christian. (2015) *The Art of Gerhard Richter: Hermeneutics Images Meaning*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Lytard, Jean-Francois. (2010) *The Sublime and the Avant-Garde*. In: Costelloe, Timothy ed. *The Sublime: Documents of Contemporary Art*. London, Whitechapel Gallery and Mit Press, pp. 27-41

Maleuvre, Didier. (2011) *The Horizon: a History of Our Infinite Longing*. London, University of California Press

Millbank, John. (2004) *Sublimity, The Modern Transcendent*. London, Routledge

Milne, Julie. (2011) *The Abyss that Abides*. In: Myrone, Martin ed. *John Martin Apocalypse*. London, Tate Publishing, pp. 53-9

Monk, Samuel. (1960) *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII Century England*. University of Michigan Press

Morley, Simon. (2010) *The Sublime: Documents of Contemporary Art*. Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press

Morley, Simon. (2010) *Staring into the Contemporary Abyss: the Contemporary Sublime*. Available from: <<http://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-20-autumn-2010/staring-contemporary-abyss.html>>[Accessed 23/02/2022]

Morton, Oliver. (2018) *After Utopia*. In: Robinson Alistair ed. *Mapping the Limits of Space: Dan Holdsworth*. Berlin, Ganske Publishing Group, pp. 229-233

Mosco, Vincent. (2005) *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press

Naifeh, Steven, White Smith, Gregory. (2011) *Van Gogh: the Life*. London, Profile Books Ltd

Pafilis, Vassilis. (2010) *Drawing Worlds: Reflections on Space, Place and Placelessness*. University of East London Research Repository

Pajackowska, Claire and White, Luke. (2009) *The Sublime Now*. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Payne, Christiana. (2012) *Our English Coasts: Defence and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. In: Cusack, Tricia ed. *Art and Identity at the Water's Edge*. London, Routledge, pp,21-36

Payne, Christiana. (2014) *From Sublimity to Modernism: British Artists and the Sea 1790-1950*. In: Kerr, Janette and Payne, Christiana ed. *The Power of the Sea: Making Waves in British Art 1790-2014*. Bristol, Sansom and Co, pp. 15-25

Phillips, Adam. (1990) *Introduction*. In: Burke Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 9-23

Price, Matt. (2018) *The Anomie Review of: Contemporary British Painting*. London, Anomie Publishing

Pye, Michael. (2014) *The Edge of the World: How the North Sea Made Us Who We Are*. London, Viking, Penguin Random House

Orwell, George. (1937) *The Road to Wigan Pier*. London, Victor Gollancz

Ramljak, Suzanne. (2018) *Natural Wonders: The Sublime in Contemporary Art: Thirteen Artists Explore Nature's Limits*. New York, Rizzoli Electa

Riding, Christine. (2013) *Shipwreck, Self-preservation and the Sublime*, in Llewellyn Nigel and Riding Christine (eds.), *The Art of the Sublime*, Tate Research Publication, January 2013, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/christine-riding-shipwreck-self-preservation-and-the-sublime-r1133015>, accessed 15 April 2020. [Html](#)

Riding, Christine. (2013) *Introduction*. In: Johns, Richard, Riding, Christine ed. *Turner and the Sea*. London, Thames and Hudson, pp. 10-23

Riekeles, Stefan. (2020) *Anime Architecture: Imagined Worlds and Endless Megacities*. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd

Robinson, Alistair. (2018) *Mapping the Limits of Space: Dan Holdsworth*. Berlin, Ganske Publishing Group

Robson, David. (2016) *How important is social class in Britain today?* BBC. Available from: <http://www.bbc.com/future/article/20160406-how-much-does-social-class-matter-in-britain-today> [Accessed 9th January 2018]

Rose, Gillian. (2001) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London, SAGE Publications Ltd

Rosenblum, Robert. (2010) *The Abstract Sublime*. In: Morley, Simon ed. *The Sublime: Documents of Contemporary Art*. London, Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press, pp. 108-112

Rouse, Michael. (2010) *Cromer and Sheringham Through Time*. Chalford, Amberley Publishing

Routledge, Fiona (2021) *Janette Kerr PhD HRSA PPRWA Summer Prints and Drawings 17th July to 12th September 2021*. Available from: <http://www.sladersyard.co.uk/janette-kerr-phd-hrsa-pprwa/> [Accessed 20th December 2021]

Sabin, Lamiat (2019) *Britain's most influential people over five times more likely to be privately educated, study finds*. *Morning Star*. Available from <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/h-splash-embargoed-social-mobility-report> [Accessed 21 August 2019]

Sarafianos, Aris (2008) *Stubbs, Walpole and Burke: Convulsive Imitation and 'Truth Extorted'*. Available from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime.html> [Accessed 3 Oct 2018]

Sellgren, Katherine. (2017) *Social mobility: class pay gap found in UK professions*. Available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-38744122.html> [Accessed 26th January 2017]

Schama, Simon. (1995) *Landscape and Memory*. London, Harper Collins Publishers

Schneider, Pierre. (2002) *Flat Forms, Deep Thoughts: Newman on Gericault* in: Ho Melissa ed. *Reconsidering Barnett Newman: A Symposium at the Philadelphia Museum of Art*. London, Yale University Press, pp. 137

Shaw, Philip. (2006) *The Sublime: the New Critical Idiom*. Abingdon, Routledge

Starkey, David. (2004) *The Monarchy of England: Volume 1: The Beginnings*. London Random House Chatto and Windus

Stewart, Judith. (2018) [Conversation about Mario Rossi on 9th April 2018]

Thomas, Sarah. (2014) *The Artist Travels: Augustus Earl at Sea*. In: Cusack, Tricia ed. *Framing the Ocean, 1700 to the Present: Envisaging the Sea as Social Space*. London, Routledge, pp.71-83

Trevino, Aimee. (2017) *Child Labour in the Coal Mines of England*. STMU History Media [Internet], April 2017. Available from: <http://www.stmuhistorymedia.org/child-labor-in-the-coal-mines.html> [Accessed 17th March 2019]

Trowles, Tony. (2008) *Treasures of Westminster Abbey*. London, Scala Arts and Heritage Publishers Ltd

WalkingStick, Kay (2021) *Artist Statement*. Available from: http://www.kaywalkingstick.com/statement/index_new.html [Accessed 19 Dec 2021]

Wade, Stephen. (2017) *Lost to the Sea: Britain's Vanished Coastal Communities*. Barnsley, Pen and Sword Books Ltd

Warrell, Ian. (2014) *Turner's Sketchbooks*. London, Tate Publishing

Weinhart, Martina. (2005) *The World Must Be Made Romantic: On the Rediscovery of an Attitude*. In: Holbein, Max and Weinhart, Martina ed. *Ideal Worlds*. Frankfurt, Schirn Kunsthalle, pp. 34-44

Wilton, Andrew. (1980) *Turner and the Sublime*. London, British Museum Publications LTD

Wilson, Colin. (1956) *The Outsider*. London, Victor Gollancz Limited

White, Luke. (2009) *Damien Hirst and the Legacy of the Sublime in Contemporary Art and Culture*. Middlesex University Research Repository

Wyporska, Wanda. (2013) *The Scale of Economic Inequality in the UK*. Available from: <http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/what-do-people-think.html> [Accessed 12 January 2018]

Zizek, Slavoj. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London, Verso