

Tiina  
Nevanperä

IN the  
FLESH of  
SENSIBLE

*Unravelling  
Incompleteness  
with Art*



'The Sirens: it seems they did indeed sing, but in an unfulfilling way, one that only gave a sign of where the real sources and real happiness of song opened. Still, by means of their imperfect songs that were only a song still to come, they did lead the sailor toward that space where singing might truly begin. They did not deceive him, in fact: they actually led him to his goal. But what happened once the place was reached? What was this place? One were there was nothing left but to disappear, because music, in this region of source and origin, had itself disappeared more completely than in any other place in the world: sea where, ears blocked, the living sank, and where the Sirens, as proof of their good will, had also, one day, to disappear.'

MAURICE BLANCHOT: 'Encountering the Imaginary' in *The Book to Come*, translated by C. Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

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# Abstract

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in studying creativity, and the wealth of studies and guidebooks on this notion indicate its importance in people's everyday and professional life. However, less attention has been paid to the subject matters of both sensibility and incompleteness, their ontological nature, their interrelatedness and their impact on creativity. Thus the mechanism of experiencing incompleteness and, what is more, the dynamics of sensibility, has remained unclear. The present research aims at filling this lacuna.

Sensibility is the key faculty in examining and depicting on creativity. The aim of this dissertation is twofold: first, to examine and specify how the experience of incompleteness in creating manifests itself and how it amounts to creativity; and, second, to define the agency of sensibility as identifying the presence of incompleteness and to explore how sensibility is taken into account in creative making as a corporeal readiness, attentiveness, a postural attitude and anticipation. The animated body of the maker as well as action are in focus throughout this research; attention is also paid to the dynamic interaction between experience, matter and movement in all expression and making. The dichotomies between the subject and the object, between the body and the mind, have been mused on, questioned and ruminated upon.

The main method adopted in this dissertation is artistic research. In addition, the phenomenology of the body and research of experience are used to provide a critical juxtaposition. This dissertation introduces and identifies artistic research as a valid method and emphasizes experience-based standpoints as a research strategy. Artistic research is understood as a complex of making and researching that inexorably affect each other. The research was conducted and data collected during the making of artworks for three exhibitions between 2011–2015. The author's diaries from that period are used as research material.

The results of this study show that even though the experience of incompleteness withdraws from our rational grasp for control, understanding, and certainty, it is lived through bodily experience and directed by the faculty of sensibility. Incompleteness refers to carnal knowledge that the practitioners can recognize to be their own and that is based on their genuine experience gained by sensibility. The organic and relational nature of incompleteness as a useful and valuable phenomenon keeps the creative work in flux.

This dissertation contributes to a better understanding of both incompleteness and sensibility, as well as of their roles in creating. This dissertation opens a vast and largely unresearched field of sensibility. In order to understand creativity, the present study argues that incompleteness needs to be detached from the contexts of understanding and reasoning. Instead, the outcome of this research emphasizes the need for both considering incompleteness from the viewpoint of sensibility and as a positive creativity-enhancing factor.

KEYWORDS *artistic research, incompleteness, sensibility, affect, experience, body, emotion, matter, appearing*



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## INTRODUCTION

# Ghostly Paintings – Unravelling My Research, Its Objectives and Relevance

On her loom in her house she set up a great web and began weaving a large and delicate piece of work. She said to us: ‘My lords, my Suitors, now that noble Odysseus is dead, restrain your ardour, do not urge on this marriage till I have done this work, so that the threads I have spun may not be altogether wasted. It is a shroud for Lord Laertes. When he succumbs to the dread hand of remorseless Death that stretches all men at last, I must not risk the scandal there would be among my countrywomen here if one who had amassed such wealth were laid to rest without a shroud.’ That’s what she said; and we magnanimously consented. So by day she used to weave at the great web, but every night had torches set beside it and undid the work. For three years she took us in by this trick. A fourth began, and the seasons were slipping by, when one of her women who knew all about it gave her mistress away. We caught her unravelling her beautiful work, and she was forced reluctantly to complete it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey* [750–650 BCE], trans. by E. V. Rieu, revised trans. by D. C. H. Rieu (London: Penguin Books, 2003), pp. 17–18 (2.93–111).

*Is nature not complete?*, 10 June 2013

And suddenly I experience, at precisely the same moment, a wondrous fulfilment and a painful division. Yet one revelation stands out above all the rest: I have become boundless, unpredictable to myself, multiple in possibilities through this alien,

fresh but identical power, which approaches me as if I were approaching myself from outside.<sup>2</sup>

2 Witold Gombrowicz, *Diary*, trans. by L. Vallee (Pennsylvania: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 24.

O, I am the person who made those paintings. Another way of saying this is that perhaps the maker, who happens to be me, was not in a presumed place but out of joint while making the works; the forms and narratives presented in the works are thus, neither familiar nor recognizable but strange, unsophisticated and clumsy. I stand this way with all the pride of my simplicity and originality. Can one know one's nothingness and greatness? As such, creating is an opening of a meaning, of possible future relations and of communication, the contents of which do not solely exist from an earlier time. It is a beginning that will never be completed and will be intoxicated by violent impatience.

In this study, I will examine creative making<sup>3</sup> drawing from my experience of incompleteness. I thus want to emphasize that incompleteness is one of the key features of all human endeavours that include creativity: incompleteness has to be there if any act of creating is to take place. However, the experience of incompleteness coincides with sensibility through which people live their lives. I propose that the experience of incompleteness is a way of discovering the world in which we live and which we share as human beings and that sensibility is the carnal layer through which being takes place. Thus, realizing and knowing this is not a purely cognitive act but engages one as a bodily being. The experience of incompleteness with which I am engaged influences both my making and my lifeworld<sup>4</sup>. This means that making becomes a very intricate situation. Complexity and openness are elemental in all making. As Juha Varto points out:

3 In this study, I use the verbs *to make* and *to create* as well as the nouns *making*, *creating* and *creative making* interchangeably.

There are also a number of things whose mere dimensions prevent us from understanding them, but which nevertheless disturb us constantly or part time, which also makes them part of our lifeworld.<sup>5</sup>

4 I use the word *lifeworld* in this study to designate what I experience, prior to any reflection, categorization or conceptualization.

5 Juha Varto, *Basics of Artistic Research, Ontological, Epistemological and Historical Justifications* (Helsinki: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2009), p. 150–151.

Incompleteness, or animal nakedness, or the wound, according to Georges Bataille, before anything else opens a passage through which we communicate:

The illusion of completeness which I'm (humanly) aware of in the body of a woman with her clothes on: as soon as she's even partly undressed, her animal nature becomes visible and (while I'm watching) hands me over to my own incompleteness ... The more perfect, the more isolated or confined to ourselves we are. But the wound of incompleteness opens me up. Through what could be called incompleteness or animal nakedness or the wound, the different separate beings communicate, acquiring life by losing it in communication with each other.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Georges Bataille, *Guilty*, trans. by B. Boone (Venice: The Lapis Press, 1986), p. 27.

Therefore, this passage of incompleteness for which we are destined, as if it were a wound or a tear, calls for communication and does not automatically necessitate completion although it might well desire it. What kind of communion or communication is this? Perhaps communication without form, without fixed meaning and without predefined structure – communication that stumbles and staggers, mumbles and mutters? Communication that calls for the other to resurrect my being and makings: to make them complete one single time at least. This communication and movement becomes the expression of my desire.

Thus, this study focuses, first, on the tension that incompleteness creates between the maker of an artwork and the work, between both the gathering of the work and its dispersion, its becoming a fragment of itself. Second, it focuses on how my anxiety and desire to experience completion, a masterpiece, at least once in a lifetime, manifest themselves in this incompleteness. My focus does not exclude the space of sharing and of communication, since my making is after all felt togetherness and a series of dialogues between me and the work, and sometimes with the audience. Making stages the event of the appearing of things that I race about: something new, something hitherto unknown and unseen that I want to share with myself and others.

I have always been accused of being a clumsy painter, of either lacking or having too much of something. What kind of experience

and communication does clumsiness create when one is put in this awkward situation where the question of incompleteness has arisen when both I and others have contested and denied my makings? Must I not be original and express it? I have been that: take a glance at the entire expanse of my loneliness! Various voices always coexist, and yet people are passionate for their own voice.

Definitely, I was not the only person distracted by my work. I recall well how my fellow artists did not want to place their works next to mine in some exhibitions because they found my work so evocative and too loud or how a close relative of mine caused a scene and declared in high voice that she did not understand my work. Of course I felt very bad and puzzled by these reactions. I did not have an idea why my work seemed so raw and imperfect both to myself and to other people. After all, I have the training for a professional artist but it seemed that I could not set down the path to proceed with my work in a satisfactory way. Of course, these observations suggested that there are elements within creating that are not mastered by the maker and that make the viewers puzzled as well. Yet I have occasionally experienced the sensation of a fleeting and fading moment of pleasure, completion and satisfaction, even bliss, as the fragment from my diary below shows.

*I have been painting a lot today. In the beginning, painting felt somewhat difficult and way too demanding, but after a while, and with me being persistent, it started to flow. At the moment the painting on which I have been working seems completed, it is fresh and it pleases me. I also started to paint another canvas but it still seems rather shadowy. Besides, I primed one canvas. I am very pleased with what I have accomplished. 19 June 2012*

What I will try to discern in this research is whether incompleteness can operate as an opening for new knowledge and outlook of the world instead of a momentary derailing incident of the what-already-is. I hold that making and communicating experiences without pre-structured codes and symbols can first irritate and frustrate, exactly as it happens with me while I am painting, but then, as I have witnessed throughout this research, the annoyance can well enrich the knowledge of the what-already-is and turn into new knowledge of the why-not.

7 I use the words *to make* and *making* in a more actual and active sense than *practice*. Practice refers to my whole artistic practice and does not include solely making but also arranging exhibitions, negotiating and so on; it refers to all the things connected with my vocation as a painter. Practice refers to my pursuing a career in art.

8 Tarja Pitkänen-Walter, *Liian haurasta kuvaksi – maalauksen aistisuudesta* (Helsinki: Like, Kuvataideakatemia, 2006).

9 Stig Baumgartner, *Virhe Abstraktissa Maalauksessa. Tekijän Paikka Maalauksen Rakenteessa* (Vaasa: Taideyliopiston Kuvataideakatemia, 2015).

10 Juha Perttula, *The Experienced Life-Fabrics of Young Men* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 1998) and Juha Perttula, 'Kokemus ja kokemuksen tutkimus: fenomenologisen erityistieteen tietenteoria', in *Kokemuksen tutkimus, Merkitys tulkinta ymmärtäminen*, ed. by Juha Perttula & T. Latomaa (Rovaniemi: Lapin yliopistokustannus, 2008).

11 Varto, *Basics of Artistic Research*, p. 150.

The incompleteness that is present in my works and that bothers me throughout the process of making a painting and in my attempts to finish a work that I find at one moment complete and the next, incomplete, is a paradox upon which I will try to shed light. In fact, the work marks its necessary incompleteness even as it lays claim to completeness. What I also find a paradox is how a meaning is deployed as something finite when an accomplished task or thing, such as an artwork, is originally incomplete.

In this dissertation, I will argue that the experience of incompleteness within creative making does not become determined through understanding but is instead, a corporeal experience in which one's sensibility plays a decisive role. Moreover, the objective of this study is threefold: first, to specify how the experience of incompleteness in making merges with the felt urge to accomplish something that satisfies oneself and how these experiences feed off each other; second, to clarify and make understandable how the experience incompleteness in practice<sup>7</sup> amounts to creativity, how it transforms into a movement and animation, and, third, to explore how the faculty of sensibility is taken into account in creative work as a corporeal readiness, attentiveness, as a postural attitude and an anticipation as a point at which thought grovels.

This research approaches incompleteness and examines sensibility from the perspective of an artist and a maker and can, therefore, be identified as an artistic research. Hence this dissertation contributes to the fields of artistic research, e.g. Pitkänen-Walter<sup>8</sup> and Baumgartner<sup>9</sup> and research of experience, e.g. Perttula<sup>10</sup>. That being so I will argue that artistic research is a valid method of researching an experience.

Making art is what motivated this research: the phenomenon of experiencing incompleteness became real and concrete to me within making. In other words my entrapment within desire became a disguised collusion. Thus artistic research, or research with art inside a creative space, became a meaningful way to carry out this research. Artistic research means that I throw myself into the process of research within and besides artistic making and that research and making do not exclude each other but, on the contrary, make the research more credible. Practice is something of which we must never lose sight in any research, as Juha Varto reminds<sup>11</sup>. The science of phenomena is distinct from that of the nature of being, from that of an immediate experience while making that is about sensibility and that materializes beyond subject and object.

I thus subscribe to that first without understanding sensibility we do not have a proper view of what kind of role it plays in the process of creativity, experiencing incompleteness and constructing reality. Second that an artistic and experience-based research method can have transdisciplinary potential for both philosophy and the sciences, and it provides a prolific perspective to research creativity and any phenomenon that is present in practice.

*I feel good and trustful, although the painting with which I am working at the moment does not remind me at all of the ideas and thoughts that I had when I started. It has changed into something of its own; it has wrapped its fingers around me, and that is why my feelings are somewhat perplexed. How to continue, how to set myself and my intuitive feelings free and then let the forces of the painting guide me all the way through? I painted all night; I painted on canvas, and I painted on my mind. What is the difference between these two? 18 July 2012*

#### CONTEXT OF THIS RESEARCH: THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE – MAKING THE INCOMPLETE MINE

Research – poetry, thought – relates to the unknown as unknown. This relation discloses the unknown, but by an uncovering that leaves it under cover; through this relation there is ‘presence’ of the unknown; in this ‘presence’ the unknown is rendered present, but always as unknown. This relation must leave intact – untouched – what it conveys and not unveil what it discloses. This relation will not consist in an unveiling. The unknown will not be revealed, but indicated.<sup>12</sup>

‘Young man,’ Porbus said, seeing Poussin stare open-mouthed at a picture, ‘Don’t look at the canvas too long, it will drive you to despair’<sup>13</sup>

12 Maurice Blanchot, ‘The Infinite Conversation’, *Theory and History of Literature*, Volume 82, trans. by Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 300.

13 Honoré de Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, trans. by R. Howard (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), p. 20.



I am basically fine, just fine; however, what I experience before me is not fine, so in the end I am not fine. I have an urge; I have to work with these paintings even further; I have to exceed myself. They all need something, some sweetness in them, a coat of sugar in some places, more volume, perhaps even more noise, and I want to be heard by them. I have to continue, let go of fear. Little by little the paintings reach a stage where they have the air of being finished. Paintings have their own time to develop, and the time of development depends on many things; I think I am not able to name them all – I do not know even if I know any of them. When the painter has finished a painting, it starts to live its own life, its own time. It is sort of out of time and I myself am back in time, unless I have started a new work. An unfinished painting means to me an endless confusing complexity, yet a promise, a promise for the future. 27 July 2012

Perhaps it is true: my paintings are even more colourful than I am, but do they hold a promise for the future? For sure, they do. Otherwise I would not bother. No way! Yet I wonder: is it this experience of incompleteness that keeps me going? Incompleteness seems to be an integral part of my painterly life, a void that needs to be filled. As I often experience it, it is superior to all creating and thinking. However, it is usually disregarded as being an obstacle, a paralyzing necessary evil having the coils of Medusa's snakes that one wants to cut off in no time. Thus the potential of incompleteness is lost and its driving force ignored. This kind of, even a paralyzing, stance is a problem to be examined closer by this research in order to illuminate what has been lost in communicating incompleteness.

First of all, what does it mean to say that something is incomplete? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the adjective *incomplete* refers, first, to something that does not have all the necessary or appropriate parts and, second, to something that is neither full nor finished. It has a Latin origin, stemming from the word *incompletus* that refers to something that is neither filled nor finished.<sup>14</sup> As I see it, both these meanings are intertwined with each other: something that does not have all its necessary or appropriate parts is neither filled nor finished. Nevertheless, I am back to the dubiousness of incompleteness: where and how does it appear and does it appear only in one's mind?

14 Oxford Dictionaries  
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/incomplete> [accessed 19 February 2016].

The initial reason why I became a researcher of my own creative making was that my own artwork hit me as being strange. I found that my works were raw, that they had naïveté, clumsiness and a sort of primitiveness in them that I was able to neither govern nor tame. I was both astonished and disappointed, as if the work had its own logic of which I was not the master. This discovery troubled me. The sense of inadequacy and shame, as well as the themes revolving around my works, skulls, haunted houses and skeletons, presented a demand to begin a research.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the agony of at least once finishing a masterpiece became both mental and physical. At this point, my life as a researcher-practitioner became as important as the making of the finished artworks. However, this is not all: I have always enjoyed painting; besides troubling, it excites me. I have a passion for being before something new and unexpected: in a sense there is an air of an explorer breathing within me. It seems that my desire and not its satisfaction, is that by which I become myself.

Strangeness, which in my case means rawness, imperfection, clumsiness and peculiar motifs, creates openness, a void, which is not the same as emptiness, but an unknown territory, as if I had stepped down a new route but only a chaotic one. I am being a stranger in a strange land, yet I am familiar with the materials that I use and with the discourse around painting and I do have some skill. I find myself thinking that the strangeness of my works stems from the alluring and bewitching powers of my vivid imagination and from the ludicrous fantasies that I must have had while being immersed in making. Perhaps this is the case. The whole troubling matter seemed to indicate that incompleteness resisted my desire for completeness and what I appeared to do was fight against it, constantly believing that ahead lies a future that indicates fulfilment. However, perhaps, non-satisfaction is the key, in the same way as the beauty of the ruins is the clue.

The writer who experiences this void believes only that the work is unfinished, and he thinks that a little more effort, along with some propitious moments, will permit him and him alone to finish it. So he goes back to work. But what he wants to finish by himself remains interminable; it involves him in an illusory task.<sup>16</sup>

15 Already the Greek philosopher Aristotle pondered on the question of how art evokes emotion and wrote his prominent book *Poetics* circa 335 B.C.E.

16 Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. By A. Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 23.

In the course of this research I have learned that the phenomenon and experience of incompleteness is closely connected to the question that was for me the initial reason for this research: how can I paint something that is of me but, at the same time, not of me, something unrecognizable and strange? This is to say that the issues of the strange and uncanny, another, fictitious and different are all of central interest to this study. I need to determine what is lost in communication when I am exposed to the experience of incompleteness and shame, and thus what is the unreality of the sugar-coating of reality furnished with aesthetic flair about and what is beneath it? For example, according to Simon O'Sullivan, fictioning thrusts itself into the world as-it-is, and in so doing inevitably both performs its own alienation and changes our reality<sup>17</sup>. Regardless, I am part of this kind of world of fictioning: as if in this ball of reality there were a bunch of uninvited guests whose intention is to ruin the dance or to spoil the game of creating, and yet I thrust myself on the dance floor. The untimeliness of the artwork and the invasion of fiction, difference, strangeness and another, in other words, the openness of the work and the materials together in addition to my sensibility, initiate a situation under unpredictable weather where I am being out of joint and the work gradually becomes a palimpsest of what has been, is and might be.

17 Simon O'Sullivan, 'Art Practice as Fictioning (or, myth-science)', *Diakron*, <http://www.diakron.dk/issues/effects/art-practice-as-fictioning-or-myth-science> [accessed 21 November 2016].

And this is how it is with everything. If our sensibility has not yet launched itself with enough force then it is because we are slaves of an inherited language, but it is forcing its way to the surface through the cracks of form with increasing strength.<sup>18</sup>

18 Gombrowicz, pp. 25–26.

So be it. The illusory task of creating leads to the reality of substantiation. What is it we substantiate? The confusion in my head regarding perfection is like an unhealthy romance or a mad obsession, although absolutely a necessary one. In a sense, it is self-evident that there is no such thing as a perfect work, for it would mean art and creativity annulling its own concept. Nonetheless, the unknown masterpiece is what I am after as a painter and always will be and, for that matter, what the viewers are hungry for. Yet it is obvious that completion and perfection are merely castles built in the air. Am I then emerging from a fog I have created myself? That said, to complete a perfect work of art holds itself pending and, by the same token, continues to enliven me, and, I believe, you too. Making art is a tech-

nique<sup>19</sup> of incompleteness. Trial and error always accompany it on the parallel tracks of potentiality and some lucky strikes.

Paradoxically, what is the preserved form of our lives lives on in artworks that are local, man-made and singular, as if an artwork were what people feel to be the most complete expression of their own nature, time, situation and place. As such, the actual life is preserved in an imaginative form, always including the presence of the absence of completion. The locality and singularity of incompleteness and its relation to something finite, on the one hand, and to something complete and desirable, on the other, become a complexity that is always particular, separate, isolated and intensified – and present. Generalities are then drawn from these particulars, from one's desire to distinguish oneself from the others.

Making is, in fact, an inquiry into the living present. Creativity manifests itself through novelty that necessitates incompleteness, as if they were the two sides of a same thing. Can anything be built on something complete, total and closed? What then is novelty, and how is it related to completion? Besides, is the novelty experienced in relation to artworks thus fake, merely an imaginative series of stratagems leaning solely on fictional elements? What then is the role of imagination? Where do reality and truth lurk? Can reality in actuality be taken as a true gift of otherness, alienation, peculiarity and inexplicability, perhaps as something and even more than fantasy?

This means that my research problem is both empirical and theoretical: it calls for research of experience. In actuality this means research that focuses on experiences that take place within conscious practice and making. What kinds of qualities of experience are of importance then? The most consequential experiential qualities that have arisen during this research are those of sensibility, body, emotion, matter, fantasy, other and suddenness. The aim of this research is to study how these qualities exist and create new as well as re-use and reformulate existing meanings of incompleteness and completeness. Hence, the outcome of this research is expected to yield a better understanding of the function of sensibility and the contribution of incompleteness in creative making.

As a precursor of the present study, the thesis of Tarja Pitkänen-Walter, *Liian haurasta kuvaksi – maalauksen aistisuudesta (Too Fragile to Turn into Representation – on the Sensuous Materiality of Painting)*, is a particularly relevant and impressive artistic research that has paved the way for my research from the beginning and that I have found

19 Using the word *technique*, I refer to the Greek word *technē* as the ontological foundation of art, for technique accounts for the production of the ground for art that does not produce itself but rather according to Jean-Luc Nancy: 'deals with being-in-the-world in its very springing forth'. Jean-Luc Nancy elaborates on the word in his work *The Muses*, trans. by P. Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 18, pp. 24–39.

very useful. Pitkänen-Walter approaches painting from a multi-sensory perspective: ‘... as a mode of understanding based on amodal perception’.<sup>20</sup> The notions Pitkänen-Walter gives on the development of oneself, the boundaries between painting and the maker’s body, as well as matter have been very illuminative. The exhibition of her artworks in the Studio K in the museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in 2003 was exceptionally enlightening and encouraging. However, my focus in this present work is on the experience of incompleteness and how it is composed through sensibility and instead of reference to psychoanalytic theory I derive for the most part from the research of experience. I realize psychoanalytic theory is an alternative theoretical perspective. Even so, in the present study, I avoid thinking that tackles unconscious and therapeutic methods instead I have chosen to take a lens that proceeds from an experience that takes place here and now at the empirical level of my conscious being.

Thus the mode in which incompleteness presents itself and is given to the maker’s consciousness necessitates that I pay close attention to appearing, to how things manifest themselves. In order to unravel incompleteness, understanding (epistemology) is just not sufficient to work with because I am dealing here with immediate sensation and experience that arise from the lifeworld (ontology) and that are bodily phenomena.

A closer analysis of my research material has revealed that completion is a temporal feeling. It is a point on the timeline where there is no past, no future but only the present. Incompleteness, however, points towards the future, to what is not – yet. The incomplete is in relation to the complete but, paradoxically, there is no definite complete that can be envisaged beforehand; instead, the complete is always veiled, as the tantalizingly lost Atlantis that has captivated dreamers in the mists of time. The complete is both something and nothing. It has no present other than suddenness that is over in the blink of an eye. The veil is torn in two but the skies never open. Here nothing counts as something.

To begin with, the most important question that arose was the following: how to carry out research that concerns a real and concrete experience within the realm of making? What kind of research method (or methods) is (are) required to identify the research problem and the questions linked to it and how then to proceed with the research in order to acquire reliable knowledge of the phenomenon in question?

## AIMS, METHODS AND STRUCTURE OF THE REMAINING DISSERTATION

*I tend to forget the surrounding world when I am at my studio. The making of a painting is something complete – it absorbs me completely from the external world, no matter how incomplete the work with which I am busy seems.* 26 May 2012

There is relatively little research available on incompleteness. As precursors to this study, Georges Bataille<sup>21</sup>, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Maurice Blanchot touch upon incompleteness in their body of writing. Blanchot fondles incompleteness through his delicate exercise of negativity, the way in which writing takes place as ‘a failed attempt to articulate the ineffable’, as Leslie Hill notes<sup>22</sup>, as if the artwork, or in the case of Blanchot the writing, turned around with itself. In Blanchot’s own words: ‘The writer never knows whether the work is done. What he has finished in one book, he starts over or destroys in another.’<sup>23</sup> And yet, according to Blanchot, even though a creator can never derive the work from its essential lack of work, one has to live with the work’s demand and has to

become lost in it and yet, in order to have sustained it, has necessarily made it stop – has, in this intermittence, rendered it perceptible, has propped it by firmly reconciling it with this limit. He has mastered it by imposing measure.<sup>24</sup>

For Blanchot, as well as for the purposes of this research, the notions of measure or distance and fragmentary play an important role. According to him, a fragmented poem is one that is not incomplete but makes available another manner of completion: that which is at stake in waiting and questioning. In Blanchot’s words:

Fragments are written as unfinished separations. Their incompleteness, their insufficiency, the disappointment at work in them, is their aimless drift, the indication that, neither unifiable nor consistent, they accommodate a certain array of marks – the marks with which thought (in decline and declining itself) represents the furtive groupings that fictively open and close the absence of totality.<sup>25</sup>

21 Bataille, *Guilty*, trans. by B. Boone (Venice: The Lapis Press, 1986).

22 Leslie Hill, *Maurice Blanchot and Fragmentary Writing* (London: Continuum, 2012), p. 13.

23 Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 21.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

25 Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. by A. Smock (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 58.

The experience of incompleteness is not a mere proffering to happenstance, an empty remark of something. Instead, it is a concurrent evidence of both the incomplete and the complete taking place. The aim of this study is to unravel this relation. Making sense of incompleteness is not an empty monologue. Why is there something rather than nothing? Maurice Merleau-Ponty elaborates:

How might anything ever be presented to us definitely, since the synthesis of it is never completed, and since I can always expect to see it break apart and pass to the status of a simple illusion? And yet, there is something rather than nothing. Something is determinate, at least to a certain degree of relativity.<sup>26</sup>

26 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by D. A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 345. Later also Maurice Blanchot and Mikel Dufrenne have elaborated on the same question: why is there something rather than nothing? Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 65. Mikel Dufrenne: 'First, why there is something rather than nothing?' and 'How is it that someone utters this nothing?' Mikel Dufrenne, *In the Presence of the Sensuous*, ed. by M. S. Roberts and D. Gallagher (New York: Humanity Books, 1990), p. 53.

27 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 29.

The purpose of this dissertation is to bring together empirical, real-life, findings and then discuss them in juxtaposition with theory. The main method of answering the research question that incompleteness has posed me is artistic research. I propose that artistic research creates what can be called first-hand knowledge, because it creates a space of communication in which, first, the artist-researcher contributes to the research through his/her making so that both the maker and the making become material for that research; second, knowledge is produced via the maker's body so that the body becomes a technique for this knowledge; and, third, the materials that are used are in direct contact and relation with the maker so that they matter. Thus the formation of knowledge and concepts takes place through operations that are necessarily based on carnal knowledge and are not conceptual; in other words, I find the research space of artistic research a dynamic and organic space in a same manner a painting is a dynamic and organic space. According to Gilles Deleuze: 'A dynamic space must be defined from the point of view of an observer tied to the space, not from an external position'.<sup>27</sup>

Incompleteness manifests itself through making. My foundational question is: what can we know of incompleteness? How does it work, what is at stake and what does it mean? I understand artistic research as encompassing varied types of methods that benefit research that is carried out through practice. Artistic research, or, as I interchangeably call it here, research with art, emphasizes a reflexive approach that takes into account the centrality of the experiencing subject in a live situation. In other words, subjectivity is taken as an asset. In artistic research, the artist-researcher is the central figure in unravelling the

research material of which he/she is inevitably part into knowledge. Juha Perttula reminds that research of experience is conducted by individual researchers, who are subjects with their personal histories, understandings, experiences, feelings, tastes and opinions, and thus the method used while conducting research of experience is about a researcher's stance on the research problem and not something separate in relation to the researcher. In other words, researchers are always part of their research and are themselves part of the world, which constitutes the ontological problem at hand.<sup>28</sup> This is to say that this research, albeit artistic, is interlinked to research of experience.

There is a risk in importing methods from other disciplines, but there can be many benefits as well. As an artist-researcher I need to be both cautious and selective as to the perspectives that I bring into the interpretation of my research material of this study. Why have I then chosen to employ the phenomenology of the body or post-phenomenology, if labelling disciplines is necessary? The answer is: because the experience of incompleteness is so closely connected to my body. Phenomenological research of the body underlines the researcher's own experiences as a bodily being. Additionally, I take body-boundedness as an important ground for all human experience: it is only through the body that we have access to ourselves, and to the world. The aspiration to gain knowledge of the research object happens through the lived body of the researcher. What is more, research of experience provides me with a way of researching a phenomenon, or better the nature of being, with which I am familiar as an ordinary and living being. To my opinion, these different approaches overlap both my research problem and each other. This kind of multimethod approach can open and create new connections and amount to new knowledge that overlaps different discourses and disciplines. A multimethod perspective is a suitable starting point in a study that concerns the human experience, because it focuses in a more variegated way on the phenomenon under research.

Phenomenology is as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry, or Cezanne – through the same kind of attention and wonder, the same demand of awareness, the same will to grasp the sense of the world or of history in its nascent state. As such phenomenology merges with the effort of modern thought.<sup>29</sup>

28 Juha Perttula, 'Kokemus ja kokemuksen tutkimus: fenomenologisen erityistieteen tietenteoria', p. 157. Sarah Pink emphasizes that the subjectivity of the researcher should be seen as a central aspect for research. Sarah Pink, *Visual Ethnography, Images, Media and Representation in Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), pp. 18–19.

29 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. lxxxv.



Thus this study approaches incompleteness from the perspective of a maker. However, as a researcher I am positioned first and foremost as a maker who wishes to unravel the research problem and enhance knowledge of incompleteness and sensibility more generally. The focus is on the maker's lived experience and on the way in which hidden meanings and the essences<sup>30</sup> of a singular experience arise revealing the nature of being. After all, this study is personal and hopefully will serve to correct some of my intuitive presumptions. For this reason I find this research a caring act as well. Max van Manen portrays research as a caring activity marvelously:

In doing research we question the world's very secrets and intimacies which are constitutive of the world, and which bring the world as world into being for us and in us. Then research is a caring act: we want to know that which is most essential to being. To care is to serve and to share our being with the one we love. We desire to truly know our loved one's very nature.<sup>31</sup>

The outcome of this research is, therefore, in addition to experiencing a research, thinking about an original experience and communicating it, perchance, as van Manen puts it, an infinite poetizing project that nevertheless amounts to new knowledge.<sup>32</sup> A poetizing research offers a possible foundation and a structure to think about incompleteness in everyday life – about how incompleteness is fundamentally productive of making and of meaning. In this perspective, making as part of creating a poetizing research is extremely meaningful to me, both in building a deeper understanding of the role of incompleteness in my own creative making and in strengthening my expertise and personal self-esteem. What is more, I find that the poems that I have included in this dissertation support my thesis and the arguments developed in each chapter. However, it has neither been possible to give a detailed reading of the poems nor a description of their words, rhythm, images and metaphors. Going into greater depth and detail of interpretation is thus left to the reader.

What mechanisms are then at work when something that I experience as strange appears, and what can I do to uncover it? I must have at least some description of the making itself, and my description of it must be concrete enough for others to understand it and to get the hold of it. What I need to bear in mind is that, first, I cannot totally

30 I follow here Max van Manen's line of thought that the word essence refers to what makes a phenomenon what it is: 'The essence of a phenomenon is a universal which can be described through a study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestations of the essence of that phenomenon'. Max van Manen, *Researching lived experience, Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 10.

31 Ibid., p. 5.

32 Ibid., p. 13.

isolate this experience neither from myself nor from the environment, but my stance is always subjective. Second, I cannot reproduce it exactly: my experiences, perceptions, impressions and reflections are always late. Third, it is impossible to produce or predict the conditions in which this experience appears. Yet, my creative work called for un-working, as if I needed, like Penelope, Odysseus' wife, to unravel the shroud that I had created myself during my working hours at my studio to study the experience of incompleteness.

I will approach the experience of incompleteness from several viewpoints. Compositionally, this dissertation is divided into chapters according to those viewpoints. The framework of this study makes it possible to employ a maker's specific knowledge on making and to have a look into the way in which the experience of incompleteness manifests itself. This research will problematize defining incompleteness and the question of finishing.

I have used Chapter One to restate and justify my thesis and to take a closer look at the research problem: how to unravel the relation between incomplete and complete. This chapter provides an introduction to the research context and the methods that I have used in this study: how to carry out research that is concerned with one's sensibility. It reflects on artistic research, research of experience and participatory philosophy that have benefited this study. It will give an outline of my own research path and of how it has developed and progressed during the whole study.

In Chapter Two I attempt to frame this study within aesthetics and to provide a brief and partial overlook on aesthetic theory and the emergence of subjectivity. Here the dissertation explores David Hume's and Immanuel Kant's thinking in relation to taste, beauty, the sublime and the ugly and touches upon Theodor Adorno's aesthetic theory, the empirical reality of aesthetics.

In Chapter Three I focus on the presence of appearing within making to show how it structures the maker's experiential reality and how it accrues and disperses the meaning, idea, action and decision-making. This chapter discusses appearing in relation to habits, manners and difference and looks at matter not as limited to physical appearance but as mattering.

Chapter Four explores experience and how it is an intrinsic part of creative making. I shall discuss how the experience of incompleteness develops through making. This chapter looks also at emotions and the body as the condition of experiencing. From the viewpoint of

bodily engagement in making, this chapter elaborates on carnal and practical knowledge.

Addressing the importance of sensibility in experiencing incompleteness, in Chapter Five I finally shift the attention to sensibility. I shall indicate such notions as fantasy, play and nonsense that are in relation to incompleteness and are influential and critical in creating. What is more, this chapter examines the relation between sensibility and affect without forgetting the body.

In conclusion, I shall restate the validity and reliability of this research, summarize the contributions, as well as suggest areas for further study. My primary focus in this study is human experience and how it can be researched employing mainly artistic research. The results of this research show that the experience of incompleteness is first and foremost experienced by the transition made possible by sensibility. Sensibility is the faculty on which a felt transition, an affect, is lived. An affect comes to be experienced on the level of emotion and this experience belongs to a subject who makes it hers or his, who is the knower, self, protagonist and experiencer.



# I THEORETICAL HYPOTHESES RELATING TO THE RESEARCH Doing Research with Art

The things of art are not a matter for a phenomenology – or else, they are themselves phenomenology, according to an altogether other logic of this ‘logy’ – because they are in advance of the phenomenon itself. They are of the patency of the world. Or else, that’s what the phenomenon is, but not in the sense of what appears in the light: rather than the phanein, it is the phos itself, light, and not the light that appears (lumen) by clinging to surfaces, but the light that flashes (lux) and that causes to appear, itself nonapparent as such. Lux without fiat, having neither creator, subject, nor source, being the source but in itself refracted, in itself radiant, exploding, broken.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Nancy, *The Muses*,  
p. 33.

So phenomenology, not unlike poetry, is a poetizing project; it tries an incantative, evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein we aim to involve the voice in an original singing of the world. But poetizing is not ‘merely’ a type of poetry, a making of verses. Poetizing is thinking on original experience and is thus speaking in a more primal sense.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Manen van, p.13.

As an artist-researcher I aim at an immediate, fresh, vivid and trustworthy description of the phenomenon that I am researching, while I concretely experience it in making. Incompleteness embraces sensuous, aesthetic, theoretical and practical considerations. I want to stress that my approach is focused on an experience in which the emphasis is on personal involvement and action. In this sense, the word *research* should be read as re-searching, or rather, as experimenting and unravelling. I strive for a rich description of a lived experience of phenom-

ena in their appearing. Should I try to produce what can be called a normative description of the phenomenon? Should I set aside or bring to the fore my subjectivity? How can making and practicing art be best employed in an artistic research and a phenomenological study? Is there such a thing as hermeneutic sensibility? What if phenomenology turns into art? In this chapter I try to answer these questions or, at the very least, cast light on them.

To research the two-part taxonomy of which incompleteness is composed, that is, insatiability and unfinishedness, I attempt to defend the view that the experience of incompleteness treats the world as if it were designed, yet not as totality, and as something to be worked out, worked with and discovered. As such, the difference and tension between the actual work and the desired work, as well as the distance between an incomplete work and the finest work that incompleteness creates, are treated as an apologia for creativity.

In this chapter, I introduce my perspective on the research problem and how I have developed my argument. To provide contextualization I have discussed the way in which I find research on incompleteness and sensibility important and what are the standpoints that I have taken in relation to other disciplines. In addition to provide guidance on how to employ artistic research for conveying and exploring sensibility and incompleteness one purpose of this dissertation is to bring together the empirical findings of a maker and some relevant philosophical elements to develop a chain of dialogue that is both transdisciplinary and even transgressive. In short, this chapter presents the background and motivations for this research.

## DEVELOPING AN ARGUMENT

Puzzles mostly come into our mind in the form of questions. This investigation on incompleteness became necessary after my own paintings hit me as being strange. Here the word *strange* defines the position from which I found myself puzzling over and over. The word *strange* means here something unexpected and unfamiliar, primitive and clumsy, since my motifs, if the work is not abstract, are usually

presented in a very naïve manner. This I find very unsettling and embarrassing, as the following passages from my diary can tell:

*I have painted with large brushes, wearing again rubber gloves, I have covered and scraped. The biggest painting is still very colourful, too colourful, I think. While painting, I was pondering about daring and shame and about what these emotions indicate in my work and in me. Then I put the question aside and continued working and put my trust in the guidance of the work. The next time I am back at the studio the painting will tell me more how to proceed, which direction to take, whether to continue, to destroy or to hide. 17 July 2012*

*Towards the light, this has been the direction of my whole life: from the cellar to the attic, into the light and to the sky, from dusky whereabouts towards peace and light. However, it never seems to go like this, I seem to stay in the cellar. This has made me think that I am a person from a cellar. In the cellar, everything is neither clear, nor lucid, nor coherent but murky. As a person from a cellar, I am unknown to myself. Trust is the only thing I have and to trust myself and my work is something I have learned little by little: to trust that the painting I am working with will be finished in the end. However, to look at a painting is not the same as to look in a mirror; I do not see myself in a painting, and I do – perhaps what a work casts is an image of my double, better, I see something strange and uncanny that I cannot grasp and yet it is cast out of me. Strangeness comes from having been working on it: have I extended myself or discovered an unknown part of me in myself through it, not knowing it while working? It remains a mystery. Alas, I need to find out more. 29 March 2013*

Arguing for a thesis involves putting forward a case and backing it up with evidence. To understand creativity and the role of the subject, object and matter in it, I have chosen from among my research material incompleteness and sensibility as key notions to work with. These conceptions indicate and expose mind-body activity and the emergence of something new and different. How did I then end up choosing incompleteness? First, I started with a particular experience that the strangeness of my paintings inflicted on me, and others. I started

to write my first diary. Second, I concerned myself with the different themes that were present in the text. Third, out of those themes I picked up incompleteness, although I did not always and explicitly use this word. I then started to write my second diary, asking what is it about my relationship with my work that causes the experience of incompleteness and how it manifests itself and what are its essence, if there is any, and consequences. I also juxtaposed my thoughts and emotions with philosophical discussions I found relevant and interesting.

I shall defend the thesis that the theory of sensibility is a fundamental requirement in establishing the sovereignty of incompleteness within creativity. Incompleteness cannot be identified with the concept of understanding and its essence cannot be discovered until it is put into relation with the faculty of sensibility.

It is a miracle that something new, something that even I find strange and odd, can be born from old matter: between me and the materials that I use. I used to experience the strangeness of my works as a failure, not as any kind of revelation. I connected the negative meaningful experiences of strangeness to the way I received and evaluated my own work: as excessively demanding when it comes to my own expectations and skills and to earlier experienced failures, critiques and self-objectification. Yet I felt that this is not the whole truth: I felt that my work showed something of which I was not aware.

I have even tried at one point to persuade myself to take failure, strangeness and incompleteness as assets, as a sort of rebellion, as a starting point to build up something different, even extraordinary, to let the beast inside me loose, to let what was at that time called bad painting rule. But this, I experienced, would have meant that I did not stay true to myself, since there is more to me than a beast – the left-brained organized conscious me who likes to philosophize too.

Whatever controversy and variety of opinions there is about the nature of incompleteness, I believe that most of us agree on this much: incompleteness is a particular kind of relation, a relation between the subject and the object and that the latter can be something obscure. Incompleteness belongs to beings that have a conscious mind and a will, to us humans and perhaps to other primates. In order to experience something as incomplete one has to be a subject, a self, an experiencer, a protagonist, a knower. So the question ‘What is the nature of incompleteness?’ is equivalent to ‘What is it that makes me consider something incomplete?’ Is it an intuition, a sense, an



inclination, knowledge, a feeling, a disposal or any exercise of mental and bodily capacities and qualities? What is the relation of the knower to the object that one finds incomplete? And what is one's relation to oneself when one makes that kind of a judgement? One cannot be just a bystander. Certainly, there is no single discursive answer; instead, the answer remains open. This indicates that the relation between the subject and the object and the subject's relation to oneself is anything but closed.<sup>35</sup>

35 Michel Henry elaborates: 'Consciousness is traditionally understood as the subject, but the subject is the condition of the object, which means that things become objects for us and thereby show themselves to us so that we can know them'. Henry, *Barbarism*, trans. by S. Davidson (London: Continuum, 2012), p. 9.

36 Andrew Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), pp. 6–7. Here, I want to mention also Mikel Dufrenne's work *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, where he focuses on the aesthetic perception creating a distinction between aesthetic object and the work of art: 'A subject always appears in the aesthetic object, and that is why one is able to speak indifferently of a world of the creator or of a world of the work', Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. by E. Casey, A. A. Anderson, W. Domingo, L. Jacobson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 196.

Andrew Benjamin provides an interesting analysis of artwork as active and as relational, as a work of art that works as art. Benjamin criticizes Martin Heidegger's use of Vincent van Gogh in his *Origin of the Work of Art* from two standpoints: first because Heidegger reduces and stabilizes the work to consist of a pair of peasant shoes, and second because he designates the work as being a well-known painting by van Gogh. In Benjamin's view both of these stances resist art's work and focus on the assumption of completion. Benjamin elaborates that such an approach fails, on the one hand, to think of a particular work as the site of art's work and, on the other hand, to think of the work in relation to its history that is not simply something assumed. Moreover, according to Benjamin, art's work needs to 'become topos demanding philosophical engagement'.<sup>36</sup>

What I intend to do in this research is to defend and further elaborate on Benjamin's remarks. I consider art's work as something that cannot be illuminated without sensibility being played in, which is to say that sensibility is one key element and factor when drawing an illustration on creativity. In this research the agency of sensibility as one experiences and identifies the presence of incompleteness in a creative work is of great importance. Both sensibility and incompleteness are investigated in the context of an art practitioner's reflections on herself as a creator, maker, author and perceiver in order to comprehend how incompleteness amounts to creativity. Sensibility implies a present that works as a medium, as bodily-ownness that points towards future possibilities and abilities.

Michel Henry elaborates on subjects' possibilities and abilities. He calls *praxis* the knowledge of life in which, as he puts it, actual life provides the sole content of this life. This knowledge is produced only in the life of absolute or unlimited subjectivity.<sup>37</sup> Henry depicts:

37 Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 19.

Art is an activity of sensibility, the fulfilment of its powers, whereas modern science, with the elimination of sensible quali-

ties from nature, defines its own field and defines itself through the exclusion of this sensibility.<sup>38</sup>

38 Ibid., p. 23.

In other words, sensibility provides a promise of creativity of man, whereas science is restricted to a cognitive abstraction of the real world. Henry emphasizes that sensibility is the Whole of experience and thus the Whole of the world.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, sensibility is what unifies, makes relations and opens up possibilities. For Henry art is the actualization of life of sensibility. The real world of life consists of the open composition gathered by sensibility and it is necessarily an aesthetic world.<sup>40</sup>

39 Ibid., p. 27.

40 Ibid., p. 35.

Both Benjamin and Henry, highlight that art cannot be confused with its material support. For Henry every work of art remains an enigma: 'The irreality of the work of art cannot be understood solely on the basis of its relation to the perceptual world', the work is both in an 'elsewhere' and what we are.<sup>41</sup> Whereas for Benjamin every artwork remains incomplete as it must be understood as an activity, and it is precisely here that incompleteness indicates excess. According to Benjamin art's material presence as the site of work, as a site of particular incompleteness, should be understood both as referring beyond itself and as such 'material is positioned beyond any possible reduction to the merely empirical' and as a knot that ties together a particular work's relations of change and its development.<sup>42</sup>

41 Ibid., p. 35.

42 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, pp. 4, 9–11.

### *Knowledge and Intuition*

I hold that experiencing incompleteness is a sign of knowledge. To know something is actually a subjective feeling: 'I know something'. This is to say that knowledge is always focused and it is based on something: on arguments, experience, reasoning, recollection and so forth. Through translation into language, knowledge becomes inter-subjective. Knowledge and understanding are connected to each other: when one claims that one knows something, one assumes that one also understands what one claims to know.

Many factors demonstrate that our knowledge is insufficient, according to Juha Varto.<sup>43</sup> Varto elaborates on the concept of knowledge in his book *Otherwise than Knowing* for example by writing that

43 Juha Varto, *Otherwise than Knowing* (Helsinki: Aalto ARTS Books, 2013), p. 196.

Knowledge has always involved the practice of excluding all that we cannot be sure of, that we cannot prove, that does not

comply with our previous understanding, that is for some reason or another considered to be unsuitable.<sup>44</sup>

44 Ibid., p. 13.

In other words, Varto claims that we should become more sensitive and critical towards what we have learned to understand as knowledge and towards what kind of forms of representation and translation are taken for granted.<sup>45</sup> What knowledge suffers from is its self-sufficiency, domestication and having been tamed, and yet knowledge is produced out of flesh, out of animation and sensibility, out of a smell of a body, out of particular experience.

45 Ibid., pp. 194–196.

I consider that an experience of incompleteness indicates something more than a mere intuitive process. Intuition is taken as a mode of knowing for example in Asta Raami's recent research.<sup>46</sup> Raami suggests that intuition is best utilized when combined with conscious reasoning. Raami advocates ways and methods of developing intuition as a tool in creative thinking. However, I find creating intuitive methods based on reasoning at least to some extent problematic, because it would mean to plant ready-made images, representations and structures in one's head and actually chain creativity up, while not allowing for enough room neither to fantasy nor carnal knowledge that are ceaselessly unfurling in making and to the experience of what is lost in making. What if intuition came from sensibility and was not in the first place destined to fill the void creativity presents?

46 I here refer to Asta Raami's study on intuition: *Intuition Unleashed, on the application and development of intuition in the creative process* (Helsinki: Aalto ARTS Books, 2015).

What then is the difference between an idea and intuition? On the one hand, intuitions are like suggestions, guidelines to realize ideas. On the other hand, intuition can grow into an idea. According to Asta Raami, intuition is an integral part of human thinking and 'the role of intuition is imperative in radical breakthrough innovations and in creative ideas involving extreme novelty'.<sup>47</sup> In her study, Raami concludes that individuals may have a personal understanding of intuition and an awareness of it. According to her, intuition among designers may include non-bodily feelings, extraordinary sensations or extrasensory perceptions.<sup>48</sup> How do I experience intuition then? I hardly ever use the word intuition in my everyday language, and it appears in my diaries only four times. I usually start with an idea and proceed then based on sensibility.

47 Ibid., p. 21.

48 Ibid., pp. 200–201.

*Knowledge and Creativity*

I find intuition hampering and entangling, although often necessary, especially when I do not know how to proceed with my work, a makeshift or a temporary solution, a map; thus, intuition relies on past knowledge. However, as it relies on past experiences and knowledge, what we have is not really thinking in making. Intuition gives me information about how to proceed with my work when I am perplexed. However, making and painting truly start when neither any idea nor intuition is recognizable any more, when one has entered the sphere of making with one's whole sensibility. I want to let the painting talk. This is where thinking starts.

In spite of the fact that knowledge is, after all, subjective and limited, we tend to rely on it. Theories and methods are built on knowledge. What then are the standards by which knowledge can be judged as useful? For example, in this research, the standards for knowledge could be coherence, openness, and transparency: use of clear and understandable concepts when describing phenomena. In other words, what we have here is a style of representation, one example of an exercise of style that can be addressed as knowledge.

What then does it mean to learn various styles of representation as if they were separate from the substance? What is at stake? Juha Varto emphasizes that in naming and explaining things, *a game of cover up and evasion*, as he names it, we invent things afterwards as if we had understood them: 'Even if the naming failed, it lives on and determines the discourse for the rest of us, because, once out the name only fades in time'.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, Varto wants to stress that the reason to research the singular, the experiential, the experienced, the significant, behind which 'lies a singular human being living his or her life'<sup>50</sup>, is exactly 'where aesthetics, the key philosophy of distance, emerges'<sup>51</sup> and where the lived flesh, as carnal knowledge and as the history of one man's flesh, is equal, not conceptual but concerning us all in the same way yet singularly<sup>52</sup>.

Knowledge of creativity is of substantial importance in various fields of human life. Creativity has been fairly extensively studied within various disciplines. Knowledge of creativity is not only the concern of what have been considered as naturally creative disciplines, for example art and design, but it is also of great importance in other disciplines as well, in scientific fields for example, and not least in supporting and safeguarding ecological balance and sustainabili-

49 Varto, *Otherwise than Knowing*, p. 17.

50 Juha Varto, *A Dance with the World* (Helsinki: Aalto University, 2012), p. 14.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

ty on earth on the present day. Also creativity is a central aspect and issue when reflecting on situational elements of authenticity significance. As one feels oneself incomplete facing multiple and complex problems can be frustrating.

Creativity customarily involves the idea that a man is capable of fashioning oneself and the world around oneself. This is to say that creativity brings together not only human actions but aesthetics and ethics as well. This means that creativity constructs a system of multiple layers of being in the world.

I will argue that creativity benefits from acknowledging sensibility and from the experiential state of incompleteness while making: sensibility and experiencing incompleteness come first then things and labels. Thinking creatively in such a circumstance is not something pre-structured but often stems from chaos and proceeds as if one was wearing a blindfold and assisted solely by sensibility. Creativity is distributed in and from one's sensible receptivity. As such, making, concerning both body and mind, exceeds one's imagination and enters an unknown territory, which is often paved with the experience of incompleteness, insatiability, imperfection and unfinishedness. One may characterize this event with such words as tension, swing, oscillation, animation and feeling of life and as attaining one's subjectivity, through trial and error. This indicates that first of all incompleteness calls for action. Particularly, the aim is to understand what kind of affordance incompleteness is within creativity and should we think of it in terms of sensibility and communication.

#### INCOMPLETENESS AS A PURPOSEFUL CONCERN OF RESEARCH

I do not believe that the best predictor of future achievement is past achievement.<sup>53</sup>

53 E. Paul Torrence, "Understanding Creativity: Where to start?", in *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 4, No. 3, (1993), pp. 232-234.

*The image stares back at me as if it planned to weave me into it, and I do not have a vote myself. Again I have painted a picture and it is never the picture I wanted to paint, insatiability and incompleteness together. It is always a near miss or total evasion. What is the purpose of this all? What*

the hell does this serve; substitution, consolation, nursing my melancholy but of what? However, to begin with, I only have a feeling, a thought, a vague picture in my mind, of what I want the image to look like. This picture came from somewhere; it must serve a purpose. The distance between the actual work and the desired one is both perplexing and fascinating, because of the distance the picture actually becomes a substitution, consolation or disappointment of the intended one. This I find exciting. Time travelling, I will never arrive where I intended, as if I travelled in a fog, I am my own witness, I paint as if my body and mind were moving back and forth between two images, two worlds. In the end something totally different appears, I experience myself slipping in and out, sensing internally and externally. Witnessing is also an act of imagination and distancing. There is no linear course of action – harmony is often lost. The image orbits around my sensuous body. As I am getting exhausted, I become a sort of black hole, the former I disappears and transforms into something novel and palpable. However, I find that there is a sense to all this and that the image recollects something, remembers something. The image is slippage from a place to another, a constant dislocation, yet something keeps it together – my mind? An image is like a passage I am traversing. All the same, the path disappears and turns into a network of paths; the image is already something lost, a disparate bundle of recollection and relations. The image contributes to past experiences and encounters, to what I have learned, to the making itself. And then, when the painting is finished, it seems uncanny and different. The image points to something of which I was not aware during the action, I am being thrown into a scene that is about encountering the uncanny in me. What I observe to be myself is a never-ending *mis-en-abyme*. 17 February 2012

To trace and share a problem is to open oneself, to find the as-yet-undiscovered traces to a problem, to unravel it. It is not the discovering of a thing or a solution that is in itself luminous and flashing, but the problems that are still veiled by the chiaroscuro of an unthought-of image of thought. A solution does not hold the allure, but the problem. There is neither a phenomenon, nor an experience, nor a prob-

lem that does not have a multiple sense. The experience of incompleteness is more than a mere intuitive process without concepts.

Incompleteness stems from the Latin word *incompletus* meaning not filled or not finished. Words that mean almost the same include unfinished, uncompleted, insufficient, imperfect, lacking, pending and wanting. It is a problematic conception, and it stages itself in a problematic way. But most of all it intrudes on the concepts of understanding and reason, exceeding and transforming them. This indicates that within creating any concepts and notions have to be used without final determinations or definitions.<sup>54</sup> One imagines an approach in order to fulfill one's wish-desire: one part of the maker holds the reins while the other part goes free of reins. Where? It is the mystery one is always chasing.

Fantasy and imagination have an important role in my making and from that follows that they have importance in my research as well. Fantasy and imagination are something that I cannot think or get hold of as such. Yet, in my opinion, imagination is something one can access very easily, when one imagines one is fully present and imagination has a potentiality to lead the imagining person to discover a novelty. For this reason, one of the objectives of my research is to shed light on the notion of imagining, refusing to see it as an outcast in the hierarchy of different disciplines: instead it is a connector. There is also a tendency to reduce imagination to something belonging to the realm of fantasy, while not being aware of the differences of these two and of both being pivotal parts of creativity in large and thus forming materiality of reality. Imagination and fantasy are in this research put to work in order to better understand the tension between incomplete and the demands of the work becoming complete.

The ambiguity of fantasy is not only verbal, as Edward S. Casey points out, but, and more importantly, phenomenal: it can include whole series of phenomena.<sup>55</sup> Fantasy means that one is trying out some new ideas, to tell a new story or that one lets the imagination take the lead in making fantasy appear in one way or another. According to Casey, in imagining the factor of control is more prominent than in fantasy and imaginings are characteristically non-narrative by nature, episodic at best. But, most importantly, fantasy gives us an embodiment of hopes and fears.<sup>56</sup> Fantasy is a mode of understanding things, and things can without doubt be understood differently. In short, we can understand world in more different and

54 Immanuel Kant already presumed that art is definitely a specific activity of its own: a work of art requires not just taste but soul and spirit as the faculty for the representation of aesthetic ideas. According to Kant, an aesthetic idea may be summarized as a representation of imagination, which occasions much thought yet is without any determinable thought. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 192.

55 Edward S. Casey, *Imagination, Fantasy, Hallucination and Memory*, p. 79, <https://philosophydocuments.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/10-fantasy-hallucination.pdf> [accessed 18 May 2016].

56 *Ibid.*, p. 81–83.

extraordinary ways when we employ imagination and fantasy. When I fantasize or use imagination in making, it means that things and language can mean more than one thing at a time and that non-sense cannot be truly a lack of sense – and this is how the importance of imagination and fantasy should be *under stood*.<sup>57</sup>

As Linda Finlay notes, phenomenological research characteristically begins with real, lived situations composed of individual expositions, descriptions, narrations, histories and so on, set down in everyday language abstaining from any premature theorizing. Research, and for that matter understanding, has to have its core in lived experience and will be corrected indefinitely by other experiences. Finlay stresses that all phenomenology is descriptive in the sense that it aims at describing rather than explaining – nonetheless, there are no definite boundaries between description and interpretation. However, and here she refers to van Manen's thinking, when research is mediated by expressions and nonverbal aspects, such as action and artworks, it is necessarily interpretative.<sup>58</sup> Events and actions are conditions of possibility on the level of experience instead of on the level of meaning. Meaning is a process of structuring, yet it is tied to present and to experience: therefore, one cannot draw stable homogeneity from the flux of experience, from the flux of becoming of something. Then if one wants to emphasize intentionality and meaning there is a risk that an immediate sensory experience becomes disregarded for the benefit of pursuing indirect meaning.

Gilles Deleuze discusses the notion of the problematic by stating that events are essentially problematic and problematizing in their essence; therefore we should deal with the problematic neither as some subjective category of knowledge nor as some random empirical instant.<sup>59</sup> Instead he claims that the problematic is 'both an objective category of knowledge and a perfectly objective kind of being'.<sup>60</sup> In this respect he considers the problematic to be innate in all phenomena and not something opposite to the unproblematic. Deleuze's line of thought leads to the notion that, when faced with the sense of strangeness or incompleteness before my own work, I am actually being called to this situation and it must in some sense be expected. Creating takes place, first, while I am being immersed in the action of painting and, second, when I face the strange, i. e. problematic. In this regard, an important remark on thinking in general from Deleuze is the following: '... thought may busy itself thereby, but such employment and such activity have nothing to do with thinking. Thought is

57 *Under stand* denotes support here. Jean-François Lyotard reminds us on relativity which each action must take into account: 'Meaning cannot in any sense be taken for granted, ... The meaning is latent because originary, and it must be resuscitated without being presupposed if we are to be led by the things themselves'. Lyotard, *Phenomenology*, trans. by B. Beakley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 123.

58 Linda Finlay, 'Debating Phenomenological Research Methods', in *Phenomenology & Practice*, Vol. 3, No. 1, (2009), pp. 6–25, pp. 10–11.

59 According to Gilles Deleuze, Immanuel 'Kant was the first to accept the problematic not as a fleeting uncertainty but as the very object of the idea and, thereby, as an indispensable horizon of all that occurs or appears'. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. by C. V. Boundas, trans. by M. Lester with C. Stivale (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 65.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.



61 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 175. A thought can be thought from at least three different points of view: first, a philosophical way of thinking considers a thought as something conceptual. Second, from a scientific point of view a thought is concerned of functions and, third, from the point of view of art a thought is something that concerns perceptions and affects. In this sense in art and in making a thought is a force that produces not only sensations but thinking that problematizes. What happens to the subject and to the object at this point is the concern of this research.

62 Pitkänen-Walter, p. 23.

thereby filled with no more than an image of itself, one in which it recognizes itself the more it recognizes things: this is a finger, this is a table, ...'.<sup>61</sup> Instead, when thought is really thinking it points to both something it does not recognize and to a framework that is somehow external to any predetermined structure or idea. As I see it, the object of thought in making is not an object, a painting or any kind of representation of something for example, but something stemming from an outside, from a thought that finds itself outside of itself, that exceeds itself, goes beyond and is in that sense transcendent, actual and free. Here, I want to refer to what Tarja Pitkänen-Walter has elaborated on painting. According to her the act of painting denotes breaking or transgressing any representative image and creating a new and original image.<sup>62</sup>

Art's work is a maze and a mystery, designed as a problematic puzzle through which one has to find a way out; the work mirrors life, albeit it does not cast a mirror image, a duplicate, but it creates nevertheless both an appearance of purpose and meaning as it simultaneously points beyond them. Art's work is a confusing chiasma of problematic information that is essentially affective and sensuous. For this reason the analysis of sensibility is of importance when studying incompleteness. We can speak of incompleteness only through a problematic field that concerns the sensibility of bodies and carnal knowledge. However, no comprehensive theory or answer appears to exist on incompleteness, as if it were an answerless riddle always present but out of joint. Yet it indicates the point at which a journey to chase after completeness begins.

#### 'IT'S MY OWN INVENTION' – ON CREATIVITY

'I only took the regular course.'

'What was that?' inquired Alice.

'Reeling and writhing, of course, to begin with,' the Mock Turtle replied; 'and then the different branches of Arithmetic – Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.'<sup>63</sup>

63 Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (New York: Everyman's Library Children's Classics, 1992), p. 117.

Creativity, according to E. Paul Torrance, has habitually been thought of from four different viewpoints: person, process, product and press. With press, he refers to the outskirts of making, for example to the environment, climate, etc., to anything that is outside of the actual making. Torrance draws attention to understanding creative thinking 'as the process of sensing difficulties, problems, gaps in information, missing elements, something askew' and argues: 'If we sense an incompleteness, something missing out of place, tension is aroused. We are uncomfortable and want to do something to relieve the tension'.<sup>64</sup> In other words, one begins to investigate, explore, ask questions, make guesses and hypotheses, just as I did at the beginning of my research. The questions never ceased.

64 Torrance,  
pp. 232-234.

How then are thought and creativity tied together? What does creativity involve; how does it work and what does it mean? Perchance the utilization of some signifying materials, symbols, iconography of a certain culture, previous art objects or some aspects of popular or mainstream characteristics or mimicry would give us a trace. Yet I doubt whether creativity is solely a process of assembling elements already existing in and of the human world, employing previous knowledge, recollection, artistic and other cultural forms. If this were the case, it would mean that creativity would not be about creation, that it would no longer be autonomous and original but pre-programmed and administrative activity instead.

*My mind is in a continuous flux; it weaves together the colourful plans, plots and scenarios of my upcoming actions concerning future painting. This is how I begin. However, I know that the painting after all does not turn out to be as it was planned in my mind. The images of my mind are vague; they are neither transferrable nor translatable into a painting. My mind is a sort of a spider's web, but it does make sense on everything. What is needed is the activity of body. Mind does not function without my body's presence. Body is the translator. 26 May 2012*

*The magical spell of the incomplete work, its dangerousness, makes anxiety grow in me. The wicked charm it casts on me, it is like a magnet. Its glamour that predicts chaos and complexity forces me to address the issues of my subjectivity anew, I am a person completely lost in herself. To begin is*

*an ambivalent moment. Nevertheless, this is the moment that I desire the most. I wonder if I actually desire for an unfulfilled desire; the appearing of it, the appearing of this perplexing experience. This much I know: this kind of moment cannot be mastered by knowledge; it is completely about sensibility.* 2 February 2012

Creativity can be seen as a research, which embraces fragmentation, ambiguity and presence. Andrew Benjamin calls for a redefinition of what is entailed in any particular work of art. He summons: 'The presence of potentiality of this nature, and the subsequent question of its release, identifies the presence of an opening within which the work of art remains incomplete'.<sup>65</sup> In its openness that identifies the work's incompleteness the work paradoxically turns out to be complete when it is finished. What kind of relation is there then between finishing and incompleteness? Benjamin's notion is on the verge of my research problem, as I have to finish a work at some point in one way or another. Finishing does not necessarily mean that I am content or fulfilled. Finishing can mean destroying the work. I find that the whole problem of finishing a work is in relation to work's incompleteness concerning completeness that points towards something as nothing. Incompleteness marks the impossibility of the presence of the work as complete and, according to Benjamin, one begins to investigate, explore, ask questions, make guesses and hypotheses, just as I did at the beginning of my research. The questions never ceased.<sup>66</sup>

Incompletion does not only concern the work or the process or the materials at work, but it also concerns the maker. It is the innate force or a desire that is not mastered by any subject, not even by the artist. This impulse or force has at least one decisive feature: it is the prominent seed of an absolute crisis of presentation and as such a drive towards the new, towards the future, towards something different; it gets one's body and mind going; in them there exists no such thing as to live the same life once more and countless times more. In this sense and paradoxically, creativity stays a mystery: however, it demands action and thus it is carnal. This means that the essence of creativity is desire that is necessarily carnal: creativity desires something that is ahead of one. One has to anticipate this something, and the way in which it can be done is by being actively creative and desire this something. Desire is an essence innate in all creative work,

<sup>65</sup> Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

it advances and changes, which means that it collides with previous entities and suppositions. It produces novel figurations and interpretations but before that experiences through one's sensibility.

Creativity is neither fully explicable according to the model of language, nor can it be reduced exclusively to the created artifact, because the elements of creativity are not explicit and they exceed, or are not fully presentable in the actual work. In short, it is less plausible that a work of art could be a complete reminiscence of the creative action. A work of art is something that was left behind as always only *im Werden*, as the Early Romantics noted. The thinking of the Early Romantics comes close to how Andrew Benjamin thinks about an artwork: a work needs to be understood as an activity and as an actuality.<sup>67</sup> Romantic reflection is reflection confronted with works of which it does not claim authorship; instead, 'it finds itself situated, moreover, within an endless web of such presented objects', and generates an unforeseeable sequence of reflections, 'in which the work or object is disarticulated and held up against a new reflection'.<sup>68</sup> Early Romanticism is the first artistic movement in modernity that objected the equivalence of the intrinsic harmony of a work of art and of the artistic genius.<sup>69</sup> In this sense in Early Romantic thinking an artwork materializes as a displacement, as non-sense and a form of irony. To provide more variety in contextualization I have discussed some Early Romantic observations later on in this dissertation.

*I hid away the paintings I had been painting recently, the big one and the small one. Now I have a new canvas before me. I have painted the ground as well, using a colour that reminds me of lilacs. My mind is a little empty; as I keep staring the canvas, some white cloud-like and a red line appear in my mind, and as this mindscape develops, there are more and more red lines twirling inside my head, but some yellow and green as well. Mind; what a landscape of turmoil. 5 July 2012*

... Any Greek can get you into a labyrinth  
But it takes a hero to get out of one  
What's true of labyrinths is true of course  
Of love and memory. When you start remembering.<sup>70</sup>

*When I set foot in my studio today, I suddenly noticed that the big and red-pinkish painting I had been working with for*

67 Ibid., p. 5.

68 Haynes Horne, 'The Early Romantic Fragment and Incompleteness', in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 289–313, p. 308.

69 Jochen Schulte-Sasse, 'Romanticism's Paradoxical Articulation of Desire', in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 1–43, p. 2.

70 Jack Spicer, 'Any Fool Can Get into an Ocean', *Poetry Foundation* <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/181724> [accessed 22 March 2016].

over six months is finished. A shock. I feel and sense that it is finished, that it is complete. Of course it is not a masterpiece but it is as complete as I can get it. It is complete as such, in its particularity as it is. I am not Artemisia, I will never be. So, let me just be me. There is a distance between a perfect, complete work and my work but this is as far as I can get at this point. I still wonders: am I being deceived? I look at the work and I sense that it is not perfect; some areas could have been painted differently but if I did that, how would it change the whole? Might it become a disaster? It works as a whole picture. It requires sensibility, intricate delicateness to make a decision on when to finish a painting. There is a vestige of completeness in incompleteness. How complex is everything? Yet, how can I articulate or explain the feeling or the sense of the work being finished? As I see it, it is finished when everything falls into place; it is a combination of the history of the work; layers, materials, colours and forms and the tension between these elements. Yet I wonders: what is my personal subjective role, how do I feel that particular day, what time of the day is it? Does that what I feel and sense, reveal something about the object, the painting? Do others feel and sense the same? All explanations remain rather ambiguous, yet there is some sense in it. Could it be that a painting was just a mirage? I have to continue with the jade-green work now. 8 April 2013

Creativity takes place in one's body and in-between one's body and something that appears outside one's body: any borders become blurred and differences tangible. Creativity calls for one's sensibility as if sensibility unravelled the cloth that disguises all that is desired and chased after.

Sensibility, as the faculty of receptivity, challenges phenomenological research, which is interested in perceptions as representations of the appearance of understanding. Thus perception can be equated with taking, with making something mine and giving meanings. Therefore it is also connected with one's subjectivity. The problem of phenomenology is that, according to it, perceptions are made up by senses; it does not take any notice of sensibility as concerning the whole being as something animated, sensuous and carnal. Of course such a stance is too plain, hence phenomenology, especially the research carried out by phenomenologists of the body, for example

Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Henry and Alphonso Lingis, has been described as a study of lived experience or of the lifeworld. According to Michel Henry: ‘Sensibility does not delineate a particular domain of human experience; it is not a region of Being that could be neglected in order to better devote oneself to another one. As its substrate, sensibility is the Whole of experience and thus the Whole of the World; the world is necessarily offered as a whole in sensibility’.<sup>71</sup> In this research I am after the ontology of sensibility as the provider for creativity.

71 Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 27.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari assert that the aim of art is to pull the percept from the perceptions of objects and from the subject and to ‘extract a bloc of sensation, a pure being of sensation’.<sup>72</sup> This being of sensation that stems from the summoned forces of percepts and the subject’s self-consciousness is what is at stake in creativity. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the sensation itself has become the sensation of the concept. I find this a crucial thought: hence, as a practitioner the concept of incompleteness, as I experience it, turns out to become a bloc of sensations. To my mind this is exactly what Immanuel Kant misses: that the concept becomes enlivened and carnal and that it is based on sensibility and experience that is not determined. Thus understanding and reason are no longer the sovereign powers. One can hold that the same goes for conducting research: the researcher as a bodily being with one’s historicity and pre-understandings becomes central in one’s research and any object of research and the relation between the subject and the object, not as something determined but as something in which the object almost becomes another subject. From this perspective, one cannot get outside of one’s research. One cannot get out of one’s body either: objectivism and subjectivism are two equally inadequate alternatives for understanding. Experience comes before theory; the world of experience is prior to understanding and knowledge. In the rose garden of *Alice in Wonderland*, people have become two-sided cards, and the question arises: can one cut off a head when there is no body?

72 Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy*, trans. by G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson (Verso: Great Britain, 2009). See especially chapter 7: Percept, Affect, and Concept, pp. 163–199.

Sensibility, the ability to experience, to react, to emote, to reflect and to think, relates to bodily sensations that concern one’s body and its mind as a whole in a given environment and any creative situation. Sensibility is both transcendent and carnal exercising.<sup>73</sup> Hence works of art, as well as the whole process of making, are manifested through one’s sensible and sensuous body, as the immediate realizations of something that appears and touches. In this research, I have

73 In this study transcendent is taken as a natural world that appears and shows itself and turns into flesh.

74 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*. However, I find that Deleuze's work on Francis Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. by D. W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2005) is a quite phenomenological work in that it concentrates on describing the object, what is depicted in the paintings of Bacon, for example pp. 11, 38, 102–107.

75 Deleuze develops in his work *Difference and Repetition*, what he calls transcendental empiricism, in which faculties of imagination and sensibility play a crucial role.

76 Manen van, *Researching lived experience*, p. 5.

77 Véronique Doisneau in *Véronique Doisneau 1*, conception by Jérôme Bel, Opéra national de Paris, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01uWV5P1nFs> 2004 [accessed 7 June 2016]. You can find Jérôme Bel discussing this piece on his webpage at [http://www.jeromebel.fr/textsandinterviews?menu\\_id=m4](http://www.jeromebel.fr/textsandinterviews?menu_id=m4). According to Bel, he chose a solo format for this piece because he wanted to know what Véronique Doisneau as both a *sujet* and a member of the *corps de ballet* thinks about both dancing and Opéra national de Paris as an institution. Bel describes the making of the piece as follows: 'As I knew little about ballet and

employed Gilles Deleuze's thinking on being of sensation. I find that Deleuze's being of sensation is what art and creativity are about. His stance can be taken as a sort of anti-phenomenological philosophy of art. Deleuzian philosophy is about the ontology of sensation and affects.<sup>74 75</sup> Being of incompleteness is the way of creating, it is the way of communication: we are out of incompleteness and confused by the absence it creates.

#### PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER SUBJECTIVITY AS AN ASSET AND HOW RESEARCH ON AND THE THEORY OF SENSIBILITY CAN BE ATTAINED AND COMMUNICATED

From the phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings.<sup>76</sup>

even less about Opéra de Paris, I decided to be like an ethnologist. I wanted to try to understand what sort of practices this kind of art has, the types of structures needed by such an institution, and so on. So I asked Véronique Doisneau thousands of questions and spent most of our "rehearsal" time discussing her experience and this world with its extremely particular laws, which I gradually began to pin down in the course of our conversations. I did not have any particular plan apart from conducting this enquiry. The issues raised in this piece are Véronique Doisneau's preoccupations. It's about suffering and

physical violence, the institution, the people she has met, her own limits, what she wants, about herself.' <http://www.jeromebel.fr/textsandinterviews/detail/?textInter=veronique%20doisneau%20-%20paris%20national%20opera> [accessed 29 March 2016].

78 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Critical Fragments' [1797–1801], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 314–319.

In the hierarchy of the Paris Opera Ballet, I am a 'Subject'. This means that I can dance both 'Corps de Ballet' parts and soloist roles ... I never became a 'Star', the question never came up. I think I was not talented enough and too fragile physically. The meeting with Rudolf Nureyev was fundamental for me. He understood everything. He gave us the idea that it was through the mastery of the language of dance that emotion is created. Above all he told us to respect the sense of movement and not to interpret it.<sup>77</sup>

Genius does not derive from willfulness, but rather from freedom, as do wit, love, and faith, which in the future must become arts and sciences. One should demand genius in every person, however, without expecting it. A Kantian would call this the categorical imperative of geniality.<sup>78</sup>

The above cited Friedrich Schlegel's request: 'One should demand genius from every person', indicates that the Early Romantics avoided positing the genius like a bust on a pedestal. Instead, genius is not something necessarily and solely identifiable with fine arts, but genius is an agency of Nature.

Dance – eating – talking – mutual feeling and working – being together – hearing, seeing, and feeling each other, etc.: all these are conditions and causes and themselves already functions of the effectiveness of the higher composite human being, the genius, etc. <sup>79</sup>

Subjectivity is the focal point of all experience. Subject is the self, the experiencer and the protagonist and for that matter the genius. Subject is the one who thinks, emotes and reacts and acts. Subject is the conscious knower. Consciousness is also consciousness of the self; thus, what unconscious mind misses is self, according to the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio.<sup>80</sup> For the purpose of this research, however, I take consciousness as (em)bodied and not hidden from itself, as Merleau-Ponty puts it: '... there is nothing in it that is not in some way announced to it, even though it has no need of knowing it explicitly'<sup>81</sup>, in other words there is no unconscious area, no hidden zones, instead there is experience that is immanent, perhaps not wholly explicable or understandable.

Subject is entirely dependent on the self's presence, capabilities and limits. Experiencing subject is not just experiencing anything but is making these experiences one's own. Experience is always someone's experience. To become a subject is the same as to own one's experiences. For me, as a maker, the experience of incompleteness penetrates my thoughts, emotions, body and movement: I own this experience. Thereby it molds, determines and directs my subjectivity and my future actions.

*Je pense, donc je suis*, or *I think, therefore I am*, is the famous proviso given by René Descartes (1596–1650). He draws that the subjective or

79 Novalis, 'The Universal Brouillon', in 'Novalis: On Women and Feminity' in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al., (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 382–390, p. 389.

80 Antonio Damasio, *Self comes to Mind, Constructing the Conscious Brain* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), p. 11.

81 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 350.



physical world is evident, whereas the objective world is that which may not be knowable. Descartes emphasizes that *cogitations*, modalities of the souls, or subjective appearances, sensations, impressions, desires, emotions, sensibility, affectivity and subjectivity in general, have an undeniable reality: body is dependent on the perception I have of the world. It is as much as my perception of the body is certain that the body can be taken as a certainty. In other words, the body's reality depends on the perception that I have of it.<sup>82</sup> John Locke (1632–1704) is of the opinion that 'knowledge begins with experience' since the physical world gives the impressions that the mind perceives and ruminates on; hence, to begin with, the mind is a *tabula rasa*, a 'blank slate' or 'white paper', and its ideas originate from sensation or reflection. David Hume (1711–1776) depicts that 'Every idea is a copy of a sense impression'. What he means by a sense impression is either sensation or reflection in a way that sensations originate from senses and reflections from our experience of mind.<sup>83</sup>

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) then, to put it straightforwardly, unites Descartes' and Hume's elaborations and claims, as Hugh J. Silverman notes, 'that scientific knowledge depends on both logical categories of our understanding and the empirical sense impressions from outside'.<sup>84</sup> Kant's notion of formative cognition objected, first, to Descartes' empirical proposition. According to Kant, I cannot be a representation of I otherwise it would be determinate. Alternatively Kant is of the opinion that such an intuitive and empirical feeling is indeterminate and that only determinate thoughts and objects can form part of knowledge. What the thinker-perceiver, i.e. subject, a configuration of mind and understanding, is doing is to attain unity and consistency between one's thoughts and perceptions: one is conscious of oneself only to the extent as one appears to oneself. This, all the same, left the Kantian subject as consisting of mind and understanding and the object formed by phenomenal attributes that are knowable by senses, split. Second, Kant claims that the subject can never know a thing as it is in itself, as it lies beyond the sense impressions. This thing-in-itself he calls *noumenon*. As a consequence, human judgements are limited, they can never know the thing-in-itself and must stay within the phenomenal qualities of objects. Kant strived to keep knowledge and aesthetics apart.<sup>85</sup>

The Early Romantics, i.e. Jena Romanticism, departed from Kant's transcendental Idealism. According to them, reflection secures direct knowledge. They removed the human's ability to know from judge-

82 Michel Henry, *The Living Body*, trans. by M. Tweed, p. 3, [https://www.academia.edu/5595141/The\\_Living\\_Body\\_by\\_Michel\\_Henry](https://www.academia.edu/5595141/The_Living_Body_by_Michel_Henry) [accessed 31.3.2016].

83 Hugh J. Silverman, 'Malabou, Plasticity, and the Sculpturing of the Self,' in *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2010, p. 90.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

85 Schulte-Sasse, pp. 15–16.

ment to reflection by eliminating the *noumenal*, the *Ding-an-sich*, in other words, they overturned the border fences that Kant had created around knowing and Reason. Thus the Romantic Absolute is an absolute of mediating infinity building on sense experience and not any Transcendental Absolute and that our knowledge is situated in an infinite progression and has no absolute foundation.<sup>86</sup>

The Cartesian-Lockean way of thinking about thought and experience as an inner mental emblem and the Humean way of seeing ideas as sense impressions were later elaborated further by Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It was then Merleau-Ponty who put flesh on the semantic contents of sensation and representation. He emphasizes the interaction between intellectual mind and material body. According to him, body-subject as owning skillful bodily responsiveness and spontaneity in direct encounter with the world forms the ground of all basic forms of human experience.

*While I am painting I have this strange feeling of being in two places at one time: in my body, which is located in this studio, but at the same time bodily within the unfinished painting as if it were an excess of my body's flesh. My flesh hovers between me and the physical painting. My flesh actualizes in the material painting as the painting actualizes in my flesh. 7 March 2012*

Merleau-Ponty is of the opinion that science only succeeds in constructing a semblance of subjectivity, whereas in his view our body, our mind and the physical world are all embedded together<sup>87</sup>, something that also my diary entry above indicates. Being open and embedded in the world means that to percept consists of interplay between the mind, the body and the physical world.<sup>88</sup> Subjectivity, which Merleau-Ponty describes as the manifestation of being that is necessarily ambiguous, links together the things and instants of the world that are presented to one and that are lived by one.<sup>89</sup> In sum, perception is the ground of both subjectivity and objectivity, and it is not merely a mental thing but a state of the body.

More recently, the French philosopher Catharine Malabou returns to the mind-body problem and introduces the concept of split or difference. According to her, the brain is, on the one hand, hard material substance, the empirical brain or the physiochemical brain, and, on the other hand, it fabricates our consciousness. She elaborates that

<sup>86</sup> Horne, pp. 289–313, pp. 304–305.

<sup>87</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245, 340–341.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 348–349.

the brain is a locus and process of self-sculpting and transdifferentiation, being very closely interconnected with the rest of the body. Malabou uses the term plasticity to indicate the ongoing self-differentiation that the brain experiences in relation to itself and to the body. Malabou expands that the brain is distributed through the body and that the brain is a system that suggests solutions that are in tune with one's history and needs, not just individual needs as the brain and the cerebral functions are part of the embodied experience of the world. The brain's plasticity is in its ability to change and to be changed, to modify and to be modified, and thus it has a socio-political dimension.<sup>90</sup>

90 Silverman, pp. 89–102.

Furthermore, and drawing attention to the new models of encountering with the mind, Antonio Damasio acknowledges that consciousness – that is, the mind endowed with subjectivity, as I discussed earlier – is not separate from the body: ‘Thanks to the brain, the body becomes a natural topic of the brain’.<sup>91</sup> His stance is shared in this research later on. According to Damasio:

91 Damasio, pp. 4, 95.

Because of this curious arrangement *the representation of the world external to the body can come into the brain only via the body itself*, namely via its surface. The body and the surrounding environment interact with each other, and the changes caused *in the body* by that interaction are mapped in the brain. It is certainly true that the mind learns of the outside world via brain, but it is equally true that the brain can be informed only via the body.<sup>92</sup>

92 Damasio, p. 97.

*I am planted in the work with which I am currently busy. It is my way of being, to shape and to form, but to be shaped and to be formed as well. While making it is not possible to observe the work objectively, from the outside. That kind of thought would be a mere waste of time. Painting stems from my inner life, which is intertwined, like a web, with my body, and this whole interrelation is spun to the outside world with a fine thread. What then is my inner life that evaporates out through my skin and then sucks in the outside? A mixture of my personal history, the culture, the place and time that I live in, all the things that I have learned so far, mixed up with experiences, understanding, feelings and imagination. Painting is a part of me, I have a tendency to think that it is the other in me, and*

*better, the actual me, as turned inside out, as if I happened right here, right now, while I am painting, not being aware of myself, however, sculpturing my self.* 15 March 2012

The world and its objects, things and matters express something: they matter to us, as if everything were nothing but mattering and relating and sharing. Then how things matter is on the same token an actualization and achievement of subjectivity, as if subjectivity emerged right when one turns inside out towards the world: through sweat and tears, perhaps, or just not realizing that being is being with and being within oneself, and as such a rearrangement or perhaps even a derangement of all possible elements: becoming different and original like anyone else. The subject always emerges anew in a way that cannot be anticipated, in relation not only to the world but to itself, as conveyed by Jean-Luc Nancy:

What is shared is nothing like unique substance in which each being would participate; what is shared is also what shares, what is structurally constituted by sharing, and what we call ‘matter’. The ontology of being-with can only be ‘materialist’, in the sense that ‘matter’ does not designate a substance or a subject (or an antisubject), but literally designates what is divided of itself, what is only as distinct from itself, *parte extra partes*, originally impenetrable to the combining sublimating penetration of ‘spirit’ [or ‘mind’], understood as a dimensionless, indivisible point beyond the world. The ontology of being-with is an ontology of bodies, of every body, whether they be inanimate, animate, sentient, speaking, thinking, having weight, and so on. Above all else, ‘body’ really means what is outside, insofar as it is outside, next to, against, nearby, with a(n) (other) body, from body to body, in the disposition.<sup>93</sup>

In the same manner Alphonso Lingis considers subjectivity in the light of embodiment. Embodiment, a relation to the material world, according to Lingis, materializes on the levels and through the instants of sensation, affect and sensuality. Lingis’ line of thought flows from his immersion in many different cultures. Tom Sparrow calls Lingis a radical empiricist. Sparrow discusses how Lingis’ philosophy ‘takes seriously the plurality constitutive of sensibility and refuses to sacrifice the infinity of sensuous relations embedded in the world of

93 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. by R. D. Richardson and A. O. Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 83–84.

94 Tom Sparrow, *Levinas Unhinged* (Hants: Zero Books, 2013), p. 124.  
95 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

experience'.<sup>94</sup> Sparrow notes that what is typically missing in phenomenology is precisely the sensation and that any philosophy that marshals the primacy of perception seems to have abandoned sensation.<sup>95</sup>

According to Sparrow, Lingis' point of departure is Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception. In Merleau-Ponty's thinking any kind of a raw sensation is excluded; instead, Merleau-Ponty takes perception as intentional, it is always a perception of something given and as such sense-giving. In other words, it is not, according to Merleau-Ponty, the physiology of the body that apprehends objects and their relations, but the intentional structure of a given schema. In juxtaposition with Merleau-Ponty, Lingis stresses that a sensation, instead of being intentional, can also suggest an interruption, a shift, a desire and a disorientation. Thus sensations can provoke senselessness, and, following Deleuze's line of thought, non-sense. Accordingly, Lingis stresses that subjectivity is produced 'out of the field of desires, pleasures, and affections accumulated within the sensual matrix' and 'The ontogenesis of the subject is carried out by this non-intentional, non-objective, non-attributive movement'.<sup>96</sup>

96 *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 130.

My makings are produced out of desire to make paintings that matter to me. The experience of myself as a painter is first of all carnal, composed of my flesh that is animated and imaginative in a manner conforming to the thinking of Michel Henry:

Life in its auto-affection – in self-feeling and self-undergoing – is essentially affectivity, but affectivity is not a state or a definite and fixed tonality. It is the history of the Absolute, the infinitely varied manner in which it comes into oneself, is experienced, and embraces itself in the embrace of itself that is the essence of life. This takes place as the pathos of this embrace; it takes on as an a priori necessity, the fundamental ontological forms of Suffering and Joy.<sup>97</sup>

97 Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 37.

Henry argues for the sensible quality of life. What is of importance is that according to him, the sensible quality is the first objectification of life. Life manifests itself in radical and affective immanence, an auto-affection of its *ek-statis*, instead of a represented sentiment.<sup>98</sup> What Henry means with auto-affection is not something that results from perceived objects but is self-receiving; it cannot be represented by something else. Life as such is an immanently felt event and the world as a life-world, the essence of which is sensibility.<sup>99</sup>

98 *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 79.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Due to sensibility being at work in my makings, I need to become aware of my subjectivity and of my, as Henry calls it, bodily-ownness when I reflect on my work. Additionally I have to be aware of the dangers that, on the one hand, any representation can cause life to become blurred or, on the other hand that the connection to the human organic body can be splintered and set aside. As Henry puts it, 'Being is essentialized as a praxis and in this form alone, as a determination of it'.<sup>100</sup> This is to say that similarly research should be understood as a mode of life, as research on one's own flesh experiencing itself doing research. Henry stresses that putting subjectivity out of play means disregarding that what is essential to the human being.<sup>101</sup>

100 Ibid., pp. 46–47, 61.

101 Ibid., p. 76.

Sensibility is transcendent, that is, immanent and natural physical and sensuous human capability, it shows itself; it is what I call the primal mode of being: sensibility is flesh as animated and responsive. Hence, works of art, as well as the whole process of making, are manifested through one's sensible and sensuous body that manifests the patency of the world. A question for further research to answer is how this kind of bodily nearness or immersion in making affects immanence and the creativity of the maker, what kind of layers of immanence there are and what is its dimension. As for example flow is often taken as merely a mental state and not concerning the whole animated body.

The affective quality of life, its auto-affection, to follow Henry's line of thought, grounds sensibility that is our receptive faculty. As I have experienced it, sensibility is not just passive, but it transforms me into both anxious and eager, open and alert, in relation to the thing that affects me. The experiencing subject as possessing sensible qualities can recognize and apprehend the qualities of the objects of the world around. This means that the subject and the object in a way merge into an experience that is necessarily qualitative and aesthetic. What is constituted, here, is the Real's affective essence and the body's sensibility. However, this does not mean that a new object is created, as the aesthetic experience does not exclude realism: a painting stays a painting regardless of my conscious aesthetic experience of it. However, this line of thought leads to the conclusion that the Real is sensible and auto-affective and its qualities can be grasped only by sensibility that never stays the same.

How then is the practitioner-researcher subjectivity marshalled in? Can an artist become a passable scholar, especially if she examines her own work, that is, when the research is intertwined with the immedi-

ate life-world of an artist? The situation is both challenging and fruitful. Only I have access to my own experience. It is challenging because of this physical, sensible and mental bond with the phenomenon that is being investigated. I cannot get rid of my subjectivity. How then to turn this kind of situation into a strength? At the same time one must keep in mind that any excess generalization, objectification, thinning and simplification of the researched phenomenon would destroy it. That is to say, the phenomenon should be kept as fresh and untameable as possible during the whole research.

Having said that, my research conforms to the conditions of scholarly research. I have to make understandable, and not only to myself, what is meant by the artist-researcher. In my research, making art had an inaugural role as it initiated my inner need to start researching. Consequently, making art has been the most important way of researching the experience of incompleteness. This is to say that my research is artistic, art-making-as-research or research with art, as the title of this dissertation suggests – even though I make philosophical and phenomenological inquiries alongside.

Conducting artistic research means that the experience, a tangible relationship with doing, and thinking while making, is the generator of the research. Search for knowledge is conducted via and besides making and the experiences that result from making. Needless to say that researchers, artist-researchers being no exception, work creatively. However, what is typical for the artist-researcher is the uniqueness of every situation in the lived world of making.

Artistic research requires critical self-reflectivity, which is also required of any researcher in any other field. What then constitutes critical self-reflectivity within the field of making artistic research? Is it something that one can measure by and that the conduct of which is constituted by academic and scholarly research? Or is it something that confuses and transgresses modes of judgement and established authority? Is it necessary to engage reduction into the research? In fact, reduction happens naturally when one starts to reflect on experiences. Gradually, the experiences that were lived through while making turn into reminiscence and knowledge when they are translated into language. As such, experience transforms into knowledge that is always conceptual and can be shared. Knowledge is transcendental, a translation, and it is often taken as independent of practical experiential experiences. Artistic research may not necessarily be wholly replicated but it can be made accessible, communicated and understood,

according to my own experience. My task has neither been to explain the artwork nor to reduce its meanings but rather to open up a new image of problematizing, to pose and open up a better problem and a novel way to research it.

The scholar's body is a sensuous body, Paul Stoller writes. He holds that sensuous scholarship 'is an attempt to reawaken profoundly the scholar's body by demonstrating how the fusion of the intelligible and the sensible can be applied to scholarly practices and representations' in an academy where the mind has long been separated from the body.<sup>102</sup> Even though there has been a growing interest among scholars in the significance of the body, at least as a bearer of social and political meanings<sup>103</sup>, Stoller concerns himself with, on the first hand, the way in which writers consider the body as a text that can be read and analysed, that is ripped off of its smells and fluids, or, on the other hand, with the body being articulated via language in a disembodied way.<sup>104</sup> How then does sensuous scholarship affect writing with and within the body? To my mind, and as I have realized it, sensuous scholarship treats the body as a awakening site of experience, of all possible complexities, problems and answers: my hand guides my mind as I paint or write my diary, it shapes my thoughts and makes them visible in another language. Instead of privileging the mind over the body, I insist that the body gives flesh to my mind's accounts.

In sum, I doubt whether it is at all possible to set aside or to bracket my experiences and understandings in an absolutely neutral and objective way, as I am not possibly able to eliminate either my body or the tale of my years. Instead, what I have wanted is to be as close as possible to my carnal experiences. Linda Finlay has discussed a phenomenological attitude as a process of maintaining reductive openness to the world while both restraining and using pre-understandings: 'the researcher engages a dialectic movement between bracketing pre-understandings and exploiting them reflexively as a source of insight'.<sup>105</sup> I have been puzzling over how much bracketing is possible or whether it is possible at all. According to Martin Heidegger, as cited by Susann M. Lavery, pre-understanding is not something that one can put aside and, in a similar way, any method can neither be absolutely value-free nor objective. According to Lavery, Hans-Georg Gadamer viewed any attempt to bracket manifestly absurd: one cannot leave one's immediate situation in the present and the presence of historicity of understanding plays an important role in research.<sup>106</sup>

102 Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. xv.

103 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember (Themes in the Social Sciences)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 198), p. 104.

104 Stoller, pp. xiv–xv.

105 Finlay, p. 13.

106 Susann M. Lavery, 'Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations', in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (2003), pp. 21–35, pp. 24–25.



As an artist-researcher, I had to start from myself, to become both the subject and the object of my own research in order to chase down my research problem. I needed to consciously and rigorously go through my experiences and the process of making, to turn all the material, the evidence and notions into a well-understood research. According to Linda Candy practice-based research means research in which new knowledge is gained by means of practice, making, and by the artifacts that result from this practice, whereas practice-lead research is practice-oriented and aims at producing knowledge that is of use in that practice.<sup>107</sup> I think of artistic research somewhat differently.

107 Linda Candy, 'Practice Based Research: A Guide', in *Creativity & Cognition Studios*, (CCS Report: 2006-VI.0 November), pp.1-19, <http://www.creativityandcognition.com/resources/PBR%20Guide-1.1-2006.pdf> [accessed 19 February 2016].

Tarja Pitkänen-Walter elaborates on how her making art as a method has guided her research path. Also encountering different events in the surrounding world and turning these into future material for her works have benefitted both making art and research, according to her. What is more, she argues that her research has become influenced of texts she has written alongside making and that these texts have been composed according to the rhythm of the paintings: it was only after having written down that it became clear to her what was it that she wanted to remark and what became important.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, I have experienced that making art has guided me through this research. Actual questions concerning my research problem have arisen from making one after another. Therefore I find that it is just to claim that making art, as a bodily engagement, is a credible method for research.

108 Pitkänen-Walter, p. 10.

To begin with, I elaborated on Carole Grey's thoughts on learning by making and experiencing. She refers to David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, in which there are four interrelated stages of action and reflection: first, the learner's immersion in a concrete experience, second, the reflection on that experience, third, conceptualization and meaning-making and, finally, the fourth stage of planning new actions/experiences from the previous stages of the cycle.<sup>109</sup> I related myself to this cycle during the first stage of my research. However, I soon noticed that my cycle did not necessarily include conceptualization and languaging, or at least I faced difficulties in languaging. Instead, I found that sensibility plays the key role in the revolving of the cycle as I live and make from within my body: the finished work is the presentation of the power of the body. In this sense, sensibility concerning the whole being of a maker gives meanings but these meanings cannot automatically be conceptualized neither are they

109 Carole Gray, *A different way of knowing? Inquiry through creative practice*, p. 3, [https://www.academia.edu/9689906/A\\_different\\_way\\_of\\_knowing\\_Inquiry\\_through\\_the\\_creative\\_arts](https://www.academia.edu/9689906/A_different_way_of_knowing_Inquiry_through_the_creative_arts) [accessed 19 February 2016].

present in the work. The making of meanings is not, as Juha Varto notes, about 'listing various qualities of perception'; instead, 'It is precisely the sensory point of contact with the world that makes our incarnate being significant'.<sup>110</sup> In addition, translating artistic research is in itself a stage for experiencing, a relational site of continual interpretative conflicts and ambiguities I am faced with.

110 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 143.

One of the biggest conflicts or challenges that I face during making is to decide when the work has reached the point where it is finally finished. This became the central point at issue for my research as it is tied with the experience of incompleteness like a Gordian knot. Finishing, strangeness or ugliness and incompleteness – this Devil's Triangle – are like natural forces that combine to challenge my leadership.

*Tearing off the canvases of bad paintings from frames, to prime new canvases with hope, eagerness, enthusiasm, desire, and passion to make something better, something that would finally satisfy my hunger. Why do I paint? I think it is the most difficult thing to do. It is a manner of being bodily and of communicating both with myself and with the world. Do I try to achieve something or to prove something? I do not think so, but there is a certain allure in painting and, in the whole, the process sort of connects my being with the world in a concrete way. How does the making affect me then? Do I become something complete as a person, as a subject? I do not think so; I find that completion is impossible. However, painting shows me my potential, it shows that there is more to me. This something, this more, is something that I cannot comprehend; I can only sense it. Nevertheless, it has a strange allure in it and it forces me to try even harder to find something that satisfies me. To finish a work is an endless puzzle. The paradox is that when it feels like a whole, the work is finished even though it is not a complete, absolute work. I usually finish a work several times. Finishing also seems to require many tryouts and hesitations; one day I am sure and the next day I hesitate. It is as if I were playing a game with the Delphic Oracle. In the end, after some time, a year or two or so, if the work does not satisfy me, I will destroy it. I usually tear the canvas into pieces and toss the pieces into the trash bin. Bad paintings are like taking steps backwards. They are annoying but perhaps necessary. 9 April 2013*

How, then, to study such a phenomenon as incompleteness without simplifying or compressing it into a mold of which the contents have been decided and named beforehand, and how also to maintain the required objectivity? Juha Varto stresses in his book *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia* (*The Methodology of Qualitative Research*) the inter-related demands in research: the demand to cope with and have balance between the pertinence and relevance of the object of the study but, at the same time, keep alive its experiential qualities. According to him, there does not exist any objective layer according to which the researcher could conduct one's research questions, themes, understanding and interpretation; instead, the researcher is always tied to one's own history, and this is actually what is meant by the history of research and its contents.<sup>111</sup> Yet, Varto warns that the experiential nature of the research, such as joy, sadness, worry, or even incompleteness, guides the interest usually only in a certain direction, allowing only one perspective and highlighting some priority in a manner that can be difficult to defend.<sup>112</sup> Varto's notion is something I have tried to take into account in this research.

111 Juha Varto, *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1997), p. 97.

112 Ibid., p. 152.

113 According to Roderick J. Lawrence and Carole Després, transdisciplinary research is at the same time between disciplines, across disciplines and beyond any discipline. Lawrence and Després, 'Futures of Transdisciplinarity', in *Futures*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 2004, pp. 397–405, [http://transd.rudygarns.com/lib/exe/fetch.php/futures\\_of\\_transdisciplinarity.pdf](http://transd.rudygarns.com/lib/exe/fetch.php/futures_of_transdisciplinarity.pdf) [accessed 23 February 2016].

Artistic research is, in the first place, research that is based on making. It is also research that can be beneficial to any other type of research that concerns with making and experiencing. Artistic research is not tied to any specific form but can use methods that have not yet been discovered: originality is a typical feature of it. It is usually problem-driven and can well deal with ambiguity and singularity: in fact, these are the realms in which it operates. This does not mean that I have lost my understanding of well-conducted research for ambiguity's sake. Instead, even though I work on sensibility and on the borders of understanding, as if I were testing its limits, the research must make sense for broader audiences and for future research. One of my objectives in this research is to demonstrate that an artistic and experience-based research method can have transdisciplinary<sup>113</sup> and transgressive potential, both for philosophy and the sciences, and it can provide a new perspective to research creativity or any phenomenon that is present in practice.

Artistic research can neither be a controlled nor is it a closed system even when it utilizes, for example, phenomenology or ethnography. Any research is a singular and unique research and requires its own and valid method that draws from the object of the study, shapes the research accordingly and can be revised and corrected during the research. Having said that, what is typical of an artistic research meth-

od is its dynamism and that it is organic by its nature. This indicates that artistic research is necessarily empirical and material research, in which the research frame is based on actual experience rather than a theory or belief. In consequence, research is always incomplete and cannot be modelled beforehand but one must strive to improve it during the entire time span of the study. Yet the analysis and the interpretation of the researched material that necessarily form a singular situation should generate a thesis or a description of the researched phenomenon that can be valued and discussed in a wider perspective.

Materials are at work in artistic research and they need to be understood as active and affective. Andrew Benjamin elaborates that the downside of empiricism is that it positions, situates and conditions the work's mattering and cannot think of it as active and relational. The staging of the work's ideational immaterial content is not enough because 'the material is positioned beyond any possible reduction' and meaning, and this, according to Benjamin, 'opens up the need to account for the release of a potentiality'.<sup>114</sup> In other words, what is staged in art's material presence is incompleteness in what may be envisioned and understood as possible.

Understanding is possible only when it happens in a context where the researcher can position oneself. Understanding means that I make something mine. It plays a part in forming one's subjectivity. In this sense, there is dangerousness in understanding. However, we share what Juha Perttula calls the horizon of understanding:

The horizon of understanding refers here to the pre-existing broader meanings which lay the ground to the ways in which a person experiences and understands the world (s)he inhabits. It means that human understanding is always in a relation to the pre-existing totality of understanding.<sup>115</sup>

When I recall my relative not understanding or myself not understanding my work, it actually means expressing a need of being part of and not left alone, not to be foreign forever, and yet not tamed and domesticated! There is no option of acting like a neutral and external observer: one always positions oneself singularly in relation to other people or things in some possible way that may be envisioned or not, as Shakespeare utters through the lips of Hamlet: 'For, though I am not splenitive and rash, Yet have I something in me dangerous, Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand!'<sup>116</sup>

114 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, pp. 9–11.

115 Juha Perttula, 'The Possibility of a Descriptive Orientation to Psycho-Social Work: Towards the Conceptual Origins', in *Socialinis Darbas. Patirtis ir Metodai*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2009, pp. 9–36. <http://ejournals.vdu.lt/index.php/socialwork/article/view/664/595> [accessed 25 February 2016].

116 Shakespeare, 'Hamlet' [c. 1600], in *The Globe Illustrated Shakespeare*, ed. by H. Staunton, New York, Greenwich House, 1983, p. 1917.

This research mostly took place in my studio in Helsinki in the suburb of Kallio. I have been painting in the same studio for around ten years. We are approximately seven to ten artists working in the same premises. Thereby the environs of my research are very familiar to me – and naturally this affects my research. I sense that I am even closer to my research subject after having spent a long time in the same work environment. To my mind, this aspect enhances the credibility and quality of the research as I do not have to adjust to a new environment.

*It is midsummer and so peaceful and quiet in the city, I must admit I enjoy this quietness. However, tomorrow a new week starts and perhaps not all the people have left for holidays but some come back to the city from the countryside. I am staring at a big red painting, the one I thought was already finished for about two months ago. It is resting against the wall, with the other-than-usual side up. I think I like it better this way. There are a great many things going on in it. However, when it has this other side up now it has some strange movement in it. I think it will become a key painting of this period. It is, in a way, chaotic but it also has an inner sense, the eye travels all around it. Actually, it moves me. Indeed, things move us. It touches my inner self, my sensibility. To describe this connection with a thing with such words as touch or flesh is just not enough, since it does not capture the feeling. This experience, being bound and separate at the same time, is exciting. I already have some ideas and thoughts for the next painting or paintings. I have visions and images in my mind but, at the same time, I have this bodily urge of getting rid as soon as possible of these images that tie me to the next work. In a way, I strive for innocence and worship naïveté. This is peculiar and ironic because I really hated when critics called me, as well as my work, naïve. I think that they did not get the point of my work at all. 23 June 2013*

Later, when I exhibited the work, the key painting, I heard that children had really liked it. One of the little ones had told the person who keeps the gallery that it reminds him of a submarine – a thought that never had entered my mind. Every person is uniquely situated in the world and every subject matter has its own mode of appearing in

a given time and space. This subject matter is always neutral: it is the researcher who values it through one's own readings and experiences and through the entire tale of one's years. It would then be most precarious to try to separate the researcher's subject from the subject matter of the research. For example, Juha Varto discusses the importance of the singular as the quality of the knower or the skilled person in the following words: 'The singular has attracted very little interest among researchers. Yet, the particular (special), as part of the universal (general), has had more appeal'. He then asks: 'How can something partial or particular have knowledge of something that is general in nature?'<sup>117</sup> Varto answers that although in research a special case is interpreted as an instance of the general:

117 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 39.

... actions and deeds are usually explained with reference to these special cases, whose fundamental quality is revealed only after they have been placed in a wider context, which should be wide enough to indicate of which general they are special cases.<sup>118</sup>

118 Ibid., p. 39.

Yet,

The only thing cogently given to us in experience is the singular: the singular phenomenon in time and place, bound to place and, to the largest extent, to the individual whose experience is at stake.<sup>119</sup>

119 Ibid., p. 45.

Every singular has some identical, common features that our minds – minds are in that way fantastic – can work out and that we can connect to our previous experiences and that we can share and communicate. But then again, one has to be careful not to generalize too much and thus not to get driven away from the actual lifeworld. What we have in common is consciousness and an ability to think by using general terms, concepts. Philosophy, for that matter, is particularly keen on concepts. Yet, we should exercise caution when using them. Still, one cannot begin a research project with general terms; instead, research has to begin with the subject matter as such – in phenomenological terms, we have to start with the things themselves, which in my research meant that I had to start with the experience itself. As one of the important developers of research of experience Juha Perttula puts it: 'Without knowing the basic quality of the phe-

120 Perttula, 'The Possibility of a Descriptive Orientation to Psycho-Social Work', p. 10.

121 Varto, *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia*, p. 135.

122 See in more detail Perttula, 'The Possibility of a Descriptive Orientation to Psycho-Social Work'.

123 Perttula, 'The Possibility of a Descriptive Orientation to Psycho-Social Work', pp. 13, 17, 24.

nomenon as a whole, it is impossible to know any specific aspects of it.<sup>120</sup> This is a notion to which also Juha Varto has paid attention, as the researched is a phenomenon and an appearing in a lifeworld. It means that the researcher has to take the researched phenomenon as it appears without reducing it by any theories or pre-conceived perspectives.<sup>121</sup>

We as people live through our experiences: flesh and experiences are all there is of us. Reality shows itself through experiencing. Perttula criticizes phenomenology in that it is not *committed* to any empirical science but is traditionally concerned in analysing the nature of the human being, the nature of knowledge, and so on, and thus distances itself from the lifeworld.<sup>122</sup> He stresses that the truth is not beyond or outside experiential reality: there is no concealed truth. The experiential, in its multiplicity and singularity and as fully as possible, is what should be the focus of any research that is concerned with human experience. According to Perttula, because of the intentionality of consciousness and pre-interpretation: 'Every person is right from his/her own perspective'.<sup>123</sup>

#### RESEARCH OF EXPERIENCE: FINDING A WAY INTO INCOMPLETENESS

No. A writer does not sit on peaks, but climbs to them from the bottom.<sup>124</sup>

124 Gombrowicz, *Diary*, p. 178.

In order to be able to study an experience, this experience first has to be described. There are many ways for description: talking, writing, drawing, dancing, painting, filming, acting, etc. These descriptions, in order to form proper research material, have to be recorded in a form to which one can later on return. What I did first was to decide what kind of research material I needed and see if there are any methods<sup>125</sup> that I could employ outside of making. I decided to keep on painting, to write a diary alongside and to take photographs and to record my making on video.

125 I have chosen to use the word *method* instead of *methodology*. Methodologies tend to be predetermined procedures and therefore involve a danger to undermine and narrow down the subject matter.

What is significant is that I consider my experiential reality as a maker important and meaningful for two reasons: first, because experience is true for each individual that it concerns, and, second,

because without knowing the quality of a singular experience one cannot draw neither specific nor general conclusions about the reality. I live my reality through my own experiential reality. This is to say, first, that reality is actual existence. Second, in principle, every person is right from the point of view of one's own experience and one can describe only those meanings that one has experienced. As Gillian Rose asserts, looking solely at visual images for what they are means neglecting the way in which they are produced and indicates that artworks have been detached from making, experiencing and thinking and then merely coupled to visual culture habitually.<sup>126</sup>

*Oh boy. Here I am again, resting my arms on my diary. I have been working on some comics with the theme of desire. One of my favourite themes persistently present in my makings – and it has nothing to do with psychoanalysis. Desire is necessary; desire is all about the body, the mind, cells, muscles, bones, joints, about every organism. It is wonderful how new thoughts arise while I draw; it is so refreshing after this long painting period. Drawing equals to thinking as a bodily phenomenon. This reminds me that I should read Pallasmaa's *The Eyes of the Skin* once more. I have even thought about that I should realize my dissertation partly in a comics form. As usual, I have been painting over and over, covering almost all that I had previously painted. It seems that my decisions on making and painting vary from day to day. Why is that? One day, when leaving the studio, I might think that a work has progressed or, even better, that it is complete and finished, but the next day is different and I end up destroying all that I have done. Well, what I think of this is that finishing is not something determinate, but it is the beginning, a waypoint. Perhaps there is not even such a thing as finishing. Perhaps all my finished works are actually unfinished ones, beginnings of something. 14 November 2013*

126 Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, (London: SAGE publications, 2002), p. 37.

First, there was this strangeness, clumsiness, even ugliness, and eccentric vividness that I confronted in my own work; I call it a problem. This problem intrigued me and it needed to be solved. Second, it needed to be set down. I call this problem setting. The problem setting was done through my first diary, through which I started to apprehend and reflect what are the key ingredients and features in my



making that bothered me. I then considered the following questions concerning my research to be decisive: what is the relation of the mind, the body and my current situation in making, and how the appearing of something that I find imperfect and strange is interlinked with my making. Using normal everyday language, I needed to look into the following aspects and parts of the body of my making:

- To describe as closely as possible my experiences, feelings of emotions and thoughts concerning my overall situation in my making,
- To examine if there are some aspects, essences or elements that are pivotal or of a more general nature and can be distinguished from my making practices and my experiences. I wanted to stay open to whatever appears. I wanted to keep in mind that the particular phenomenon that I am investigating is always an example of a more general phenomenon of the lifeworld and that there surely is someone else who shares the same problem of strangeness, and then the way in which my singularity is at stake,
- What is the appearing of something about? What are its meaningful conditions and relations in my creative work?
- How does the appearing of strangeness actualize in an actual artwork?
  1. As part or as whole?
  2. As something clear and definite, or as something unspecific and ambiguous, or as apprehensible or sudden?
  3. As something else or nothing and in relation to what?
- After paying this much attention to the previous aspects, I might have some understanding of the phenomenon of the appearing of strangeness, rawness and imperfection in relation to my subjectivity and making.

First, I started to reflect on my making by keeping a diary gathering my experiences, thoughts and emotions before, during and after working in order to get access, as closely as possible, to the experience of strangeness that I had. In this first diary, I documented and analysed my own activity, experiences and thoughts. I kept a diary in my studio between December 2011 and August 2012, every time answering four questions:

1. feelings and reaction before the action,
2. perceptions on the course of action,
3. reflection on actions, and
4. discussion and conclusion after the action.

I made up these questions myself: my preliminary thought was that the experience of strangeness can be captured by answering rigorously to these questions.

I tried to stick to the questions and answer each question each time as precisely as possible. At this point I was concerned with the two central principles of the phenomenological methodology: bracketing and imaginative variation. Bracketing means that the researcher brackets or isolates biases in order to be open to the experience itself, whereas imaginative variation means that the researcher tries to see the object of study from several different angles through the utilization of imagination. However, before long I noticed that the questions limited and confused me. I felt that I could not separate the second, third and fourth questions from each other. Answering these questions seemed to me somewhat forced, the questions seemed to guide and paralyze me too much and draw me away from both the phenomenon and my experience of it. At this phase of my research, I found it very difficult to separate feelings, perceptions and reflection from each other. I wanted more freedom, I wanted to be as open and candid as possible. Gradually, I noticed that I took freedoms, towards a freer, more direct writing. I also started to collect visual materials of various forms: photographs, drawings and videos that include my thinking aloud.

It was this first diary that revealed something unexpected: the experiences of imperfection, inadequacy, insatiability and incom-

pletteness while making and what seemed an endless trying to finish a work. Of course, these were not the exact words that I used, but I later chose incompleteness as the most descriptive and suitable term for my research purpose. I found out that the experience of incompleteness relating to both unfinishedness and insatiability plays a key role in my creative making and perhaps amounts to the experience of strangeness or is somehow related to it.

Second, I then analysed the diary texts and examined what were the themes of the texts that emerged. Naturally, some of the themes I was able to foresee in advance, for example my clumsiness that had always bothered me. Other themes that were present in my writings related to the materials that I use and to how I use them and to the forms or formlessness that are present in my works, the force or vitality of the brush strokes, a sense of time and place, humour and irony, ideas and the impossibility to repeat them, difference and distances. I realized that within my creative making there are so many elements that I could not possibly cover them all in one research. I had to limit my research to one aspect. I was surprised how much of my writing dealt with imperfection and unfinishedness and how difficult it was to bring the works to the end and to finish them, and how much I had been disturbed by the feeling of dissatisfaction. I made an early hypothesis that imperfection and unfinishedness, or later incompleteness, have a meaningful relationship with the sensation of strangeness, unfamiliarity and clumsiness that my works inflicted on me.

Third, I started a second diary in March 2013 and kept it until March 2014. I made entries in the diary regularly while working, documenting what ever came to mind. I used mostly English. At this point, I had already decided to focus on incompleteness. I did not limit myself according to the place where or the time when to write. I did not especially concentrate on writing about the feeling of insatiability or unfinishedness, yet underneath my thoughts I think these might have shadowed my writing because incompleteness was now my research topic. I consider this phase of my research the actual study, whereas the time of my first diary is my preliminary study.

The fourth phase of my study began when I started to reflect and analyze my research material over and over again. In the course of my research I have constantly evaluated my own position in relation to the research topic. I find that my strategy has lead me to advance from the bottom to the peak step by step: after pondering and exam-

ining one complexity of making, a new horizon that needed to be explored had emerged before me.

During my research I have produced the following productions and exhibitions as part of my dissertation. Each exhibition has been made during a phase in which I have investigated one perspective relating to my current research problem. The exhibitions have been the following:

1. Exhibition at Galleria Jangva, Helsinki, 11–28 August 2011, The Sense of Painting. I held a public discussion on 26th of August at the exhibition space on difference and repetition with the researcher philosopher Miika Luoto and the doctoral candidate and performance artist Tero Nauha. I also wrote an essay, *Painting as Difference and Repetition with Reference to Deleuzian Philosophy*, as I needed to explore my habits, manners and difference and I wanted to juxtapose my thinking that of Deleuze.
2. Exhibition at Galleria Huuto, Helsinki, 22–31 August 2014, Sense & Sensibility – Research on Experience, on translating and conceptualizing art and practice-based research. This exhibition reflected my experiences and perceptions of making and creating and then translating experiences into language, notions and concepts. This exhibition was built during the whole exhibition as I spent a lot of time at the gallery space. This exhibition was accompanied by an essay titled *Huomioita taiteellisen tutkimuksen menetelmästä: teoriaa ja sovellutus (Observations of the Method of Artistic Research: Theory and Adaptation)*. The aim of this essay was to explore what others had written on art-based, artistic or practice-based research and then to put that into perspective with my own research.
3. Exhibition at Galleria Pirkko-Liisa Topelius, Helsinki, 10–29 March 2015, Experiences and Experiments. This exhibition consisted of paintings and a video documentary of 27 minutes on the making and creating of three of the paintings presented at the exhibition. An essay, *An Insider's Account of Experience*, accompanied this exhibition. In this essay I elaborated further my thoughts on experience.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Tiina Nevanperä, 'An Insider's Account of Experience', in *Synnyt / ORIGINS*, Vol. 1, (2015), pp. 31–40.

All these exhibitions, the artworks made and the essays written, alongside with my other research material, have been part of my research and been integrated into this research report.

My method can well be described, besides saying that it is artistic, meaning organic and stemming from making, as hermeneutically advancing. However, first, I did not adopt any kind of theoretical framework, so as not to estrange myself from the phenomenon that I researched. In the beginning I was concerned with setting aside any biased view or natural attitude of understanding the research material. This is called bracketing. However, I noticed soon that bracketing would distance me from myself and my research problem. So, I abandoned it. Nonetheless, I find bracketing a meaningful tool when the researcher is conducting research on experiences other than one's own.

Additionally, phenomenological research includes also the process of imaginative variation. According to Juha Perttula, imaginative variation takes into account all the possible meanings, the meaning network, of an experiential phenomenon.<sup>128</sup> I wanted to use imaginative variation as best I could in this research. Obviously my personal history and my natural attitude affect and shape the experiences that I have had and the way in which I have conducted this research. Each person's situation in the world is unique and sets the boundaries within which understanding operates and imaginative variation can be utilized. First and foremost, my research took place against the background that my making and the immensity of painting proposed. Thus, the sphere of my research had a setting, yet its form was not prefixed but incomplete and open.

128 Perttula,  
'The Possibility of a  
Descriptive Orientation  
to Psycho-Social Work',  
p. 15.

*I usually have clear insights on how I should continue with a painting with which I am currently working. This happens usually when I am somewhere else than at my studio, on my way to school, home or to my studio or out of it, in a tram or in a bus. I have these insights on what kind of forms I should perform and what kind of colour combinations I should be mixing, what kind of brush strokes and what kind of rhythms I should execute and what the whole picture should be like. However, it never goes like this. I have these ideas outside the studio and in my mind, but when I enter my studio and start to work, things go totally differently; my body gets involved, it is not anymore just my brain and mind. Nevertheless, I think that*

these preliminary ideas and thoughts create a sort of a stepping stone, even if I abandon completely the idea that I had had in my mind. For example, this particular painting that I have been working on within my mind in a tram would have had some pale yellow spots with some green and umbra in it, but it did not go like that at all. 23 March 2014

I want to note that while I am writing this research report I cannot recall anymore some pale yellow spots: they have been painted over, scraped down or I have destroyed the work. There have usually been countless amount of surfaces on just one canvas. Then, if am painting in my mind somewhere else than in my studio, the moment body is brought to the scene and I am actually painting no painting is being reproduced. I do not know if the pale yellow spots ever materialized. When does painting come to being? Is there a particular moment for that? Is the existence of a painting tied to a being a thing? My answer to the last question is no, painting is tied to experienced suspension that takes place in me.

Hermeneutics, as one method on which the research of experience draws, is about explicating and interpreting the reality and the understanding of the human being. Understanding itself is always interpretation. In this sense, one cannot separate description and interpretation. Hermeneutical reduction is a process that is never complete.<sup>129</sup> Understanding of the phenomenon can grow at each reading as the task is infinite. 'Hermeneutics is art of interpretation', as Romualdo E. Abulad proclaims in his wonderful essay *What is Hermeneutics?*<sup>130</sup> Since hermeneutics is art, or, as Abulad depicts, 'the imparting of a poetic sensibility'<sup>131</sup>, there cannot be any fixed and firm procedures and standards for a legitimate interpretation of a text. Abulad affirms this by stating.<sup>132</sup>

129 According to Perttula, Martin Heidegger's phenomenology can be taken as inscriptive, and the same goes for Merleau-Ponty's line of thinking. The aim of their thinking is to reveal the meaning of meanings, whereas, according to Perttula, descriptive phenomenology does not analyze objects or consciousness *per se* but rather the reality that is given to consciousness through intentionality. Descriptive phenomenology does not search for any concealed truth. Intentional objects are described exactly as they show themselves and as they are experienced. Perttula, 'The Possibility of a Descriptive Orientation to Psycho-Social Work', pp. 11–13. Martin Heidegger asserts that phenomenology expresses a maxim which can be formulated as 'To the things themselves!' According to Martin Heidegger, phenomenology poses the demand to return to the origins of things themselves. This maxim underlies all scientific knowledge. A phenomenon shows itself as something (*Scheinen*), it appears,

it looks like, but is not, what it gives itself out to be. This appearing of something does not mean showing itself as a phenomenon. Phenomena are never appearances, as Heidegger emphasizes. However, a phenomenon is constitutive for appearance. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1962, pp. 50–54. Susan M. Lavery has written a comprehensible article on the essential similarities and differences between hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology. Lavery, 'Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology', pp. 21–35.

130 Romualdo E. Abulad, 'What is Hermeneutics', in *Kritike*, Vol. 1, No. 2. (2007), pp. 11–23 [accessed 25 February 2016].

131 Finlay, p. 14.

132 Abulad, p. 22.

In a way, method kills the art especially since art requires creative spirit. Each creation is a free process whose source is the interplay of faculties unique to each artist... An interpreter follows his or her own inspiration, and mechanical rules are hereby out of the question.

Following Abulad's line of thought, artistic research places the researcher on unsecured terrain to conduct a research and build a research report through engaging oneself bodily with the materials at present. Artistic research becomes then that which it sets out to name, to define and refine by way of the researcher's sensibility.

#### A PRACTICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS PARTICIPATORY PHILOSOPHY

'WHAT can I know? Is only half the problem; the other half is how can I know?'<sup>133</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, 'Philosophical Fragments' [1796], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 335–343, p. 338.

<sup>134</sup> Art, creativity and imagination do not represent a threat to reason. Still, a large number of philosophers have played down the significance of experience: analytic philosophy focuses on logic, the philosophy of science, linguistic analysis and the philosophy of mind. At best, art and creativity has been considered as belonging to aesthetics, to the theory of art that has distanced itself from the practice of art.

Artistic research is an act of participation with reference to the reality, singularity and difference. The binary relation of artistic research, on the one hand, that of making art and being an artist and, on the other hand, carrying research as a researcher, opens the researched question to something more: to the vertiginous thrill of in-exactitude, and, to an annihilation of the separation of art and science.<sup>134</sup> Artistic research as an organic endeavour constantly needs to question itself and transgress any presuppositions. This is exactly the reason why I had to work philosophy into my research: to be able to form better questions, to have a better view into the problem, to make a composition of the two and even to question philosophical insights.

From my point of view, a philosophical account gives me a theoretical underpinning when it comes to the premises on how to identify the subject matter, how it can possibly be examined and how the research should be conducted. But, first and foremost, on how can I understand what I research. There is no general understanding of the world or a general method by which understanding should happen; instead, understanding is always done from a point of view of the human subject and is singular. Nevertheless, understanding and lan-

guage, for that matter, are inseparable features of being human, and they concern not just ourselves but the things around us that we all share.

Participatory philosophy is a method and a routine that Juha Varto has introduced. By participatory philosophy Varto means a method in which the researcher has an interrogative and open attitude towards both the empirical phenomenon that one is researching and the philosophy that one is implementing in the research. Participatory philosophy means that one has to be aware that, first, the phenomenon that one explores does not get invalidated, blurred or transformed into something else, but that its essence and origin stay as intact as possible, and, second, that the theory that one implements does not get twisted nor perverted. As Varto emphasizes, the researcher has to use the whole array of one's resources as well as one's experience.<sup>135</sup>

Then, what comes to this research at hand, participatory philosophy requires that I understand myself as a living researcher in the middle of the empirical phenomenon that I examine. This means that I understand that practices are complex and rich in meaning. It also means that, alongside my own interpretations, I employ the thinking and theories of other thinkers as my controllers while I juxtapose my own experiences and thinking with theirs. The others are there to challenge my thinking and to help me arrive at better descriptions of the phenomenon. In participatory philosophy, the experiential and empirical and the conceptual give meaning to each other and cannot think of each other as separate, just as I cannot think of the roles of an artist and researcher separately: instead these roles both overlap and control each other. Participatory philosophy presumes that the empirical world is the basis of the world of knowledge and that one should not distance oneself from the real-life world and its flesh.<sup>136</sup>

I have chosen the method of participatory philosophy alongside artistic research as a part of it because I need philosophical thinking tools in my research. However, as there are questions which constitute the core of a certain skill, like, for example, making art, and as making art is a complex phenomenon, it is justifiable to talk about theorizing and not about any specific theory or philosophy. My intention is not to take over any method or theory but to emanate from art practice, whereby a direct and reflective contact to the nature of the problem can be achieved. I have introduced myself to some philoso-

135 Varto, *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia*, p. 162.

136 *Ibid.*, p. 162.



phers' thinking, and the reader will get to know them better later on. It is important to note that I will only give my own reading on them and only concerning the questions in which I think their thinking is helpful in this study. At this point I want to name but a few, and some I have already introduced.

The thinking of the Jena Romantics, that is the Early Romantics, especially Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) and Novalis (1772–1801), is grounded on the impulse that we humans are beings of sense before we become creatures of reason. It was Friedrich Schlegel who reformulated the idealist tradition of thinking on subjectivity. For Schlegel, an I, as the expression of a self consists of a metamorphosis, adaptation and transfiguration of the pre-existing culture. Therefore, the subject is no longer the origin but rather a mediator of existing forces. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy view that 'The motif of Romanticism is in fundamental revolt against Reason and State, against the totalitarianism of Cogito and System'<sup>137</sup>, and they claim: 'We still belong to the era romanticism opened up'<sup>138</sup>

What is characteristic of Romantic poesy is the notion of ecstasy and that the work exceeds beyond itself as it oscillates between the presented and the presenting. Such poetry is critical and reflective. The transcendental process is presented in the product as well. This standpoint marks the incommensurability of any concept that is made beforehand. The sensuous in an artwork shows something that extends beyond the reach of conceptual pre-defined meanings. There is a great deal at stake in Romantic thinking, not least in relation to understanding such concepts as finite and infinite, material and immaterial, sensible and insensible, presentable and unrepresentable. The I is the first idea how this world is constituted: it is from the I we can understand the world. New humanity implies sensibility and the art of poesy is given the privilege to outlive all other sciences and arts.<sup>139</sup> However, the Early Romantic thinking did not become the prevalent mode of thinking of art and aesthetics in Western World. Nevertheless, I find its radicalness thought provoking and helpful in this study.

One of the characteristics of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy is his ability to have seemingly incompatible disciplines, like science and aesthetics, children's literature and philosophy, become friends without conceptual obstructions between them. For example, Deleuze brings out in his text *How Do We Recognize Structuralism* the relationship between structuralism and the *portmanteau* words that Lewis Carroll invented. According to Deleuze:

137 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe & Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, (1988), p. 15, <https://joacamilloopenna.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/lacoue-labarthe-nancy-the-literary-absolute.pdf> [accessed 17 May 2016].

138 Ibid., p. 15.

139 Schelling, Hegel & Hölderlin?, 'Earliest Program for a System of German Idealism' [1796], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 72–73.

It is the nonsense which animates at least the two series, for example verbal series and alimentary series, not in a way that the word would have two meanings but having an other order than words possessing a sense and which provides them with sense by circulating through them.<sup>140</sup>

According to Jean-Luc Nancy, art is not about imitation or mimesis, nor can it be apprehended in terms of representation; art is about revealing Being as singular plural. Art exposes a figure or a form, which as a touching exposes a world not as totality, but as fragment.<sup>141</sup> Nancy criticizes the view that art would represent a configuration of some philosophical, religious, scientific or subjective truth. For Nancy, art appears as such, there are no meanings, ideas, truth or a special telos outside a particular work of art, 'but painting always paints a vanity of words'<sup>142</sup>, and that

The image gives a presence that it lacks – since it has no other presence than the unreal one of its thin, filmlike surface – and it gives it to something that, being absent, cannot receive it.<sup>143</sup>

My paintings and my making of paintings give presence to this research, the meshing and weaving together of sense out of their apparent non-sense. All I need to do is unravel sense out of my making with the help of my research. Sense, according to Nancy, requires material that makes absence a *presence*. Sense is a movement and it 'consists only in being woven or knit together'.<sup>144</sup> The absent in an artwork are the things that are imagined and that take their place in sensibility. Sense as such has no material though it is woven into a painting. For Nancy, sense is always embodied through touch, and what sense touches is existence, sense gives presence to presence. Somewhat accordingly Tarja Pitkänen-Walter has depicted marvellously that painting is a living reality and not representing it: 'it challenges the discursive order of the world'. As claimed by her, painting opens the possibility to explore reality more intently.<sup>145</sup>

The Cartesian assumption that minds think and bodies act accordingly has been abandoned in this research. However, the question remains: is the body observed rather than a living animated presence? According to Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, the likeliest candidate to capture the living presence as an experience is the first-person body:

140 Gilles Deleuze, 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism', in *Desert Islands and Other texts 1953–1974* (Paris: Semiotext(e), 2002), p. 186.

141 Ian James, *The Fragmentary Demand: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 218.

142 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. by J. Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 72.

143 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

144 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

145 Pitkänen-Walter, p. 151.

To re-enter the world of the living body is to recover a world of mysterious possibilities and to forego, at least for a time, a world of self-made empirical certainties. That world of possibilities exists because the living body is a source of mystery yet at the same time is utterly transparent; it is guileless, without pretensions, it hides nothing.<sup>146</sup>

146 Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Corporeal Turn* (Charlottesville: Imprint Academic Philosophy Documentation Center, 2009), pp. 20–21.

Sheets-Johnstone further elaborates that the liberating possibilities of the body are mysterious not only because of their freshness and unexpectedness: ‘They are mysterious also because there is no cause-effect sequence that might be said to underlie them’, and that

Moments of illumination or insight that come in attending or listening to the body are not within our direct control. This comes even clearer if we consider that the experiences are not necessarily repeatable.<sup>147</sup>

147 Ibid., p. 22.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone emphasizes the first-person perspective in all this by noting and warning that in case knowledge is not implicit but orchestrating and conducting the experience, body becomes the third person body. In case one tries to control the experience, one is no longer in the midst of experience but outside of it, observing the experience as if it were a clinical rendering, a second-hand thriller. Then under these blighted conditions, the mysterious could scarcely come to be discovered.<sup>148</sup> Sheets-Johnstone’s focus is on being a body and especially her elaborations on being a body in movement are notions that I will explore in more detail in the following chapters.

148 Ibid., p. 22.

#### OTHER ATTEMPTS TO FRAME ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Artistic research and methodological approaches to it have been written about rather a lot in the past decade: there are several books, manuals and instructions available on the topic.<sup>149</sup> To this subject there is certainly not one single angle or viewpoint; instead, it is inherently inexhaustible. Artistic research has also been addressed by a number of Finnish researchers, theorists and thinkers.

149 A Google search for the words *artistic research* and *methodology* gives around 16,000,000 hits.

Finnish philosopher Tere Vadén elaborates how a scientific worldview is built on the principle of repeatability in his article on artistic research that was published in 2001. Vadén ponders on the meaningfulness of experience as a productive and creative force. Vadén stresses, experiencing is something that cannot be divided into scientific and artistic experiencing but, rather, these two modes of being in the world are two simultaneous sides of being; we cannot divide the world into two or more categories. Vadén underlines that both ways of experiencing must fit one way or another on the same continuum. According to him, these two positionings, the artist and the researcher, should run in parallel but in such a way that the different roles can be recognized.<sup>150</sup>

Finnish theorists Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta and Tere Vadén published quite recently a book titled *Artistic Research Methodology: Narrative, Power and the Public*.<sup>151</sup> The basic premise of Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén is that artistic research is not the same thing as making art. However, the authors are of the opinion that making art is an integral part of artistic research. According to these writers what artists tend to have as an asset is the skill of being sensitive and this skill can be cultivated for the interest of research. This cultivation can happen partly through identification of the different roles of the artist-researcher. Yet these roles should be treated separately from each other. Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén elaborate further the artist-researcher's dual role as an insider and as an outsider. The authors stress that if the external researcher's role is emphasized too much, it results in the loss of the know-how and experience that a person has as an insider as an artist and practitioner. The authors point out that the different roles may also have methodological implications. What is more, the authors give a basic formula of artistic research while emphasizing it as an open-ended, historical, context-aware and narrative enterprise.<sup>152</sup>

I find a sharp division into the dual roles of the artist and the researcher problematic for the following reason: when I am making, the making is itself research. In this sense making becomes my research material; hence, there is a two-layered research going on although the research objective is different. In making art, the objective of research or making is to aim as close as possible to the perfect possible work of art, whereas in this research my research object is the manifestation of incompleteness, i.e. the experience of difference and distance that I experience when I do not achieve my first objective.

150 Tere Vadén, 'Väännetäänkö rautalangasta? Huomioita kokemukselliseen käytäntöön perustuvan tutkimuksen metodologiasta', in *Taiteellinen tutkimus*, ed. by S. Kiljunen and M. Hannula, Helsinki: Kuvataideakatemia, 2001, pp. 91–111.

151 Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta & Tere Vadén, Tere, *Artistic Research Methodology: Narrative, Power and the Public* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2014).

152 Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, pp. 15–19.

Thus, these objectives overlap each other and it is almost impossible to tell them apart as they are woven together.

Finnish artist-theorist Jyrki Siukonen has presented a view that contrasts with above-mentioned methodological orientation that advocates taking practice and research as distinguished from each other. Siukonen is of the opinion that art practice is research from the start: research conducted by artists is thinking via doing, a tangible relationship.<sup>153</sup> Siukonen emphasizes that research has always been an elemental part of art making and, as such, the practitioner's role has grown even more important theoretically. According to him, artists oscillate between knowledge and mythical thought and art, as intertwined with research: is more than just the implementation of a practical problem concerning a single work of art. Siukonen elaborates on Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of *wild thinking* and stresses the importance of the practical knowledge that a practitioner has of materials and formation of an art object. Wild thinking is thinking with one's body. Wild thinking is thinking in its immediacy, in which time and space are in one's own hands and meaningful in one's own terms, within one's immediate reach. Accordingly Juha Varto writes: 'One can say that this is a subjective projection of a mental space, full of animistic fantasies and images, as well as other unmanageable features, such as cohesion of the social, the dead and the living'.<sup>154</sup> However, problems may arise when the images that emerge from wild thinking need to be communicated for example in this research.

153 Jyrki Siukonen, *Tutkiva taiteilija, kysymyksiä kuvataiteen ja tutkimuksen avioliitosta* (Keuruu: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Taide, 2002).

154 Varto, *Basics of Artistic Research*, pp. 45–46.

155 See, for example, her dissertation titled *In Nature, a dialogue with the words of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää*, (Helsinki: Maahenki, 2011).

156 Leena Valkeapää, 'In the Fells, Artistic thinking as a basis for research', in *Artbeat* (Helsinki: Aalto ARTS Books, 2012), pp. 117–135, p. 119.

157 Ibid., p. 131.

Artist-researcher Leena Valkeapää brings to the fore the singularity that is inherent in arts-based research, as well as the importance of everyday experience. In other words, her research method is based on her own personal experience within her own lifeworld in the highland fell region of Finland. She has not acted as an outside observer but as an insider-researcher. In her research she uses artistic modes of thinking.<sup>155</sup> In Valkeapää's own words, she seeks 'to apply artistic experience as a fundamental skill in scholarly research'. She is of the opinion that perspectives that emerge from her subject of study would remain unnoticed and could not be observed if they were investigated through any other method.<sup>156</sup> According to Valkeapää, relying on experience leads to recognizing singularity as it manifests itself. It is a kind of passiveness from which the research emerges as she lives her life in her research environment.<sup>157</sup> During my research I have reflected on Valkeapää's thinking on many occasions, as it cor-

responds with my own experiences on conducting artistic research in reciprocity with the making.

Juha Varto, who has studied and written about artistic research on various occasions, sheds light on the thinking of Edmund Husserl and its meaningfulness in artistic research. Varto calls attention to how Husserl emphasizes the importance of imagining in all research and to how in the identification and interpretation of a phenomenon all means are permitted, as long as these means bring the imagination and the world together and do not become only a fantasy.<sup>158</sup> The employment of sensibility along with imagination cannot be emphasized too much in any research. Without them, the research that is being carried out becomes something that is built on ready-made ideas and concepts and theories and is not what actually is meant by research.

Varto underlines that research should never forget its initial task of identifying a phenomenon as it manifests itself in the first place, for this is the exact point in which the connection between the world and something novel as appearing can be apprehended. Accordingly, Varto emphasizes that, for a researcher looking into that what is appearing and bringing it forth, is the most pivotal and primary task of research and only after that come other demands. Varto notes that one usually has the habit of approaching the research object with certain presets and pre-conceived opinions, and even though one is aware of them, they tend to colour and influence each action, finding, perception and analysis. An imaginative method means a clear break from any pre-settings that invites one to explore openly the research object. Any kind of reflective description of the phenomenon cannot take advantage of any pre-configured concepts and structures, because this kind of approach would attach the phenomenon prematurely and ahead of time to a more general connection, to which it does not necessarily belong. Only after the phenomenon has been described is it possible to consider its essences and impacts on a more general level.<sup>159</sup> In this sense, the most important and the most difficult task in researching a singular phenomenon is to maintain one's imaginative perception and not to rely on past monoliths of thought.

In his book titled *Basics of Artistic Research, Ontological, Epistemological and Historical Justification*, Varto reflects on the individual research subject's uniqueness, openness and complexity in relation to knowledge production. He is concerned with the demand that all complex phenomena presuppose openness and that the phenomena take

158 Juha Varto, 'Esille saattamisen tutkiminen', in *Taiteellinen tutkimus*, ed. by S. Kiljunen and M. Hannula (Helsinki: Kuvataideakatemia, 2001), pp. 49–58.

159 Varto, *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia*, pp. 125, 136, 139.

160 Varto,  
*Basics of Artistic Research*,  
pp. 57, 150, 154.

place in a historical context and then that they will be solved by models that are derived from closed systems. According to him, the essential point of departure in all research is the lifeworld, meaning that phenomena and issues that we deal with on a daily basis are part of the world and in relation to each other. Varto asks: 'Are human beings complete, or constantly developing and incomplete?'<sup>160</sup> He is of the opinion that there is no such thing as a neutral research method, but all methods are tainted by the manner in which the research is carried out and by the research questions posed. Varto remarks: 'Recipe-type universal methods may generate research, but no new knowledge, and specifically no such new knowledge that identifies practice'.<sup>161</sup>

161 Ibid., pp. 154, 159.

Thorough considerations of artistic research are the requirement of rigour and the intention to add to knowledge and understanding. Harri Laakso's reading of Maurice Blanchot points to the notion of unworking of the work of art where the artwork as a material being is not an accomplishment but is in a way incomplete and has an imaginary centre. The imaginary centre is the prerequisite for the work's inescapable plurality. It points towards nothingness, towards the destined of the work. The imaginary centre is something that is felt and desired and that calls for communication, yet it is neutral, neither the object nor the subject, as Laakso notes. In this respect, Laakso asserts that in Blanchot's thinking the artist and the researcher have similar aims with regard to their method as a sort of technique of infinitude, in which the centre is not to be found instead one abandons oneself to approach it infinitely.<sup>162</sup> In Maurice Blanchot's own words:

162 Harri Laakso,  
'Imaginary Research',  
in *The Art of Research*,  
*Research Practices  
in Art and Design*, ed.  
by M. Mäkelä and S.  
Routarinne (Helsinki:  
The University of Art  
and Design Helsinki,  
2006), pp. 142–144.

Theories are necessary (the theories of language for example): necessary and useless. Reason works in order to work itself out, by organizing itself into systems, seeking a positive knowledge where it can posit itself, pose and repose and at the same time convey itself to an extremity which forms a stop and closure. We must pass by way of this knowledge and forget it... Forgetfulness is a practice, the practice of writing that prophesies because it is enacted by the utter renunciation of everything: to announce is perhaps to renounce.<sup>163</sup>

163 Blanchot,  
*The Writing of the Disaster*,  
pp. 75–76.

The above mentioned studies on artistic research are varied in their approach and perspective: in some of them the writer's own experience of art practice, and the associations and interpretations

on it, form the basis of reflections and study, whereas others are motivated by methods that are based on philosophy or auto-ethnography, for example; methods that study the problem from outside from a perspective that is specified and predetermined. The present study, however, focuses on the experiences of an artist-researcher that take place while making an artwork; thus my position as an artist and a researcher places empirical knowledge and theoretical interests close to each other in a way that the roles of artist and researcher cannot be separated from each other. Employing the binary relation of artist-researcher that is inevitably an intertwined relation, this study discusses experience while making and that is manifested in engagement, sudden eruptions, displacements, matter as something mattering and body yielding or resisting. Yet, I find that different theories and methods can well benefit from being beside each other when there are good reasons for that. This study would not have been possible without theoretical guidelines that come from philosophy and research on experience. What I hope to illuminate is that artistic research is not a single vision treatment of a problem but a transgressive endeavour.

#### ON WRITING: ANY FOOL CAN GET INTO AN OCEAN<sup>164</sup>

There is no explosion except a book.<sup>165</sup>

He lived a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glasses. He had an odd autobiographical habit, which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past.<sup>166</sup>

*I have decided not to keep a diary any longer. I have a sense that I have finally finished the four paintings that I have been working on for over a year. As I see it, my work is very fragmented. The making of the four paintings has been partly exhausting, partly very rewarding. It is high time to move on. This is what I plan to do: I will stop writing a diary, keeping a*

164 Spicer, 'Any Fool Can Get into an Ocean'.

165 Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 124.

166 James Joyce: 'A Painful Case', in: *Dubliners*, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/j/joyce/james/j8d/chapter11.html> [accessed 25 February 2016].



diary has been a must, I have felt obliged to keep it. Keeping a diary is not my favourite thing at all, although I have always kept some sort of a diary, but that has been like an accident, I have not paid attention to writing down things the way I have while writing these two diaries. Now, it has been a sort of description of the thoughts and emotions on my doings at the studio. Well, I am eager to read what I have been writing about the makings so far. What is the purpose of a diary? To fill in gaps? To understand? To give meanings? To point to a direction? To formulate? To whine? To celebrate? To recollect? To think? Perhaps all of these and many more. However, writing is a different medium. I would not even say that it is reflecting. Why? Because it happens with a different medium. Writing is translating, and it is not. I have been thinking whether I should write a notebook instead of a diary. Anyhow, it is time to move on and to get rid of the diary. 19 September 2013

I never stopped keeping a diary; it became a form of reflecting on my making, experiences, emotions and thoughts. My research started from my own experience, when an emotion, a feeling, a thought, grew, picked, rushed, flared up, exploded, faded, collided, got me into its grip and, at moments, thrust me further away from myself without an advance warning – the object of making is precarious, not a stable object, neither am I. Painting stems from an idea, an experience, a feeling, a disaster, a suddenness or a crack-up of experience, habits, manners, difference or chaos, you name it. It is something that appears and occupies a maker's mind and body and transforms her. Accordingly Tarja Pitkänen-Walter writes that the subjectivity of a painter is not stable but demands constantly redefining.<sup>167</sup>

167 Pitkänen-Walter,  
p. II.

Maurice Blanchot makes clear that being an artist is absolute subjectivity, he writes:

Schlegel is supposed to have said: 'Every poet is Narcissus.' We should not be content simply to rediscover in this statement the superficial mark of a certain romanticism according to which creation – poetry – is absolute subjectivity and the poet a living subject in the poem that reflects him, just as he is poet by virtue of having transformed his life into poetry by incarnating in it his pure subjectivity. One ought, no doubt, to understand Schlegel's statement in another way too: in the poem, where the

poet writes himself, he does not recognize himself, for he does not become conscious of himself.<sup>168</sup>

168 Blanchot,  
*The Writing of the Disaster*,  
p. 135.

How to capture experiences, emotions and thoughts that my works evoke in me, how to describe an intense form of intimacy, verbally before, during and after making? Does the writing distract and distance one from the experimental, from the sensorial? Can writing connect sensory experience and theoretical discussion in a useful and true way, and must the researcher be conscious of herself while painting and making as well?

Language is never innocent. It establishes its own truth, its own layer, and for this reason I have to be concerned with language. Language is crucial in all relations: does it control us or do we control it? This is not all, since language has fantastic elements: it is actually bloody and messy. Spelling casts a spell, judges order sentences, treaties are closed by clauses and punctuation is needed to puncture the speeches and to mark a portion of time and rhythm. Writing is a performative act, a material manifestation: it demonstrates what matters to the writer. I write of my own experience to capture the felt experience that I have made mine. As I make it mine, I place myself in my research and make it mine.

As a researcher, I have to be sensitive to the issue that I am researching and adjust my arguments accordingly. Thus writing becomes an aesthetic act. On the one hand, as an insider, my insider status allows me to have insights to which outsiders have no access. On the other hand, I cannot be separated from my research; I write from the location of my bodily presence, which means that I write from my experience as it appears to myself. How do I make my case, how do I shape words on the page, what kind of compositional strategy should I create and follow? These questions followed me throughout this research.

I proceed from writing as an affective plane, with the desire to provide a more complete picture of my experience and to let my sensibility flourish. A purely cognitive description of my making, experiences and thoughts risks failing to give rich and nuanced portrayal and erases the individual as an administrative problem in the name of generalizability. Meaning is extremely dangerous, and at the same time it is what I am after. Ronald J. Peliás writes that a researcher who sees oneself as engaged writes more closely about one's involvement in the problem that one is addressing.<sup>169</sup> In other words, one posi-

169 Ronald J. Peliás,  
'Writing into  
Position, Strategies  
for Composition  
and Evaluation', in  
*The Sage Handbook of  
Qualitative Research*, ed.  
by N. K. Denzin and Y.  
S. Lincoln, London: Sage  
Publications, Inc., 2011,  
p. 662-663.

tions oneself as contributing to the question one has posed to oneself. I have to make sure that I am myself at the centre of the research, yet neither in a self-indulgent nor in a monotonous manner. I have to make sure that I am sufficiently in the background and give room to the thoughts of others as well.

A sensuous writing strategy asks researchers to speak from their senses and from their sensibility. A sensuous strategy allows the body to be alive in the research, it is writing from the bodily experience. As such the body becomes the location of knowledge, a site where the researcher speaks from a felt experience, from an awareness of what the body endured, from a sense of self.<sup>170</sup> In doing so, the vulnerability and sensibility of the body gains agency by asserting its history and its living presence in the palm of one's hands in one's seek of future fulfilment.

170 Ibid., p. 663.

Any fool can get into an ocean  
But it takes a Goddess  
To get out of one.  
What's true of oceans is true, of course,  
Of labyrinths and poems. When you start swimming  
Through riptide of rhythms and the metaphor's seaweed  
You need to be a good swimmer or a born Goddess  
To get back out of them  
Look at the sea otters bobbing wildly  
Out in the middle of the poem  
They look so eager and peaceful playing out there where the  
water hardly moves  
You might get out through all the waves and rocks  
Into the middle of the poem to touch them  
But when you've tried the blessed water long  
Enough to want to start backward  
That's when the fun starts  
Unless you're a poet or an otter or something supernatural  
You'll drown, dear. You'll drown  
Any Greek can get you into a labyrinth  
But it takes a hero to get out of one  
What's true of labyrinths is true of course  
Of love and memory. When you start remembering.<sup>171</sup>

171 Spicer, 'Any Fool can  
get into an Ocean'.

## CLOSING WORDS

Reality is opaque; but there are certain points – clues, signs – which allow us to decipher it.<sup>172</sup>

The singularity of experience can be best examined and understood from the position of an artist-researcher oneself, because the subject matter requires for it to be taken just as it shows itself in the present, in the flesh of sensibility. Experience travels like a current or a deluge and opens from the receiver's standing point disrupting it. Paradoxically, it is not a fixed point but a site of departure. Evidently, I as a researcher have to define, draw lines, demarcate, choose questions and themes, but all this has to result from my preliminary understanding of the subject matter and from my relation to it as something that moves me.<sup>173</sup> In my opinion, how the researcher opts for a subject matter, how one defines it and how in one's opinion the subject matter is situated in one's reality and in the reality at large, would then be more transparent and graspable for others.

I identified myself strongly as an artist-researcher right from the beginning. I also realized that there is no option of acting like a neutral and external observer. My research began in an experience of bewilderment. Nevertheless, there is a danger that I look at things purely from my own perspective and for my own interest. Transparency with regard to my research topic is therefore necessary to opt for relevant research questions: how to define the problem and how the subject matter is situated in the lifeworld in general. A philosophical account alongside a phenomenological research method can provide constructive insights and give a helping hand. Yet, each research is singular.

In every research there is a subject who conducts the research, analyses the materials and makes reports. As I see it, subjectivity cannot be a problem as long as there is some observable material present. In research, the material makes things objective. A diary has been my primary source of reflecting on my experiences and my actions during making. A diary has been a means by which I have recorded a feel for the work, and later it has provided data for analysis and a tool which helps in grasping and filling out vital and problematic issues both in making and in research. It has enabled a dialogue between myself and the work and research. Besides the diary, I have tape-recorded, photographed and videotaped myself while working.

172 Carlo Ginzburg, 'Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method', in *History Workshop*, No. 9, (1980), pp. 5–36, p. 27.

173 Varto, *Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia*, p. 74.

As a result, I became interested in the physicality of my making and the embodiment of creativity. I had not realized how flexible my body is when I am engaged in working. This made me realize how much potentiality my body has of which I have not been aware. The plasticity of my body, on the one hand, and its clumsiness, on the other, is an interesting combination to which I needed to pay more attention. I mostly work on the floor, kneeling or sitting on my heels, but when the work so requires, and it usually does, my body can reach out in the most imaginative ways; I was amazed at the kind of acrobatics of which my body is capable. The state of the human body, its sensibility and physiology are something that cannot be quantified but can only be lived and felt as something qualitative, or better as natural. As a result of these observations, body has been given a pivotal role in this research.

I have conducted my research and produced the research material on two interlaced layers: first, that of making, as I have made the artworks some of which were later exhibited and, second, that of documenting my experiences in diaries and by photographing and videotaping. As I have been making the works and planned the exhibitions, I have also written each time an essay on the problems that I have found perplexing at the given moment. Yet, this research has all the way been toying with uncertainty, since the research object, incompleteness, is more than ambiguous, and its essence, if there is any, its meaning and the mode of interpreting it have not at any stage solidified into one unified monolithic seamless entity or completion. What is more, I do not feel like being able to manage all the variables related to my research. Quite the contrary, what is characteristic of my study is that it is dynamic and animated in itself. This means that the research has been organic, it touches the researched problem, however, not imprisons it.

During the course of this research I have been impelled to change my own attitudes, and also my research question has become more refined and crystallized. My understanding about my primal research problem, the strangeness of my works, and my thesis on sensibility has also been strengthened. The researched phenomenon, incompleteness, has become more understandable. The troubling beauty of rawness of incompleteness, its conflict with and, finally, its superiority to pretence, has materialized in this research in an attempt to understand and depict it in one possible way.

This said, the overall emphasis still appears to be on art as a sign, a symbol or some sort of social management and on attaching cultural

labels to an artwork, identifying schools and styles, establishing sources and influences to a work's quality and its place in a canon. It only needs to read critics written by men of delicate taste. I do not claim that this approach is totally misleading; it does have a context, the socio-cultural context, in which the artist is also working, and artists live from the critics they receive. This context is, indeed, many things, not to mention political. Besides, I do not want to assert that art is elsewhere or that it transports us elsewhere, nor that canons, meanings and symbols have nothing to do with art. Instead, I want to question reducing art to signification or to readily existing, discourse-related accounts and theories, while forgetting art's essence as diverse multiplicity of potentiality of creativity. Creative work is future-oriented. Its material is incompleteness.

Creativity is innate in the human being. Evolution, adaptation, survival of the fittest and sexual selection are all evidence of creativity. For example, Geoffrey Miller asserts that sexual choice runs deeper than the senses and is dependent on memory, anticipation, judgement, decision-making and pleasure. In other words, emotional preferences go beyond sensory or intellectual preferences. According to him, if we consider arts as a source of pleasure, then it is correct to assume that evolution is prone to make pleasurable those behaviours that are adaptive.<sup>174</sup> Yet, the question remains: why then do many artists consider themselves as going against and resisting current and popular opinion on what is pleasurable? Why do I paint ugly pictures? The question of adaptation, evolution and contemporary art is fascinating and deserves further study.

Every experience has an essence of the aesthetic. But what is aesthetic? The use of the word aesthetics came to light during the 18th century and was connected to the emergence of subjectivity and the decline of theology, in the wake of the thinking of Immanuel Kant, Alexander Baumgarten and David Hume. However, the act of aesthetic judgement is as old as the meditation on art and beauty. Next, I will turn to aesthetic judgement and to the way in which Immanuel Kant first elaborated on it.<sup>175</sup> Kant kept the theory of knowledge and aesthetics apart. I will first briefly illustrate Kant's and David Hume's elaborations on the aesthetic object and judgement of taste. After that I will discuss in a word the thoughts of Theodor Adorno on art, on the dialectic of an artwork between aesthetic norms and its own particularity. However, I will proceed in the light of my own research problem that incompleteness poses.

174 Geoffrey Miller, *The Mating Mind, How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature* (London: Vintage, 2000), pp. 138, 259.

175 According to Martin Heidegger, the word *aesthetics* is formed from the Greek words *aisthetike episteme* that mean knowledge of human behaviour with regard to sense, sensation and feeling, and knowledge of how these are determined. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Volume One and Two*, trans. by D. F. Krell (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), p. 78.

## 2 Towards the Aesthetics of Incompleteness

176 Schelling, Hegel & Hölderlin, 'Earliest Program for a System of German Idealism' [1796], pp. 72–73.

177 Jean-François Lyotard, *Toward the Post-Modern*, ed. by R. Harvey and M. S. Roberts (New Jersey: Humanity Press, 1995), p. 169.

178 Barnett Newman, *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. by J. P. O'Neill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 304.

179 Peter Osborne, *From an Aesthetic Point of View, Philosophy, Art and the Senses*, ed. by P. Osborne (London: Serpent's tail, 2000), the back cover.

180 In this study I use the term *judgement* in a sense of making something mine. According to Jean-François Lyotard, to judge is to settle, to decide, to discern, synthesize. Lyotard, *Toward the Post-Modern*, p. 174.

I am now convinced that the highest act of reason is an aesthetic act, in that reason embraces all ideas, and that in beauty alone are truth and goodness joined together. The philosopher must possess as much aesthetic power as the poet. The people with no aesthetic sense are our philosophers of the letter. The philosophy of the spirit is an aesthetic philosophy. Without an aesthetic sense, one cannot be ingenious in anything; one cannot even reason ingeniously about history.<sup>176</sup>

The artwork as act is not artwork as object.<sup>177</sup>

Aesthetics is for me like ornithology must be for birds.<sup>178</sup>

Contemporary visual art stands on the ruins of beauty. What is the place of the aesthetic in the experience of such art?<sup>179</sup>

The experience of incompleteness is an aesthetic encounter, a constellation or a figuration where something is not right or something is pending. I would have to have been insensible in order to become acquainted with it. Yet I am well aware of the impossibility of any quest for perfection and completion. This being the case, the birth of a finished and, in that sense, a complete and satisfying painting is a strong and wonderful surprise. I have learned to master the excitement that the work is, in reality, finished and the fright that it is not. Then to make the decision that the work is finished is to achieve nearly a work of outstanding artistry where there is nothing to add to the work, at least not for a while, for a day, a month or so. What then is the meaning and value of such an aesthetic encounter and judgement?<sup>180</sup>

If only there were at least some of these kind of magical moments of satisfaction in just one painting! When I apprehend something as incomplete, it is, in fact, a focal and simultaneous point concerning both of making and of aesthetic perception. Normally, I cannot tell whether this incompleteness is about my use of colour, the prevailing forms, the overall materiality of the work, its rhythms or something else. All I can tell is that there is something wrong with the work. Penetrating deeper into the work reveals the vast gulf between me and the work. Then the making changes into a research, where the interest is both in past actions and future successes in the alluring tension between the existing and the non-existent that exists nevertheless. The experience of incompleteness, a demon of verdure, makes a claim on me, and this, I find, is an aesthetic claim: it entangles me with its mesh I have eagerly ravelled myself.

In blowing billows of fescue, in a forest glade,  
Where the forest grows suddenly to meadow,  
Lie the mortal remains of a wanderer, rather useless remains.  
He had roamed the whole world from cloud to cloud,  
Until suddenly in his restless mourning he was seized with a desire  
In spirit to explore at one fell swoop the verdure in itself.  
At that instant the verdure demon in the breath of all forests  
Engulfed him as he paused along the way beneath a tree.  
And enticed him with a rush of endless blooming,  
And tempted him with painting lips mysteriously laughless,  
And bewitched him with the decay of fragrant, yet-unembodied  
things,  
And lured him ever deeper – into that verdure, into that verdure!  
And he ran along the shores of ever-different worlds,  
Unmanning his soul and breath amidst flowers,  
Until he waded into ringing jugs of such berries,  
Into such a dazzling dark of ferns,  
Into grave mounds of such quiet,  
Into such an unworld of thickets,  
Into such a still undawn,  
Into the last storms somewhere of such sounds,  
That he lies dead here in the abyss of a hundred springtimes,  
Shadowy, as a forest in a forest – the drowned one in verdure.<sup>181</sup>

181 Boleslaw Lesmian,  
in *Boleslaw Lesmian: the  
Poet and His Poetry*, ed.  
by R. H. Stone, trans. by  
R. H. Stone (Berkeley:  
University of California  
Press, 1976), p. 116.



In this poem by Boleslaw Lesmian, the wanderer gets caught up in the forest by the verdure, by its fragrant and yet-embodied things. I read the poem as if the green verdure were a painting, with which I am working, yet unknown and alien both in its material reality and its spirit, and still holding a tempting allure to which I cannot but consent though everything can end in a disaster. Making a painting is to give a hostage to fortune.

Before I focus on elaborating on the question of incompleteness with more depth, I will in this chapter give a rough outline of aesthetics as part of philosophy of art and juxtapose it with sensibility and experiencing incompleteness in making from the point of view that best highlights the points of contact with my own research question and interest.

Aesthetics is a concern of both art and philosophy: it usually refers to the theoretical discipline that engages in the study of artistic creation and of the works that result from it. In order to understand works of art, the common trait has been to first study the main classical aesthetic theories, those of Immanuel Kant, F. W. J. Schelling and G. W. F. Hegel.<sup>182</sup> Traditionally aesthetics has been considered as concerning subjective spirit, illumination and feeling. However, controversies between whether aesthetics belongs to the realm of reason, or whether it has to do solely with sensuous experience arose during the 18th century. In other words: is an aesthetic encounter considered as interfering with intellectual rigour and is knowledge involved in aesthetic judgment?

In this chapter, I will discuss David Hume's view on taste, after that my intention is to juxtapose Immanuel Kant's lines of thought on aesthetic judgement with my own experiences as a maker and an experiencer. Lastly, I shall have a brief look at Theodor Adorno's aesthetic theory and discuss how it contrasts with Kantian aesthetics from the perspective of incompleteness and other. Adorno wants to break away from the constitutive subjectivity that Kant had established and from Kant's idea that concepts define the likeness of the world with the subject. Adorno's overall aim is to rescue aesthetics from being a discipline that employs strict and definite concepts; instead, he advocates aesthetics that wants to know art from within and to present what art itself understands as an antithesis of society. Before I draw my attention to Hume and Kant let me get sidetracked for a moment and provide a few words on modern and everyday aesthetics to begin with.

182 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* [1790], ed. by P. Guyer, trans. by P. Guyer and E. Matthews, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art* [1859], ed. and trans. by D. W. Scott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* [1835], trans. by T. M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Vol. 1, 1975.

## A BRIEF PARSING OF MODERN AESTHETICS

Andrew Bowie describes the modern time of aesthetics that followed Immanuel Kant and David Hume by contending that it

was established upon the principle of subjectivity. The modern era is therefore characterized by the subject's domination of the object world which is achieved by reducing it to general concepts and by manipulating it technologically.<sup>183</sup>

In other words, the point of producing general laws and the demythologizing nature of natural sciences enable the manipulation of the object world in a way in which the world starts to look like a machine.

In this respect, Michel Henry depicts the era of scientific aesthetics as a misunderstanding that opens the way for its work of death in which the origins and essence of life can never be discovered.<sup>184</sup> In sum, what the modern time overlooks is both the body and sensibility as the core vigour of being. Moreover, it has confused the artwork with its material support and technique and given the faculties of mind a prominence in aesthetic matters. Nevertheless, what has been achieved reciprocally is a new worldview that assumes that the world has ceased to be a deity and predestined, which means that the human reason has to become the ground for the truth and, what is more, that aesthetic appearance and experience are vital in understanding the self. By the same token, on the one hand, subjective aesthetic experiences and emotions have been overlooked in general in the practice of scientific research and, on the other hand, aesthetics has suffered a crisis and has become a commodity.<sup>185</sup> On top of that, artworks have become more and more dependent on economic value.

What use is it then to identify here the points of contact that the long tradition of aesthetics has with the one-person experience of incompleteness, as drafted in this dissertation? The return to aesthetics, even if just briefly, and even if there are claims that aesthetics is no more shared like a unique substance, that there is not any ultimate aesthetics, there is still a singular human being who exposes oneself carnally to others and is present in the circulation of meanings that the word aesthetic gathers together – the word being itself empty.

Aesthetic experience is essentially not anything measurable, even though in everyday use and in everyday aesthetics it might be confused with aesthetic allegations that are made for example on valuing

183 Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 8.

184 Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 38.

185 Jean-Luc Nancy notes that *krisis* marks the element or the structure of 'undecidability' of the 'logical' decision itself. Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, ed. by W. Hamacher and D. E. Wellbery, trans. by B. Holmes et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 255–256. For example, the so-called conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s aimed at breaking away from anything that related to aesthetics, and in the 1970s and 1980s there existed a deep-seated dislike towards aesthetics, according to Peter Osborne. Osborne, *From an Aesthetic Point of View, Philosophy, Art and the Senses*, p. 2.

celebs by different measurements in various tabloids. Alan Friedlund notes: 'Philosophically, it's arguable that "experience" is not anything intrinsically measurable. This may make it forever off-limits to science'.<sup>186</sup> In my opinion, this is something artistic research needs to challenge.

186 Alan Friedlund, 'Hard Feelings: Science's Struggle to Define Emotions', in *The Atlantic*, 24 February 2015.

Aesthetics evidently suffers from inflation, from a fall in value, as beauty is for sale. According to Wolfgang Iser, what aesthetics suffers from is that it has traditionally been unable to do justice to the singularity of artworks. First, as Iser notes, judging everything as beautiful destroys the quality of the beautiful, and second, the tendency to globalize aesthetics becomes somewhat annoying and even results in aesthetic horror.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, Iser criticizes the way in which the media has de-realized the reality, which has led to such peculiarities of media aesthetics as the overall weightlessness of bodies and images: 'Everything is an object for possible electronic manipulation; and, within media, "manipulation" is no longer a normative but almost a descriptive term'.<sup>188</sup> The media reality has extended and wrapped its every tendril around the everyday reality of everyday aesthetics. What Iser calls for is a new form of the discipline of aesthetics. According to him, aesthetics should transcend first of all what is traditionally understood as aesthetics of the establishment of a universal and timeless concept of art, because, according to him, 'There are no good reasons for aesthetics to restrict itself to artistics'; instead, aesthetics should comprehend all the fields concerning aesthesis, in a way that aesthesis forms the framework of every discipline and not being solely a mediating term between art and philosophy.<sup>189</sup>

187 Wolfgang Iser, 'Aesthetics beyond Aesthetics', *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2003, p. 8.

188 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

189 *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

From the viewpoint of being judged not only by myself but also by others, viewers and critics, and in order to clarify the relationship between a work of art, the maker and the viewer or the critic, I shall first briefly discuss what David Hume called the standard of taste that, according to him, belongs to the philosophical field that he called criticism. I shall juxtapose his thinking of community with what Jean-Luc Nancy has elaborated on community. After that, I shall problematize and reflect on Kant's aesthetic judgement from the points of view of beauty, the sublime and the ugly.

## HUME AND THE COMMUNITY OF CRITICS

*Is it a good sign when plans change? Often I feel so embarrassed with my own work. Yet I get stimulation and energy from my work, and that is definitely something positive, but do I have the nerve to carry on with my painting, as much as it takes? Yet, I get carried away by making. What is the point of my work after all? Can anyone else see it? No one knows me. Do I get satisfaction even when I am being ignored and working underground? How long will I continue with this path of rejection? Do I actually need any recognition? Why do I paint? The answer is: to search the answer to these and other questions that I have posed myself. Every work that I make is an assignment to myself. I make the decision of making it and when it is finished or whether I destroy it. 22 July 2013*

The Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–1776) is interested in empirical processes: how are good judgments of taste made, and what are the empirical conditions required for such a good judgment to be adequate and plausible. Hume argues that beauty is no quality in things themselves but

it exists merely in the mind of man, which contemplates them: and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others,<sup>190</sup>

and

Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings.<sup>191</sup>

Therefore, if we follow Hume's thinking, qualities of an art object, for example, are based, on the one hand, on the experience of an observer, on one's sentiment, and, on the other hand, on the observation of the common sentiments of human nature that are in compli-

190 David Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste' [1757], in *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), p. 230.

191 *Ibid.*, p. 235.

ance with objects that have qualities to produce such feelings. In this respect Hume claims, to my mind quite radically in his time, that an experience or an encounter with an object is a particular effect of the different relations that constitute it.

192 *Ibid.*, p. 240. Hume argues that every work of art has a certain end or purpose, for which it is intended. Every work, even the most poetical, is, according to Hume, nothing but a chain of propositions and reasoning, yet disguised by the colouring of imagination, and as a result it should be deemed more or less perfect.<sup>192</sup> As I understand it, by this Hume wants to express the notion, even though he does not explicitly say it, that every artwork is in a sense incomplete. And what makes it incomplete is imagination that cannot attain the work's telos or end but colours its surface.

193 *Ibid.*, p. 232. Thereby, Hume advises us that on every occasion we are not to trust our own experiences<sup>193</sup>; for they are, after all, tainted by the fumes of imagination. As Hume points out, every encounter is different and depends on many variables, not to mention the subjective time-order and the minuteness of the object. This notion made by Hume I can well relate to and later I shall give a description of how difficult it is to finish a painting. Hume's advice to solve this kind of dilemma is not to just practice the particular art more rigorously but also to seek guidance from men of delicate taste. This kind of enthusiastic commitment and vocation to be an artist requires as well that one exercises a frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty free from all prejudice.<sup>194</sup>

194 *Ibid.*, pp. 237–239, 243. Judgements about art objects are about one's response to the object then. However, not all the responses are as valuable as others. Hume then proposes that there is an agreed rule, the best argument, the Standard of Taste, by which the various sentiments of men may be accepted so that a decision could be made as to which sentiment is to be confirmed and which condemned.<sup>195</sup> Hume agreed that there is naturally a wide difference in delicacy between one person and another; therefore, the standard is to be set by men of delicate taste: 'by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of the mankind'.<sup>196</sup> For Hume this empirical standard is equally applicable to all humankind: 'The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature'.<sup>197</sup>

195 *Ibid.*, p. 229. 196 *Ibid.*, p. 243. 197 *Ibid.*, pp. 233, 237, 241, 243.

Hume's idea of a critic constitutes a community of taste as a social norm on which even the artists of today are dependent and build their identity and even subjectivity on. Not being recognized by *the*

*men of delicate taste* is a misfortune with which I have wrestled and had to come to terms. Yet, the endless strokes of bad luck have not ceased me from trying harder. A well-founded question then is: do I paint for myself or for others? Above I answered that I need to find answers to the questions that the painting poses me. However, this is not all: I have an urge to communicate. I find that this urge is innate, as if to communicate meant the same as being experienced by the others as being able to communicate my message that I exist too, that I am part of the community too.

For what do we need critics then? Paul Guyer gives the following, quite genuine answer: the community constitutes and acknowledges its own identity through the work of critics. Guyer discusses in his book *Values of Beauty* the way in which meanings are made by critics, as shared attunements of the standardized language: critics, who thereby have a legislative and extant authority of the language. The critic does not just discover good taste but is part of the means whereby a community of taste can constitute itself. Guyer cites Stanley Cavell: the critic's value to us is

that he is able to make that history (of taste) a part of his data, knowing that in itself, as it stands, it proves nothing – except popularity. His value to art and culture is not that he agrees with its taste, ... , – but that he sets the terms in which our tastes, whatever they happen to be, may be protected or overcome.<sup>198</sup>

198 Stanley Cavell in Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 37.

What we have here is a society described as an object to the mind, a representation of ready-made identities, always referring to something other than one's true self. However, I am of my paintings and my paintings are of me. I am not painting just in my studio but everywhere I go seeing and fancying all sorts of things, i.e. painting in my mind. There is not such a thing that when I close my studio door that my mind would be easy. That is the way of my world.

*When I paint I have a conversation, but with whom am I discussing? My answer is: with myself, with the work or the world. Even if I hide the work, I am still working with it in my mind. There is no escape. Within this conversation any ideas that I have in my head change, they are in constant flux. This brings me to think how much I actually work outside my studio and in my head. The funny thing is that when I look*

at my paintings, there is an internal historicity, a lineage, a genealogy, some naïveté of mine; my body in all of them. The images relate to each other in an uncanny way. How then to make decisions? Personally, I find that decision-making has three phases: first it is wondering and pondering, then it can take a swift turn and make me do something hastily, in order not to lose my grip of an intense and brief momentum of brilliance, and finally, after accomplishing something, I might take it all back and destroy what I have just accomplished. Any ideas in my mind are sort of liquid, perhaps the essence of the mind is nothing but free-flowing, something that cannot be grasped in detail. Indeed, it is in fact impossible to eliminate things that occupy my mind. There is also this inner complexity in painting: materials lead to one direction, ideas, thoughts and emotions to other, and then my skill and bodily capability to yet another direction. However, there must be some internal historicity within the works. 10 January 2012

How then, singular and complex works of an artist are transformed into cultural value by a community? Jean-Luc Nancy provides an important and enthralling analysis on the relatedness of history and community. Nancy deciphers a community as having something in common in that it is historical that it happens and that it is more than a being, it is an event. History, according to Nancy, does not belong 'primarily to time, to succession, nor to causality, but to community, or to being-in-common'.<sup>199</sup> This is to say that history is finite because it no longer has a goal and because being-in-common is not a subject, nor a substance, it does not determine and as he writes: 'history itself appears to have become a part of history' or historicism that presupposes history. History can no longer be presented as a grand narrative.<sup>200</sup> In this sense, criticism provides an adequate supply of nourishment for itself for future period of time.

Why then is it important to think about history when our topic is incompleteness? As claimed by Nancy: precisely for the reason that history is the ontological constitution of the subject itself and of community<sup>201</sup> and, for that matter, of incompleteness. What I present in this research is one possible history of incompleteness that has taken place singularly via my being and experiencing, my makings and this theoretical study. But just as one presupposes that one is historically determined, one is not aware how this determination works.<sup>202</sup>

199 Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, p. 143.

200 Ibid., pp. 144, 146.

201 Ibid., p. 148.

202 Ibid., p. 146.

The different ways of thinking of history open up perspectives for questioning presentation and representation, and a presentation can therefore never be a presentation as such because it is always contaminated by its history, the precursor, nor can there ever be representation either as it is never the same. Even though I have a history and my paintings have a history, it is another history that the community of critics display. The history I present here is outside their history, and thus it has entered another history.<sup>203</sup>

203 Ibid., p. 150.

What then has incompleteness to do in relation to community, for example the community of critics? Community is alleged to be in common, a cluster, a gathering or figuration of being with each other, together having a common essence a common substance. Quite contrary, according to Nancy, being together means existence in which one's inside. i.e. otherness, becomes outside, however, 'without building any "common inside"' and in which one's otherness is related to the otherness of others: 'Community is the community of others'.<sup>204</sup> If I follow Nancy's line of thought, then incompleteness pointing to my experienced otherness and strangeness in my works is what is essential in my being part of community of others. Thus to exist, is to hold one's *selfness* as an otherness.<sup>205</sup> Here Nancy goes on, referring to Heidegger:

204 Ibid., pp. 154–155.

205 Ibid., p. 154.

We are others through birth and death, which expose our finitude. Finitude ... means that we are infinitely finite, infinitely exposed to our existence as a nonessence, infinitely exposed to the otherness of our own 'being'.<sup>206</sup>

206 Ibid., p. 154.

Nancy continues that 'Finite history, then, does not consist of the accomplishment or representation of the subject' and it is never present to itself<sup>207</sup>; 'Finite history is this infinite decision toward history'<sup>208</sup>. Finite history is then differing from oneself. As I see it, incompleteness is a presence of the offering of the differing and otherness of self to oneself. This offering takes place on the level of affective quality of the world, and one's sensibility is what makes this sensation of being a part of community to oneself possible. To open myself to the affective, sensible and sensuous is to give myself the possibility of exposing myself to myself and to hold my selfness as otherness, to partake myself only as another, to say I and we prior to signification. To be in common is necessarily organic and that it does not take memory as a ground to understanding but is being open to the other-

207 Ibid., pp. 158–159.

208 Ibid., pp. 158–159.



ness of myself and the otherness of others. Thus incompleteness turns out to be the key to otherness as togetherness: a cry of ethics.

Next, I will take look on what is meant by aesthetic judgement and how it was first established in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, published in 1790, also known as *Critique of Judgment*, discusses, in its first part, aesthetic experience and judgement. It addresses the notions of the beautiful and the sublime and also that of artistic creation and genius. Kant makes a tripartite division of the human mind into the faculties of cognition, pleasure or displeasure and desire.<sup>209</sup> Kant's thinking on pleasure and displeasure is constructed on the idea that the human mind is comprised of reflective acts of consciousness accompanied with concepts. In other words, Kant is of the opinion that the powers of knowledge play a crucial role in aesthetic perception even though the aim is not acquisition of knowledge.<sup>210</sup> Such judgments of taste are empirical and the aesthetic object is an object in its appearing, yet always paired with the rational mind.

209 Kant, p. xiv.

210 Martin Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. by J. Farrell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 3.

What Kant's transcendental philosophy then happens to disregard are first, the topics of body and embodiment, and second the topic of sensibility. However, he raises sensibility into a faculty and considers the body to be the site of sensibility. Yet, according to Angelica Nuzzo, Kant's body is a transcendently transfigured pure form, a transcendental embodiment, that grounds one's cognition, and it is the condition under which outer objects can be experienced.<sup>211</sup> This stance led Kant to neglect materialism and naturalism. One may ask if this kind of transcendental body can be called a body at all and what is it that explains the formation of the subject, what is the role of the lived body in grounding the subject. Jacques Lacan describes this problem in the following manner: "Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than transcendental subject of the thoughts = x'."<sup>212</sup> With this problem in mind, the theme of an animated body being absent in Kant's thinking, I shall give in the following a brief overview of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* that is after all one of the most important works of modern Western philosophy on aesthetics.

211 Angelica Nuzzo, *Ideal Embodiment, Kant's theory of sensibility* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 24.

212 Kant, pp. 12–13.

## A PLAY OF SHAPES

The judgment of taste has nothing but the form of the purposiveness of an object.<sup>213</sup>

213 Ibid., p. 106, §11.

I used to read Orwell's columns in *Tribune*, a magazine much read at the time. Some of the novels are good. For me, *1984* is unreadable, but *Coming up for Air* is a bit good. I used to meet him in the Café Royal, and though some of his opinions seemed extreme, what I liked about him was that he always had reasons for them. But he was an extremely unaesthetic person. When you said that such and such was a beautiful work of art he seemed quite put out. He would say, 'What do you mean? Prove it!'<sup>214</sup>

214 Lucien Freud, in Martin Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), p. 53.

Upon seeing (Mae) West's necklace, the other party said 'Goodness, what beautiful diamonds'. West replied: 'Goodness had nothing to do with it', which is a significant remark for our discussion.<sup>215</sup>

215 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 23.

Mae West's witty remark is noteworthy here even though it may be that Immanuel Kant did not cultivate such biting sarcasm, but he thought accordingly: goodness has nothing to do with Beauty. What is more, in Kant's thinking Beauty has nothing to do with the body. However, both Mae West and Immanuel Kant have a moral in their thinking. For Kant, Beauty is the symbol for moral feeling and the judgment of taste in particular can provide a transition to that moral feeling:

Now I say that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and also that only in this respect (that of the relation that is natural to everyone, and that is also expected of everyone else as a duty) does it please with a claim to the assent of everyone else, in which the mind as at the same time aware of a certain ennoblement and elevation above the mere receptivity for a pleasure from sensible impressions, and also esteems the value of others in accordance with a similar maxim of their power of judgment.<sup>216</sup>

216 Kant, p. 227, §59.

However, the crux in Mae West's thinking, as Juha Varto puts it, is the lived flesh. The flesh is the origin of carnal knowledge proper: 'The lived flesh is the history of man's flesh'.<sup>217</sup> What is of importance

is that the lived flesh is not conceptual and, for this reason, it involves everyone in a same manner. Even though it might be far-fetched and even transgressive to bring up Mae West and Immanuel Kant in the same paragraph because their thinking is so far-apart from each other, they both strive to the same conclusion and claim that aesthetics has a relationship with moral and ethics.

Judgement of taste does not concern any concept: neither the concept of the beautiful, nor the concept of the agreeableness, nor the concept of the good. Accordingly, Kant notes: 'The judgment of taste is entirely independent from the conception of perfection'.<sup>218</sup> Thus, nothing other than the form of purposiveness in the representation of the object can be established. As a result, the beautiful is a mere form of purposiveness in the representation of the object that is given to one.<sup>219</sup> Because the aesthetic judgment of the object is non-conceptual reflective judgment, it means that there are no terms to classify it. Thus, pleasure and displeasure are not within one's cognitive control. This is because the powers of cognition are set into free play by the given representation of the object.<sup>220</sup> Their interaction with each other is not

restricted by any rules. This free play leads to cognition in general, according to Kant.<sup>221</sup> One can claim that objects for the judgement of taste meet the requirements of our powers of imagination and intellect, as if they had been designed that way, since they claim universality.<sup>222</sup>

In Kantian terms, the moment where I announce that something is beautiful, this something, whether it is a necklace or a flower or whatever, becomes an end and, as such, something conceptualized and stagnated. In other words, in aesthetic judgement purposiveness finds a form, yet without a purpose. This means that aesthetic judgement is a process: it does not have an end. Concepts<sup>223</sup> can never grasp the object or the feeling that are given by one's sensible intuition

217 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 23.

218 Kant, p. III, §15.

219 Ibid., p. 106.

220 Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860, The Legacy of Idealism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 70: 'Such harmonious free play however is not itself directly experienced ... it is by an act of attending to it, of *reflective judgment*, that the agent apprehends the harmony'.

221 Kant, p. 102.

222 Pinkard, p. 72: 'The experience of nature or natural object as beautiful is based on a reflective judgment about the purposiveness of the world around us and how that world harmoniously fits our nature as spontaneous beings'.

223 According to Kant, as Allison reads him, the elements of a concept are: 1) apprehension; 2) comprehension; 3) exhibition. In order to apprehend something, we need imagination; in order to comprehend a given representation, what is needed, is understanding. Then, finally, in order for something to be exhibited as something, a judgment has to take place. Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 46.

in aesthetic judgement. On that account, Kant with his wonderful spiritual attributes writes:

For I must be sensitive of the pleasure immediately in the representation of it, and I cannot be talked into it by means of any proofs. Thus although critics, as Hume says, can reason more plausibly than cooks, they still suffer the same fate as them. They cannot expect a determining ground for their judgment from proofs, but only from the reflection of the subject on his own state (of pleasure or displeasure), rejecting all percepts and rules.<sup>224</sup>

224 Kant, p. 166, §34.

That being so a work of art has a purpose, despite the fact that this purpose cannot be pointed out. For me, it seems, the star-cast purpose is for once to create a masterpiece – yet my endless smearing of pastes of colour and destroying works are the result of my failure to achieve what I am after, yet, I have experienced sudden revelations of beauty when encountering my work.

Experience of the beautiful is, as Kant phrased it, a causal experience of purposiveness without a purpose. This means that beautiful objects do not have a purposeful end, not even that of a masterpiece. Purposiveness without a purpose is a sense that things fit together according to a purpose that I cannot neither state nor indicate. In other words, the feeling of purposiveness has to do with both the incomplete and the infinite, even though purposiveness is a quality that can be noticed by reflection in objects and can concern the form of the object.<sup>225</sup> To express it in a different way, a mere form of sensation that is aesthetic is the equivalent of subjective purposiveness without a concept.

225 *Ibid.*, p. 105, §10.

Kant examined aesthetic judgment, feeling of pleasure or displeasure, as the accomplishment of free play of the cognitive faculties of understanding, imagination and reason. This is to say that pleasure is neither restricted to any particular cognition, nor is it in any way practical, yet it occupies one's cognitive powers without further aim in such a way that one lingers over the reflection of the beautiful.<sup>226</sup>

226 *Ibid.*, p. 107, §12.

To linger is a very fitting term to describe the state in which I find myself when encountering something beautiful or utterly satisfying. What is of importance is that the feeling lasts an indefinite amount of time: beauty lingers and I sense it quivering all over my body. Then, when something displeases me, it causes uneasiness and anxiety and

227 Allison, p. 51. What makes a judgment aesthetic is the fact that it is based on a feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which for Kant entails that it is non-cognitive.

228 Kant, p. 101, §8.

229 In present days, it is commonly acknowledged that biological diversity is a global asset of tremendous value to both present and future generations. Global conventions on sustaining life on Earth are an indication of human unrest and worry in facing the environmental crisis. The Convention on Biological Diversity reads: 'Biological diversity – or biodiversity – is the term given to the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms. The biodiversity we see today is the fruit of billions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of humans. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend'. See <https://www.cbd.int/convention/guide/default.shtml> [accessed 16 April 2016].

230 Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, p. 72.

this also takes its time although I do not care to linger no longer than necessary. Yet, a work that I find incomplete and displeasing can bother me for a very long time. It is no exception that I can well work with one painting for over a year. Making is not about lingering but being occupied with a mystery and chasing after a resolution: being addicted to the riddle that the work has posed me: that it displeases and that it is incomplete. It is as if this rule of endless trying and making came from nature and not from my subject. Yet, it is me who judges, it is my mind, my faculties of imagination and understanding, according to Kant that judge. However, Kant's point of view leaves me dissatisfied because experiencing incompleteness in a work and while making is not a matter of understanding but one of sensibility.

According to Kant, there are two forms of judgments of taste: the beautiful and the sublime. These judgments apply to everyone and they are necessary for the humankind; hence we can subsume both subjective necessity and subjective universality. As Kant claims that the judgment relies solely on one's own subjectivity, he also claims that one cannot discover grounds for pleasure or displeasure privately: there has to be a universal ground even without a concept and despite the fact that the judgment of taste is valid without a rule or a concept. Kant argues that it is the feeling of satisfaction or pleasure that gives an indication or a suggestion of *sensus communis* as the basis of universal validity of judgments of taste, because it is through aesthetic reflection that it is produced, not out of a concept but a feeling.<sup>227</sup> This universality presupposes a claim that everyone should agree to one's aesthetic judgment although there is no verifiable proof that they will.<sup>228</sup>

The demand of universality is communicative: it does consider the world as if it were designed, suitable, appropriate for humankind. What does this mean? I do not think that Kant gives us a proper answer, except that he links together nature in itself and the freedom of rational beings. He finds that nature gives the rule, at least to art, and that natural beauty is prior to the beauty of art, yet for him the human mind is superior to nature because nature does not have domination over our soul and cognition.<sup>229</sup> The demand for universality takes me back to Jean-Luc Nancy's thinking of community that I discussed earlier and how he elaborates it and highlights that being always implies sharing, and it always implies itself as sharing<sup>230</sup>, and that

The ontology of being-with can only be 'materialist,' in the sense that 'matter' does not designate a substance or a subject

(or an antisubject), but literally designates what is divided of itself, what is only as distinct from itself, ... The ontology of being-with is an ontology of bodies, of every body, whether they be inanimate, animate, sentient, speaking, thinking, having weight, and so on.<sup>231</sup>

231 Ibid., pp. 83–84.

However, and because the judgment of taste, according to Kant, is not based on a determinate concept, but is based on a representation of the object as necessary for everyone, it must nevertheless be based on a concept: 'a concept that cannot be determined by intuition, by which nothing can be cognized, and which thus also leads to no proof for the judgment of taste. A concept of this kind, however, is the mere pure rational concept of the supersensible ...'<sup>232</sup> Thus Kantian purposiveness finds a form in an appearance of for example a work of art through the supersensible that lays a claim beyond sensible experience. Beauty is experience that points beyond that experience. For Kant nature is totality of supersensible whereas sensibility, according to him, is receptivity of the body that has nothing more to do with the aesthetic judgment than being the pedestal on which cognitive faculties take place.

232 Kant, p. 216, §57.

That being so, Kant's supersensible is superior to our sense world, it is underlying all humanity and nature, it is basis for all intuition. He writes: 'But even to be able to think the given infinite without contradiction requires faculty in the human mind that is itself supersensible.'<sup>233</sup> This is to say that Kant introduced something exceptional because supersensible is something that remains outside the domain of cognition. As I see it, Kant needed to have some kind of adhesive in order to relate humans, things and the world together, in order to make me and you able to judge and grasp something beautiful or sublime and claim that such judgement has a universal ground. What is more, Kant touches singularity in his oeuvre, he writes:

233 Ibid., p. 138, §26.

..., the aesthetic universality that is ascribed to a judgement must also be of a special kind, since the predicate of beauty is not connected with the concept of the object considered in its entire logical sphere, and yet it extends it over the whole sphere of *those who judge*.<sup>234</sup>

234 Ibid., p. 100, §8.

Yet, Kant, on the one hand, dismissed sensibility and on the other hand, he did not give up his rationality: supersensible is a rational, i.e.

nonmaterial concept although one cannot cognize it. Supersensible makes the basic account of subjectivity, but it is something that one cannot sense: about it one can only have ideas, whereas sensibility is something that stimulates the cognitive faculties. Sensibility, as our faculty of receptivity, makes us perceive an object through its purposive appearance that is provided by the rational concept of supersensible that then, according to Kant, becomes translated into thoughts by means of understanding.

In sum, sensibility's role is to foreshadow the legitimacy of the rational concept of supersensible. I find Kant's theory of sensibility and the supersensible difficult and somewhat obscure. My general observation on Kant's theory of taste is that his conceptions of sensibility and supersensible are in apparent contradiction with each other. I have come to see that both supersensible and sensibility have qualities that are equivalent to what I call sensibility in this dissertation. I think that Kant is mistaken because he overlooks the body at the cost of sensibility. However, his theory is extremely useful in that it sheds light on the difficult problem of sensibility in relation to aesthetic experience and, what is more, on the conception of the sublime. Otherwise sensibility is not involved in aesthetic judgment, claims Kant. This is to say that it is only understanding that can cast me beyond the limits of nature and that enables me to grasp what he calls the *noumenal* world. According to Kant, sensibility is subjective and private, a passive and receptive capacity whereas understanding is universal<sup>235</sup>.

Accordingly, Kant narrows his understanding of aesthetic judgment to the perception of the object, of its process of appearing, *Erscheinen*. In Martin Seel's view, Kant suggests that

Aesthetic appearing can be followed by anyone, who, first, possesses the appropriate sensuous and cognitive faculties and, second, is willing to be attentive to the full sensuous presence of an object, while forgoing cognitive or practical results.<sup>236</sup>

*Transparency, layers, illumination and the sense of the deep depth, they all go together. I am more interested in the vertical than the horizontal. I have been working with the sense of depth, depth is all about my work. It seems that forms are not important at all. They come and go and are in a constant flux. For me smothering thick paste of paint is like unraveling. The more I cover, the more something begins its*

235 John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgement* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 48–50.

236 Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, p. 4.

appearing, *Urdo inversus*. The sense of myself vanishes into a painting, makes it become visible in other means, makes me an object to myself, as if turning myself inside out or having multiple reflections. Does it mean that I am transformed into a whole as I am being embodied with the painting? I do not think that I become a whole, it is an illusion, painting is an extension of myself, but at the same time it is something else: it carves my insides. I become an object through painting for myself. It shows me that there is something that I have not yet discovered. And how can I become whole when the work demands me to continue: there is no end, the demand does not end into one finished work? This is to say that I am an endless possibility. Actually the finished work is evidence of this demand and of there being possibilities on the horizon. I have been working with four paintings over a year now and it seems that I am all the time discovering something new and that I make progress although the pace is very slow, so slow that I almost feel ashamed of it. 4 September 2013

Kant's proposition is that human subjects exist in a way that is determined by the laws of nature<sup>237</sup> and at the same time also as free agents<sup>238</sup> and that the feeling of pleasure, upon which the aesthetic judgment is founded, is not intentional, because it derives from the sense of a harmony in nature.<sup>239</sup> This is to say that for Kant aesthetics answers the question of how the subject is affected by the empirical world as a representation.

The experience of beautiful is thus based on a reflective judgment about the purposiveness of the world around us. The representation is purposive in its accordance with cognitive powers in their harmonious free play. One is delighted in apprehending the object and the object is thus fulfilling its purpose in the world, yet the purpose concerns solely the form of the object.

What is a form's structure, force, energy, illusion? Who gives the form to the form: does it form itself, or is it me or the materials in use? Does nature give the form to the form? Does material have a form, is emptiness a form, does the outside give the form to the thing that is inside? What is the essence of a form? Do I paint nothing but forms? Is the form the same as having sense? Having been painting for many years, I find

237 The Early Romantics had an opposite view. They claimed that the beauty in art is predominant to the beauty in nature and that the sublime feeling is connected primarily to an artwork and not to nature. Although the suppositions of the Romantics are as well favourable of the genius, Romanticism puts far more weight on art's importance to the whole society as a mean for man to perceive life and to express himself. In short, art needs to be distinguished from the beautiful in nature. M. Andreas and A. Oksiloff, 'Romantic Crossovers: Philosophy as Art and Art as Philosophy', in: *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse, ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 158.

238 Kant, p. 17.

239 Ibid., pp. 185–186, §45.



*that form and duration go together; it takes a long time for something to form, at least when we are talking about my painting. While painting, I form myself as well, even though I do not notice it, at least not until I begin to wonder what on earth I have been painting. The essence of a form is that it is never a thing of the past but it is something that looks ahead. A form is gathering and letting gather. 14 April 2013*

240 Ibid., p. 108, §14.  
Form reads here as  
symmetry, harmony or  
proportion.

241 Ibid.,  
pp. 108–109, §14.

For Kant, the pure aesthetic judgment is independent from any explicit charm, colour for example, and emotion. It has as its determining ground solely the purposiveness of a *form*.<sup>240</sup> It is only the purposive form that can be communicated universally. Kant pointed out: ‘The purity of a simple kind of sensation, means that its uniformity is not disturbed and interrupted by any foreign sensation, and belongs merely to the form’.<sup>241</sup> Kant is determined that we do not know how the world is in itself: what we know about the world depends on the subject’s constitution of the objects as they appear in the phenomenal world.

#### IN THE WAKE OF THE SUBLIME

242 Is the Universe  
finite or infinite? This is  
a question to which we  
still do not know the  
answer today.

The sublime is an innate part of Kant’s transcendental philosophy. Introducing the sublime, Kant remarks that the Universe is infinite in space and time. Of course the scientists<sup>242</sup> of today have their say on it, but from a single human perspective I agree with Kant: playing my own heroine on my own flat plane of time and space, the Universe seems infinite and the possibilities at hand inexhaustible. However, at the same time I have a sense of my finiteness that the experience of incompleteness both emphasizes and challenges. I find that the feeling of the sublime is still valid from the point of view of infinity. However, I never experience the sublime when encountering my own work. Why is that? Do I prefer lowbrow aesthetics, abject art or a sense of failure as a precursor, the story of previous failures, as contaminating all my future attempts, as if failure and incompleteness were my obsessive concerns? In order to help the reader to grasp what is meant by the sublime within the realm of art and aes-

thetics, I find it necessary to take a short plunge into the notion of the sublime.

Yet I find that there is a wrinkle in the sublime that needs to be ironed out. This wrinkle stands for my relation to my own work: as I just mentioned, I have never had a sublime feeling before my own work, not even when I have been very pleased with it. This is not to say that the sublime is something that I otherwise experience repeatedly. No, the sublime takes place sparingly but it happens. I have experienced such a triggering excellence, incomprehensibility or magnitude many times before nature, in concerts, before a painting or when someone dances before me. Strangely enough, I have never heard that an artist's own artwork would have evoked a sublime feeling in the maker. Perhaps there are artists who think that their work is sublime, I do not know. A work can well be out of this world in the way in which it used to happen to Jack Spicer, the poet whose poem *A Fool can Get into an Ocean* I quoted in the first chapter. Robert Berg writes that Spicer acted as a receptive host for language rather than an agent of self-expression and that, according to Spicer, the best condition for the poem is one of *not-knowing*.<sup>243</sup> Being a receptive host can indicate to something more than a mere state of flow, perhaps even to an automated process. Flow may seem as being a fully automated process; nevertheless, I experience flow while I am painting as a seamless liaison with the work and the materials at hand.

Why are then my own works devoid of the sublime? Perhaps there is something wrong with the scale of proportion. In any case the failure rate is high and incompleteness rules. Or perhaps the history and the long journey of making each work weighs too heavy on my shoulders and I get too used to the work and too close to it as if it were my skin.

I very much like my painting of a Siamese ballet dancer with a bat. And so did one little girl who saw this particular painting in an exhibition. I can but imagine when and how she had this sudden feeling of recognition of how she feels herself while dancing. Her mother later came to me and told about her daughter's experience. Perhaps we cannot call it a sublime feeling but a sudden *punctum* in a work that triggered the little girl. When I painted the work of the Siamese ballet dancer, I recall having enjoyed making it, painting the reds of the background and the feathers of the tutu, but I cannot recall any sudden feeling of beauty or sublimity, I just found the work very pleasing. I do not even have any idea why the dancer had

243 Robert Berg, *Jack Spicer 1925-1965*, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/jack-spicer>, [accessed 16 April 2016].

to be Siamese with two heads and why there had to be a bat in the image.

For the reason that I find a sublime feeling so remote in my own making, I shall provide only a brief account of Kant's theory of the sublime. I shall explore Jean-François Lyotard's elaboration on Kant's theory and point out that there is still more to the sublime than they thought. Thanks to Lyotard, while contemporary artistic making has challenged Kantian aesthetic view of beauty, the sublime regained positive appreciation in the late 20th century. Lyotard introduced a somewhat novel way of thinking about the sublime: it is no longer connected to the nature but to an artwork. I find Lyotard's, even radical, reading of Kant very innovative and rewarding.

Basically Kant is saying that in the sublime the imagination presents the object without boundaries, even devoid of any form. The sublime is not contained in any sensuous form but rather concerns ideas of reason although no adequate presentation of them is possible: the presentation is infinite. The impression of boundlessness present in the sublime feeling conveyed by the senses stimulates imagination and reason to think as if the object were a presentation of the idea of infinity. In the sublime feeling the imagination is seriously occupied and yet it does not succeed in comprehending a phenomenon, but it reaches its maximum and collapses. Thus reason enters with its idea of infinity. Works of art can be judged sublime, Kant asserts, only on the condition that they are in agreement with nature. Kant claims that the sublime feeling 'must not be shown in the products of art, ... , but rather in raw nature, ... , and merely insofar as it contains magnitude'.<sup>244</sup>

244 Kant, p. 136, §26.

Perhaps, Boleslaw Lesmian's poem *Happiness*, which you will find below, does not give the most adequate picture of a sublime feeling, but it points to some primary qualities that are typical of a sublime experience, those of raw nature that arouses fear and feeling of inadequacy.

Something silver occurs in cloud-distance.  
The wind rattles doors like a postman with news.  
We held out for each other's existence.  
Hear the thunder? The atmosphere rends and hews.

You have a soul that's profligate and star-cast.  
Remember the haste of inter-plaited breaths?

Why this sadness? Happiness came at last  
And we evade its radiance in shadow-depths.

Why does our joy look for meaning in darkness,  
Losing its limits and absolving the void?  
In its unmeasure all is encompassed,  
Except my terror and your tears-it can't hold.<sup>245</sup>

When Kant moves from beauty to sublimity the heterogeneity of aesthetic indetermination increases, and as imagination suffers a disaster in a presentation the harmonious and open relationship with the nature is broken. First, Lyotard critiques Kant, who understands judgment as a relation of faculties and form, in that Kant treats matter as evanescent. Lyotard insists that material power is still active even if the predominance of form has given a figure to the material that is present. Accordingly, Lyotard points out that art's objective can only be that of approaching matter, which, as Lyotard states, is equivalent to approaching presence.<sup>246</sup>

Second, Jean-François Lyotard later reverses Kant's presentation of the sublime and introduces, first, the notion of negative aesthetics and, second, his observation that 'for the last century, the arts have not had the beautiful as their main concern, but something which has to do with the sublime'.<sup>247</sup> The sublime for Lyotard presents a break or rupture, an experience of heteronomy, and the object's Other, *different*.

The occasion or the instant that the experienced nuance, tone and timbre of an artwork occupy cannot be counted or measured; it is prey to presence, it is the opening for the something, the quod. It is a qualitative experience, not quantitative. It is precisely that presence in the absence of the focused body and mind – unforgettable and immediately forgotten, as Lyotard writes. 'The matter thus invoked is something that is not finalized, not destined', and as Lyotard accentuates: 'It is in no way a material whose function would be to fill a form and actualize it'.<sup>248</sup> Thus matter becomes something that is not addressed or destined. It must be immaterial. A nuance, tone and timbre find their occasion in matter only when delaying the sensible and intelligible forms that are constitutive of objects. According to Lyotard: 'This differend cannot demand, even subjectively, to be communicated to all thought'.<sup>249</sup> In other words, the object of thought is thought of something in two different ways: first, as given to experience, and second, as 'an effect of transcendent causality'.<sup>250</sup> In other words, the

245 Boleslaw Lesmian, *Happiness*, trans. by Joanna Proulx, <http://www.bu.edu/pusteblyme/5/proulx-translating-lesmian.htm> [accessed 16 April 2016].

246 Jean-François Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', in *The Inhuman, Reflection on Time*, trans. by G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 89–107.

247 Jean-François Lyotard, 'After the Sublime the State of Aesthetics', in *The Inhuman, Reflection on Time*, trans. by G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 135.

248 *Ibid.*, pp. 140–141.

249 Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons of the Analytic of the Sublime, Kant's Critique of Judgment* §§23–29, ed. by W. Hamacher & D. E. Wellbery, trans. by E. Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 239.

250 *Ibid.*, p. 233.

aesthetic realm, according to Lyotard, opens up a possibility beyond that what it presents.

Therefore, a new thought of being that rejects conventional ways of perception becomes fore in Lyotard's opinion:

If you think you're describing thought when you describe a selecting and tabulating of data, you're silencing truth. Because data aren't given, but givable, and selection isn't choice. Thinking, like writing or painting, is almost no more than letting a givable come towards you.<sup>251</sup>

251 Jean-François Lyotard, 'Can Thought go on without the Body', in *The Inhuman, Reflection on Time*, trans. by G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press), pp. 8–23, p. 18.

How do we let matter be matter and how do I let a givable come towards me? Precisely by letting my sensibility through sublime experience speak for the unrecognizable. I hold that sensibility provides timewise the simple recognition that I must act now that this is my moment. Any conceptualization or semantics fails to sense the need to take action: the need or urge to take action is a matter of sensibility.

Cornelia Klinger sees that Kant's theory on the sublime helps man to become aware of his identity as a rational and moral being, whereas, in Lyotard's thinking, the sublime is a device for the deconstruction of human identity: 'Lyotard's concept of the sublime shares (Friedrich) Schillers' highly pathetic attitude, the heroic gesture of breaking free from the bonds of surrounding reality'.<sup>252</sup> Sublime can be characterized by organic vitality through which the animated and progressive nature of a human being becomes enlivened, not only as intelligible but as sensible as well.

252 Cornelia Klinger, 'The Concepts of the Sublime and the Beautiful in Kant and Lyotard', *Constellations*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (1995), pp. 207–223, p. 218.

Lyotard emphasizes that 'the infinite as totality actually given in thought, does not belong to the world, it is the substrate underlying it'.<sup>253</sup> This is why the infinite is thinkable as a whole and as something destined, it is felt as a 'soul-stirring delight'.<sup>254</sup> Nevertheless, he continues that the objects of the senses are given to us as phenomena and as such they are, as Lyotard notes, an act of synthesis of and toned by sensibility, understanding and imagination. However, 'What "gives" them to us, the thing or the being from which these phenomena reach our apprehension, we know nothing about', as Lyotard supposes.<sup>255</sup> The thing that is given is not as it is in itself but what is apprehended of the thing, and more precisely what is grasped by intuition in an "apprehension" and by imagination in a "comprehension".<sup>256</sup> In a word, what is given in a sublime feeling, in the act of synthesis, can be comprehended, on the one hand, as intelligible in

253 Lyotard, *Lessons of the Analytic of the Sublime*, p. 115.

254 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

255 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

256 *Ibid.*, pp. 132.

its action and, on the other hand, as sensible in its effect, in its apprehension.

At this point I consider artistic making in a way as sublime in itself because in it the presentation of pleasure in pain that is the desire to succeed in creating something extraordinary, as a revelation of the infinite limitlessness, exists in anticipation of fulfilment and at the same time as an attempt to break free from the fear of stagnation and all that I find old. Making is both an anticipated and suspended state of a sublime feeling, thus having a sense of the sublime and being open to such an experience. For this reason, I find that the sublime is present all the time, yet veiled.

Then, if I mull over on Lyotard's horizon, there shimmers the never-ending question that does not form part of Kant's problematic: is It happening, *arrive-t-il?* There is this something that is not determinable but is presented as unrepresentable and the name of this privation is a sublime feeling. And this feeling is always of something, as it calls for action and consists of effect.<sup>257</sup> Making artworks is awaiting fulfilment in the future. Thus the nature of making and the idea of it is that it is forever incomplete. The Early Romantics took this paradox that the work posed them as the work's continuous self-irony.

Lyotard's elaboration on the notion *arrive-t-il?* applies to his elaboration on what is art. Hence, according to him, art exists only in-act, as Lyotard writes: 'The act that decides is not an action in the strict sense of the term – it is an event'. He quotes Paul Valéry:

as for the rest, I mean as for the modifications and substitutions that this constraint leaves open, we simply wait for what we desire to be produced. For we can do nothing but wait for it. We have no means by which to reach precisely what it is within us that we wish to obtain.<sup>258</sup>

*The plain emptiness of the fresh canvas, neither glued nor tamed, in all its innocence before me. Can one tame a painting or tame something yet unknown with the aim of a painting? I am a little startled again, open to new thoughts concerning my work. This emptiness of the new beginning is at the same time soothing and disturbing. I am left with the feeling of a surge of anxiety, both my mind and my body anticipate towards something as if my body had this energy inside as something innate to extend towards something. Is this desire. There is a*

257 Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', p. 93, pp. 106–107.

258 Paul Valéry in Lyotard, *Toward the Post-Modern*, p. 171.

*tension between the need to start as soon as possible but also to wait and be patient. I always think that something new waits for me, something not yet explored. Perhaps this is the best moment within the process, before the empty canvas. 9 July 2013*

#### A PLAIN FASCINATION WITH UGLINESS

Painting, then, even though it was already deforming, continued to suffer insatiety – those martyrs of the paintbrush (that clumsy instrument) felt that they could not express themselves on a larger scale by imitating existing forms in nature, even if they underwent an extreme transformation. What were they to do? How were they to liberate themselves from the Thing; the Thing to which they were chained like dogs.<sup>259</sup>

259 Gombrowicz, p. 334.

Current opinion has it that the beautiful has degenerated into the commercialism of advertisement and design and, therefore, does not deserve any serious consideration in the context of aesthetic theory.<sup>260</sup>

260 Klinger, p. 208.

Several philosophers have written about Kant and the ugly and have pondered whether Kant has a theory on the ugly at all.<sup>261</sup> Naturally this is also of interest to me as, on the one hand, incompleteness points towards something that is imperfect and, on the other hand, I many times find my work ugly and clumsy. However, ugly artworks can be appreciated too; nowadays even a negative aesthetic feeling of ugliness can be appreciated within the realm of art and aesthetics.<sup>262</sup>

261 Among them Henry M. Allison, Paul Guyer, Marten Steenhagen and Mojka Kuplen, to name but a few.

262 Mojka Kuplen, 'The Aesthetic of Ugliness – A Kantian Perspective', in *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, Vol. 5, (2013), pp. 260–279.

Mojka Kuplen asks whether ugliness was first considered an unfavourable aesthetic concept because of a lack of aesthetic value and therefore not deserving of consideration? Yet artworks that evoke negative aesthetic feelings of ugliness may well evoke a positive appreciation of them. According to Kuplen, this kind of duality of a situation can result from two different approaches to such artworks. First, such ugly artworks can be valued due to the artistic representation of an ugly subject matter, and second, such ugly artworks, instead of having aesthetic value, may have cognitive value that results

from an intellectual engagement with the work.<sup>263</sup> If clumsy can be considered ugly, as it might well be, then my turning clumsiness into an asset can be considered as an intellectual engagement with a work. However, I find that this is not all and I think that *bad painting*, for example, can well have aesthetic value in provoking thought and emotion.<sup>264</sup> Bad painting was not intentional for me in the beginning, until I turned it that way.

Yet I find that the engagement with an artwork is necessarily always intellectual because one's sensibility is something that is needed in order for something to be intellectually engaging or ravishing. This is to say that whatever cognitive faculty, understanding, imagination or reason, is dominating does not mean that the engagement with a phenomenon lacks sensibility. On the contrary I claim – based on what I have come to understand in my research – that the faculty of sensibility, which I shall discuss in more detail in the following chapters, is the foundation for any intellectual, sensuous and emotional engagement with an artwork and these types engagements are intertwined with each other.

I can't stand his *Human Comedy*. To think how easily the best soup gets spoiled when one adds a spoonful of old grease or a bit of toothpaste to it. One drop of bad, pretentious, melodramatic Balzac is enough to make these volumes and his personality unpalatable. They say that he is a genius, that one must be tolerant because of this. The women who slept with his brilliant obesity know something about this tolerance because in order to sleep with a genius, they must have had to overcome many abominations in themselves.<sup>265</sup>

I have recognized that the subject matter of my paintings varies: I have painted many still lives on skeletons and skulls, my dying brother and haunted houses, a portrait of a child murderer that some might find ugly because of the subject matter. I do not find these subjects ugly myself. How these subjects are presented is yet another question. The way in which I have realized a painting can well be questioned: is the artistic presentation valuable enough, is it representative enough, does it meet the requirements of aesthetic value? As I have already told you, I find myself a clumsy painter, which is at least a little astonishing, since I have been told that I am plastic dancer, and for that matter, I am a very physical painter as well. I usually paint so that the

263 Ibid., pp. 261–262.

264 *Bad painting* is a trend that was born in the 1970s in American figurative painting.

265 Gombrowicz, p. 372.



painting is on the floor. I find that these are the two opposing sides in my physicality, clumsiness and plasticity. However, in general I have learned during my painter years not to take clumsiness as a defect, at least not anymore. Rather, it can be turned into an asset that has aesthetic value. What I have learned during this research is that my animated body seems more active and dominant than my mind while I am painting as if my body did the thinking: the thinking mind comes later.

*I think that I have altogether three finished works. However, I am not sure if I will keep my mind in the long run. I just have to wait and see. I have painted these three works mostly on the floor. Why not to paint so that the work would hang on the wall? I have been pondering about this. Is it because I sense that I have a better control over the work when I can go all around it and be on top of it and paint over it? 19 June 2013*

For me, as can be read from the extract from my diary above, being bodily all around the work is crucial in what comes to both making and reflecting on a work. Reflecting takes place in the midst of making or after it and cannot be separated from making entirely, yet it is withdrawing from the work in a bodily sense. Reflecting is about taking distance and considering past actions and relating these actions with possible future ones. It becomes something more intellectual, or better conceptualized than making that can be very imaginative.

Kant does not write on an animated body in relation to aesthetic judgment: it seems to be a matter of nonchalance for him. All he is concerned about is the play of cognitive faculties reflecting on an object. The aesthetic pleasure, according to Kant, is a result of the harmonious free play of the cognitive faculties of understanding and imagination. Paul Guyer argues that Kant's aesthetic judgment does not allow an inverse harmony of the faculties: 'I conclude, then, that while Kant obviously recognizes the existence of ugliness, he does not hold that our experience of ugliness is a pure aesthetic experience.'<sup>266</sup> I do not find Guyer's argument plausible, since how can the free play of the faculties be felt harmonious, if the other end of the scale, disharmony or chaos, is not present within the play of imagination and understanding?

Actually Kant's thinking of ugliness rests on the aesthetic, as the aesthetic applies to all judgments that pertain to a feeling, whether

266 Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 20, <ftp://ftp.cle.unicamp.br/pub/kant-e-prints/vol3-n3-2004.pdf>, [accessed 11 June 2016], p. 161.

it is a feeling of pleasure or displeasure.<sup>267</sup> However, this is not all, as Marten Steenhagen has rightfully noted. First, beauty and ugliness do not deny each other but are contraries, or two different sides of the same thing, meaning that no more than one of these attributes can be present at a time. Second, according to Steenhagen, Kant applies aesthetic judgment to all judgments relating to a feeling, yet Kant finds that the kind of ugliness that arouses loathing is based on biological facts.<sup>268</sup> If something is experienced as loathing and can be traced back to biological roots, it does not necessarily mean that we are not dealing with an aesthetic judgment in a Kantian sense, quite the contrary. In this study I argue, that we are dealing with aesthetic even though it might be something loathing that necessarily, on the one hand, activates one's aesthetic sensibility and, on the other hand, derives from the evolution of a living organism's biology. Here, as I see it, the mind and matter interact over the depths of evolutionary time to produce aesthetic sensations. Naturally, sensibility has been and is a very vital faculty in terms of survival. This is to say that I find, contrary to Kant's thinking, that it is not just a receptive and passive faculty but instead a faculty that calls for action. Even for Kant feelings of pleasure and displeasure entail that aesthetic judgement is non-cognitive and that the determining ground is sensation, Kant held fast to his opinion that the claim about an object while subject apprehends it, is about the state of the subject.<sup>269</sup>

To what category does ugliness then belong? Does it belong to the category of beauty; is it just an incompleteness of beauty, a deceived expectation of beauty? In my view, if we take aesthetics as a manifold of sensibility that is necessarily also something carnal and that is capable of rejecting conventional forms of perception, then also ugliness belongs to the realm of aesthetics.

Mojka Kuplen elaborates on the Kantian perspective on ugliness based on the free play of imagination. According to Kuplen, objects hold, or fail to hold, one's attention precisely because of the free play of imagination. Kuplen claims that ugliness particularly stirs up free play and draws more attention towards itself.<sup>270</sup> The cognitive need to find harmony challenges one's cognitive powers to find a harmonious resolution: 'we are instead enticed to continue our reflection' until purposiveness of the manifold shows its conformity to our cognitive abilities.<sup>271</sup> Kuplen pays attention to Kant's remark<sup>272</sup> that originality is the primary characteristic of the artist. In other words, creating a work of art is neither governed by any known rules nor by a predis-

267 Kant, p. 89, §1.

268 Martin Steenhagen, 'Explaining the Ugly: Disharmony and Unrestrained Cognition', in Kant, *Esthetica*, <http://estheticatijdschrift.nl/files/2014/09/3-Esthetica-ExplainingtheUgly-DisharmonyandUnrestrainedCognitioninKant-2010-11-24.pdf>, [accessed 18 April 2016]; Kant, p. 190, § 48.

269 Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 51.

270 Kuplen, p. 275.

271 Ibid., p. 276.

272 Kant, p. 186, §45.

273 Ibid., p. 192, §49.

position of skill. In paragraph 49<sup>273</sup> Kant talks about the spirit, without which the work is nothing. In my view, what Kant means by spirit is a faculty for the representation of aesthetic ideas. With an aesthetic idea I understand a representation of imagination. In this sense the spirit is identical with the faculty of sensibility but limited to the realm of art. Kuplen claims that ugly works of art are also products of the artist's talent and potentiality to exercise free imagination. Kuplen gives as examples of such ugly artworks John Cage's work *Imaginary Landscape No. 2* and Stockhausen's *Helicopter String Quartet*.<sup>274</sup>

274 Kuplen, p. 278.

Yet, beautiful art exceeds the concept of Beauty and ugly art, as well as an incomplete work, exceeds the concept of Ugly or Incomplete. This is to say that beauty, ugly and incomplete are all experiences that point beyond the adherent concept but also beyond the actual experience. In Kant's words:

Now if we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way, then in this case the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion, that is at the instigation of a representation it gives more to think about than can be grasped and made distinct in it (although it does, to be sure, belong to the concept of the object).<sup>275</sup>

275 Kant, p. 193, §49.

In sum, if I say 'what a beautiful or ugly painting', then I already have a concept and an end. What we have here is a logical judgment, not an aesthetic judgment. Instead, Kant's aesthetic judgment is about a reflective feeling on how objects affect us: it is not cognitive. Naturally, one can formulate a conceptual judgement of a painting. According to Kant, feelings such as pleasure and displeasure have no cognitive function at all. Thus he defines an aesthetic judgment in general as one whose predicate can never be cognition, i.e. concept. This is because the determining ground of such a judgment is always a sensation that can never become a concept of an object.<sup>276</sup> Yet, reflection is composed of finding a suitable concept that corresponds to the existing feeling, whether harmonious or disharmonious.

276 Allison, p. 51.

I am of the opinion that the way in which Kant conceptualizes and rationalizes the aesthetic feeling and drops out the animated body

means that the experience produces general objectivity, in which I know through concepts, a way of thinking that was later criticized by Gilles Deleuze and Michel Henry, for example. This kind of stance neither gives the answer to the question of what makes the appearing of something affective. I claim that the faculty of sensibility is the active condition of such an experience of aesthetic appearing, for example beauty, ugliness or incompleteness, but it does not necessitate a concept. In this sense what the Early Romantics wrote on chaos, I think, is applicable here. While making an artwork, the experience can well remain indeterminate and no concept can be adequate to it. The judgment is based on a feeling: it feels like something, incomplete, even chaotic, but I am not sure what it is, and that is enough. The next action that I make with the work does not call for any definite concept to be present but sensibility. Making art and, for that matter, an aesthetic encounter, becomes concrete via the experience of incompleteness that actually marks the point of becoming of something. Thus the feeling of something undetermined concerning body, mind and matter can well be the ground for the next movement. *Poesisis*, in Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, refers to aesthetic chaos, the purpose of which is to synthesize the sensible and the intelligible and even rework social and discursive structures.<sup>277</sup>

277 Andreas & Oksiloff,  
p. 159.

*I divided colours into six separate cardboard mugs; reds and bluegreens. The aim was to paint light using wide brush strokes in a wavy manner. I worked with the big paintings that had some flowers, while my thoughts traversed between death and destruction. Perhaps this painting seems visually somewhat beautiful; however, I find that it has something threatening in it, something that reminds me of approaching act of devastation. 5 July 2012*

Later after one year I destroyed the work.

According to Kant, an aesthetic idea is precisely a counterpart of a rational idea. An aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination in such a way that in its free employment no expression of a concept can be found.<sup>278</sup> An aesthetic idea strives to reach the supersensible and unconditioned that is something beyond the bounds of experience, just as the idea of reason strives to bring itself to the phenomenal and possible. According to Mary-Barbara Zeldin, there is no rule for the production of aesthetic ideas in Kant's thinking, yet this production requires both taste and an artist, the genius.<sup>279</sup> Kant actually determined in quite an exact way the elements of an aesthetic idea: firstly, an aesthetic idea employs reason, which then results in a content of the theme of a particular work of art. Secondly, there is a particular image or intuition that is present in an aesthetic idea, for example hell, eternity or death. Thirdly, in an aesthetic idea the two previous elements, reason and intuition, are brought together.<sup>280</sup> In other words, aesthetic idea discloses a new rule.

Kant asserts that the purpose of an artwork is to express aesthetic ideas and that an artist, as a natural gift, is the most suitable talent for the exposing of the ideas. The work of art is thereby that of the genius.<sup>281</sup> The artist, or genius, to use the term that Kant uses, is the incarnation of the happy relation between the faculties of imagination and understanding. The genius is the one who finds the expression through which the subjective state of mind can be communicated to others. According to Kant, the spirit of the genius as the animating power of his/her mind puts the mental powers into swing. The genius awakens genius. Genius involves spirit, a talent for apprehending and communicating aesthetic ideas: no concept whatsoever is adequate for such ideas that actually enlarge a concept.<sup>282</sup> Thus, great art involves the freedom of the originality of the genius, skill and any self-imposed discipline of taste. Zeldin then asserts that skill can be acquired through training and taste, through culture, but the spirit, the originality, is something that is given or not.<sup>283</sup>

What I find intriguing in Kant's thinking, is, first, the notion that the genius is an original talent, which means that originality, the primary characteristic of a genius, must be a consequence of singularity. This observation that I have made actually speaks against Kant's own claim of universality. Second, if the talent of the genius belongs to nature, then it must be both unintentional and unstudied, it is a *nou-*

278 Kant, p. 192, §49.

279 Mary-Barbara Zeldin, 'Kant's Theories of Art and Genius', *International Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 8, (1976), pp. 101–114, p. 101.

280 Kant, pp. 192–193, §49.

281 *Ibid.*, p. 186, §46.

282 This is exactly what Gilles Deleuze elaborates on when he problematizes the concept as something given. According to him, a philosophical concept can never be mistaken for a scientific function or an artistic construction. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xiv.

283 Zeldin, p. 110.

*menal* act, and it is exactly here when the Kant's transcendent becomes something empirical and carnal.

Artistic making, as I experience it, permeates and exceeds thought, it stimulates indeterminate thought and animates body. Thus what is characteristic of artistic making is, in addition to indeterminacy, is chaos, expansiveness and excess. While making, I am normally working in a way, as if I transcended beyond the limits of experience entering chaos that becomes a pure plane of sensibility. To my mind, art can then be taken as an instant and as evidence of the logic of expansion. Then, in this perspective, completeness, after which I strive and which is my aim, is in actuality a concept of expansion. This is to say: the work of art communicates aesthetic ideas that are neither concepts nor ideas of reason but, nonetheless, concern a whole apprehended by sensibility.

Kant thinks that aesthetic ideas and an aesthetic experience are the triumph of the spirit, i.e. spirit is the faculty for the representation of aesthetic idea, which is a representation of imagination. He elaborates that the spirit of the artist expresses what is unnamable in the mental state to make it universally communicable. Accordingly, 'that requires a faculty for apprehending the rapidly passing play of the imagination and unifying it into a concept (which for that very reason is original and at the same time discloses a new rule)'.<sup>284</sup> In other words, imagination is liberated from the control of understanding and reason, it schematizes without concepts. The individual spirit or soul of an artist intrudes the uniformity of humans when imagination is liberated. However, Kant is after uniformity and comparability of works of art in that he presupposes universality and that everyone must experience similar pleasure.

284 Kant, p. 195, §49.

What if the idea of universal satisfaction stemmed also from the body, from its origins, and what if the mind evolved by moonlight, indicating human mental evolution, and the body evolved by adaptation to survival strategies? And, if I bring back biology and assert that the two dimensions of being that Darwin called sexual selection and natural selection have to be both included in aesthetics in order to explain human organic complexity, functionality and sense of beauty. Where does body then stand? Yet, both the thinking of Kant and the evolutionary theory leave me perplexed and engulfed with controversy.

For me, the spirit transforms into making and making becomes spirit. I find that the aesthetic idea takes place due to a relation be-

tween me, my subjectivity, my animated body, the painting and the other materials at work. I drown into the world of making that is subtle, both sensuous and intelligible and that suits me. The aesthetic idea that first sees the daylight from this relation takes hold of me, and my preliminary ideas, those of understanding, imagination and reason, according to my diary quotations below, go up in smoke. In summary, the relation between the body and mind, the environs and the work and the materials at hand, in which the spirit of the artist is just one element, is decisive and constitutive in creative making. What we have here is relation that is like a mesh to be unravelled out.

*The painting for today is done. I spread colour all over the big canvas with different kinds of brushes, in different rhythms. This work was supposed to be a big red painting. Unfortunately or fortunately the painting took me altogether in another direction. The question remains: will I return to the original idea of a red painting? Painting is in so many ways undetermined and self-regulating. What am I; a mere medium? However, I have conquered the space, the next time I will have to look at the work more closely and see who is leading here. 16 July 2012*

Kant's description of humans as reasoning living beings is based on the presumption that humans have an absolutely free will and, based on this free will, they are capable of recognizing the autonomy of others. This Kant's, in his time radical moral claim, made a subject a vessel for nature, and the deeds and doings of a subject manifestations of freedom. As a consequence, reason allows us to give autonomy to artworks as well.

More than a century later Theodor Adorno realized that 'The Kantian concept of the judgment of taste, by its subjectively directed query, concerns the core of objective aesthetics: the question of quality – good and bad, true and false – in the artwork'.<sup>285</sup> Adorno rightly notes that Kant grounds the aesthetic objectivity in the subject and subordinates it under the primacy of discursive logic.<sup>286</sup> Adorno then proposes his idea that the subject and the object are dialectical in 'that whatever the work is composed of – material, expression, and form – is always both'<sup>287</sup>, and 'In the artwork the subject is neither the observer nor the creator nor absolute spirit, but rather spirit bound up with, preformed and mediated by the object'.<sup>288</sup>

285 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by G. Adorno and R. Tiedemann, trans. by R. Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 216.

286 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

287 *Ibid.*, p. 218.

288 *Ibid.*, pp. 218.

Next I shall discuss how Theodor Adorno elaborates his way toward a new way thinking of aesthetics proceeding from both Kant and Hegel. I shall juxtapose his negative dialectics with my own making.

#### THEODOR ADORNO AND THE AESTHETIC AUTONOMY OF ART

One paints a painting, not what it represents.<sup>289</sup>

Art perceived strictly aesthetically is art aesthetically misperceived.<sup>290</sup>

Why then has mankind begun to look closely at paintings? You will find answer to this in the mechanisms of human cohabitation, in its historical development. Painting, in spite of everything, is pretty, right? It serves to ornament. Hence a market for paintings has arisen, just as it has for jewellery. People began to pay because – to paraphrase Pascal – if a Titian hangs on my wall it means that I am somebody, because I am rich. This pretty object – a painting – has thereby inflamed the possessive instinct in kings, dukes, bishops, all the way to the bourgeoisie, and the need has created a whole scale of values. There are many reasons for this; people, just like individuals, have their games and manias ... Who for example, could have foreseen that a certain type of stone, such as a diamond or ruby (whose artistic effect is minimal), would arouse such powerful desires in man? And what about postage stamps?<sup>291</sup>

At the beginning of the 20th century art faced novel threats that came both from outside the art world, i.e. the invasion of mass culture and mechanical reproduction, and from inside it: the self-criticism of avant-garde art. The European avant-garde movement insisted on art becoming practical and mundane again through an assimilation of art into the society and into the everydayness of life. It was through artworks that the new praxis of life could come into being, and people joined others and started to search common revelations in artworks. This meant that the categories of individual creation and

289 *Ibid.*, p. 5.  
According to Adorno, it was Arnold Schoenberg who said this.

290 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

291 Gombrowicz, pp. 335–336.



reception ceased to exist, as the now, the event, and any form of singularity and authenticity of the artwork were confronted with the expectations of the trooping masses.<sup>292</sup> <sup>293</sup> The art's autonomy, which the bourgeoisie had almost one hundred years earlier attained, had been chastised once again, and this time for good, indeed, because of the splendour of mechanical reproduction and mass culture.

292 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 53.

293 Adorno describes that art tries to respond to the loss of its self-evidence 'by trying to pull itself free from its own concept as from a shackle: the fact that it is art'. Adorno, p. 22.

Quite the contrary, for Theodor Adorno aesthetics is distinct from mechanical reproduction. His endeavour was to defeat the generally acknowledged decline of aesthetics and to bring aesthetics closer to the-thing-itself, the artwork and the particular. The crucial questions for Adorno are: is there an intelligible correspondence between aesthetics and an artwork or is an artwork an object that prohibits its inner comprehension, what is an artwork's focal point in society, and is an artwork possibly external to society? Adorno's main thesis is that the concept of art refuses its definition: art cannot be categorized and art's essence cannot be concluded from its origin. This is, firstly, because a work of art is more than the combining of its materials. Secondly, the Idea of an artwork is that it turns against itself and opposes its own concept.<sup>294</sup>

294 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Although Adorno claims that the concept of art refuses definition, he differentiates himself from Kant's non-conceptual object of aesthetic judgment. Adorno's point of departure is different: he is of the opinion that an artwork can only be defined from its other, by its relation to what it represents and what it itself is not. He claims that an artwork has only borrowed elements in common with the external world. Here we are to note that Adorno's aesthetics requires metaphysics, as did Kant's *noumenon*, the thing-in-itself. Adorno's notion of the other that necessitates metaphysics is imprinted in human longing and inevitable incompleteness that reason cannot compass but can only catch glimpses of via artworks. The other as longing and as inadequacy points towards something that is posited beyond, and so, as Sarah Snyder views, 'the world from which art appears to come to us is in fact always an expression of the mind's dissatisfaction with its ability to reach unequivocal truths'.<sup>295</sup>

295 Sarah Snyder, 'Art and the Possibility of Metaphysics: Theodor Adorno on Tragedy as the Origin of Aesthetic Autonomy', in *Evental Aesthetics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2013, pp. 40-51, pp. 46-47.

I find that the experience of otherness is something natural and genuine. Otherness signals the possibility to have a close contact with the difference and the heteronomy of the mind, body and matter. The distance between the other and the maker, the artwork and the world stay irreducible. This distance between the artwork and the best possible work is precisely the event of tragedy that the artist has to suffer. I

am continually confronted by the evidence of this distance actualizing and manifesting itself through my constant attempts of painting a better work. Thus this distance turns out to be evidence of the other in its negation. Distance becomes something carnal through making, through my sensibility. For that reason I find metaphysics problematic.

Maurice Blanchot shares with Adorno negative thinking on artwork in what comes to the notion of the other. A note from Maurice Blanchot's thinking on the disaster and the Other reads as follows:

In the relation of myself to the Other, the other exceeds my grasp ... But, in the relation of the Other to me, everything seems to reverse itself: the distant becomes close-by, this proximity becomes the obsession that afflicts me, that weights down upon me, that separates me from myself...<sup>296</sup>

296 Blanchot,  
*The Writing of the Disaster*,  
p. 19.

My making is about coping with this distance and to have a sense of it and to finally accept it and finish the work that has occupied me. I tend to think when it comes to my relation with the work that finishing a work means the death of that particular work and the other that becomes apparent by the virtue of making.

What is more Blanchot shares also both Hegel's and Adorno's thinking on an artwork's parted company with history. However, for Blanchot, the fall of art that Hegel advocated is rather a sign of art's own endless self-questioning. This self-questioning indicates art's constant vanishing out of reach in its inability to claim its own essence.<sup>297</sup> The Hegelian vision of the possible death of art, according to Adorno, corresponds to Hegel's view of art as a transitory product of history.<sup>298</sup> Adorno shares Hegel's view in that art has a socio-historical past. However, Adorno emphasizes that the historical past of art relies on the importance of tragedy: tragedy designates the origin of the artwork's autonomy. Contrary to Hegel, Adorno claims that art is the social antithesis of society and not something derived from it. In fact, art is an antithesis to existence as well.<sup>299</sup> He thinks that art is inherently resistant to the oppressive forms of communication in society and that it can offer perspectives past these kinds of forms.<sup>300</sup> This is to say, it is the work's dual character, both autonomous and fait social, that adheres external tension to the artwork.<sup>301</sup> Because the artwork can never achieve closure, it is an antithesis of itself as well – and hence the notion of a fragment becomes something decisive for Adorno.

297 Hill, p. 16.

298 Adorno, p. 4.

299 Ibid., pp. 9, 138.

300 Ibid., pp. 9, 296–297.

301 Ibid., pp. 3, 5.

Painting is not just a puzzle; it would be belittling to say so. Painting is about being in this world as a sensuous being before the unknown. The answer to the riddle that a work poses is not equivalent to what it actually illuminates in a given moment. It is just a fragment. What is being illuminated through the making of a painting is being, being as something unpredictable and informal. As such, art exceeds the senses and comprehension, it points to something beyond and mediates between things. 18 June 2012

302 Ibid., pp. 56–57.

An artwork in its fragmentary formation is a part of the totality of the work that opposes totality; it is part of a whole where the rest is missing yet actual. Thus fragment is the basic form and the only philosophical method to an artwork.<sup>302</sup> Adorno claims that traditional aesthetics strives to make the universal particular, whereas, as Adorno underlines, the particular is what is essential to art: it is the difference between the universal and particular, as an energizing and tense relation that cannot be eliminated in an artwork.<sup>303</sup>

303 Ibid., p. 264.

What emerges while I am making a painting is a patchwork of fragments that might well pull to different directions. What my work is about is not entirely what it seems to be: so many fragments and layers become hidden. However, those absent references are reified in the painting, giving an illusion of a full painting performance. Still, I cannot capture all the references that have been present: materials leak out while the practice is itself resistant: making becomes a place of gathering in which things might well be out of order and chaos might well be prevailing. Therefore a painting is only a fragment or the remains of a bigger painting and its gravitational force that has taken place while making. This gravitational force, according to Adorno:

... gathers around itself *membra disjecta*, traces of the existing ... The synthesis achieved by means of the artwork is not simply forced on its elements; rather, it recapitulates that in which these elements communicate with one another; thus the synthesis is itself a product of otherness.<sup>304</sup>

304 Ibid., p. 9.

It has been a long time since I have been in my studio. I have missed it so much. My studio is my place; it belongs entirely to me. Here I can express myself as I wish, here I can work as long days as I wish. This is my true place of being. Here I

am free to make my own decisions, to alter something, and to decide when a work is finished, and so on. Here I am happy, apart from that an unfinished painting drives me crazy and bothers me. Nevertheless the urge to finish a work is what I consider as something positive, it promotes my creativity. The unfinished work teases me, it does not let me take a break, whether I am inside or outside my studio, it constantly calls my attention. My painting is how I communicate with the world. My work is also evidence of the world's incompleteness and of mine as well. How can the world be incomplete? Is not all that is needed here and now? Is nature not complete? Art provokes the same question over and over again: what is being, is the painting worth making? Does it make sense to even answer these questions? Well, it seems that one tries, at least I do. Does it have an effect on my work? Today I took all the three paintings I have been working with before me and worked with all of them, as if I wanted to compose something more substantial with them, as if each of these paintings were just a fragment of a bigger picture, of a bigger thought. Here by thought I mean something that is not pre-structured and where the rules of linguistic language do not apply. The thought is embodied as the questions are. I even took the biggest painting that I have not worked with for over eight months and that I thought I had completed and finished before me and worked with it. I am amazed, but it just shows me that a painting is never complete. I can even remember that during the making of it, I thought about whether I should quit because it was obvious that I could not achieve anything perfect. Then I was pondering: is it enough just to be content? However, I cannot quit, I need to paint more, I am never finished with painting. 10 June 2013

Adorno notes that 'There is no art that does not contain in itself as an element, negated, what it repulses'; he discusses the works refusal to play along and how 'Its (artwork's) power over the subject intensifies in parallel with the increasing autonomy of the work'.<sup>305</sup> He claims: 'It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist'.<sup>306</sup>

Adorno finds Immanuel Kant's approach to aesthetics revolutionary in that it preserves the aesthetic judgment's objectivity through

305 Ibid., pp. 9, 11, 13, 14, 18.

306 Ibid., p. 1.

- 307 Ibid., pp. 11–12. the analysis of subjective elements.<sup>307</sup> Kant's emphasis on representation stems from the subject's point of view, meaning that the significance of the aesthetic judgment arises from the effect that an artwork as such has on the subject and that consequently claims to have grounds for expecting a similar pleasure of everyone. In the same spirit Adorno claims that 'The share of subjectivity in the artwork is itself a piece of objectivity' and 'Although art in its innermost essence is a comportment, it cannot be isolated from expression, and there is no expression without a subject'.<sup>308</sup> In other words, Kant's *sensus communis* is not just common sense but stems from the fact that we all have the same structure of faculties, i.e. we judge from the same standpoint of faculties. However, Adorno elaborates that the share of subjectivity of an artwork, repulses repressive collectivization, and stands in critical tension, for example, to science and to society in general.<sup>309</sup> Adorno's thinking reminds me of how Jean-Luc Nancy has elaborated further on community, as I have touched earlier. For Nancy community is constitutive of individuality thus community points to communication that makes it possible: to be is to be together without any common inside.<sup>310</sup>
- 308 Ibid., p. 52.
- 309 Ibid., p. 303.
- 310 Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, p. 154.
- Adorno argues that Kant's pure aesthetic judgment impoverishes the artwork, regarding aesthetics either to the empirical, that of the formal beauty, or to the sublime, that of the natural object. Adorno writes: 'The sublimation of the work to absolute form neglects the spirit of the work in the interest of which sublimation was undertaken in the first place'.<sup>311</sup> For Adorno the concept of beauty is inadequate to aesthetics: 'If aesthetics were nothing but a systematic catalogue of whatever is called beautiful, it would give no idea of the life that transpires in the concept of beauty'.<sup>312</sup>
- 311 Adorno, p. 12.
- 312 Ibid., p. 66.
- Moreover, Adorno writes: 'Art's promesse du bonheur means not only that hitherto praxis has blocked happiness but that happiness is beyond praxis'.<sup>313</sup> According to Adorno, desire survives in art only, in that it negates itself, i.e. the desire it provokes. I read this negating in a way and as I experience it repeatedly in my practice, that I am constantly turned back and that I cannot trust my feeling of the work being completed? In practice my seeking of pleasure and fulfilment can only be challenged by the sublime that is ever present as emptiness, which Kant, as Adorno claims, excluded from art.<sup>314</sup> For me, the sublime is present in my making in its negativity, in that it *is the nothing* there is.
- 313 Ibid., pp. 14–15.
- 314 Ibid., p. 18.

*How could I become a better painter, more skilful, more expressive, more something? Deep down inside of me I know that there is no other way than to paint all the time, it is the only way to become better, to satisfy my desire. However, I am afraid that my appetite grows endlessly; what a vicious circle. My aim is to get more into the sense of materiality and to get sense of the emerging forms of the work. However, I love this work and how it challenges me. I want to be as close as possible to it and to sense its potential, I want to develop alongside it. There is some strange mystery hidden in materials that I use and I want to find out at least something about it, and to learn it, I have to work harder. 17 July 2012*

The new, as the aesthetic mediator, means for Adorno nothing else than force or coercion used by the object itself to make itself intelligible and autonomous; it is the effort of pressure by the old that forces toward the new and without which the old cannot be fulfilled.<sup>315</sup> In Adorno's mind, the category of the new within art produces even a conflict between the new and duration. He claims that artworks are meant to endure:

... it is related to their concept, that of objectivation. Through duration art protests against death. The paradoxically transient eternity of artworks is the allegory of an eternity bare of semblance. Art is the semblance of what is beyond death's reach.<sup>316</sup>

But this is not all; new witnesses nothingness: it witnesses resistance the moment when it manifests itself and when it is no longer new. This I find the absolute paradox in art: its own subjective time span of resistance that works for future, for the work being once more something more. What I have in mind is the complexity of the work and its relation to me as a maker: whenever I have experienced fulfilment, the next day begins with a disappointment, with a disaster. As Jean-François Lyotard sees it, the mind does not have the finite at its disposal: 'It desires or waits for it, but does not have at its disposal. The mind will not complete the form', 'What is desired? Simply the event of an end. In sense, a death. Yet is it a death of what is simply possible, or a death in order to give birth to the artwork?'<sup>317</sup>

Adorno asserts that 'Art cannot fulfill its concept'<sup>318</sup>; instead, it shatters it<sup>319</sup>, and 'the autonomous work, functionally exclusive in itself,

315 Ibid., p. 29; & p. 41: 'The new is the longing for the new, not the new itself. That is what everything new suffers from.'

316 Ibid., p. 35.

317 Lyotard, *Toward the Post-Modern*, pp. 171–172.

318 Adorno, p. 71.

319 Ibid., p. 74.

320 Ibid., p. 74.

wants to achieve through its own immanent teleology what was once called beauty'<sup>320</sup> In other words, particularization as it manifests itself in tension and in a strive for perfection is essential in art and immanent in artistic development. In this sense, Adorno can be considered as a post-Kantian thinker in that he is of the dialectical opinion that 'The dialectical postulate that the particular is the universal has its model in art'<sup>321</sup>, in that what was once called Beauty.

321 Ibid., p. 265.

Let me still note a few words on Adorno's thinking on the ugly: 'Whatever it may be, the ugly must constitute, or be able to constitute, an element of art... the ugly is that element that opposes the work's ruling law of form'<sup>322</sup> The category of the ugly is dynamic and serves as a tension. Adorno is not thinking about the ugly in a sense that something is historically older, archaic, but that the things that one tends to include under such abstract headings as polymorphous sexuality, violently mutilated body parts and lethal diseases are those where ugliness is present. What is at stake in the ugly, according to Adorno, is that it extends art's concept beyond that of the ideal: 'As Nietzsche knew, art's own gesture is cruel. In aesthetic forms, cruelty becomes imagination: Something is excised from the living, from the body of language, from tones, from visual experience'<sup>323</sup> Adorno stresses that the purer the form and the higher the autonomy of the works, the more crueler they are. 'Cruelty steps forward unadorned from the artworks as soon as their own spell is broken. The mythical terror of beauty extends into artworks as their irresistibility, a trait once attributed to Aphrodite Peithon', he depicts.<sup>324</sup> The function of cruelty in artworks, the way in which 'Terror itself peers out of the eyes of beauty'<sup>325</sup> requires further study. Anyhow, the turmoil of present-day aesthetics is a subject that for example Wolfgang Welsch has pondered over.<sup>326</sup>

322 Ibid., p. 60.

323 Ibid., p. 65.

324 Ibid., p. 65.

325 Ibid., p. 68.

326 Welsch, 'Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics' & 'Aestheticization Processes: Phenomena, Distinctions and Prospects' *Theory Culture & Society* 1996, Vol. 13, No.1, [http://www2.unijena.de/welsch/papers/W\\_Welsch\\_aestheticization\\_processes.pdf](http://www2.unijena.de/welsch/papers/W_Welsch_aestheticization_processes.pdf) [accessed 20 October 2016].

327 John Roberts, 'After Adorno: Art, Autonomy, and Critique. A Literature Review', *Historical Materialism*, UK: Brill, Vol 1 No 7 (2000), pp. 221–239, p. 226. Adorno claims: 'The immanence of society in the artwork is the essential social relation of art not the immanence of art in society'. Adorno, p. 304.

328 Adorno, p. 232.

How should I think of Adorno's aesthetic theory then? I find that his arguments are crucial for my research. First, Adorno argues that aesthetic theory is never merely aesthetic because all aesthetic questions are essentially also historical ones.<sup>327</sup> However, as soon as the artwork attains social visibility, the work is under a new order of aesthetic norms, but retains its aesthetic otherness. Second, Adorno points out that artworks are not being but process and that 'They are in need of continuity and capable of it by virtue of their incompleteness and, often, by their insignificance'<sup>328</sup> He is insistent in that the neutralization of the artwork is the social price of aesthetic autonomy and that 'once artworks are entombed in the pantheon of cultural commodi-

ties, they themselves – their truth content – are also damaged'.<sup>329</sup> It is apparent that such damaged artworks communicate a real crisis for aesthetics. Third, his elaboration on that fantasy brings out something out of nothing, i.e. creation *ex nihilo*, as inadequate and that 'fantasy shifts whatever artworks absorb of the existing into constellations through which they become the other of the existing'<sup>330</sup> has had an impact in this study.

329 Ibid., p. 299.

330 Ibid., p. 227.

## CLOSING WORDS

Of course, a painting is not a postage stamp. It is however, art, although quite limited in its means of expression. Combine the artistic charge of painting with other powers, not having much in common with art, and you will understand why it has been raised so high by our feelings, almost to the level of holiness. The only question is – is painting worth keeping at these heights? Today this is what happens to you: first the complicated herd instinct, which creates itself historically, throws you on your knees before a painting – and only then do you try to force yourselves to explain that if you reeled with admiration, it was because the work was worthy of it.<sup>331</sup>

331 Gombrowicz, p. 336.

In this chapter, I have discussed aesthetics, taste, aesthetic judgment, beauty and sublime and what these terms mean when developed and unraveled in their time by David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Theodor Adorno and Jean-Francois Lyotard. The pivotal questions have been, first, what allows one to make aesthetic judgments on things and nature? Second, what is the role, significance, value and impact of art in particular and art more generally in society, and finally, how the maker through one's physical engagement with the work breaks down some of these conventions laid down by those Giants of philosophy.

332 Kant, p. 96, §5.

333 Ibid., p. 95, §5: 'One can say that among all these three kinds of satisfaction only that of taste for the beautiful is a disinterested and free of satisfaction'.

Kant asserts that aesthetic judgment is the act of judging an object through a satisfaction or dissatisfaction without any interest, purpose or concept of perfection.<sup>332</sup> An aesthetic judgment is not based on the agreeable<sup>333</sup> nor on the concept of perfection<sup>334</sup>; it is not a cognitive, logical judgment and its determining ground is no other than sub-

334 Ibid., pp. 112–113, §15: 'Thus by the beauty, as a formal subjective purposiveness, there is not conceived any perfection of the object'.



335 Ibid., p. 89, §1.

336 Ibid., p. 102, §9.

337 Ibid., p. 89, §1.

338 Pinkard, p. 68.

339 Kant,  
pp. 100–101, §8.

jective.<sup>335</sup> The subjective state of mind, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, follows the free play of the powers of representation, cognition, one's intellect, understanding and imagination.<sup>336</sup> Pleasure is not something within the cognitive control of the subject; instead, pleasure is solely that of the subject, its determining ground is no other than subjective. It provides no knowledge of the object.<sup>337</sup> Kant emphasizes that the pleasure that one experiences in relation to beauty does not precede the judgment, but is instead attendant on it.<sup>338</sup> It is valid but without a rule: it is a singular, subjective judgment but it has an aesthetic quality, that of universality.<sup>339</sup>

A judgment of taste is universally communicable. It is addressed to the individual and to all others, and must therefore be formed upon universal grounds or norms. These norms cannot themselves be explicated as concepts, since there are no rules for determining what counts as pleasurable and beautiful. In making a subjective judgment about the beautiful, one is making a statement about how an object ought to be felt.

Adorno claims that Kant's theory of art is inaccurate in that it insufficiently reflects on practical reason, and this is why Kant's theory of aesthetics is 'paradoxically a castrated hedonism, a desire without desire'.<sup>340</sup> What is more, the error or misunderstanding of aestheticism is that aesthetics has confused its own theory of the artwork and that aesthetic norms lag behind artworks.<sup>341</sup>

340 Adorno, pp. 13–14.

341 Ibid., pp. 45–47.

In Adorno's estimation, aesthetics should instead expand interest even beyond the particular, and this interest needs to be in a composition with the whole, but from the standpoint of the particular. In other words, the standard of aesthetics, according to Adorno, should fall beyond the actual life of the artwork – the dialectic of the artwork takes place between aesthetic norms and the artwork's specific and particular form.<sup>342</sup> In accordance Adorno suggests that the aura of the artwork is not only, as Walter Benjamin asserts, the here and now of the work but 'It is what goes beyond its factual givenness, its content; one cannot abolish it and still want art'.<sup>343</sup> For Adorno the alarming scenario is that the concept of the aura is lost, which is to say that the aura of the work both becomes something that determines and contradicts, both itself and the society.

342 Ibid., p. 47.

343 Ibid., p. 56.

The immanence of a form, in Adorno's aesthetic theory, within the heterogeneous realm has its limits and the limit is undermined by the artwork's other<sup>344</sup>, whereas for Kant the form in a pure aesthetic judgment is a mere form of purposiveness in the representation of the

344 Ibid., p. 289.

object that is given to us.<sup>345</sup> Thus the metaphysics that Kant and Adorno employ points towards different directions: Adorno's points to both the notion of other and to the future, whereas Kant's is more oriented to the past because in Kant's thinking the subject is already something formed by one's cognitive faculties. Whereas, Adorno's aesthetic theory bases on differing, first, from the point of the subject oneself and, second, when it comes to temporal differences in being future oriented.

The transcendent use of sensibility and imagination stems from Kant's thinking. The difference between the transcendental and the transcendent is pivotal in his thinking. What is meant by Kant's transcendental idealism, what we perceive by means of our senses of the object, is just a phenomenal appearing of the thing. In this sense transcendental idealism turns out to be empirical realism because our knowledge is based on how we experience things, how they appear to us and what kind of impact they have on us. We perceive phenomena and are affected by the world by means of our senses and sensibility that are directed towards the world. So, what we perceive is a phenomenal appearing and affectivity of the world.

I conclude this chapter with the following remarks that are based on my own experiences and reflections during this research. Since I feel my own limits of imagination and my skill, I have some kind of a feeling of what is not limited in myself, a feeling that I have some potential within those limits and hopefully beyond them; otherwise I would not paint and otherwise I would have no way of being aware of a limit. Freedom emerges from this feeling of potentiality that is inherent in me. I contain more than I can ever think of. However, I am at the same time limited and faced with the limit that I pose myself to myself.

As a maker I am impelled to test my limits. There is something seductive and exciting about my potentiality while making, it poses a demand for action. The potentiality present in me brings about associations and dissociations concerning my works. These experiences are tied to my subjective time lapse and obviously to some other things too, like my history, the experiences that I have, the things that I have become conditioned by and what I have learned in life. This is to say that my potentiality is always in relation to something existing and tuned by it yet to be offered.

*An important part of painting is its physicality, and right from the beginning, from building the frame and priming the*

*canvas. Although the preparatory work is largely based on manners and habits, on things that I have learned by doing, manners and habits have value; they function as setting up the stage for thought and action. Of course, my manners and habits change all the time, little by little, as repetition is impossible.* 9 June 2012

Following Antonio Damasio's thinking, the self is born when it experiences associations and dissociations; the self is not something with which one is born. The self is never finite but infinite in a sense that it is fragmentary and incomplete. The important question to ask is: how do these associations emerge? What ties us to them and to the world in large? For Merleau-Ponty it is the flesh of the world of which we are all part, but for me it is sensibility as the faculty concerning my whole being, because sensibility, and this is the argument of this dissertation, is the capacity that brings together perception and action, being exists and appears through sensibility, in this sense thought is always late if it is not intertwined with the making body that is not presentable.<sup>346</sup>

346 Tiina Nevanperä, 'An Insider's Account of Experience', in *Symyt / ORIGINS*, Vol. 1, 2015, pp. 31–40.

Incompleteness refers to a maker's effort to arrange and create a finished work. This effort means that the maker is bound by the work, bound by the interplay of tension, reward and rejection, and perhaps of being turned back. However, at some point the maker has to present a finished work and in that sense a completed one. Nevertheless, the work's openness remains, first, as an organic whole to numerous interpretations, to a set of tastes, inclinations and prejudices, and, second, the incompleteness of the work encourages or compels the author to try even harder in the next one for the previous work, the finished one marks a point of death of the author.

Incompleteness is an inescapable element of my making. It induces me to shift my position continuously in order to see the work in constantly new appearances, it becomes like the splendour of a kaleidoscope. Every coming together with a work offers me one kind of a version of the work but, as Umberto Eco, notes, at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit.<sup>347</sup> The next chapter will open a discussion on appearing, on how things appear and manifest themselves as incomplete in making and on how they develop.

347 Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 15.

I do not know if I dare to say this but I finally think that I have finished those three paintings. There is a fourth one of which I am not yet sure. I think that I am ready to start with my fifth painting of this period. Finally I feel satisfied and content. It has been a long painting period, way over a year. It seems that my painting is getting slower and more complex, and as such the work is becoming more demanding. Is this the result of a life experience or a painting experience? 17 January 2014

### 3 In The Presence of Appearing

348 Gilles Deleuze, 'On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought', in *Desert Islands and Other texts*, ed. by D. Lapoujade, trans. by M. Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 142.

349 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, p. 9.

350 Deleuze & Guattari, p. 167.

351 Ogden Nash, from the poem 'Dragons Are Too Seldom', in *Selected Poetry of Ogden Nash* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, Inc, 1995), p. 290.

352 Angela Carter, 'The Lady of the House of Love', in *The Bloody Chamber* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 119.

What philosophy lacks is empiricism.<sup>348</sup>

Materials are at work. Empiricism merely notes their presence but cannot think the activity of materials.<sup>349</sup>

The sensation is not coloured but, as Cezanne said colouring. That is why those who are nothing but painters are also more than painters, because they 'bring before us, in front of the fixed canvas,' not the resemblance but the pure sensation 'of a tortured flower, of a landscape slashed'.<sup>350</sup>

Where there is a monster there is a miracle.<sup>351</sup>

She herself is a haunted house. She does not possess herself; her ancestors sometimes come and peer out of the windows of her eyes and that is very frightening.<sup>352</sup>

I do not know where the painting comes from. My life as a painter is consumed in such dubious ways. My own painting operates like a distorting mirror in the midst of the most proper and intimate sphere, as if it unraveled me, the sweeper of a dream it is. I am unavoidably looked at and touched through by a stranger's eyes that happen to be my own. If I were simply I, I could recognize me, but now that the monster of incompleteness is ceaselessly concerned with me, I am constantly exposed to a difference and othering, whether disappointing or astonishing. The difference makes me try to make the sense of it through my constant, endless work. However, it is in vain, as the situation is never the same: I cannot grasp it, I am unable to answer it. Yet I try to keep up with it: the vertiginous thrill of inexactitude gives rise to a creative trait in me that is grounded on unease and puzzlement and on the appearing of something new. I wonder: where does incompleteness come from?

This chapter is about appearing. What does it have to do with incompleteness? Precisely this: incompleteness needs a place to appear, a place where to get out of my hands and then shape my future actions. This out-of-handedness will transform my making all the way. I find, as is well present in my diaries, that there is so much in appearing that is problematic, and just as much that is irritating, like all the unrecognizable things that appear on canvas and the chaos that those monsters tend to create: any kind of possible resolution hovers just out of reach. For this reason, I have to take a look at appearing and find out whether it has any kind of logic and sense. How do things appear, is the concept of appearing a prerequisite for something to appear? To what extent does it have to be known epistemologically? Or can it rather be understood in terms of the possibility of its knowability and/or, more suitably, in terms of sensibility, or is appearing an ontological fact of being without which there is no being?

This chapter will seek to show how the phenomenon of appearing and the experience of incompleteness are constantly engaged in the creative processes of making, of materials under transition, of a form that figures, of a force that resists, of a gesture that gathers; and further, how the endless possibilities and counter-possibilities emerge alongside as something appears. Here the intertwined theory of both incompleteness and appearing has to do with at least three problems: first, the work's openness; second, the maker's desire; and third, the finiteness or limits of them both. All of these three are in relation and juxtaposition with each other as the work starts to appear. There is a never-ending tension between all these because being is both incomplete and infinite, as if being were nothing else than brewing, mixing certainty and insecurity, taunting me to try again and again. For this reason, creative making has no end, it is an end in itself, an open-end. Thus, stakes are high because satisfaction is so rare.

The first part of this chapter looks at the openness of an encounter between a subject and making, as well as the multiplicities that emerge and appear within the relation between the subject and the object. What I am interested in is how the real something appears through an aesthetic perception and sensibility. For a more solid footing in comprehending appearing as a phenomenon, I will discuss Martin Seel's presentation of the aesthetics of appearing. After setting the stage, I shall turn to materiality and point out how pliable or how resistant it is during the different phases of my creative work. Lastly, I shall explore the notion of appearance and try to find out whether

there is a meaningful distinction between appearing and appearance and between an unfinished work and a finished work. My presupposition is that incompleteness starts from somewhere. To start off, I assume, even if these assumptions are somewhat contradictory to each other, the following: first, that appearing necessitates that things that are perceived do not just come across by chance, and second, that appearing does not begin as I have had in mind, it is not a monologue but a relation.

353 William B. Yeats,  
a fragment from his  
poem "The Second  
Coming", *Poetry*  
Foundation [http://www.  
poetryfoundation.org/  
poems-and-poets/  
poems/detail/43290](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/43290)  
[accessed 25 April 2016].

OPENNESS: 'SURELY SOME REVELATION IS AT HAND'<sup>353</sup>

There are many ways in which things appear and how one apprehends and perceives them. However, each is singular. When something appears, it touches me; it is an encounter. Being touched by a painting that is in a stage of emerging – after the madness and the magic of it all, not to mention the disappointment that hovers around – is as if we, the work and I, formed a mutual web: that of an affair, miserable or otherwise a precarious one. Making as a technique is a way to look also at myself as an open whole entangled with this mesh and all: I become with the work. Yet, any kind of holistic view of myself is doomed to fail. First, a reflection of myself that I catch from my work can never anticipate what comes next. It is always incomplete: something habitual, old and fragmented, second, it is soon replaced by the same-as-ever desire to create something new, as if it were that the worth of the old and incomplete is in that it pushes forward towards the new. And then reality comes along and spoils it all and I am almost where I started. Incompleteness takes a part of the event of appearing, almost as if creating itself – it is never planned yet it is an essential part of it.

*I feel just fine; I have started, a moment ago, to prime large canvases. It is evening and it is peaceful. I thought earlier today; how can I verbalize my making? I am almost certain that one can write very close to her own flesh or better, sensuously surpassing the senses, ignoring ready-made concepts. However, a distance always remains. I could start again to*

*take some photographs of myself working. I have been thinking of abstract painting and the environment, my surroundings, yesterday when I walked to my studio and passed the industrial park of Suvisahti, and all those worn-out buildings, lived-through walls, what I saw really captured me. Time, which at the same time in its essence is concealed from sight, became so sensuous and sensible. The worn-out paint is not just a trace but turns inside out into what cannot be traced solely by senses. How is it that time touches? 1 June 2012*

I am time. My passionate nature does not search for the rightness but the best possible painting that satisfies me. One can call it beauty or something that strikes or punctures me. It is illusory yet real and carnal. How can it be all these? Chasing after the best possible painting makes me sense a distance and then the distance becomes the most important thing. It represents in the work the loss of something that I never really had and will have. Everything becomes very delicate and scintillating, something that only sensibility can address.

To make an image, I take the risk and enter the intimate space and stand the chance of frustration and shame. When something appears, it does not only involve the act of seeing or the interplay of other senses: it involves my sensibility. Then what is at stake in an event of appearing is my subjectivity, because the relationship between me and the work cannot be determined objectively any longer. I can always abandon or destroy any work if I do not like it, if it causes too much annoyance, if it makes me hate myself. Still, I cannot wipe off what it had revealed to me of myself and of incompleteness.

I strive for being a better painter, to exceed myself. The demand seems infinite, innate and universal. The work produces itself a future, as if it were an echo of the future yet to be discovered, an anticipation of a novel phenomenon or even a revelation. Yet I have to finish each work one way or another: 'There is no finality in painting except that one finishes it', Jasper Johns tells.<sup>354</sup> At best, the moment when the work has reached that stage that it is finally finished – it never comes to an end – is the moment when materiality that can be neither de-sensualized nor dis-closed enters and shatters the discourse, when there is no longer any inside, when I am already outside both of myself and the painting. Then the time has come to wonder what have I painted?

Umberto Eco maintains that the openness of a work becomes manifested within a given field of relations: a work is 'a balanced

<sup>354</sup> Jasper Johns, *Writings; Sketchbook Notes, Interviews*, ed. by K. Varnedoe (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996), p. 88.



355 Eco, p. 4.

organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do no impinge on its unadulterable specificity'.<sup>355</sup> Here Eco discusses the situation where a performer plays a piece of music and the performer's interpretation and judgement has impact on the configuration of the music. For the performer, one piano piece is a field of possibilities, an explicit invitation to exercise choice, with which one can employ one's particular and individual sensibility and its perspective. In other words, every gesture is both a gathering of existing and a distribution of possible relations. This is what makes incompleteness so tangible and real, it is entangled in every possible relation that appears.

356 Ibid., pp. 16–17.

There is no end to interpretation. Openness characterizes every moment of one's experience; openness paves the way for differing. According to Eco, openness is a condition for every act of perception: openness characterizes every instance of an experience.<sup>356</sup> For a practitioner, whether an artist or a researcher, no subject or object is closed but is open to possibilities. What is more, every act of perception is open and singular. We can derive objects from multiple perceptions.

### *The Edges of the Aesthetics of Appearing*

Appearing discloses the materiality and flexibility of the world. Appearing un-works and unravels any conceptual closures and discourse. Yet the question remains: does then this something that appears figure itself out of something that already exists, from something that is underdetermined, to use the term deployed by Martin Seel in his work *Aesthetics of Appearing*?<sup>357</sup> Before I elaborate on the ways in which I am myself mindful to appearing during making, I will briefly discuss Seel's theorizing on the concept of appearing. According to Seel, the aesthetic begins with the concept of appearing. My primary aim is not to negate his stance. Rather, my intention in this and in two following chapters is to re-vision the philosophical consideration of this concept.

357 Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. by J. Farrell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

Seel claims that the empirical world is underdetermined and the starting point is a conceptually graspable given. In other words, Seel's elaboration on appearing is paved by high rational thinking. In order to perceive, we have to pay attention to the momentariness of things and our own givenness in their sensuousness, a givenness experi-

enced in the particular here and now. This, according to Seel, is what is meant by aesthetic intuition. Aesthetic intuition takes place within an occasion of sensuous alertness, in a place, where one is affected by objects and the world. Space and time are basic forms of affectivity.

Seel's aesthetics of appearing interacts with the focus of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgement in many occasions. For example, first, in that space and time establish an immanent non-cognitive connection between the subject and the object. Second that an aesthetic object pleases without a concept, but not without a minimal concept, namely that of an aesthetic idea for Kant and the concept of appearing for Seel.<sup>358</sup>

In Seel's description aesthetic perception has been attributed with the capacity either to gain genuine access to being or to disclose a genuine sphere of illusion, as if aesthetic perception could be conceived of as a flight from the phenomenal presence of human life. In the first case, aesthetic perception is seen as an encounter with and access to how things truly are in their essence. Here the classical aesthetics of being understands the aesthetic process as the revelation of a higher sense or being. This opinion assumes that the general structures of reality can be recognized in or by means of aesthetic perception: the basic constitution of reality becomes visible in the constitution of aesthetic perception. In the second option, the aesthetics of illusion, aesthetic perception appears inversely as a turning away from all the stability of the world and is experienced as puncturing the power of the real.<sup>359</sup> Here the aesthetics of illusion, *Ästhetik des Scheins*, rejects any close liaison between reality and aesthetic reality and, as Seel states, it also rejects any relation between the aesthetic, epistemological and ethical theories of one reality. For the aesthetics of illusion, the field of the aesthetic is a separate zone, from which nothing can be concluded about the constitution of reality. Such illusion is located outside the continuity of being.

Both of these stances, the aesthetics of being and the aesthetics of illusion, are, when taken as distinct from each other, incorrect because they are, according to Seel, merely variations of what he finds the third path, in which both intuition and reflection are an approach to both being and appearance. He claims that aesthetic consciousness ought to be comprehended as a way of intuiting presence as a play of appearances in the radiance of constitutive underdeterminacy.<sup>360</sup>

The starting point for the analysis of aesthetic perception, Seel claims, is that we have a graspable given. He writes: "The perception

358 Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, pp. 20–21, 25, 35.

359 Seel, 'The Aesthetics of Appearing', *Radical Philosophy* 118, March/April (2003), pp. 18–24.

360 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

of something as something is a condition for being able to perceive something'. Anything that is perceptible within the given can be both perceived and conceptually grasped through the process of appearing. In other words, aesthetic perception indicates one's capacity to perceive something as conceptually determined, and thus the appearances that come to play are conceptually determinable objects, aspects of perception, or at least habitually determined in intuition.<sup>361</sup> However, according to Seel, aesthetic perception differs from practical and theoretical practices and perceptions in that 'it allows us to develop a sense of the passing presence of life'.<sup>362</sup> Yet, even aesthetic perception is a perception that is conceptually instrumented.<sup>363</sup>

361 Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, p. 25.

362 Seel, 'The Aesthetics of Appearing', p. 24.

363 Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, p. 48.

Aesthetic perception, according to Seel, is an extensive faculty that necessitates that one is able to classify the object of one's desire. Aesthetic relation means that the conceptually articulated human perception rests on the fact that 'only beings who can know conceptually have the capacity for *perceiving that*, which is present only in connection with the capacity for *perceiving as*'.<sup>364</sup> Still, in aesthetic perception there is a conceptual incommensurability that results, on the one hand, from the concurrent reception of various aspects of the object and, on the other hand, from the consideration of its transient appearance.<sup>365</sup>

364 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

365 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Seel notes that all aesthetic illusion, *Schein*, originates in an appearing, *Erscheinen*, that is not itself illusory but real. As such, appearing can be grasped in perception but it cannot necessarily be held fast in the form of knowledge. When one perceives something aesthetically, one perceives it as a play of appearances, claims Seel, and a play of appearances is never just an appearance but it is also in connection to the phenomenal aspects of the object that, however, vary.

An aesthetic object is an object of appearing, first, in being sensuously so and, second, in appearing. Aesthetic consciousness perceives reality in the particularity of its own sensuous self-presentation and not just as an appearing of something. Seel elaborates that in this perspective, aesthetic perception should be understood as the opening of the plane of appearing that is revealed from a different, otherwise inaccessible side, neither as something determinate being nor as an unreal appearance, but as a simultaneous manifestation of the process of appearing. Therefore, Seel asserts that aesthetic perception concerns, first, the constitution of perception and, second, the constitution of the objects of this perception and their particular presence. The aesthetic experience concerns a whole, 'the entire situation of aes-

thetic perception', but in a particular, sensuous and indeterminate way, one's attentiveness to the momentary play of appearances. Aesthetic objects are then objects that are occasions of sensuous perception.<sup>366</sup> However, according to Seel aesthetic perception is a capacity to perceive something as conceptually determined as something.

366 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Aesthetic appearing is the appearing of the particular, which is not conceptually exhausted although it is determined at least minimally, claims Seel. The appearing of an aesthetic object rests at the minimum on the concept of appearing, which Seel calls a minimal concept.<sup>367</sup> This is to say that a rational concept envelops one's aesthetic perception. In a sense Seel preserves the primacy of reason and mind.

367 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

In my reading of Seel's relation to aesthetic appearance, I can well agree that at least within creative making the aim of aesthetic perception is to be attentive, first to a presence of appearing itself, second, what is appearing and third, to respond to it or to be animated by it. This means, first, as Seel asserts, that to perceive aesthetically may be nothing more than a concentration on a sensory appearing of the object. Second, aesthetic perception's attentiveness results in an event of detaching oneself from one's current situation. I find that in making, what happens is actually the contrary: I attach myself to the current situation of making. Then, naturally, I detach myself from something. Therefore, making is not just another flight of fancy. I read Seel in way that for him detaching is precisely a state of transcendence that is illusory even though appearing as such is real. Instead, engaged with making, I am being enclosed in the work, in order to be both physically and mentally present in creative work, in its here and now, it is not illusory. In the case of a viewer, I can well agree that the situation is just as Seel describes it: that it is more like detaching oneself from one's current situation. Seel's third point is that an artistic representation of the world is an encounter and a process of artistic appearing that guides the imagination beyond the limits of the perceivable, as perception lingers with a given object in a way that expands everything immediately given in a sensuous presence.<sup>368</sup>

368 Seel, 'The Aesthetics of Appearing', pp. 20–22.

In sum, in his presentation of the aesthetics of appearing, Seel's approach consists of both the person perceiving and experiencing and the object, the something that appears. Thus, aesthetic appearing is an interplay between the viewer and the artwork, in Seel's account. Yet, he is of the opinion that the world is already out there: it is undetermined, we just have to discover it, whereas I approach creative making from the standpoint of inventing the world. This is an atti-

tude of being sensuously open that is attentive to both one's sensibility and world's affectivity, to its being sometimes chaotic and that I am in the midst of this chaos and neither a bystander nor an outside observer.

Seel does not leave much room for experiencing objects and things as a bodily carnal human being, for a contingency of something that is not just illusory and present only in one's mind and in appearing but that is present through one's sensibility and flesh as a sort of fallen transcendence, i.e., an active shaping of the world and oneself that is necessarily a carnal experience. For Seel appearing rests on a concept and is directed by the subject, it is not an event as experiencing the world in its immanence but in its givenness that is underdetermined. To my mind, the difference, on the one hand, between bodily experience, reflection and interpretation and, on the other hand, between the affectivity of the world and the sensibility of one, is something that is missing in Seel's thinking. When Seel gives a depiction of his encounter with William Turner's painting, *Rain, Steam, and Speed*, for example, it is based on seeing the work, not on how he experiences and feels the work.<sup>369</sup> In this sense, his depiction of the work is based on sight and for the most what can traditionally be called phenomenological.

369 Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, p. 130.

As I read Seel's thinking, his neo-Kantian stance indicates that a sensible world is within an intelligible world, in which 'presence is an open encounter with what is there – an encounter that senses, acts, and acquires. This encounter is not as such aesthetic; rather aesthetic attentiveness represents a mode of encounter'.<sup>370</sup> In other words, aesthetic encounter is what is indeterminate within the determinate or the underdetermined, yet not necessarily in a knowledge form. The way in which I have experienced and analysed appearing in my research, perception as a joint venture of my animate and sensuous body and its mind is not directed to high rational ideals or concepts or understanding but to something that satisfies me as a whole as a sensuous being or makes sense in a way that cannot necessarily be articulated in the presence appearing that is in itself necessarily affective.

370 Seel, 'The Aesthetics of Appearing', p. 22.

Appearing draws one's attention because the world is affective and in a constant becoming. When I am engaged in making appearing is what matters but it is nothing without my sensibility and the materials I work with that are part of my life's experience. However, and to my mind, what is of importance is that appearing marks a bound-

ary that indicates obscurity between certainty, uncertainty and possibility. It points to something that I need to work out. Without my sensibility I would not experience anything appearing. Sensibility is non-determined faculty yet aesthetically self-creative, a passage. It falls outside the boundaries of conceptual theories and any universal structures that reason generates, it gestures towards other in me and in you. The universality of any thing or event is possible in the first place through sensibility.

Seel has it right when he notes that aesthetic appearing is not primarily an appearing of something but an appearing of itself, and an appearing of the appearance of an object. It is neither a sign, nor it is in a role of something: it does not reveal or illuminate a representation. In this sense, aesthetic appearing creates a first-hand relation, on which all other relations build. Then only when objects are represented in a form other than the one in which they emerge and appear constitutes power relations and, for example, the question of ethics arises, according to Varto.<sup>371</sup>

371 Varto, *Otherwise than Knowing*, p. 18.

Materiality is in constant work in the world. What does it mean and how does it work when something strange and uncanny sneaks into my work right from the beginning and makes any attempt to follow my original idea impossible? Seen in this way, Seel's minimal concept of appearing becomes something oscillating, it lacks sensuousness and it does not capture the drama inherent in being. It should be studied through examining the materials at work. The minimal concept of appearing is anything than minimal but points towards sensibility and affectivity that come first.

Sensibility, implicating the chiasma, or better a passage, between the body and its passions, is of both the presence and excess of any concept. Gilles Deleuze crystallizes the problem with concepts and elaborates critically on the textual level of concepts as he answers the question of where concepts come from. According to him, they come from presence, they have a certain empiricism, a locality to them, they are in contact with drama that is actual differentiation, and they bring certain cruelty with them: 'the creation of concepts in the wild'.<sup>372</sup>

372 Deleuze, 'On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought', p. 141.

The ability to tell an unhealthy horse from the state of its hooves, a storm coming up from a shift in the wind, or unfriendly intentions from the shadow in someone's expression, would certainly not be learnt from treatises on the care of hors-

es, or on weather, or on psychology. In each case these kinds of knowledge – of lore – were richer than any written authority on the subject; they had been learned not from books but from listening, from doing, from watching; their subtleties could scarcely be given formal expression – they might not even be reducible to words; they might be particular heritage, or they might belong to men and women of any class. A fine common thread connected them: they were born of experience, of the concrete and individual.<sup>373</sup>

### *Going Down the Rabbit Hole*

I have stopped painting haunted houses, skulls and skeletons, at least for a moment. I painted a picture of my dying brother, I destroyed it later; nevertheless, this is *The painting* I will always carry inside me. I used pale and translucent colours and the colourlessness and transparency of zinc white and drained blues that shimmer as the light shines through each one of us at one point and when in the mirror on the wall we are not seen anymore. When my brother disappeared, the red was washed out. This painting was so different from my other ones because I had brushed it down and wiped it off, destroyed it and then sent it to the heavens.

*I continued to work with the small paintings. I did paint each of them to some stage. I did not feel any difficulties as I was painting them. Now when I look at what I have accomplished, I think that I could still do this and that with them. I am not at all satisfied with the painting with nails on it; I think that I should destroy it. 8 April 2012*

I destroyed the painting with nails later. I cannot indicate any specific reason. I still remember the work quite well, I think. I just did not like it, and that is an inner feeling. Being engaged with making is to be in relation with something that constantly troubles, at best, perhaps, a potentiality that resides in the shadow, in me, and the world and that needs to be unravelled. Gradually the work at hand begins to look like something and more than all the elements of which it is composed. In a sense, as these different elements are being actualized, the work takes place in no other way than by differentiation. What appearing reveals are all those relations and sensations that become

actual but cannot be possessed – *miracoli and memorabilia*. The most difficult task then is to finish a work because to be engaged in making is to be an insider outsider to myself, to be aware of the unfamiliar I obsess about. Perhaps this is all there is to painting to reveal what is there underneath, what is unfamiliar and that can be revealed through it.

In his *Book of Arts*, Cennino Cennini writes on unseen things that are veiled underneath natural objects:

Afterwards (when Adam and Eve had been driven by an angel out of Paradise) he carried on many necessary arts, different from each other, and each more scientific than the other for they could not be all equally so. Now, the most worthy is Science; after which comes an art derived from science and dependent on the operations of the hand, and this is called Painting, for which we must be endowed with both imagination (fantasia) and skill in the hand, to discover unseen things concealed beneath the obscurity of natural objects, and to arrest them with the hand, presenting to the sight that which did not before appear to exist.<sup>374</sup>

To arrest things, rhythms, colours and movement, i.e. life, into a painting reminds me also of one of Edgar Allan Poe's narratives. In his first-person tale *The Oval Portrait*<sup>375</sup>, Poe creates a narration in which the vivid effect of the portrait of a young girl greatly dismays the protagonist who in his desperately wounded condition had entered into an abandoned castle. The story does not mention the name of the painter of this portrait. However, the image is painted in the style of Sully. The main character finds the portrait disturbingly life-like as he discovers through perusal of a small volume that describes the painting that it represents a maiden whose fiancé himself had once painted the picture. While working on his bride's portrait, the painter had become so absorbed into his work that it had gone on from hour to hour and from day to day. By the time the work, which according to the painter reflects life itself, was completed, the model, his bride, was dead. The completed picture in an absolute life-likeness of expression resembled that of a living person, as if the maiden's life force was being sucked into it.

Poe's tale highlights the verity that painters create something that flows and breathes, that has air in it rather than imitates, that presents

374 Cennino Cennini, *The Book of Art* [1390], trans. by C. J. Herringham (London: George Allen, 1899) p. 4.

375 Edgar Allan Poe, *The Oval Portrait* [1842], <https://maggimeneill.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/complete-tales-and-poems-of-edgar-allen-poe.pdf> [accessed 25 April 2016], pp. 397–399.



rather than represents. Thus, the tension between mere imitation and creation is immanent and present in the tale of the Oval Portrait since failure exists only in contrast to success. The urge to be a creator rather than an imitator is presented in the painter's lack of consideration for the other sides of life, for his bride at least. The aim to create something extraordinary surpasses all possible consequences, even life itself. This too can be considered as incompleteness because one cannot rule all. Painting here represents an absolute act, a striving for the absolute through which all is established for the self and the prospective revelation to the detriment of anything else. Considering the painting's power, in the Oval Portrait life became an obstacle that had to be conquered. In the same spirit Lucien Freud notes that success is something that one wants to share and make public, whereas failure and incompleteness are more private:

When one is trying to do something immensely difficult, I think the most dangerous thing would be to be pleased with one's work simply because it is one's own. One wants every picture to be better than its predecessors; otherwise, what's the point? Even so, I will admit that there is a tiny bit of my mind – which I think we all have – that believes, just possibly, my things are best by anyone, ever.<sup>376</sup>

376 Lucien Freud, p. 82.

*Now that I have been contemplating on what I have accomplished today, I have the feeling that the painting with which I have been working is finished. It seems very lively, which is of course a good thing, but, for sure, the next time when I am back here in my studio, I will not be satisfied with it and will continue working with it. Today's feeling of achievement is just a deception; tomorrow everything or the most part of the work starts all over again. What do I think when I paint, can I separate my thoughts or are they placed in a chaotic way in the painting, all mingled together so that it is impossible to describe and articulate them lucidly? Now that I think about today's work, I reckon that I thought about adding glitter and some thread on the painting – do I dare to do that? but then I put that thought aside. However, the work, the painting, asked for some glitter and thread on it. I am the manual labourer, I have to decide whether to obey or to deny. I am the medium. 18 June 2012*

I conceive making as an endless and open discursive system, a method of repetition and difference. During making, preliminary thoughts and ideas undergo a complete transfiguration. Initial ideas do not get to see the daybreak as a finished work but have become unexpectedly a different kind of figuration. The possibilities that are present are manifold since difference is something that is innate within the whole of process of making. In other words, difference is the essence of making. It even becomes a method of research.

Making determines the direction of my research: it proceeds from one actual question to another. Research takes place on the conditions that are laid down in making, where the thought, action and materials are aligned in a sense that is yet to come. Research becomes an exploration of possibilities that are yet unknown, both in respect of discovery of reality and in inventing research. In this sense, research is concerned very much with appearing. Therefore, questioning and invention always come before theory, the way Maarit Mäkelä and Sara Routarinne as practitioners have also discussed<sup>377</sup>. In my research, the interconnectedness of making art and research are taken as an interwoven instance inside creative space. However, what is more, Harri Laakso cites Maurice Blanchot, is that a work inside the creative space 'is not to be understood as a mere academic theoretical or intellectual enterprise' but as an investigation of the conditions of possibility of the art experience.<sup>378</sup> I find this a crucial remark that calls for further study – perhaps the conditions of possibility of the art experience can be expanded to apply experiences to other areas of life too.

377 Maarit Mäkelä and Sara Routarinne, 'Connecting Different Practices', in *The Art of Research, Research Practices in Art and Design*, ed. by M. Mäkelä & S. Routarinne (Jyväskylä: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2006), pp. 10–38, pp. 22–23.

378 Laakso, 'Imaginary Research', p. 143.

*I usually postpone the beginning, withdraw myself, hold back my thoughts, emotions, physical, bodily eagerness, to start. I enjoy, in a strange way, lingering on this threshold, in the space in-between, in the moment, before the long and difficult journey begins. Even so, I usually have worked out the next painting in my head many times before; the colours, size, rhythm, strokes, perhaps in a tram, while I am waiting for a bus or wherever. I have written many sketches of future paintings in my phone. For me to begin is an important moment, the first layers of acrylic paint on canvas and certain and well-thought colours sort of set the scene for the journey. 4 December 2011*

The always-so-pleasurable phase in making is the beginning. Yet it is imprinted with anxiety and suspension. I like to postpone the beginning and at the same time I find this innate eagerness in me. The feeling is somewhat the same as when I am about to travel abroad, starting a journey of exploration but without a manual or a globe. What is worst is the uncertainty, the endless possibilities that arise. However, the possibilities are tied to the actions that I had previously made and the new ideas and images that arise.

The kind of certainty that I am feeling at the beginning, what comes to preliminary ideas, is very different from the actual making of a painting. Soon everything starts to get more complex and new possibilities start to emerge, this is the beginning of differentiation. It becomes very hard to keep up with the painting. It might even begin to feel exhausting and troublesome. The work actually starts to consume me: it wants to get everything out of me as if I were its servant. It occupies me constantly. Why? Because I am shut in, the work swallows me: I fall down the rabbit hole. I become flesh of the work and vice versa. Accordingly Deleuze depicts: 'Flesh is only the developer, which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation'.<sup>379</sup>

379 Deleuze & Guattari,  
p. 183.

An artwork is only an incomplete endeavour despite the fact that it continually has to take a form of a finished work. The making is like sweet torture, and the result perhaps a sigh of bliss, a triumph or a bitter disaster. The demand that an artist has is to navigate forward towards a finished work. The path is unknown, guided only by one's flesh, interior sense, sensibility, one's standards, i.e. the task that one has set to oneself. This inner desire makes it worthwhile to struggle constantly to get as close as possible to the completeness that the work is asking for. This is how Lucien Freud illustrates the painterly path of one of his days:

I finished my picture only today. It went on and on and on. I was very pleased with it, but then I thought it could be made better and as a result it got worse. Then I went on a lot and now think it's much better than ever.<sup>380</sup>

380 Lucien Freud, p. 142.

*Experiments, Ideas, Musings and Tastings*

In what ways am I mindful of...?

Suddenly it seems that distances have become important to me, distances that exist between everything; ideas, thoughts and concepts, performance, and action, people. What is of importance is distance; this much I have learned. Nothing turns out as prefigured or planned. Perhaps the vaguest thing is a thought, an idea, something connected to the mind. I trust more my body and its reactions; after all, it is the body that acts with the materials at work. My mind just blurs things up, perhaps this is why brain is called grey matter. Why then is it so difficult to give myself up to action, to the actual making, to give up ideas and admit that it is the phase of the actual bodily work that counts? To act is scary. And it takes a lot to have the courage to start. What am I after, what do I want that would become out of my actions? I want to discover something, but what is this something? What am I painting; my dreams, my body, the body of my dreams? What is the role of irony? Something minute, something secondary, found only in marginalia, something that cannot grow to fill the distances in-between. This is the role of irony; it is never on the direct spotlight. What is worst is the uncertainty. To paint is the same as having blind faith in succeeding. I will have come to terms with my clumsiness, blind faith. Confidentiality is nameless. Echoes of past experiences stretch towards something unknown through this present moment. Faith is strongest. Fight the fear that engenders the beginning, middle and end. I keep faith in my work for the sake of my survival. What remains of me after I have finished a work, when I have passed through the work like a shadow of my former self? And then, after some time, to discover that I actually have lost my balance, my sense of direction, and that I have been drifting in the wrong direction. None will know the paths I have traversed – none will know my work. What are of importance are the distances between everything that can be imagined, met, touched, thought, between appearing and appearance. Painting is one of the most flexible techniques to make the distance shown, the most perfect expression of sensibility. And for me sensibility

is the synonym for distance. Do I then focus on bad painting?  
My answer is no; it is just an innate matter of personality. I  
have come to terms with my clumsiness. My brush is heavy; the  
world weighs on it. Colours become something material. I have a  
sinking feeling when I paint. Time is transforming oneself into  
every conceivable nightmare. Painting stares back at me as if it  
had ghostly eyes. 12 January 2012

Appearing means that something shows itself. I like the way in  
which Heidegger puts it: it is 'an *announcing*-itself through something  
that shows itself. 'What appears does not show itself, he asserts.<sup>381</sup>  
But what is there behind the appearance and announcing? What if  
appearance is all there is in a given time and space, in a blink of an  
eye, a whirling fog of dust before me? Is there something behind the  
strange appearances of my paintings? What is there that shows itself?  
Or is merely the painting, the surface that shows itself in its incom-  
pleteness? According to Nancy a painting becomes a threshold to  
the infinite and announces what is not there in the painting thus the  
ground disappears but force remains.<sup>382</sup>

I could use the term figuration following Lyotard's line of  
thought.<sup>383</sup> The figural power of something appearing, will, as Lyo-  
tard illustrates, 'slow down the eye, and judgement, forcing the mind  
to take position in front of the sensory'.<sup>384</sup> Figural as such is some-  
thing both violent and sensuous: it does not leave me untouched.  
According to Lyotard, the desire to comprehend and to take a stance  
and to give a meaning never reaches satisfaction but instead calls for  
action and implementation that feeds new requirements. In other  
words, figuration is an active element in all appearing: 'The figural  
power of the line can only break out, like a scandal'.<sup>385</sup> The figural  
matters, and it matters as a distance between incompleteness and  
completion.

The work's incompleteness as a distance is a possibility. Andrew  
Benjamin elaborates that incompleteness is, first, a continuous process,  
second, it cannot be described, third, it stems out of a network of  
relations that are indeterminate, yet necessary, and, fourth, it stages  
the presence of the work as a site of interpretive conflict.<sup>386</sup> Incom-  
pleteness is thus the very essence of a work. In my mind, it creates  
another space where the making takes place, a distance that brings  
me to the space of the imaginary that transgresses the bounds of  
thought.

381 Heidegger,  
*Being and Time*, pp. 52–53.

382 Nancy, *The Ground of  
the Image*, pp. 7 and 62,  
for example.

383 If I follow Lyotard's  
thinking correctly, the  
figural is an active  
force of figuration and  
formation of sensation  
that is identified with  
desire and that unseats  
any viewpoint claiming  
to be legitimate.

384 Jean-François  
Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*,  
trans. by A Hudek and  
M. Lydon, (Minneapolis:  
University of Minnesota  
Press, 2011), p. 212.

385 *Ibid.*, pp. 212–213.

386 Benjamin,  
*Art's Philosophical Work*,  
pp. 12, 17, 19.

According to Andrew Benjamin, in order for something to become something, the ‘other possible relations are always present *in potentia*’.<sup>387</sup> In other words, in order for me to be me, what is required is that I am not a closed system but open and incomplete. Making in order for something to appear is playing and dealing with something that has not yet been given a form and that cannot be dissembled into structures or meanings. Then creativity means exposing oneself to openness of relations between the subject, the object and the materials at work. Working with materials is re-creating the world, including me, as I weave and am being weaved into a web of threads of its system that is not stable. Underneath every creation there lies a system of forces that in Jean-François Lyotard’s thinking energizes and disrupts the ordering of a figure, in other words any figure that is created is supported by displacements, condensations, and distortions.<sup>388</sup>

387 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

‘How can anything ever present itself truly to us since its synthesis is never completed, and since I can always expect to see it break apart and pass to the status of simple illusion? And yet there is something rather than nothing. Something is determinate, at least to a certain degree of relativity’, muses Merleau-Ponty.<sup>389</sup> Not only does the object have a certain power or force as it presents and manifests itself enveloped with different sentiments and affects, but so does also the subject with which it is in relation. This relation between the subject and the object that appears through something means an infinite variability of possibility of experiencing things. According to Merleau-Ponty, the world is inherently incomplete, incompleteness is its very essence: ‘Thus, it is essential for the thing and for the world to be presented as “open”, to send us beyond their determinate manifestations, and to promise us always “something more to see”’.<sup>390</sup>

388 Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, pp. 140–141.

389 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 345.

390 *Ibid.*, p. 348.

I often feel as if being left behind and unable to answer to the questions the work poses me: stumbling in trying to figure out what the work is about. And, as I try to stick to my ideas, I discover that the work does not obey, my ideas are not translatable into a practical work, as if my body and the materials at hand were an obstacle: ideas and making are two completely different worlds. These obstacles contrast with my expectation in the work. Is then what we have here just a problem of translation? No, expectations and making are two completely different spheres that resist each other.

*The work went on smoothly. I love the feeling when I encompass the canvas, the way it becomes my territory and still not*

entirely mine. Who is the master of the canvas, is it me or the painting? Is the painting the other in me, the other which makes itself visible through the work? I do not think so completely, partly it might be something that I do not recognize in myself with clarity; however, I think that the work becomes something separate and during the process it slides apart from myself. Today again I have drifted far apart from my initial ideas of painting. It is ironic. It seems that the work process takes hold of me and not the other way round. 16 July 2012

Perhaps, paradoxically, an artwork solely conveys the response to the question of what is art making. As if trying to repeat of ideas and mental images, led making to touch something that is more, an unexpected difference. Indeed, this is the point of making: to experiment with something that is not in my command. I want to refer to this as the aesthetic potentiality of creativity: aesthetics is here ex-static. It is, on the one hand, about the flexibility of one and, on the other hand, about one's incompleteness that becomes something creative. As Andrew Benjamin emphasizes incompleteness is a continuous dynamic process, in which 'works always work to incomplete'.<sup>391</sup> Otherwise there would neither be any beginnings nor anything appearing.

Creativity is not a process of merely assembling already existing ideas and elements in and of the world. If one denies openness and takes things granted and constructed only from the old, making would not be creative, autonomous and original any more but some kind of pre-programmed, closed and administrative activity. It would be something underdetermined.

Deleuze elaborates that an idea is both pure virtuality and a structure. An idea, Deleuze writes, is, firstly, a multiplicity of particularities within an idea<sup>392</sup> and, secondly, it is empiricism within an immanent particular idea, which is truly expressive<sup>393</sup> as it individuates in actualization and no longer relies on similarity.<sup>394</sup> Thus ideas are multiplicities that produce new multiplicities. Multiplicity itself is neither conceptual nor sensible, yet it is inseparable from the potential or the virtual.<sup>395</sup> The true essence of an idea, according to Deleuze, is that of empiricism,<sup>396</sup> an idea is defined as an empirical structure<sup>397</sup> and every structure is a multiplicity<sup>398</sup>. The genesis of an idea takes place between the virtual and the actual. In other words, it goes from a structure to its incarnation.<sup>399</sup>

391 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, p. 19.

392 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 348.

393 Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone, 2005), p. 326.

394 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 348–349.

395 *Ibid.*, 230–231.

396 'Ideas themselves are not essences', according to Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 236.

397 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

398 Deleuze, 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism?', p. 177.

399 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 231.

Deleuze highlights that aesthetic ideas are intuitions without concepts, but at the same time they are problematic because they intrude on the concepts of understanding. The sphere in which ideas and intuitions are evoked belongs to an era in which phenomena are unmediated events of the spirit. He continues that ideas extend the concepts of understanding in an unlimited way and that an idea frees imagination from the constraints of understanding.<sup>400</sup> What Deleuze misses is the entanglement of body and making in relation to ideas as a joint physical pursuit that is crucial in making. Aesthetic ideas restore a duality of infinite becoming and finite understanding that function, when brought into making, singularly and transform into matter that is transgressive.

400 Gilles Deleuze, 'The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Esthetics', in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, trans. by Michael Taormina (Cambridge: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 67.

*To Actually See an Actual Monster*

... And I would rather see a second-rate monster such as a mermaid than a first-rate genius  
such as John Bunyan or Schiaparelli or Schubert or Schumann;  
Yes, I would rather see one of the sirens  
Than two Lord Byrons ...<sup>401</sup>

401 This is an excerpt from Ogden Nash's poem 'Dragons Are Too Seldom', in *Selected Poetry of Ogden Nash*.

'Did Bacon destroy any pictures that were really good?'  
'Well, perhaps not any of his very best things, but at that time he was very fastidious and he certainly destroyed some which were better than any he did later. I remember a pope I saw in his studio that I'd certainly like to see again. Of course, anything that is one stays, in memory, "You destroyed me, and now you'll never see me again, and I was so marvelous"'.<sup>402</sup>

402 Lucien Freud, pp. 131–132.

The life that I am living that surrounds me here and then it suddenly draws me away from within what is already in place. Yet, rather than taking me to a never-never land, I understand it pulls me towards something that I have not experienced before, it draws me towards new. Only after this something figures itself does it become part of my making and later part of my subjectivity and my knowledge. It then becomes something experienced and known: it turns out to be something. This is what creativity is about: striving for new that the new itself opposes.

This new or strange, as in my case, is something what Andrew Benjamin calls a precursor. A precursor is a diversity of possibilities pres-



ent within the incompleteness of the present: it is the nothing that already figures in the present: it is both insistent and ontological. This nothing, the precursor, is linked to the future, to novelty, completion and finality, yet it is never capable of producing flowers, skulls or monsters. According to Benjamin nothing is the reason why Hegelian completion and finality fail or why repetition never succeeds in repeating. Nothing marks, on the one hand, the presence of future possibilities and, on the other hand, the presence of a particular that is on its way as a potential. The particular becomes finite in appearance.<sup>403</sup> What is important here is the link between this nothing and sensibility.

403 Andrew Benjamin, 'A Precursor: Limiting the Future, Affirming Particularity', in *A Time for Humanities: Futurity and the Limits of Autonomy*, ed. by J. J. Bono, T. Dean and E. Plonowska Ziarek, (USA: Fordham University Press, 2008), pp. 29–44.

In regard to painters: tous ces modernes sont des poètes qui ont voulu être peintres. L'un a cherché des drames dans l'histoire, l'autre des scènes de mœurs, celui-ci traduit des religions, celui-là une philosophie. One imitates Raphael, another the early Italian masters; landscape artists employ trees and clouds to make odes and elegies. No one is simply a painter; all are archaeologists, psychologists, theatrical producers of this or that recollection or theory. They enjoy our erudition, our philosophy. Like us, they are full and overfull of general ideas. They like a form, not for the sake of what it is, but for the sake of what it expresses. They are sons of a scholarly, tormented and reflective generation – a thousand miles removed from the old masters, who did not read and only thought of feasting their eyes.<sup>404</sup>

404 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 437, section 828.

I agree with Nietzsche and I do not. I have always liked reading and there have been times when a book has been my only companion and I love to theorize and problematize. Indeed, one of my teachers in painting strongly recommended not too much reading. And certainly painting is a feast at its best but a problematic one.

*There is not enough light coming from the outside; I dislike that. Instead, I like the dim light that sifts through the dusty windows on a sunny day. I feel so disappointed with my work most of the time. When do I know when the work is finished? What for do I have this studio; to produce thinking, to produce painting, which is actually the same as thinking? Thinking is not the same as knowledge, knowledge is something embodied that thinking can become. There are so many*

abandoned canvases waiting to be ripped to pieces from the frames and tossed away. To be forgotten forever. Very often when I have finished my work for the day and I have an idea of how to proceed the next day, I leave a clue. And yes, I leave hints for the next day on the floor: a brush, a tube of oil of a certain colour, a piece of paper with a word, but planning in advance is not the whole method, it can serve as a bridge, but often and paradoxically the work takes me in an absolutely opposite direction. Perhaps these hints work as a safety net for myself so that I am not completely lost. I have many incomplete paintings underway at a given time and actually I usually paint two or three on the same day. 17 March 2012

Leaving hints behind me in order to recollect where I was when I left my studio is like trying to stretch fleeting moments and make them more lasting. Sometimes it works: tracing a path I have left behind. Collecting moments is, according to Juha Varto, creating a construction in which moments become meaningful by applying some principles.<sup>405</sup> What are these principles within making a painting? Trying to master both past and future moments and the way in which the work should proceed brings more rationality into the making and makes the process more closed and predetermined.

405 Varto, *Basics of Artistic Research*, p. 64.

Painting challenges me, it demands so much. It demands my entire attention. I find that there is a sort of constant urge, drive or force that I cannot get rid of. The unfinished painting is like a siren's allure, it teases me, and I have no peace, no matter if I am in the same room or not. There are so many things that ask for my attention. The subject matter: I often think that I have a clearly stated idea in my head, but the moment when I enter my studio it turns into something vague and blurred and gets even blurrier when I try to translate it into the painting's language with my body as a vehicle. Why do I get so distracted? Why does the translation seem impossible? Ideas and painting stem from a different sphere, their essence is different. Also the time and the place intervene in the whole process, not to forget the materials that I use. The harmony or completeness that I strive for never turns out to be the completion that I had in mind, nor is it completion in a way in which everything falls into place, but it is a sort of

*disharmony harmonizing itself, completing itself just as it shows itself, finalizing itself for now.* 12 March 2013

There is the desire to create something new, to make progress, to astonish myself, to make new connections and discoveries, to make me hover between the old and the new, something I cannot get hold of: appearances and becomings of unidentified creatures. This desire takes my whole body as its machine: the new must be found through it, between its folds and beyond its thresholds. Roland Barthes notes such a desire as he talks about photography: ‘We do not want to produce a world that is without difference, ... , let us save immediate Desire (desire without mediation)<sup>406</sup>, and, ‘... by the mark of *something* that triggers, to produce a tiny shock, a *satori*, the passage of a void (it is of no importance that its referent is insignificant).<sup>407</sup> – in other words, to produce an experience that awakes one suddenly, that shivers one’s flesh, that points one to the path that leads perhaps to a *satori*, in which words fail, and, as Roland Barthes elucidates, ‘... , the rare, perhaps unique evidence of the so yes, so much and no more’<sup>408</sup> This something appearing sets me off to experience something singular, a certain air, perhaps even a gust of completeness – yet fleeting and incomprehensible in its character, an air of painful and delicious intensity, a fragment of a larger whole, an air of more for the moment the referent of which is insignificant.

406 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida, Reflections on Photography*, trans. by R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 119.

407 Ibid., p. 49.

408 Ibid., p. 109.

### *Peek-a-Boo – Painting Takes Over What I Thought Was a Painting*

I have suffered from a too lively imagination, of making up things, fancies and curiosities that go out of hand. What is more, my body is out of control too: my hands shake, my mixing of paints and medium never happens in the right proportion, and the shades of colours seldom match the shades that I had figured out in my mind. Never mind, the finished work usually reveals some traces of my initial intentions: some clumsy attempts. My work turns out to be a play of Peek-a-Boo, and I cannot find in it a stable object any more, only an appearance of desire at work, and even that can turn out to be a shot in the dark as something not intended appears. Nevertheless, there are two things that I know: first, painting takes over what I thought was a painting, and second, my body would not let my mind falsify things.

The displeasure of experiencing incompleteness does not exist without touching on suffering and it is the artist who is suffering. I

have a passion for painting. What desire desires is never placed before me nor objectified, but I am rather a part of the whole of the desiring movement of the work. I pass from a motion that is drawn out of chaos and lack to an emotion that is excited and passionate. When I finish a work finally, it becomes the exact moment that I experience myself as being abandoned, as if I exceeded and carried myself outside of myself.

At one point, 'finished' meant 'smoothly detailed', and painters such as Constable and Gainsborough were criticized in their lifetimes for exhibiting 'unfinished' works. Now, however, finished means something like 'complete as a work of art according to its own internal laws', and this is much more difficult matter to judge. LF's (Lucien Freud's) own criterion, 'I begin to think a picture is finished when I have a sensation I am painting someone else's picture', is elusive, though one can see what he means.<sup>409</sup>

Studies on mental imaginary show that, as Antonio Damasio argues, the process of imagination consists of the recall of images and their subsequent manipulation – cutting, enlarging, reordering, and so forth. Damasio asks: when we use our imagination, does imagery take place in the form of the picture or does it rely on mental descriptions resembling those of language?<sup>410</sup> According to Damasio, the picture format (visual, audio, etc.) is more plausible. It means that comparable regions of brain are activated when objects or events are perceived and when they are recalled from the memory. The images constructed during perception are re-constructed during the process of imagery. They are approximations rather than replicas, attempts at getting back at a past reality and thus not quite as vivid and accurate.<sup>411</sup> This explains a lot to me: why I cannot get hold of the imagery in my mind, instead it seems quite blurry.

It is true that in the beginning the initial idea always has a grip on the work that is beginning to materialize and on me. It is a thread that weaves the painter and the work together and sets them forth. It constitutes and announces the beginning. Then gradually it negates itself. The idea that I have is always tied to the finishing of a previous work. Such is the nature of an idea or any mental image: it transgresses itself at one point. Then variations, modifications, differences turn out to be normality, all that is left.

409 Martin Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), p. 141.

410 Antonio Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind, Constructing the Conscious Brain* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), p. 159.

411 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

I think that today I concentrated on painting very well, though in some moments my thoughts drifted to my personal life. This always affects my work. All days are different and one has to work on a daily basis according to the emotions, intuition and thoughts. There is no room for any calculation in any situation with my painting, it has to be candid and I have to be totally frank in what I am doing. 4 May 2012

I feel good and trustful. Although the painting with which I am currently working does not remind me at all of the ideas that I had when I started. The painting has changed to something of its own, it has wrapped its fingers around me, and thus my feelings are somewhat perplexed. How to continue, to set myself free, to let intuition, the forces of the painting as it grasps me, guide me all through? Actually I painted all night last night; I paint on canvas; I paint on my mind. What is the difference between these two? Both are real. 18 June 2012

I feel so tired and cannot think at all while working. My head is all blurred. Anyway, I have been painting a lot, even though, as it seems, I cannot make any sense out of it. It is as if I were working and depending solely on intuition, and I hate that. Intuition is already something that relies on my knowledge, it is about relying on the past. I wish I could get a good night's sleep. 5 May 2013

When a painting starts to emerge, this is the stage where excess, the potentiality of that what is outside the idea, comes into the picture. This is why painting is always heterogeneous and this is why something new and fresh can only emerge from heterogeneity. Making begins when my working body and its mind begin to resist the preliminary idea that brought the whole process into daylight; gradually, as I have experienced, I often have an urge to get rid of the preliminary idea, for if I follow it too rigorously it usually wears out all the freshness from the potential artwork. Therefore an idea is a double-edged sword: to shadow an idea is not really making. Sometimes it is a pity because there are times when I find my ideas genial. Yet it is impossible to translate an idea into a work.

*The emptiness that I experience within me points towards the magical spell that the new work imposes on me, the dangerousness that it casts on me turns into a desire. The glamour, the chaos, the complexity forces me to address the issues of my own subjectivity. Who am I and what am I doing? Actually, the thing that I desire is the appearing of something new, the experience of newness, the moment that cannot be mastered by knowledge, the moment when there is no substitute to it, the moment of freshness, purity, naïveté. I catch myself in anticipation. Desire embraces me and I am attracted by it. Is this luxury? The sensuousness of anxiety lies in and around me, it is made to resemble different shapes, colours, rhythms, boundless racing in the mist of the searching for the best possible solution, the complete picture. Flickering flaming colours, heavy brush strokes, then, mess. There is luck and bad luck in painting. The main point in painting is to paint, it is through anticipation that I judge the work: what if I did this or that, and it is desire for a bliss that obliterates everything old and stable. 2 February 2012*

What is then thinking? It is to create, to think mentally and to be bodily immersed in the medium of time and space and the materials at hand, but at the same time to sense that I am continuously at the edge of a disaster, failure, catastrophe before the eyes of something appearing. Thinking is precarious. This is to say that a disaster does not necessarily have to be a negative but a flowering incident – hence a disaster is constantly dislocating and transfiguring itself; it is an anonymous passenger in every process, in every artistic journey that is an experiment in itself. Thinking becomes a synonym for desiring within the sphere of sensuous modalities of sensibility at the edge of a catastrophe.

The work rips me out of myself, I feel myself extending to new dimensions and then suddenly I am turned back. What I most suffer from is the typical and uncomfortable situation of not being in or out of the scene but in somewhere in-between. It is this slipping in and out within a sensuous space where time and space create a whole of another order.

To perceive something appearing is to be in relation with the world through one's sensibility. Maurice Merleau-Ponty asserts that 'The world, ..., is the natural milieu and the field of my thoughts and

412 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. lxxiv.

413 Ibid., p. lxxiv.

414 Ibid., p. lxxv.

415 Lyotard, *Phenomenology*, p. 48.

416 Ibid., pp. 74–75.

417 Jean-François Lyotard citing Edmund Husserl. Lyotard, *Phenomenology*, p. 49.

418 Ibid., p. 53.

419 Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, pp. 196–197.

420 Ibid., pp. 197.

421 Ibid., p. 197.

422 Ibid., p. lxx.

423 Ibid., p. 197.

of all my explicit perceptions'.<sup>412</sup> To perceive is to open one's body and its mind as the world opens itself. To perceive is a subjective phenomenon. According to Merleau-Ponty, perception is 'the background against which all acts stand out and is thus presupposed by them'.<sup>413</sup> He claims that the world is exactly the one that one represents to oneself.<sup>414</sup> Whereas for Jean-François Lyotard: 'The object as it is given to me in perception is always open to the horizons of indetermination'.<sup>415</sup> For this reason Lyotard criticizes phenomenology in that it tries to grasp conceptually what is actually experienced by the person who judges, as if it eliminated the subject of the experience.<sup>416</sup>

However, in Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, unicorns are alive and kicking: 'Any object given "in person" could equally well not exist, while any experience given "in person" could not fail to exist', notes Husserl: this is the law of essence.<sup>417</sup> In other words, the subject constructs the world in the way that one perceives and experiences it through one's experiences of it.<sup>418</sup> There are no appearances in Husserl's phenomenology in a sense that there would lie something that is real behind the appearance or experience. For Husserl, the subject is identical to one's consciousness.

Mikel Dufrenne argues that 'A subject always appears in the aesthetic object' but that an aesthetic world is unreal as 'even those who believe in hell, the demons of Bosch are unreal'.<sup>419</sup> However, the world of Bosch is real: 'The real then becomes what this subjectivity makes real, and the horror of the serenity of the night is as real as the astronomical fact of the night'.<sup>420</sup> Thus the aesthetic object is more like an illustration of the real world. What Dufrenne finds problematic is not to know to what extent the world presented in an aesthetic object is true, as he writes, the aesthetic object is, like subjectivity itself, 'the source of a peculiar world' and it is installed in the real, objective world.<sup>421</sup>

Dufrenne makes a difference between perception and aesthetic perception. He elaborates that an aesthetic object, 'if we agree to call "object" the thing as perceived', differs from an ordinary perception of a work of art in that, in order for an aesthetic object to appear aesthetic, aesthetic perception must be joined to the work of art.<sup>422</sup> In other words the work supports aesthetic perception. What is more, an aesthetic object differs from other objects in that the maker has invested one's subjectivity in relation to the possibilities and actualities that emerge in a work. Even though the subject lives in an objective world, it is 'the subjective worlds which finally speak and express a world that is real as any other'.<sup>423</sup>

This is to say that what appears in the final work is absolutely real because it astonishes and startles me at best: it is weaved into my reality through my body and my sensibility.

#### MATERIALIZATION OF MATERIALITY

The individual horizon, i.e. the scale of observing, perceiving and discovering the world and its materiality and affectivity, is exercised from a human point of view, and then there are other viewpoints as well, such as those of an animal and a plant, that are easily disregarded. How much we can relate to animals or plants is another issue, and a topic for another research. Yet we are all of the materiality of the world. The impact of materiality is multilayered: it is something that affects the whole ecosystem and one's lifeworld but also one's sensibility.

Even though that may first seem so, materiality is not just something reduced to a clear rectangle tacked up on the wall, a pile of dusty newspapers from a lost era under the bed, or mud on our hands while making mudcakes in a backyard. Fake or not, matter is material and it matters through our lives. I look at materiality from the standpoint that it is something ungraspable, and even fictional, playful, and perhaps violent, yet absolutely real. Besides I find that art that claims to be in particular immaterial raises the question of art being an ontologically distinct object of experience of the material world, as if it were a mere reflection of analytical knowledge and discourse. For me there is no such thing as immaterial art.

Moreover, issues concerning the transformation of materiality as extensive and intensive and as a means to invoke phenomena and all kinds of experiences, imaginary as well, and as such something immanent, is of growing interest among scholars.<sup>424</sup> In this respect, I attempt to keep in mind at least two questions: first, what is the relation of an aesthetic object and an artwork, and second, what appears in an art's work. With this in mind, I will give six short stories in this subsection, namely on matter, habit, difference, chaos and nonsense, distance and fragment, in relation to, appearing and incompleteness.

424 Those of the so-called New materialist and Post-humanist attitudes in research.



## *Matter Matters*

425 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, p. 10.

Matter is always informed, Andrew Benjamin claims.<sup>425</sup> Matter exposes, evokes, transforms and results upon an appearing of something. Matter is a manifestation in movement. The internal mode of appearing matter can be called affectivity. Matter is not just anything; it is affective.

Affectivity neither has visibility nor a definite part that manifests itself from a distance. The affectivity of matter can be sensed, for example, when gas, rock fragments or hot vapour erupt. Or when a painting affects, it is not just some thing on the wall, just some stuff but a chiasma of tensions that becomes a gathering of an experience. This way conceived, there is an affective plane that we all share in all materials. One's flesh is an affective plane as well.

Consequently, affectivity of the world and appearing of something are linked together. What then results is change, differentiation within oneself and around oneself. Matter as something that appears and affects is involuntary. The consequence and the experience that something appears have been brought about by matter, is not about cognitive faculties alone but about one's sensibility.

*I am not at all satisfied with the paintings that I have been working with today; however, perhaps two or even four of them are finished, but I cannot tell yet. I think that I should have been more courageous and actually have left some works unfinished. What does it mean to finish a painting? I have used very thick layers of paint. The feeling of the material is part of my body thinking; through the material and spreading it on the canvas, I actually dig and bring something out, something to be seen, not anything phenomenal perhaps but, as I see it, something pre-phenomenal, pre-something, pre-conscious. 12 March 2012*

*At the moment, I am quite pleased with the way in which I paint. I have been thinking about forms and matter and their combination. Are they ever stable? Which is first, the form or matter, when I paint? Or is the form something that is innate in matter? I do not have any urge to paint anything figurative. I am more interested in letting matter and the form as such speak for themselves. What comes out of chaos is much more interesting. 7 May 2013*

Bodily activity, awareness and flexibility are two operations, mutually compatible, which matter brings into play in relation to the subject: making and the world. I experience the material world as not organized by categories, structures or parts but as composed by intensities and affective layers of colour, sound, aroma, flavour, texture, emotion, etc. Material differentiating is not about othering, separating but, on the contrary, about making connections, relations and commitments even though it first seemed to me that the strange and different that I experienced in my work was something separate. Therefore, matter challenges and overcomes the limitations that high philosophical aesthetics has imposed by bringing on stage not just itself, matter, but also the body, its sensibility and its passions the many relations that actualize through flesh.

*Looking for Habit and Hoping Not to Find It*

Habit intends a perfect state, and then the difference comes and spoils it all: it is impossible to mix the same tone of colour, or I just cannot otherwise get the work right. A new experience, nuance, tone, variation, thought arises. A work of art stands for a startling difference and yet it is built on habits. Habit is a recollection stored in my body; much of the choreography of the body is learned. Habit is a set of intelligently constructed mechanisms that the body masters. Habit in its peculiar way connects the past, the present and the future. Habits are constituted as images or maps in my mind and body. Habit is expressed in no other way than through the body. What is it then that goes wrong in my making that produces strange images, I should know how to paint and hold a brush: finally, tragedy turning into horseplay? Constantly risking absurdity and death, wrote Lawrence Ferlingetti.<sup>426</sup>

The images in one's mind, writes Antonio Damasio, are given less or more importance in the mental stream according to their value for the person. This value is based, firstly, on the disposition and tendencies that orient one's life regulation and, secondly, on the values that orient from one's experiences. Values are tied to need, and need is tied to life. Value relates directly or indirectly to survival. Damasio writes that minds 'are about the cinema like editing choices that our pervasive system of biological value has promoted'.<sup>427</sup> However, the nature of the experience that the mind presents is always private, and when the brain manages to introduce a knower to these images, subjectivity

426 Lawrence Ferlingetti, Lawrence, 'Constantly Risking Absurdity', *Poetry Foundation*, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/52319>, [accessed 19 May 2016].

427 Damasio, p. 76.

428 Ibid., p. 11.

follows.<sup>428</sup> This is to say that habits and the emergence of subjectivity are in a relation with each other, subjectivity arises when the difference that a habit produces is experienced. Thus, the blank embrace of apparent monotony turns out to be valuable.

429 Connerton, p. 95.

Paul Connerton writes that habits are more than just technical skills. When we think for example of swimming, technical skill is perhaps what first comes to mind. Habit impels one towards a certain action. In this sense, Connerton asserts that habit is knowledge and remembering of the body and in the 'cultivation of habit it is our body which "understands"'.<sup>429</sup> In this sense all making contains an element of recollection. Connerton discusses the body as a bearer of social and political meanings the way in which we tend to follow automatically what is incorporated in our bodies as these kinds of meanings.<sup>430</sup>

430 Ibid., pp. 93–95.

*I primed some canvases. It went as always, as part of a habitual procedure, as a manner learned many years ago. I do not think that it is necessarily bad, manners and habits I mean. I use what is called hare glue; however, I think that it is made of cow's bones. I also use thick cotton canvas; it is called cotton duck. The hare glue suits me best, I have tried synthetic glues, but so far I have had no success; the canvas turns out to be uneven, wrinkled and jagged. 1 June 2012*

431 Simon O'Sullivan, *A Diagram of the Finite-Infinite Relation: Towards a Bergsonian Production of Subjectivity*, pp.165–186, <http://www.simonosullivan.net/articles/bergsonian-production-of-subjectivity.pdf> [accessed 3 May 2016], p. 180.

Habit is a predetermined action, a return circuit, way of preserving the past, to keep safe, in some cases to survive, to use as little energy as possible. Or it is, as Simon O'Sullivan characterizes it, precisely the opposite of this: 'The return circuit is used as a means for freeing up a habitual repetition'.<sup>431</sup> This travel, as Sullivan elaborates it, is precisely from the finite to the infinite, but involves a return back to the finite. What we have here is 'the actualization of the past events in the present in order to counteract the present. ... the past operates here as a resource against the present at least to a degree that such a present is limited to a logic of the possible – determined by a perspective of what, precisely, already constitutes the plane of matter'.<sup>432</sup>

432 Ibid., pp.180–181.

As a practitioner, my work is a lot about repetition and habits and manners. It is about systemically repeating certain actions, for example, my habit to work kneeling on the floor, my use of only a certain kind of glue and a certain kind of brushes. Does repetition enhance the vigour of my work? Then, as I have been working for years ex-

tremely hard, tied up by my manners, is it just for repletion or to find something new in repletion or to get rid of repletion, to change myself and my body, to start again? I sweat and agonize over myself and over my work and over what is in between. Is this just a trivial attempt? Why is it so hard to change my habits, is it because they give me a feeling of belonging and security in order to counteract the heaviness of the present?

*To paint does not happen solely from my side but it is interaction between me and my work, as if the surface of the work were this between where everything happens, but the complete work, which is never achieved, is beyond that, an excess that is present by being absent. Sometimes it seems that I am the medium and that the painting that I am working with takes hold of me. The work that I am making gives me suggestions as to how to proceed. Often when I leave my studio, I leave hints such as oil tubes, brushes or notes close by the painting with which I am working at the moment. This is a habit. The next time that I come back it connects me back with the work. However, I might have continued, as I often do, the work in a tram on the way home. I do not necessarily use those hints that I have left. The obvious dominance of the work can be a little stressful as well. Of course, there are times when the work does not communicate at all and I just have to stare at it for ages or continue painting it in my mind on the way back home. There are moments when I find that it is better to work with some small details of the work rather than with the whole and to try to communicate with those small areas and try to make them resonate. Then, suddenly, a very small hint of a colour or a certain type of brush stroke in some place can change the whole picture. 18 March 2013*

I might repeat myself in my work, and perhaps my style stays the same for a long period of time, but the repetition never repeats the same. Who is the illuminator and who is being illuminated? My work stages my inner ambivalence about the importance of myself to myself in a way that I need to explore more. Perhaps the unpredictability of the moment when the work is finished offers a novel possibility for the formation of new subjectivity, a discovery of myself as something more than what I used to be. However, the anxiety that I suffer

from is actually a desire for an unfulfilled desire, perhaps for a will to power, as Nietzsche would say. I am forced to paint outwards, expressing an inward despair. Then becomes a moment of recognition, always involuntary in that I never know which moment it might be or when it might surface, a moment that I will never understand since it configures itself with all the lack of preconfigured knowledge: a split second, pause, time within time. A moment which stands before all the moments, a moment that I have been waiting for so long, a declaration of sorts. A sentient that would project towards another time and place. Questions that remain unasked but haunt my making, and I am not even able to formulate them. I try to reconstruct ideas, thoughts and feelings into paintings, into something sensible yet sensuous, as if painting as a passage of time and my haunting desire of space of my own could interpret my attempts of capturing the *nastroénie* in the style of Chekhov or the Mad Tea Party rumbling inside me. A tableau vivant – is it, am I?

Habit is not like a play; it is a repetition, it lacks imagination. It is nothing and it is difference. It is not in my control though I think it is. It hands me the key to what I tend to call accidents or revelations. Why then accidents and revelations happen? Habits are necessary when I compose a painting. Habit creates soundness and security: it is a base, a sibling with incompleteness. However, habit is never the same, it is the difference of the same: never being able to catch the same nuance, tone, the same amount of ingredients, the same colour. I will never reach the same tone again. This is when I find habits very frustrating. It is the nature's organic will that nothing will ever turn out exactly the same as it was before. That is why Deleuze rightly states that 'Habit draws something new from repetition – namely difference'.<sup>433</sup> He continues: 'We produce something new only on condition that we repeat – once in the mode which constitutes past, ..., what is produced through the past and the metamorphosis of the present is something new but in turn nothing but repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return'.<sup>434</sup>

<sup>433</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 94.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

*Distance of Difference*

Our perceptions, sensations, emotions and ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public property.<sup>435</sup>

Gilles Deleuze gives a very detailed description of difference in his book *Difference and Repetition*. He tells that we can single out two kinds of difference. The first one is the difference between objects that are represented by the same concept. Here the difference is external difference between objects, for example paintings of portraits. The difference can also be internal and not yet conceptual. The internal difference takes place within an idea before it is represented in an object. Difference here is external to the concept.<sup>436</sup> The intention of this difference is, as Deleuze states, to dramatize the idea as well as the concept later on. However, Deleuze asserts that these two modes of difference are tied to each other. Deleuze's elaborations on the difference as something internal to the idea and yet not conceptual are something that I associate with my making. I find that it takes place through my sensibility. I have been thinking that the internal difference within an idea and, better, with something that is not even an idea yet but something that I sense on the plane of my sensibility is actually what is at work in making. Deleuze notes that 'A dynamic space must be defined from the point of view of an observer tied to that space, not from an external position. There are internal differences which dramatize an Idea before representing an object'.<sup>437</sup>

To be precise, the differences within making are multiple. I probably do not recognize them all. First there is the difference between my initial idea of the work in my mind, the difference between the as-yet-unrealized, phantasm, and the final realization of the work. While working, the innate and sensuous difference within the inkling that I have takes place and hovers as its borders are ambiguous and porous and it gets mixed with the movements of my body and the materials at hand. Here difference starts to claim its space.

Deleuze points out that man has had at his disposal a completeness of signifier which he has obstructed from allocating to a signified, given as such without being any better known. There is always

435 Henry Bergson, *Time and Free Will, An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* [1889], trans. by F. L. Pogson (Mineola: Dover Publications Inc., 2001), p. 129.

436 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 29.

437 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

an inadequacy between the two. They never reach balance but are moved back and forth by a tension between them, by a differentiator. The signifier and the signified always appear in relation and form the structure of things. In Deleuze's view, art, or any event, happens and is made to happen by this gap between the two series. Deleuze elaborates further that the signifying series marks excess and, as he puts it, 'an empty square and an always displaced place without an occupant'.<sup>438</sup> Accordingly, what the signified series is lacking is an occupant, a non-situated given, an unknown, difference. The incomplete painting as the signifier marks the empty place of that of nothing and thus, lacks the occupant. Deleuze cites Novalis: 'Novalis sometimes says that there are two courses of events, one of them is ideal, the other real and imperfect'.<sup>439</sup> So conceived, the real and the imperfect and incomplete can become the place of freedom and ethics if the empty square is taken as a place of or event for possibilities and singularity.

<sup>438</sup> Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 60.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

How then do I discover difference? I use my senses. However, the difference here is external difference. The internal difference, the nuances, the timbre and the tone, for example, I discover by my sensibility: is something just right or not. It is through sensibility that the affectivity of matter comes on the surface, to be apprehended.

As I have discussed above, following Gilles Deleuze's line of thought, that difference emerges from between two repetitions<sup>440</sup> and that it is through repetition that difference touches. That is why repetition is not generality<sup>441</sup> and why it cannot be replaced by another repetition, in the wake of habit.<sup>442</sup> Thus repetition itself appears as a potential difference; it constitutes itself by disguising, by masking itself as generality although it makes the difference emerge.

<sup>440</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 97.

<sup>441</sup> Repetition is against natural law, whereas law and moral law leave us in generality. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 5.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

It is through repetition that I discover difference, and through difference that I discover repetition, rhythm, the phase of my heartbeats, every new beginning of a painting. Repetition makes difference, it manifest itself. This event does not have a proper concept<sup>443</sup>, it can be approached through creativity or thinking when it is really thinking and when matter starts to matter with matter, through making.

Difference differentiates itself from the ground that making lays underneath, from the precursor. It forces me to look at it and to take a stance. Do I then get hold of the difference? This is hard to tell. I try, I think of difference as a potentiality. On the contrary: 'Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference, it mediates

everything, but mobilizes and moves nothing', as Deleuze writes.<sup>444</sup> Deleuze goes even deeper, he is of the opinion that every representation or resemblance comprises a dualistic element within itself, that of being orgiastic in the way that the infinite subsists on the edge of finite determination. Thus, representation does make difference in discovering the infinite within itself only by allowing the finite determination to be effective.<sup>445</sup> This is the reason why it is important to finish every work: every work demands my active agency to decide when it is finished. Difference has forced me to think about distance – it has forced me to think about completion and how far behind of it I am being left in my works.

444 Ibid., p. 67.

445 Ibid., p. 54.

### *One Life and Chaos*

Endless actions, repetitions, habits, manners, over and over, again and again. Failing, as if the whole making consisted of a series of failures. This makes the making of a painting quite an absurdist thought. Yet, it is precisely here that I have a thought, a pause for thought, a space of problematizing, a unique cast.

Deleuze asserts that a problem, the problem of an artwork for instance, does not express a subjective uncertainty but, quite surprisingly, 'on the contrary it expresses the objective equilibrium of mind situated in front of the horizon of what happens and appears'.<sup>446</sup> Why is that? According to Deleuze, events are themselves problematizing and the problematic is an objective category of knowledge. For Deleuze, a unique cast, a unique event corresponds to chaos, to a game and to chance within the sphere of the problem. In this game each thought signals to singularity within the possible distribution of multiple singularities.

446 Deleuze,  
*The Logic of Sense*, p. 67.

In this perspective, within the realm of making an artwork, I am faced with two dissymmetrical halves, the signifier and the signified, that the incomplete work indicates. The halves are not symmetrical. In an ultimate instance, and as Deleuze concludes, that which is then produced is sense as an effect by the circulation between the two halves. What is of importance is that sense is produced at a surface and it is produced by its perpetual displacement and absence: being off-stage. Sense is produced by nonsense but this does not mean that there is an absence of sense, quite the contrary. Nonsense implies always a destination, a point of time and space at which it is possible to sense, to problematize, to know whether or not something has



indeed arrived, and during the circulation, i.e. making, between the two series for this something to arrive must be in some sense expected. This waiting for something, completion, to arrive from nonsense shapes the whole of artistic thinking and making. My sensibility meshes the two heterogeneous halves in which I am enclosed in my waiting and working for the appearing of the something, being towards something but also becoming away from something. The incomplete work signifies life.<sup>447</sup>

Slavoj Žižek elaborates incompleteness from an ontological point of view with the aid of Jacques-Louis David's painting, the *Death of Marat* (1793). As he examines the painting, Žižek ponders: 'Universe is incomplete, reality is not fully ontologically constructed. We are walking on the edge of abyss'. He then refers to T. J. Clark, claiming that this particular painting of David is the divide from which modernism began: it began when one looked at this painting as an unfinished work. The work, as we well know, is connected to the French Revolution (1789–1799): it is its most famous symbol. Žižek suggests that even if there is some kind of structure of reality existing and even though the French Revolution failed, this is not all because underneath this structured reality there is a pre-ontological chaos and not yet reality. This is what the painting depicts, he thinks. With this chaotic preontological, prelogos chaos, Žižek then refers to Friedrich von Schelling. Schelling's idea of creation, according to Žižek, is that in the beginning there is something. Creation does not happen out of nothing. The beginning is multiplicity, and things emerge from this preontological chaos. According

to Žižek, history is never simple contextualizing because no context is full. Every historical constellation is incomplete, open. As Žižek emphasizes, the problem is how then to put things together. He points out that we are getting signs from the future all the time but this future is not an objective one. This future is the future of possibilities and this is what makes the time of creativity a paradox, as Žižek elaborates: what we have here is circular time, the time of creativity.<sup>448</sup> The circularity of time is well present in that I am

447 Jean-Luc Nancy asserts that sensibility and sense are produced on the surface. The surface of the painting is the ground where the rising of the thing is to happen, its emerging from nowhere and going to nowhere. This event manifests the notion of an empty time as a rupture as 'time itself, that is as that which admits nothing presupposed, not even, or especially not, a presupposition ... The rupture of nothing, the leap of nothing into nothing'. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, pp. 170–171. Further, Jean-Luc Nancy's essay *On the Threshold* tells us first of all that because the scene of Caravaggio's painting is solely a painting painted on a canvas, we should

remain on it, on the painting's surface, on its pigment and on its oil. On its oil that melts the pigment into matter, once flowing and pliable, now immobile, yet, by the same token, something that is singular, distinct and in motion, presenting a presence, offering itself as a ground for a thing that comes out of nothingness, in its very reality. In other words, it is the coming of the coming-and-going locally, uniquely, that is different, particular and each time mine. Which is to say, not in any definite form, but as a passing that is the thing's coming into being. Thus, as Nancy tells us, we should not try to see behind the painting nor inside nor outside it. Nancy, *The Muses*, pp. 59, 62.

448 S. Žižek, 'Ontological Incompleteness In Painting', *Literature and Quantum Theory* (2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddctvDcrlIA> [accessed 3 May 2016].

never finished with making: creativity is not linear but a vertiginous thrill of inexactitude.

A work of art is a thing of heterogeneity from the beginning; there is no such thing as a Given in the realm of art, or the Given has to be taken as chaos. In this sense, what is given is the preontological chaos. The preontological chaos is all there is. Each work has excluded itself from any definite conception, from any idea that refers to art, because a work of art aims at being a unique work of art and there is no totalizing concept of art. Yet it claims it being a work of art, but not of any kind. In this sense, the preontological chaos already signifies that it is impossible to think of a complete work of art. Already the beginning is determined with indeterminacy. I have an idea and a habit how to begin, yet soon the path I had planned to take transforms into verdure with no paths at all. How come do I and other artists then strive at a masterpiece, a complete oeuvre of art? All that it means is irony, a play of havoc. Yet I have my naïve faith in art, a sort of professional mysticism of a fevered aesthete and artist.

*Distance: a Space for Difference*

While making, I am a person confined to the square space of a painting to attain the most remote skylines: exhausting and attractive at the same moment. Local life, the limited space of the square, my concrete being that of incompleteness though it has an end, and yet my aim is to expand my horizons, to experience the ways in which I am capable of making paintings. My body is the extent of my reach and I can be touched from a distance, because my body is already at that distance from me. However, this distance as a qualitative space is not anything that can be measured but a location or an extension of its own. Here distance becomes nothing else but sensibility emitting possibilities and making them mine.

Deleuze's idea is that we should no longer identify contraries with the same but instead measure them through their finite distance from each other, as if the distance, i.e. their difference from each other were affirmed by their relation to each other.<sup>449</sup> In my view, this distance between contraries is at the core of creative making.<sup>450</sup> Distance is here of experience, how does it feel; it is the distance that I myself sense between an incomplete work and a complete one even though the complete is present only in absence and is illusory yet concrete. Distance has a pivotal role in my deciding when to finish

449 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 197–198.

450 I have already discussed Deleuze's thinking of the two series of an idea.

the work and when I cannot get any closer the complete one. However, this is not all; the distance is in motion, as all creativity, all experiencing, all gazing, all contemplation and thinking. That is why to finish a work is a very complex and problematic relation. Time of making and finishing is indeed circular, a lost opportunity.

According to Jean-Luc Nancy, relation is not anything distinct but rather distinction itself: 'The distinct distinguishes itself: it sets itself apart and at a distance, it therefore marks this separation and thus causes it to be remarked – it becomes remarkable, noticeable and marked at such. It also, therefore, attracts attention: in its withdrawal and from out of this withdrawal, it is an attraction and a drawing toward itself'.<sup>451</sup> Nancy claims that relation opens the between as such, by means of which there are two, and yet between the two there is a void, or space, or simultaneous time, or sense. By this he wants to stress the notion that the between relates without resembling, or resembles without uniting, or unites without finishing, or finishes without carrying to its end. In other words, relation presupposes a separation that both withdraws and attracts. Distance is precisely not a thing but it happens between things, it separates and it is singular, it attracts and withdraws. It is the difference that distances and as it distances itself it comes close.<sup>452</sup>

Difference and distance are always present in my work. They are not behind the work but in the work, and their being takes place right at the surface of the work, whichever material or medium or art form is in use. An artist has to ponder throughout one's career: what is it for there to be a constant becoming, why cannot everything be the same, perfect and once and all completed? A work is only a fragment of this pondering and distancing, and this distancing is something of which I can have a sense only through my sensibility. If I follow Edward S. Casey's thinking, here the actual work, the location, marks also a boundary<sup>453</sup> of the work's becoming. Casey's line of thought led me to think that the boundary of my painting is something horizontal but the work's limitlessness, its infinite working, its incompleteness is vertical.

Maurice Blanchot crystallizes this thought by noting that the artwork is distance itself not with respect to any other work but with respect to itself. The work is remote to itself during the process of making but also when it is done and finished, it is not quite itself. In other words, the work is an opening to itself and from itself. This distance, cut or break is the opening of the vacancy of the work, of its proper

451 Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, p. 6.

452 Martin Heidegger, as cited by Mitchell, elaborates that 'When the artist models a head, he only seems to copy the visible surfaces'; however, according to Heidegger, the artist 'shapes the properly invisible, namely the way in which this head looks in the world, how it holds itself up in the open space' and brings the invisible into the figure when he corresponds to the essence of art, each time allowing something to be caught sight of which hitherto had never been seen: 'The sculptor sculpts the announcement and approach of that invisible world in the face'. Andrew J. Mitchell, *Heidegger among Sculptors* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 47.

453 For further discussion of site vs. place and boundary, see Edward S. Casey, *Getting back to Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

place, which is to say that it lends itself to be filled with everything that it is not.<sup>454</sup>

Andrew J. Mitchell writes that the emptiness of a work is a condition of growth, expansion, and it requires room to grow, it needs to be filled. This need arises as a result of the putting into play of the opposition between presence and absence<sup>455</sup>: the concealed is present and announces itself within unconcealment undoing the opposition between absence and presence. In this perspective Heidegger notes that 'All art is in its own way poetry (Dichtung)' for art is nothing but a confrontation that opens a place beyond itself; and in this way it exposes and is in relation and in a sense becomes public art. This confrontation, according to Mitchell: 'stretches and tightens space, rendering it heterogenous'<sup>456</sup> Mitchell reads Heidegger's note as meaning that space is on the one hand the movement of spacing and, on the other hand, it allows bodies to pass beyond themselves. Thus Mitchell writes: 'Space is not a gap between us and the world but we are already underway in space and in the world'.<sup>457</sup>

The limit or border is not where something ceases and ends but rather from where something begins its presenting. The distance between the limit, the boundary, and this something is something that one cannot measure, it is a qualitative distance, it is qualitative proximity that I can but sense with my sensibility. In this respect, I consider distance as matter. I am confronted every day with this qualitative distance that I try to solve with matter. I could not possibly be in space with the work in such a manner that, firstly, the space, the distance between me and the work, remained unaffactive and that, secondly, that I remained unaffected and did not distribute me past myself.

### *A Fragment: a Formlessness of Fantasy*

The Romantic mind surpasses distance and difference, it releases one from one's self-incurred tutelage and treats fantasy as something intellectual that 'disembodies or decenters the subject's unwavering focus by constantly inverting or shuffling it between external image and internal movement of thought'.<sup>458</sup> The Romantics constantly and persistently oriented toward the desire for the infinite, which indicates that the subject is always undergoing a splitting. The infinite here is neither something determined nor structured but incomplete and in a constant flux. While making, one reaches beyond oneself 'in

454 Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. II.

455 Mitchell, *Heidegger among Sculptors*, p. 26.

456 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

457 *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

458 Schulte-Sasse, p. 41.

order to seek and find the completion in his innermost being in the depths of a stranger. The game of communicating and approaching is the business and power of life; absolute completion occurs only in death'.<sup>459</sup>

459 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Dialogue on Poesy' [1799], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 181.

Only romantic poesy can, like the epos, act as mirror of the entire world that surrounds it, and become an image of the age. And yet it is also romantic poesy that can hover on the wings of poetic reflection between the presented (Dargestellen) and the presenting (Darstellen), free from all real and ideal interest, and continually raise this reflection to a higher power, thus multiplying it as in an endless row of mirrors'.<sup>460</sup>

460 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenaeum Fragments' [1798], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 320–321.

Thus the essence of poetic reflection must be novelty, and to create something must in itself be creative. Moreover, according to Friedrich Schlegel, an aesthetic system only grows out of fragments.<sup>461</sup> He illustrates: 'A fragment should be like a miniature work of art, it has to be entirely separate from the surrounding world and complete unto itself like a hedgehog'.<sup>462</sup> The prerequisite for the fragment and the whole genre of Romanticism is a lack of unity and completion; yet the artwork has to be complete in itself like a hedgehog.

461 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Fragments on Literature and Poesy' [1797], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), fragment 496, p. 333.

*I painted once again with ease right from the start. I think, to start is the crucial point; if I just start, at least something emerges, I tried to stay true and as open as I could to what I was doing and to think outside of what pleases my eye. Actually, in making my whole body and mind get involved, as if my body were one sensing sensuous organ, painting is not at all a visual thing. One could call the visual mere wrapping or a fragment of the whole. Colours are important to me; they are not just to charm visually, I think and work through colours, I think that I really can handle them on a big surface, I examined the big canvas for quite a long time, it is quite nice but I am not pleased with it, it needs something, some kind of essence, agent, factor that would link things together, to make it vibrate. This I would call a force, it keeps the work together and from not falling apart. Like the human mind, which is quite a wonderful web woven in my body and that keeps things together. II July 2012*

462 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenaeum Fragments', fragment 206, p. 322.

Every work is singular, a broken part of completion. Maurice Blanchot elaborates on fragment:

... the fragment: while it never is unique, still it has no external limit – the outside toward which it falls is not its edge – and at the same time no internal limitation (it is no hedgehog, rolled up and closed upon itself) ...<sup>463</sup>

463 Blanchot,  
*The Writing of the Disaster*,  
p. 46.

Instead, any distance is not excluded from the work but is immeasurable, which makes the object space itself out, resulting in thinking that is extended over bodies.<sup>464</sup>

464 Deleuze,  
*The Logic of Sense*, p. 204.

It is exactly here that the taking-place of making takes place, and this is the actual place of the fantasy: on the surface of things where everything begins and reaches beyond any possible thought like a worry that reminds me of a wound and never finds rest but seeks eternally consolation. Making opens a multiplicity of points of time and space at which it is possible to opt whether or not something has arrived or is yet to come or at which point one was abandoned. Perhaps art is the best medium to expose, as Heidegger notes, the abandonment of one, one's being thrown into the world.<sup>465</sup>

465 Heidegger,  
*Being and Time*, p. 22.

Naturally, there is no sense to say then that something is completed. How can anything be ever completed if its contents always, and already from the beginning, leak outside?<sup>466</sup> Thus, every composite is an illusion. However, I strive for perfection and completion: the demand for completion seems infinite, universal. An artist's never-ending task is to strive for completion, for nothing that of illusion. This task is one of the most natural ones that there is: it is the drive of being and exceeding oneself. This is to say that the essence of incompleteness is nothing, an illusion.

466 Martin Heidegger:  
'The boundary is that  
from which something  
begins its presenting.'  
Martin Heidegger,  
'Building Dwelling  
Thinking', in *Poetry,  
Language, Thought*  
(Harper perennial:  
New York, 2000), p. 152.

*Does my work represent something? If it does, what? What is at stake, why is it so important to me? Recently I have been painting towards abstraction, although there might still be some pictorial elements in the works that give some hints of objects such as curtains, mirrors and animals and so on. However, I am not sure if they hint towards any objects but to something beyond them. I do not intentionally paint objects; the objects or abstract forms work as bridges towards what I see as the materiality of the world in its completeness. This materiality concerns sensibility. Materiality is my first*

concern, I find that my paintings do not represent anything particular; instead, every painting is a singular fragment, it makes the materiality of the world visible as something ungraspable but something that we depend on. A fragment is never anything fixed, nor it is material. This reminds me, however, of Schlegel's hedgehog. The painting figures itself but I cannot figure it as something determinate, only as something that has to do with excess and that can only be apprehended with sensibility. I paint so that the canvas is either hanging on the wall or lying on the floor. Usually it is on the floor, and then I change my place around it to get hold of it, to mark it. It has been like this for as long as I can remember. What is my point to paint? Why do I do it? Firstly, I do it because of pleasure. The pleasure that I get from painting has to do with my urge to become better, to finally achieve something that would satisfy me. I know, I paint in a dream a dream. When I look at my painting after some time, after having hidden it from my gaze, it is possible that I find that it is quite fine. I have learned during my painterly years that completion is impossible, yet sometimes I think that I get a glimpse of it, as if, something absolute, a masterpiece existed, or I am just being fooled around. When the painting flows it seems that I have learned something from past obstacles. I have a sense that the works are just part of a bigger picture. Still, the most important part of the work is puzzlement. A painting has always been a puzzle to me, perhaps a piece in a larger puzzle. I hear a note of irony in life's voice. 22 March 2013

Friedrich Schlegel illuminates that the world of poesy is as immeasurable as it is infinite and as inexhaustible as living nature is rich in plants, animals and creations of every kind.<sup>467</sup> He also elaborates that a project is the subjective seed of an object that is in the process of becoming. According to him, a perfect project should be both completely subjective and completely objective, an indivisible living individual.<sup>468</sup> Perhaps this is to say that a project always oscillates within the distance between the incomplete and the complete, between the maker and the world – there is an ongoing dialogue.

All that I can come up to with my painterly work is that the finishedness of a work carries not just the desire of completion that does not secure it but a break, a separation that is necessary to it and that

467 Schlegel, 'Dialogue on Poesy', p. 180.

468 Schlegel, 'Athenaeum Fragments' fragment 22, p. 319.

actually secures it. What is it that intertwines the-object-like-thing, the subject and the distance or break together? Feeling? Fantasy? Sensibility, the ability to respond that makes the distance or break graspable.

What is it for that there is a constant becoming, why cannot everything be the same, perfect and once and all completed? A painting is only a fragment in itself. The essence of the fragment and the whole genre of Romanticism is a lack of unity and completion, however, one person's poesy is limited into itself – like a hedgehog, therefore, according to Schlegel:

... a person keeps going outside of himself, ever certain of finding himself again, in order to seek and find the completion of his innermost being in the depths of a stranger.<sup>469</sup>

469 Schlegel, 'Dialogue on Poesy', p. 181.

Perhaps now I can understand Friedrich Schleiermacher, as cited by Maurice Blanchot: 'By producing a work, I renounce the idea of my producing and formulating myself; I fulfill myself in something exterior and inscribe myself in the anonymous continuity of humanity – whence the relation between the work of art and the encounter with death: in both cases, we approach a perilous threshold, a crucial point where we are abruptly turned back'<sup>470</sup>, as incomplete. In this perspective I note two things, and now I let Novalis take the lead: first, 'All synthesis – all progression – or transition begins with illusion. I see outside of me that which is inside in me'<sup>471</sup>, and, second, consciousness is made up of images that are based on belief, whereas self-consciousness is based on the reflective relation to oneself: 'Thus, one understands the I only insofar as it is represented by the non-I.'<sup>472</sup>

470 Blanchot, p. 7.

471 Novalis, 'The Universal Brouillon' fragment 601, p. 233.

472 Ibid., fragment 49, p. 226. Also Henri Bergson: 'as we are not accustomed to observe ourselves directly, but perceive ourselves through forms borrowed from the external world', Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 154.

#### APPEARANCE, FACING A WORLD OF AFFECTIVITY AND SENSIBILITY

The world of senses, however, or nature, is indeed nothing but appearance, precisely the appearance of the immanent light.<sup>473</sup>

People say such things as, 'Oh, they make me see marvellous colours' – which is to my mind a horrible idea. I don't want to see marvellous colours. I want to see the same colours, and that

473 Johan Gottlieb Fichte, Fichte-Schelling correspondence, in [1800–1801], in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 84.



is hard enough. Then they say that they are taken out of this world, but I don't want to be out of this world, I want to be absolutely in it, all of the time.<sup>474</sup>

474 Lucien Freud, p. 51.

*The colours that I use make up reality, however mellow, loud, dead or dull, dyed, scintillating or illuminated. Some time ago a colleague of mine, an artist, told me that the kind of a pink sky that I was expressing in my painting just did not exist and that I should stop painting them. Needless to say, I did not feel very happy. Of course it exists and it is not just a plain sky tinged with pink. I have witnessed it and I have seen skies that are even more peculiar than the one that I painted. And I know exactly where I experienced this particular pink sky. It was in Helsinki, over the bus station one summer evening. 12 March 2012*

Later I have paid a lot of attention to the marvellous variety of pink skies that nature presents to me. This kind of sensuous composition of appearance attaches me to them and to the world. The distance between me and the skies is long if I wanted to measure it, yet in my experience the sky becomes part of me and it matters in me. Without something appearing and then the appearance, there is no reality at all. Appearance is that particular that can be perceived in an object.

Appearance connects the subject and the object and, as such, is always relational. Appearance is of communication, it calls for attention and I am drawn to it. What is it that draws me to it? To my mind the answer is: the affectivity of an appearance and my sensibility together. Thus, affectivity equals to activity. Through appearance I access the world and I become part of it, as if appearance were a sensuous area through which my sensibility emerges. The transformation of matter in appearing allows me to enter into a relation other than a mere reflective subject-object relation. This is exactly how I feel when I am being immersed in my work: appearing take hold of me and I take hold of the appearances later: they become mine. Appearance is the evidence of the material event of an appearing of the material workings of the world. Matter is both the base and the medium of all appearance. Without matter, there is no appearance, not even an illusory one. However, in appearance what is lost is appearing. Appearance is isolated from activity. Appearance is an image made of my body and mind and the materials that are at work in it. Thus it is always a rela-

tion, figuration or a gathering and a recollection. It reminds me of an agreement.

My paintings exist outside me but not without me; their existence is dependent on me, being there within a distance. The sensation of appearance gives rise to an experience that travels within my body. While my actions often remain ambiguous and indeterminate, appearance functions as a direct comment on my attempts, my repeated attempts, as Michel Henry puts it:

Instead, the painter seeks these 'sensible appearances' in their singularity and changes: this form with ungraspable contours and with faint lights that twinkle in the dazzling night, a bedazzlement where reality breaks down into pure bursts of blinding light, slips into the unknown, loses all consistency, and ultimately disappears.<sup>475</sup>

Renaud Barbaras illuminates the idea that perceiving is not a collection of qualities but rather a fragment of extension of an object manifested by its appearance through space. Every object can be endowed with a numberless amount of qualities: colours, forms, etc. This is to say that, according to Barbaras, I never discover the object itself: the object always exceeds its appearances. This is not all, however, the pivotal point that Barbaras notes, is that only sensibility allows me to confirm that something is out there in space and that space is not something that can be measured, it can only be experienced.<sup>476</sup> Here I am actually at the foot of the world that is undetermined in its essence, yet in a mystical way functioning as if sensibility weaved together any appearance and appearing that takes place in matter.

Sensibility manifests the thing without being confused with it. The finite refers then to the appearance of the thing. This is to say, as Barbaras elaborates, that the presence of a thing requires transcendence. However, transcendence in Barbaras' thinking does not point to the transcendent, but to difference: 'it names nothing other than the incompleteness of sensible knowledge', according to Barbaras.<sup>477</sup>

*I sometimes think that vision is just a sense on the surface of the painting, it does not have any depth, it needs the other senses, as if vision were a sort of a threshold for the other senses, as if my eyes were just empty holes, an entry for the*

475 Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible, on Kandinsky*, trans. by Scott Davidson (New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 15.

476 Renaud Barbaras, 'Invisibility at the Heart of Appearance: On Perception, Art and Desire', in *Paradoxes of Appearing*, ed. by M. A. Andersen and H. Oxvig (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2009), p. 172.

477 *Ibid.*, p. 174.

other senses to come to play with me, myself and the work. I am being sucked into the painting through the holes of my eyes. To communicate my thinking as it has developed through sensibility. My work seems somewhat autistic and clumsy most of the time. It is as if I communicated with myself through an unknown inside, and neither do the sides inside and outside meet nor are they in tune or in harmony with each other. The distance between me and my work results in stuttering in-between. This in-between has a form or, better, a force or tension and it can be met solely on the level of the sensible. This distance one cannot measure; it is organic and can only be sensed. 20 March 2013

Reality is given in experience that is an immediate and continuous process of appearings, becomings and appearances: thus, reality is multi-layered. Distances grow smaller and sometimes so immense that I have to destroy what I have been doing. Here I find that Henri Bergson has it right in saying that a quality of an experience, like an immensity of distance for example, can become in a certain way a quantity that he calls intensity.<sup>478</sup> This kind of intensity or heaviness I experience can result in that I abandon the work. An ocean of events, and then only a few of my works survive the shipwreck. Indeed, I do not want to invoke the images of the works that I have destroyed yet these images are of importance. Some of my paintings that have survived still shake my complacency. The work of art is not only a historic relic of its time, but it matters, as its essence is potentiality within which the work of art remains incomplete.

That what affects is the ontology, and in the case of art, it is the ontology of art's work.<sup>479</sup> In this perspective, Andrew Benjamin discusses a notion that there is appearance in artwork, meaning that art appears and is in its appearing. What appears, according to Benjamin, are the materials at work. By this Benjamin wants to stress his opinion that the materials that appear at work in a work cannot be equated with or reduced to the empirical, hence although the work of art documents: 'Empiricism merely notes their presence (materials) but cannot think the activity of materials'.<sup>480</sup>

How the materials are at work in Ernst Barlach's (1870–1938) expressionist and primitivist sculptures and what was the appearance of his work at a given moment, is what I will briefly discuss next. Barlach's participation in World War I as an infantryman made him

478 Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 90.

479 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, pp. 5–6.

480 *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 13.

object the war. The horrors of war are present in his works. Barlach received many prizes for them and was offered many prestigious positions. However, from 1936 on, Barlach was hunted by the Nazis. According to the head of the Nazi Party in Mecklenburg, Friedrich Hildebrandt: 'Ernst Barlach may be an artist but German nature is alien to him'.<sup>481</sup> A large amount of Barlach's works were confiscated and destroyed as degenerate art. His work was also included in the infamous Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art) exhibit in Munich in 1937. Degenerate art was then described as works that insult German feeling or destroy or confuse natural form or simply reveal an absence of adequate manual or artistic skill.<sup>482</sup>

481 Mitchell, p. 20.

Martin Heidegger compiled a piece of writing titled 'The Abandonment of Being and Errancy' to the catalogue for a 1951 retrospective exhibition of Ernst Barlach. Controversy concerning Barlach was still going on at that time. Andrew J. Mitchell asserts that Heidegger in this writing offers his most severe critique towards the State dominated by technology and National Socialism. Yet he does not mention Barlach in this text. According to Egon Vietta who edited the catalogue, there is a hidden connection between the two, Martin Heidegger and Ernst Barlach. The hidden connection 'hangs on an understanding of what Heidegger terms the abandonment of being. The abandonment of being presents a vision of beings as harboring a constitutive insufficiency that surrenders them wholly to the world, an insufficiency embodied in the plastic works of Barlach'.<sup>483</sup> An artwork is a place for dwelling, or in Heidegger's terms, 'an abandonment, as being is neither wholly present nor wholly absent'.<sup>484</sup> What Heidegger means and what Barlach's works present is that being escapes, eludes and exceeds finishedness. The human becomes the object of the abandonment of being. Thus, being takes place between presence and absence, at the surface where being extends beyond itself and enters the world. Being takes place at the limit of the thing, where the thing begins its appearing, and it is actually this limit where something begins. According to Mitchell:

482 Frederick Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 2003 (Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press, 2009), pp. 151-168.

483 Mitchell, p. 22.

484 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

What the abandonment of being names, in other words, is a way of experiencing beings such that they are no longer construed as self-contained and discrete objects but as already opened and spilled into the world. Being lies beyond the being, calling out to it that it come forth.<sup>485</sup>

485 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Thus being escapes both incompleteness that hangs heavy on its shoulders, and completeness the way in which completion escapes, it eludes – this being the mistake the Nazi's made and went wrong – and exceeds finishedness. Ernst Barlach writes himself against the finished creation in a letter addressing the biblical account of God's six days of creation and seventh day of rest: 'But I fear that that Sunday was followed by a hungover Monday and a new week's labor; and so it continues until today; in short, creation has no end, and ultimately creator and creation are one'.<sup>486</sup>

486 Ibid., p. 23.

According to Mitchell, as Heidegger wrote in *Being and Time*, Dasein's being in the world, is a matter of an engagement and being in nearness the things around it. This nearness is nothing measurable: 'Every entity that is "to hand" has a different nearness, which is not to be ascertained by measuring distances'.<sup>487</sup> An artwork unfurls a space of appearing, it brings itself to closeness: it struggles between concealment and unconcealment. What it unconceals is truth of things and the world. The work is the space, the medium for the appearing of truth, to bringing things that are far into closeness. Alfred Rosenberg writes in a Munich newspaper on Barlach's works: 'But what he shapes of humans is foreign, utterly foreign: earth-enslaved massiveness and joy at the impact of heaviness and the material'.<sup>488</sup> In other words, Barlach's works reach out into a world, in which an experience of being takes place in its materiality.

487 Heidegger, pp. 102, 135.

488 Mitchell, p. 28.

Materiality indicates exactly the heterogeneous and qualitative duration of a work of art in which neither the duration nor distance can be counted, but writes itself. The empty interval or gyre between the incomplete and the complete and the possibility of their touching each other while one's sensibility produces a sentient of distance, refer from one to the other becoming something palpable. Relation between the incomplete and the complete refuses to allow any conclusion to be made and also refuses to allow any appearance to be repeated. As Barlach himself tells, his theme has always been 'the human situation in its nakedness between heaven and earth'.<sup>489</sup>

489 Ibid., p. 35.

My innate necessity of creating once and for all a complete work arises as a result of the putting into play of the resistance between presence and absence, as if making were a confrontation of setting forth in the work something that is neither present nor absent to fill a void that is present. At the end, difference becomes the matter of the work, in which materials are at work in order to illuminate difference. The outcome is that the event of infinite incompleteness is giv-

en in an appearing and appearance of the difference, in which nothing else than the potentialities are animated. Incompleteness is in a sense a condition of growth and becoming that both require room and space. Surely some revelation is at hand.

#### CLOSING WORDS

This chapter has investigated the event of appearing and the notion of appearance from the maker's point of view. It has summarized also some relevant discourse on this phenomenon. Martin Seel's elaboration on appearing has been a relevant basis for discussion and for the further development of the notion of appearing. What I have attempted is to identify the relation between making, appearing, appearance, incompleteness and sensibility. Subjective sensibility and the world's affectivity are the prerequisite layers that we all share and that take their form, figuration or gathering through the appearances of relations. This relation is revealed in the experience of difference.

Incompleteness, just as it shows itself, is an appearance of difference. It has to do with the materials at work, the affectivity of the world and my sensibility. Difference is not solely about differing, othering, alienating, separating but also about making connections, relations and commitments. It is organic and transient as I am and as my body exposes, creates, transforms and results upon it. What then appears is something different. The material world is then the condition for something being possibly possible or impossible and an occasion to differ from itself. I share with others the material world and the possibilities that are given to me. These possibilities are played out by my sensibility.

Making a painting eventually turns into an expectation, readiness, into intimacy and into a relation. To achieve completion appears as something strange and unattainable, yet constantly present. I see everything that I have done, felt and thought during my painterly years, and I do not see it. It has become both my weakness and my asset. Everything that I have done during the past years spreads out in front of me: all the straying and trying, moments of disbelief and insatiability, and then sudden and surprising moments of succeeding, rare moments of joy and happiness.

The demand for completeness weighs heavy on me. The complete becomes something that is present within the incomplete. Their relation is immediate yet distant, since completion can only be looked for and approached, yet it appears through incompleteness. Incompleteness and completeness are not the opposite to each other but the heterogeneous element of each other. They do not rule each other out but complement each other, an approach of tension between the two. Proximity of completeness causes unrest; it is event-oriented and calls for action.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?<sup>490</sup>

490 Yates,  
'The Second Coming'.

A painting is slippage from a place to another, a constant dislocation of materiality, a rough passage that I traverse in waiting for revelation. The image as an appearance is already something lost, a disparate bundle of recollection. Then, if everything that can be has been, what are we then missing? An artwork, but a vestige of loss, that of a moment, a figure, a touch, a feeling, a skill, knowledge, a delivering

of an absence, of an undefined thought marks the artwork as incomplete and makes it different in itself in its incompleteness between heaven and earth. However, this is not all: the complete still sounds in the incomplete like ghostly echo gyring around it. Therefore, the incomplete is not only tragic, since the absence of the complete presents a promise of an event, a revelation, a second coming.

Distance is the affirmation of that which it distances. Distance is that which relates and links things with each other, it links the practitioner with the creation, and, as Deleuze elaborates, ‘... each thing opens itself up to the infinity of predicates through which it passes, as it loses its center, that is, its identity as a concept or as self.’<sup>491</sup> Here distance can be experienced as a path through which identities are formed and one no longer identifies two contraries with the same but affirms their distance as that which relates one to the other.

491 Deleuze,  
*The Logic of Sense*, pp. 199.

As my analysis points out, Seel’s highly rational viewpoint and its exclusion of the other, one’s body and sensibility from the rational same and determined, needs reconsidering and re-visioning. Seel’s claim that an object’s sensuous appearance constitutes all properties that are perceptually determined and that are already out there opens up the question of, first, where does, on the one hand, individual and, on the other hand, material freedom stand and, second, whether there is any room for chaos and indeterminacy in creative making through which the appearing of something stemming out of void or nothing is experienced and is not necessarily determined. Moreover, Seel’s assertion that ‘an aesthetic intuition can be exercised solely in the context of a perception equipped with names and general concepts; only within this framework is it possible to confront something in its particularity’<sup>492</sup> impels me to ask: whose aesthetics, experiences are taken into consideration as presenting an ideal underdetermined case?

492 Seel,  
*Aesthetics of Appearing*,  
p. 41.

Incompleteness is the carnal manifestation, appearing and appearance, of an infinite world, of living on edge; it consists of constant slipping away from the light, from the path, from the stage. It is where everything begins. It manifests itself in the difference that emerges from distance not being quite on the spot yet, however, being something that I experience in my flesh and through my sensibility. It permeates me and triggers my memory, transgresses my thoughts and my desire to create. It is (em)bodied as an experience of emptiness. Incompleteness teaches us what it means to be in the world. Friedrich Schlegel’s writes:



The game of communicating and approaching is the business and the power of life; absolute completion occurs only in death. The poet must constantly strive to expand his poesy and his views of poesy, and to approximate the highest point possible on earth by striving to connect his part to the great whole in most determined manner possible.<sup>493</sup>

<sup>493</sup> Schlegel, 'Dialogue on Poesy', p. 181.



# 4 Experience Hits My Body Like a Deluge

The starting point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotion. The objects that provoke this emotion we call works of art.<sup>494</sup>

<sup>494</sup> Clive Bell, 'The Aesthetic Hypothesis 1914', in *Art in Theory 1900–1990*, ed. by C. Harrison and P. Wood (Oxford, Blackwell), pp. 113–116.

The previous chapter showed how things, phenomena and events appear in respect to artistic making and how appearing represents a natural way to encounter the world for an artist. Sensibility to what is appearing is a particular ability of an artist. In this regard, I find artistic research the most suitable realm to investigate incompleteness. What is more, artistic research can offer a meaningful way to examine a phenomenon that is a real-life phenomenon that relies on sensibility in a situation that is instable, unique and uncertain, and is based on experience and carnal knowledge. Being a practitioner-researcher is a particular and unique situation in which bodily knowledge is not allowing preconceptions to intervene with the action. Instead, the way in which my study shows making and materials tend to take the lead and direct motion and decisions.

Sensibility, bodily-ownness, through which one's ability to experience, to react, to emote, to reflect, to think, is made possible, relates to bodily sensations that concern my body as a whole in a given environment and moment. Hence works of art as well as the whole process of making are manifested through my sensibility, as immediate realizations of something that appears.

This chapter will give an analysis of experience, of how experiences, in particular incompleteness, become tangible and communicated through my making that involves both my body and mind. Making, action, experiencing, emoting and reflecting initiate perceptions that have an impact both on the works that I create and on the research that I have simultaneously conducted. How experience enters into

making, what is its role in knowledge making and how it can be examined: these are the questions that I will tackle in this chapter. The question of experience has set the stage for the research on the main question, i.e. how to research incompleteness. The time of the aesthetics of experience has come.

First, I will set the stage with the notion of peculiar emotion that was introduced by Clive Bell. After that, I will address the question of how to research experience. Then I will discuss the formation of the subject as well as the body-mind interaction within artistic making. Later I will analyse the formation of knowledge. Then drawing on the thinking of Henry Bergson, Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone I will show the way in which experience intertwined with the materiality of the work at hand creates a subject position. After that I will turn to Antonio Damasio in order to discuss the emotions of a maker when she is inside the making process. Finally, I shift attention to the notions of strange and uncanny. The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the maker's animated body, sensibility and experience in order to illuminate and develop a dialogical perspective into incompleteness that involves both body and mind and the resistance of the materials at hand.

#### TO BEGIN WITH

The claim on a peculiar emotion that I cite above in the beginning was made by Clive Bell in his book *Art*. In this book published in 1914, Bell, as he writes in the preface, tried to develop a complete theory of visual art. According to him, every work produces a different emotion. Bell calls this emotion the aesthetic emotion. However, as he states, there must be one quality without which a work of art cannot exist. This quality is shared by all artworks, and he calls this shared quality a 'significant form'. A significant form as an object of emotion differs from an informative form. Bell finds that most of the primitive works of art are good examples of works that move people emotionally and thus have a significant form that is free of descriptive qualities. Bell maintains that the forms of art are inexhaustible, yet as they have the aesthetic emotion as the common nominator they have the

capacity to evoke aesthetic ecstasy.<sup>495</sup> In a sense Bell's thinking of aesthetic ecstasy brings us back to Immanuel Kant and aesthetic pleasure.

I can relate myself a primitive painter, not just because of my vivid use of colours, heavy brushstrokes and clumsiness – some call it childlike – that are usually considered as typical characteristics of primitive art, but most of all because I am perfectly frank in what I am doing.

*What is a painter's day like? Tearing off the canvases of bad paintings from frames, to prime new canvases with hope, eagerness, enthusiasm, desire, passion to make something better, something that would finally satisfy. Why do I paint? I think it is the most difficult thing to do. It is a manner of being bodily and communicating both with myself and the world. Do I try to achieve something or prove something? I do not think so, but there is a certain allure in painting and in the whole, the process sort of connects my being with the world in a concrete way. How does the making affect me then? Do I become something complete as a person, as a subject? I do not think so; I find that completion is impossible. However, painting shows me my potential; that there is more to me. This something, this more, is something that I cannot comprehend, I can only sense it. Nevertheless, it has a strange allure in it and it forces me to try even harder to find something that satisfies me. To finish a work is an endless puzzle. I usually finish a work several times. Finishing also seems to require many trials and hesitations; one day I am sure and the next day I hesitate with the same work. It is as if I had a game with the Delphic Oracle. In the end, after some time, after a year or two or so, if the work does not satisfy me, I will destroy it. I usually tear the canvas into pieces and toss the pieces into the trash bin. Bad paintings are like taking steps backwards. They are annoying but necessary. 9 April 2013*

Does the kind of hesitation with finishing that I have described above make any sense? The central point of Clive Bell's aesthetic theory is that, on the one hand, an experience is necessarily qualitative, singular and private and, on the other hand, that aesthetic value has nothing to do with its success in representing an object, therefore neither a peculiar emotion nor significant form refers to content or sub-

ject matter of a work. However, objects of art have a common quality, the essence of art that of an aesthetic emotion that is produced by significant form and that affect all sensitive people.<sup>496</sup> Bell thus advocates for the autonomy of art from other aspects of life, i.e. social or political.

496 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

I interpret the piece of my diary above in a way that the words 'something' and 'satisfy' indicate towards and communicate the words 'peculiar' and 'significant' used by Bell. A large part of my research consists of trying to identify what the words *strange* and *incompleteness* mean, and all that is at stake in their significance in my work.

Feelings of incompleteness and strangeness, I find, have cast an important shadow on my work and my makings. Paradoxically, I keep on creating new works out of incompleteness. This is to say that human existence itself must at the beginning be incomplete.

In my work I have often pondered on the experiences of shame, pleasure, dissatisfaction, acceptance, success, imperfection, desire and sense of purpose. These experiences are both physical and mental. It is then that I have realized that experience can be understood as something shrinking or enlarging, a change of orientation, or far-reaching so that it might even mean throwing oneself towards the presence of something unrecognizable, even if I were faced by nothing but a feeling of imperfection and insufficiency, by incomplete works: an interesting view of myself.

Because – and this is a truth one should not forget – only weakness and inadequacy are enthralling, never power and perfection. And it is true that Freud and Mann knew how to extract all of the biological poverty accompanying greatness, those deviations, the sickness of a great man, but what determines greatness in him, genius, talent, the Olympian spark, the flame of Sinai, this is powerful in them, priding itself on all the glories of Perfection and Blossoming ...

But this does not correspond to the truth (he thought further). Inadequacy is not something that accompanies greatness, superiority; it is its 'quid,' its substance: greatness – let us say this at last – is inadequacy.<sup>497</sup>

497 Gombrowicz, p. 407.

To experience comes in many qualities: emotions, thoughts, knowledge, physical sensations, faith, and even intuition. As a paint-

er it has been my task to manage this space between all the different experiences that I have had with my works as best I can.

Moreover, I have discovered and learned that to paint turns into a gesture of extraordinary generosity: it both communicates toward myself and toward the world. Thus, being a subject feels quite concrete and at the same time quite experimental and innovatory, as if I were reaching beyond myself both inwards and outwards. I cannot detach myself from my experiences, emotions and thoughts, from my living in relation to my inside and to the outside. Perhaps what we have here is one's porousness that leads to experiencing difference and distance that my works present me: a void forming itself as I form myself. Things will be presented in this clearing that experience of incompleteness exposes.

I experience myself in a place of this in-between, between here and there. According to Alphonso Lingis, without distance, conversation would not be possible. Lingis points to human beings, but I sense that his remark applies to every being and thing, as well as my painting-to-be: there is an unbroken line between us. Lingis depicts: 'The other materializes before me. It materializes not under the manipulating hand, but under the eye and the touch that caresses. The caress is surface contact with skin. Facing me the other singles me out'<sup>498</sup> and 'The encounter with the other is a being affected by it. To recognize the other is not to recognize another one nor to identify alterity but to recognize not the form and distinctive aspects but the force.'<sup>499</sup>

I make contact with my work and with myself through my other self and by embracing the world bodily. Yet, any completion remains inaccessible to me. The accomplished artwork is a fragmented remainder of my attempts in transforming the experiences that I have had while making and that have traversed like a deluge through my body.

We are like tones from which the melody issues – like words forming themselves into sentences – but we are not in control of what we express, this expression of ours strikes us like a thunderbolt, like a creative force, it arises from us unrefined.<sup>500</sup>

<sup>498</sup> Alphonso Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, ed. by J. Sallis (New York: Humanity Books, 1996), p. 70.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>500</sup> Gombrowicz, pp. 357–358.

## RESEARCH OF EXPERIENCE – EXPLORATION OF CARNAL DENSITY

Experiencing is movement, animation of the whole sensitive materiality of my body. How does an experience manifest itself while I am making a painting? How does it transfer me and the work while I am making: painting on the floor on my knees, with a certain tempo, and a certain rhythm of movement? When something appears and I experience it, what is at stake and what does it mean?

My attitude towards experience is practice-based, meaning that no supernatural, transcendental entities are needed in studying it. Yet such experience can well be fantastic and imaginary. My position toward studying experience is that it is a phenomenon that is transient, transcendent, empirical and natural.<sup>501</sup> Experience is real and subjective, it is always met by someone never objectively or transcendental-ly. Experiencing necessitates openness of my body and mind toward something transcendent to it, receptivity with regard to something appearing that affects.

I work not only to paint a masterpiece but also to feel myself at work, to experience how the treatment of materials and the movements of my body unite to become something that finally satisfies me. Nobody else's experience could possibly suffice for me. Thus, experience as the element of creativity can be studied only from the position of a practitioner because making, as a prerequisite for creativity, insists to be taken as a whole from inside out.<sup>502</sup> According to Juha Varto: 'The only thing cogently given to us in experience is *the singular*: the singular *phenomenon* in time and place, bound to place and, to the largest extent, to the individual whose experience is at stake'.<sup>503</sup> The recognisability of an experience does not lie in concepts but in my positions and orientations, which my body postures. Experience fills me up with its energy and force and thus establishes my location to myself and to the world.

Experience, which explicitly means that there is something like a sensation, affection and sensibility that are all at stake, comes each time anew and singularly. Singularity points towards finiteness, just as singularity indicates one's or the thing's own limit. However, this limit is the thing's and my own porous boundary between incompleteness and completeness. It is the border that leaks and from which everything begins its presenting. This is the limit, the point where intensity and tension take place as they both point toward the space of difference between the incomplete and something that is called com-

501 'The subject is indeed that which transcends the given,' according to Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity, an Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. by C. V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 88. 'If the subject is constituted within the given, then, in fact, there is only a practical subject', *ibid.*, p. 104. 'The given is once again taken up by a movement and in a movement that transcends it', *ibid.*, p. 92.

502 In this dissertation, I have taken the stance that the concept of transcendent refers to the natural world because it shows itself, it appears, whereas transcendental refers to knowledge, which has become independent of practical and carnal experience.

503 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 45.



plete. Incompleteness indicates this space in between that can only be experienced. In this sense incompleteness both starts from nothing and points to nothing: it is an experience of nothing. It is toward this nothing I orientate myself.

In researching experience, according to Juha Perttula, natural attitude consists both of a theoretical way of thinking and a common sense of experiencing the experienced world. One does not have to put aside the meanings of the researched person: the experiential reality is always true for each person. However, conducting an auto-ethnographic research, I have to be attentive towards my dual position as a practitioner and researcher. In other words, I cannot completely withdraw my horizons of my understanding of my experiences but I have to be aware of my person. Nevertheless, as I see it, it is an advantage that I am close to the phenomenon that I am researching. Experiential reality is the starting point from which the relevance of the research stems: every person is right from one's standpoint. As Perttula asserts, the situatedness of each person is unique and sets the boundaries of understanding and description.<sup>504</sup> Perttula advises to use imaginative variation, meaning that the researcher should explore the variation of all possible meanings that can be related to the phenomenon, yet description always includes preunderstandings and preinterpretation, and 'although there is no passable bridge between authentic experience and human understanding, there is the ethical demand .... To be in the process of trying'.<sup>505</sup>

Experiences exist and they can be expressed, and as they exist I can research them, describe and interpret them. I can well research all kinds of experiences, mine or another person's: experiences on angels and unicorns, for example. I cannot argue against someone's experiential reality. The only prerequisite for research is that I have to first think what an experience is and how it manifests itself. This line of thought leads me to deduce that, in order to know or to conclude anything of incompleteness, I have to examine the essential conditions in which it appears: those of the subject, one's carnal, i.e. physical being, emoting, materiality and animation.

504 Perttula, 'The Possibility of a Descriptive Orientation to Psycho-Social Work: Towards the Conceptual Origins', p. 17. Perttula reminds that for Edmund Husserl, interpretation is description, whereas for Martin Heidegger, description is interpretation, *ibid.* p. 11.

505 *Ibid.*, pp. 15 and 33.

## THE FLOWERING OF A SUBJECT AT THE SITE OF FLESH

For example, tears or angels have not constituted, generated or been part of knowledge, because they seem so closely connected with the knower that it is impossible to separate one from the other.<sup>506</sup>

506 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 27.

For him (Husserl) Kant's philosophy does not build into scientific thought; it consists in taking the universe of science as given, taking the universe of objectivity as already constituted by the universal laws of objective thought, and then saying that the universal laws that form objectivity are in fact subjective forms, or more exactly, formative operations of transcendental subjectivity.<sup>507</sup>

507 Alphonso Lingis, *Phenomenological Explanations* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986), p. 9.

When I am painting I feel most alive, the most conscious of my being, not being in somewhere, in some time, in search of lost time but being as such in my flesh in a moment that becomes a space that is both being towards myself and being beyond myself toward the future of possibilities. I have a sense of belonging to here and now but at the same time I am future-oriented since my making configures itself with an appearing of becoming of something.<sup>508</sup> Making becomes gathering.

508 In this perspective, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, writes about *Dasein* being ahead of time, willing and wishing as if that were ontologically necessary, and that what defines one is future, pp. 236–238. According to Heidegger, anticipation is the same as coming towards oneself. Being is being beyond oneself towards the possibilities that are in the future. *Being and Time*, p. 416. What is the danger here is that Heidegger's *Dasein* is only concerned of oneself.

There is no fixed point where subjectivity could be positioned while I am making, as if it were abstract and transcendent, as if I were foreign to myself but one with the work. This insider circle is quite peculiar. Subjectivity never reaches itself, the finished work is a mystery. Experiences traverse through my flesh like a deluge, I make them mine I become a subject with them but a porous one.

A body is defined most commonly in terms of the human body, the material frame of man viewed as an organic entity with internal organs. Though body can sometimes refer only to the main portion of an animal or any other unit, it may also refer to a series of organized units, a collective whole, of things or persons. Within science it refers to any substance, simple or compound, solid, liquid or gaseous. In Christian texts the body is understood as the sacrament, the metaphorical body of Christ, or as Christ's passion, or Christ falling under the weight of cross. To embody is to put into a body an idea or spirit, to give a concrete form to or to express: principles, thoughts, or intentions, within art, an action, word combinations, or institutions,

God, Marx, Mother Teresa. Thus an embodiment of an idea or principle is its physical form, realization or expression, or the incarnation of that idea. It becomes flesh. In my opinion the prefix *em-* at the beginning of the word body is not necessary because body as an organ already bears the necessary receptivity, sensibility and flexibility to form to something.

*Summer is at its best. I love summer; it makes me feel so alive. This is funny because when I was younger I hated summers and the feeling of being exposed to others and being visible as a body was something I disliked. I felt that my vulnerability got to be discovered by others. I cycle to my studio almost every day or pass by it on my way to school. In my studio, I get this extra energy; is it because I can be by myself here and surrounded by my things? I love the dim summer light that glimmers through the dusty studio window. Painting is absolutely my main medium. Painting is so much more than just seeing, it concerns my whole sensibility, my flesh, my whole person and my body with my story in it because it involves so much: my person, the environment, the materials, colours, brushes, canvases, pots and buckets, oils and the dust and dirt of my studio. 4 July 2013*

Some theorists discuss the body primarily as the site of perception, the site of the senses. Descartes (1596–1650) broke up the mind and the body into separate entities, substances, which is now known as Cartesian dualism. He held that *ego cogito*, the ‘I think’, was distinct from matter and that it could influence matter. Although he did not specifically write on the subject, he sees the thinking mind as an individual subject. His dualistic view is definite, the body and the mind are different substances. *Cogito ergo sum* also means that all that I understand clearly is true, and as such the mind has a clear vision of itself. According to the Cartesian doctrine, one establishes one’s existence and the limits of one’s physical being through the existence and limits of one’s senses. The clause ‘I think therefore I am’ puts into words the idea that it is the thinking mind as the self that identifies the senses of the self, the self’s body.<sup>509</sup>

509 See for example Descartes’ *Discourse on the Method*.

Immanuel Kant’s thinking is also to re-assess the superiority of the mind, understanding and reason. As I have discussed earlier, what is fundamental to the mind, according to Kant, is its capacity of synthesis and the play of cognitive faculties. Synthesis is central to cognition.

Kant's highly rational method is called transcendental. According to it, cognition requires concepts as well as perceptions. Kant aims at *a priori* deductions, in which knowledge turns out to be independent of observed behaviour, events or experiences.

Very much unlike Kant thought, the notion of carnal knowledge needs to be addressed, according to Juha Varto. The key concepts that compose carnal knowledge are flesh and distance, as Varto elaborates. He refers quite unexpectedly for example to the witty sex symbol Mae West, as he asserts that flesh can be classified by substance, such as being under gaze on the meat counter. Thus he elaborates further that flesh is a form of subjective imagination. Having said this, Varto concludes that 'the subject is a fantasy'.<sup>510</sup> On my practical level, such as that of painting, this means that I can measure the rest of the world and relate the image with which I am working in the way that I want, in the way my flesh imagines, because flesh is a faculty that I cannot control.

510 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, pp. 19–20.

'Who are you?' said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I – I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the Caterpillar sternly.

'Explain yourself!'

'I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir' said Alice, 'because I'm not myself, you see.'

'I don't see,' said the Caterpillar.

'I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly,' Alice replied very politely, 'for I can't understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.'

'It isn't,' said the Caterpillar.

'Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet,' said Alice; 'but when you have to turn into a chrysalis — you will some day, you know — and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?'

'Not a bit,' said the Caterpillar.

'Well, perhaps your feelings may be different,' said Alice; 'all I know is, it would feel very queer to me.'

'You!' said the Caterpillar contemptuously. 'Who are you?'<sup>511</sup>

511 Carroll, p. 55.

Carnal knowledge is composed of sensibility, movement and matter, it covers sensation, sensorial experience, and temporality in a mode of experienced duration. It initiates the sensibility of a human in its dynamic and organic activity within the affectivity of the world. Re-thinking of materiality through the arts, body and sensory materiality of both human and nonhuman beings has initiated research within different disciplines. For example Tiainen, Kontturi and Hongisto suggest that ‘... in new materialist frameworks ontology evokes the fundamental co-formation – rather than separability – of being and knowing, natural and cultural, biological and social, matter and thought’.<sup>512</sup> However, sensibility has not evoked interest in new materialist theories.

My body is my medium to try to find something new in my work, not to copy something or somebody, but to find something that would satisfy me. Nevertheless, the future is postponed and I do not know before hand what would this something satisfying be. According to Alphonso Lingis, anxiety is the sense of nothingness<sup>513</sup>. On the one hand, in making the plasticity of my body amazes me and on the other hand, the clumsiness of my paintings disturbs me. Perhaps, what I have here is the ontology of a monster, a sudden awakening outside any representation present in my works. The work, or the monster, arises between itself, from within the folds of the work and through my body. This is how difference feels, and passion passing over my body. Lingis emphasizes that the subject ‘features the plasticity of the body, the materiality of affect, and the alimentary nature of sensation’.<sup>514</sup>

In Tom Sparrow’s interpretation, Lingis is the phenomenologist of the sensitive body and the materiality of subjectivity. Lingisian philosophy is philosophy of sensation, sensuality and sensibility. He is a phenomenologist and a radical empiricist of the body who, according to Sparrow, ‘refuses to sacrifice the infinity of sensuous relations embedded in the world of experience’.<sup>515</sup>

Yet this is not all, because, as I understand, for Lingis subjectivity opens upon the time of others. He elaborates that this openness towards others and at the same time towards one’s own being establishes an imperative and a responsibility. Still, this researching toward oneself and toward others never reaches an end. It is always paradoxically incomplete: a layout of possibilities and prone to vulnerability. Therefore to experience is always to experience with; thus, an experience is a manifestation of the relation of the inside and the outside of the body. It becomes a common experience.

512 Milla Tiainen, Katve-Kaise Kontturi & Ilona Hongisto, ‘Movement, Aesthetics, Ontology’, *Cultural Studies Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2015), pp. 4–13, p. 7. For further reading on the notion of new materialism through the creative arts, see, for example, Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds.), *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a ‘New Materialism’ through the Arts*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

513 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 3.

514 Tom Sparrow, ‘Bodies in transit: The Plastic Subject of Alphonso Lingis’, *Janus Head*, Vol 10 No 1 (2007) pp. 99–122, p. 55.

515 Sparrow, ‘Bodies in transit: The Plastic Subject of Alphonso Lingis’, p. 57.

In his book, *The Emancipated Spectator* Jacques Rancière suggests that the way an artwork and a human community are in the world is that they intersect and overlap, neither fully integrated nor overlapping but in a way that implies a creative collision, as if they weaved a common fabric of experience that is not just divided into senses but that is of a finer feeling of the whole than that of sensibility. Rancière elaborates:

... the link between the solitude of the artwork and human community is a matter of transformed 'sensation'. What the artist does is to weave together a new sensory fabric by wresting percepts and affects from the perceptions and affections that make up the fabric of ordinary experience. Weaving this new fabric means creating a form of common expression or a form of expression of the community – namely, 'the earth's song and the cry of humanity'. What is common is 'sensation'. Human beings are tied together by a certain sensory fabric, a certain distribution of the sensible, which defines their way of being together; and politics is about the transformation of the sensory fabric of 'being together'. It seems as if the paradox of the 'apart together' has been dispelled. The solitude of the artwork is a false solitude: it is an intertwining or twisting together of sensations, like the cry of human body. And a human collective is an intertwining and twisting together of sensations in the same way.<sup>516</sup>

516 Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. by G. Elliott (London: Verso, 2009), p. 56.

The moment of experience is coming together into being of my subjectivity. I consider experience as a will to difference, in other words, to radicalism, to encountering the excess or the other in me and of others. There is no fixed point where subjectivity can be positioned, as if it were something very concrete and abstract at the same time. I cannot make my subjectivity something complete; it is in motion all the time. There is no point where subjectivity could be except my body and its flesh that are both flexible and porous towards myself and others. Juha Varto writes:

The flesh of a fictional character can only become real and singular if readers see in the character their own nativity and mortality. Sharing this is really difficult. However, if you do this, you will notice that sharing your singularity creates an odd situation, in which you come to share something that you did not know existed in you. A fictional character reveals in the readers

517 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, pp. 57–58.

their own oddity, which the readers had never let form into an idea, even if this was what they had been all along.<sup>517</sup>

Flesh is expansive, insisting and intoxicating as a force: flesh is the true delirium of desire. But, tragically, I can never quite figure it out because I am of it, of its physicality, sensuality, its form, matter and force, and it (em)bodies and envelops me; I am of it and it is always ahead of my mind. Flesh is of presence and of the future. Yet, due to my inborn incompleteness, and because my mind lives a little behind my flesh, completeness is always already lost at the very moment when I think I recognize its eerie eyes. My mistakes start to multiply. I lose my agility – if I ever had any. I hide myself behind my commonness. I stumble under the weight of myself.

Flesh is the condition for something being possibly possible or impossible. It conducts me on many levels and layers. It is organic as my body exposes, evaporates and sweats, creates, transforms and experiences on it. I share with others the flesh of the world and the possibilities that are given to me through it. These possibilities are played out by my sensibility. The plurality of the world and my potential is always met singularly. When I paint, flesh is what ushers me with the materials that I use and with my animated body. My flesh confronts the nothing that is presented by the feeling of incompleteness.

I know my idea of portraiture came from dissatisfaction with portraits that resembled people. I would wish my portraits to be *of* the people, not *like* them. Not having a look of the sitter, *being* them. I didn't want to get just a likeness like a mimic, but to *portray* them, like an actor. (*Portray* was said with a peculiar intensity.) As far as I am concerned the paint *is* the person. I want it to work for me just as flesh does.<sup>518</sup>

518 Lucien Freud, pp. 111–112.

Flesh is accompanied by images and is the centre of action. I have a particular image of my own – my body, by it all other images are conditioned and change 'as though by a turn of a kaleidoscope', as Henri Bergson alludes.<sup>519</sup> We can only grasp things in the form of images; hence, we must state any problem at hand in terms of images and of images alone. The central image is one's body, this is a stance that both Bergson and Antonio Damasio share, although they come from different eras and disciplines. This is a stance that I also share. I as a maker am a process of experiencing through images and the core

519 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* [1896], trans. by N. M. Paul & W. S. Palmer (Milton Keynes: Digireads.com, 2010), p. 13.

image is my body, through which I experience and value my making and that what appears.

*I try to finish every painting that I have started, but I might as well destroy some of them after some time, when I have experienced them long enough. It can take even years to decide what to do with a work. Nevertheless, the destroyed ones did not develop into finished paintings. Quite often the details in a painting seem brilliant, but details do not complete a painting. A painting is so much more. What makes it difficult is that it is a porous entity made of folds expanding beyond itself. For that matter, I do not know where it started and where it will end. Well, of course it usually has frames but the frames mark a place for a painting to emerge, its beginning. In a painting there is an eternal and organic present. The reason why everyone experiences things and events differently is that each of us perceives a given sight from a vantage point of their own past experiences, thoughts and feelings. Painting is also a test in luck and taking chances. My enthusiasm as a painter stems from the reality that I have to navigate forward into the unknown, guided only by an inside sense of direction. I have to try to keep up my own standards that I have set myself, even though these standards are vague as they are directed towards the future that is unknown. Painting is worth this struggling, and as a gift I get a glimpse of the sense of the right direction. Painting follows its own inner laws. Of course there is some meta-text to it that one learns in an art school. Painting does not represent anything. In painting there is an eternal present. Painting is about testing luck and taking a chance. There is strictness to it as a painter I have to navigate forward into the unknown, guided only by my sense of direction, and keeping up my own set of standards. 14 July 2012*

Moreover, an absolutely speculative function of the mind, divorced from experience and action, does not exist either for Bergson or Damasio. For Bergson one's present is precisely a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future: we are determined by our pasts, but we are also specifically future-oriented beings. Our body, understood as this system of sensation and movements, occupies the very centre of this material world since the world



is necessarily arranged around one's body and one's body is of the materiality of the world. The body, in Bergson's terms, is then a special image situated amongst other images that constitute the plane of universal becoming of reality itself. It is the place of passage of the movements received and thrown back. The body is the connecting link between the subject, the object and the environment and things, which act upon me, and the things, upon which I act: 'Perception as a whole has its true and final explanation in the tendency of the body to movement'.<sup>520</sup> According to Bergson: 'My body is that which stands out as the centre of these perceptions; my personality is the being to which these actions must be referred'.<sup>521</sup> He elaborates further that

520 Ibid., p. 24.

521 Ibid., p. 25.

Our body, with the sensations it receives on the one hand and the movements which it is capable of executing on the other hand, is, then, that which fixes our mind, and gives it ballast and poise. The activity of the mind goes far beyond the mass of accumulated memories, as this mass of memories itself is infinitely more than the sensations and movements of the present hour; but these sensations and these movements condition what we might term *our attention to life*, and that is why everything depends on their cohesion in the normal work of the mind, as in a pyramid which should stand on its apex.<sup>522</sup>

522 Ibid., p. 94.

Damasio asserts: 'Body is the central object of brain mapping, the very first focus of its attentions', whereas the brain as part of the body has a special status: 'it is the body part that can communicate to every other body part and toward which every other body part communicates'.<sup>523</sup> The body-mapping and image-making structures are located below the level of the cerebral cortex, in the region known as the upper brain stem. This is an old part of the brain that we share with many other species.<sup>524</sup>

523 Damasio, p. 98.

524 Ibid., p. 22.

In his analysis of these issues concerning mind and body, Antonio Damasio in line with Bergson asserts that the body is the foundation of the conscious mind. The body is represented in the brain in the form of maps and mental images. These together constitute the subject, one's protoself. One's protoself and its primordial feelings are the foundation of material me. However, according to Damasio, in order to have personhood and identity, some intermediate selfprocess is needed. The changes in protoself initiate the emerging of the core-self.<sup>525</sup> According to Damasio:

525 Ibid., pp. 214–215.

What is added to the plain mind process and is thus producing a conscious mind is a series of images, namely, an *image* of the organism (provided by the modified protoself proxy); the *image* of an object-related emotional response (that is, a feeling); and an image of the momentarily enhanced causative object. *The self comes to mind in the form of images, relentlessly telling a story of such engagements.*<sup>526</sup>

526 Ibid., p. 216.

The body signals the brain, Damasio asserts: “This is how I am built and this is how you should see me now.”<sup>527</sup> The brain informs the body of how to keep its course or how to construct an emotional state. The organization of the body in an environment changes constantly and ‘the map of the body represented in the brain changes accordingly’.<sup>528</sup> The information and interaction between the body and the brain is transported via neural channels. The neural messages inform the brain about the body’s state.<sup>529</sup> Damasio describes the human brain as a cartographer: the brain maps the body inside which the brain is situated, and whatever sits outside the brain is also mimicked by it.<sup>530</sup> In sum, the images in one’s mind are created by the brain’s momentary maps of everything and of anything, inside our body and around it, concrete as well as abstract, actual or previously recorded in memory. Damasio draws attention also to the fact that feelings, which are largely aspects of one’s body state, are also images. Such images represent physical properties, spatial and temporal relationships and actions.<sup>531</sup>

527 Ibid., p. 100.

528 Ibid., p. 101.

529 Ibid., p. 103.

530 Ibid., p. 68.

531 Ibid., pp. 74–75.

532 The unconscious refers in this study to unconscious mind processes, to an organism’s own functions foremost, in order to achieve the balanced state of homeostasis, i.e. nonconscious life management. For the purposes of this paper, experience is something, which continues to be given to the consciousness; there are no zones hidden from consciousness, no unconscious in a sense that there is in psychoanalysis.

Experience is given to consciousness.<sup>532</sup> What kind of consciousness is this then? Damasio mentions two kinds of consciousness: the first of which he calls core consciousness, the sense of the here and now, it is the minimal-scope kind. It is about the personhood and is mostly directed by the person’s past and but little or no future. The second type of consciousness, the big-scope kind, Damasio calls extended or autobiographical. This kind of consciousness plays a substantial part in one’s life when both the lived past and the anticipated future dominate one’s proceedings. According to Damasio, it concerns both one’s personhood and identity. The changes in consciousness’ scope can take place rapidly. What is common is the fluidity and dynamism of the shift from one type to the other. This can best be described through the intensity with which one engages oneself to different tasks.<sup>533</sup> The core self and the autobiographical self constitute the knower in me. ‘Conscious mind begins when self comes to mind’,

533 Damasio, pp. 178–180.

self is grounded on protoself, from which the core self grounds itself. The core self is about action: 'about a relationship between the organism and object'.<sup>534</sup>

534 Ibid., p. 24.

*Small and unfinished paintings on the floor; altogether eight. None of them is finished. Some have thick layers of paint. Ideas and thoughts have made them possible this far, but is it enough? 7 March 2012*

*None of the paintings is finished. Why have I in the first place started to paint these? I would like to paint much bigger paintings. However, I have to soothe myself and be patient and work on these now until they are finished. 12 March 2012*

*My feelings are very blurred at the moment. Perhaps it is the pain that I am feeling and the morning that I spent at the Theatre Academy. To learn, what a swamp to stick oneself in, what an indefinite, unsettled position. Is painting to me learning or experiencing? Or perhaps research, research of being. My being, is it a spatial entity and does painting correspond to that space? The space of me is being myself in a painting? I begin. 15 March 2012*

Bodies are the very site of existence, Jean-Luc Nancy asserts. Being is being as a body, though we cannot know the body. However, Nancy suggests, an emergence always happens on the surface of the image and not from a depth.<sup>535</sup> The way I understand it, Nancy wants to stress the notion that we cannot separate the mind and the body and that bodying is something concrete and neither indulges itself in metaphysics nor is material: 'The body is neither substance, phenomenon, flesh, nor signification; it is just being exscribed.'<sup>536</sup> Bodies happen at their limit, along their border, on their skin *à fleur de peau*, on the flowering surface, which is porous and on which writing, which is to say touching, happens and from which any thought is expressed.<sup>537</sup>

535 Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, p. 356.

536 Ibid., pp. 9, 19.

537 Ibid., p. 11.

The body opens up to an experience while making, to appearing of images. Being a body, a conscious body, is an inherent part of making art: when my body invents, when it is engaged with materials, it makes itself and the surrounding world meaningful. The relation with the world is thus a relation of meaning, care, empathy and ethics those of concern. In Martin Heidegger's words:

The kind of dealing which is closest to us is as we have shown, not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of knowledge. The phenomenological question applies in the first instance to the Being of those entities which we encounter in such concern.<sup>538</sup>

538 Heidegger,  
*Being and Time*, p. 95.

The body is the condition for possibility. The body is the condition of vital force, to explore and illuminate what happens in me, with me and next to me, in other words, the ways in which experience takes place. This means that I do not produce knowledge through experience by standing back but being engaged and actively immersed in the world. Such an immersion presupposes the body and mind. I am inscribed with meaning with which I am not yet familiar, just as my body shows itself and this meaning becomes prior to any articulation or a discourse.

We communicate with one another through signals, abstract entities, which have transmitted through the static and rumble of the world. Meanwhile our bodies make contact with the fur seals, the spider monkeys, the agoutis, the hawks, the jaguars, the frogs, the rain, the leaves in the winds, the cliff path, the clouds, the flames, the earth, the remote stars. Making contact with them is not simply recording signals being randomly emitted by the friction and turbulence of things. We communicate with things by embracing them bodily.<sup>539</sup>

539 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 53

This quote by Alphonso Lingis is a beautiful account of the fact that we are not in the world alone, but that the world matters to us as we matter to it and to ourselves. The world happens on the level of one's sensibility, the faculty of receptivity and reaching out. This mattering takes place within an experience as one discovers 'oneself touched by alien hands, seen by alien eyes, heard by alien ears'.<sup>540</sup>

540 *Ibid.*, p. 53

*The artist's artistic character is but a bundle of manners, tendencies and tensions. To paint is to feel the work's weight on me. It questions me and at best unravels me; a sense of the human condition being naked before my own eyes. I try to control it, but I cannot control the feeling that rises while making. What is the main point in painting? It is to explore*

something that is unknown to myself, to exceed my skill, to astonish myself, to unravel the mystery of life. This is why the painter needs the canvas, a linen shroud or whatever to paint on, as the place to search for the unknown territory within oneself, the mystery of life. Painting works in two ways: it hints towards something as it shrouds this something the way a mist shrouds a shore. One thing that I cannot control is the feeling and it differs every day. So it is a wonder that any painting can be completed or, rather, finished at all. 8 April 2012

541 Stemming from the Latin *carnalis*, the word indicates 'fleshly'. The term is also used to signify copulation, the act of a man having sexual relations with a woman, and in connection with that kind of a criminal act.

#### PASSING CARNAL<sup>541</sup> AND PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

In the knowledge which must always free itself from knowledge, there is none prior; nor does this knowledge succeed itself, and there is thus no presence of knowledge either. Do not apply a knowledge; do not repeat it. Enough of theory which wilds and organizes knowledge. Here space opens to 'fictive theory,' and theory, through fiction, comes into danger of dying. You theoreticians know that you are mortal, and that theory is already death in you. Know this, be acquainted with your companion. Perhaps it is true that 'without theorizing, you would not take one step forward,' but this step is one more step toward the abyss of truth. Thence rises the silent murmuring, the tacit intensity.<sup>542</sup>

542 Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 43.

The more poesy becomes science, the more it becomes art as well. If poesy is to become art, if the artist is to have exhaustive insight and systematic knowledge into his means and goals, into their obstacles and their objects, the poet must philosophize about his art if he is to be more than mere inventor and worker; if, rather, he is to be knowledgeable within his field and capable of understanding his fellow citizens in the realm of art, then he must also become a philologist.<sup>543</sup>

543 F. Schlegel, 'Athenaeum Fragments', fragment 255, p. 324.

There are at least two kinds of knowledge. To begin with, there is a kind of knowledge that is based on rational thought and that has an unchanging form. This kind of knowledge stands for unity, utility, calculability, repetition and abstraction. This knowledge is taught in schools and universities. It is often called science. It provides codes of conduct and standards of measures, it refers to understanding and becomes familiar.

However, there is also knowledge that is more concerned with change and is empirical and particular in nature. It is knowledge that does not take things as given: it is pliable, adjustable and material. It is more curious and often rather proximate, and it can operate fruitfully and efficaciously in connection with practical problems and questions. This kind of knowledge is that of a practitioner. It is knowledge that is future-oriented, and as Maurice Blanchot asserts in the first quote above, it does not transfer what it seeks to know into an object of knowledge and that risks being tainted with what it objectifies. In making and encountering such knowledge is, as I see it, an act of being bodily active, i.e. animated, making observations and reacting accordingly, treating different moments of the dialectic on the same level, while at the same time exposing oneself to possibly possible. Here carnal knowledge breaks off, breaks up, ruptures and shatters, dislocates. Carnal knowledge is never finite but persists on account of its incompleteness.

How can an experience become knowledge for someone? Juha Varto writes that in order for something to become considered as objective knowledge, what is required is distance. According to him, a particular individual experience becomes knowledge when it intertwines or undergoes within a new experience, in which it becomes meaningful as conceptual or as carnal. Varto emphasizes that the knowledge we have should not be based on epistemology but on experience and that we should remember that all epistemology depends on a particular experience.<sup>544</sup>

The following passage from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* shows that for Hamlet to grieve is a real experience instead of an appearance of a ritual or a coded behaviour.

<sup>544</sup> Varto, *A Dance with the World*, pp. 23–32.

QUEEN

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:  
Thou know'st 'tis common, – all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN

If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,  
That can denote me truly: these, indeed, seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play:  
But I have that within which passeth show;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.<sup>545</sup>

545 Shakespeare, p. 1860.

Carnal knowledge knows not seems, because it is primary knowledge. Instead it knows of becoming, of trembling, of pulsating. Carnal knowledge becomes rather than is, it is organic and brutal. Carnal knowledge is knowledge of becoming, knowledge of passing or surpassing – a passage. Carnal knowledge is that which overcomes that what seems. There is no form of it that could be envisaged, it is a call to figure and gather.

Something manifests itself in action and in experience that take place. Juha Varto writes: explanations are invented afterwards. Varto argues that knowledge has always been considered as something conceptual in that it must follow previous understanding, and its findings should be replicable, in order for it to be knowledge. When we know

something, we think that we understand it and that it has become something stable and knowable.<sup>546</sup> We tend to get nervous and irritated when asked more specific questions: we do not want to start splitting hairs.<sup>547</sup> Varto is concerned with knowledge that has become the most amplifying agent of reality and that the breaking down of experiences has been disregarded:

The amplification of our environment means that our experience is simplified or made more average, and the details and nuances are overlooked, because we do not have the need or time for them. We only look at images that have the most lurid colours, eat food that has a familiar and uniform flavour regardless of its ingredients, we smell the good and the bad, and go for the music that is loud enough. All this is justified – has been justified since the late 19th century – by the scarcity of time and busy lifestyle. Because stopping and lingering take time away from all new phenomena, it is essential to let the amplification choose: amplified impressions, which are in fact, effects stripped of meaning, give us enough room for manoeuvre and time to get more similar impressions.<sup>548</sup>

546 Juha Varto discusses the notion of knowledge and its relation to artistic making in his book *Otherwise than Knowing* (Helsinki: Aalto Arts Books, 2013), pp. 13–17.

547 *Ibid.*, p. 174.

548 *Ibid.*, pp. 174–177.

*The painting that I worked with today went on smoothly, as if it were the most natural thing for me. And it is, it is certainly an internal part of me, it is a way to be, to express myself as a living being. I express myself with painting and dance, and yet I am interested in theory of my life. Well, I destroyed the small paintings and I am so eager to get into bigger ones, I mean to paint and not to destroy, to have more space for my thoughts and for my body to move. I have been thinking about different emotions and about how they could be expressed in painting. I primed big canvases, for once, I feel so pleased. 26 May 2012*

What does it mean to destroy something that I have previously accomplished but that does not meet my criteria? Where did this self-criticism come from, how has it developed? On what is it based: knowledge, skill, intuition, or feeling? Am I just being busy splitting hairs?

The word ‘skill’ stems from the Greek word *tekhne*. Varto describes skill as emphasizing and directing toward ‘the difference between



knowledge people have through their experience and the apparent state of things in nature'; he continues that

in this way skill has, from the start, contained a seed of conflict, a challenge from man to nature, an attempt to consider skill as something crucially important but characteristically incomplete: there is always something that shows its inadequacy, a criterion that challenges it.<sup>549</sup>

549 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, p. 36.

To my mind, skill is intertwined with carnal knowledge. They both materialize in making, yet they stay proximate and problematizing.

'The most important quality any painter can have', he muses, 'is the strictest possible self-criticism.' That is the reason LF edits his own output so strictly, sometimes putting his foot through pictures that don't come up to his standard. He feels El Greco, who ran a busy workshop turning out multiple versions of some pictures, let out too many dodgy paintings.<sup>550</sup>

550 Gayford, p. 128.

Carnal knowledge is always practical and attuned with one's skill, and it is knowledge in and from the flesh of my body. Carnal knowledge is in relation to experience: carnal knowledge is received and applied in an experience. When things that appear are gathered in an experience through one's sensibility, this gathering becomes carnal knowledge. Carnal knowledge is a delicate responsive animation of one's body, a movement, a handling, a response. I find that carnal knowledge concerns and points towards what Lingis describes as sensing. Lingis tells that sensing is

to feel the tangible, the smooth, the sticky, or the bristly, the touching hand has to move across a substance with a certain pressure, a certain pacing and periodicity, a certain scope of movement. The look too, in order to see the red of the dress, has to focus, and move across its expanse with a certain pressure and scope and periodicity. One does not see the dull moss green of the leaves with the same movement of the look that makes the ardent red of the rose visible. It is in swaying with the melody, rocking with the rhythm, or being jarred by the clatter that we hear them. ... Sensing does not simply record the fact of the red or the hard thing there; it captures the sense of

the red and of the hard ... The sense or essence of the lemon is the way all that goes together and is sensed together. This sense is not an intelligible meaning, which could be captured in a concept. ... None of us have anything like an intelligible notion of what a lemon is; in fact there is no concept of a lemon.<sup>551</sup>

551 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 54.

*A large part of my work, painting, is musing and dwelling on the work, thinking with it, having a conversation with it, having a sense of the work. The discussion is neither about words nor about pre-existing concepts, but about images of thought, perhaps a sort of mélange of images and abstract feelings, a mingling of these. These are the ingredients for me to gain possession of the painterly space and of my body movements. Still, what happens in reality with the painting and what I have intended within my mind might be completely different. Where does this distance come from? I stare at the naked canvas, I have chosen certain colours with which to begin, I had plans that this time I would paint a red painting, and underneath it there would be a sort of grey, a tranquil grey. Then I have also chosen some greens and some greenish blues to continue. I think, I will have to make a long journey till I reach on top of red. 16 August 2012*

Experiencing and making are the closest way to knowledge. Learning takes place through making and repetition. Knowledge of the object is not same as carnal knowledge of the making of it and learning through making. Carnal knowledge and experimenting have the same origin, that of sensibility. Both experience and experimenting have their origin in the Latin *experiri*, which means to try. This is to say that experiencing and experimenting in a sense entail impossibility, as Harri Laakso has noted<sup>552</sup>, as if impossibility were the core of existence and all learning and knowing.

552 Harri Laakso, 'Pistoja', in *Kosketuksen figureja*, ed. by Mika Elo (Tutkijaliitto: Helsinki, 2014), p. 186.

*When I looked at one of my paintings, it was astonishing how my mind first started to wonder on its surface, then the work started to bombard me with question marks and finally it all became very complicated; where all this chaos took place was actually in between me and the work; beyond the picture and beyond myself. Painting is a very complex thing; rhythms, forms, colours, brushes and other strokes, materiality, covering,*

*revealing; however, the work's inner force or energy is the most important thing, without which there is nothing.* 18 June 2012

A pure phenomenon can never be isolated, since it shows itself in a continuous series of appearances and relations that indicate infinite incompleteness. Every instant is different with the painting that I am working with. My body and mind create a miraculous process in weaving everything together, and as soon as I perceive something appearing. Paints and brushes around me, I consider them in relation to myself and my work. It all starts to make sense. Every single experience, every single painterly experiment through which an experience is gathered in my sensuous body and beyond it, is essentially a piece of carnal knowledge, and through carrying it out I verify it.

What kind of knowledge do I acquire as a practitioner through experience? Based on my research, I divide knowledge into three categories. First, I have theoretical knowledge: the knowledge that I have learned in art school and from practical manuals. For example, what are the primary colours, how to make green, what are the proportions of the ingredients to make proper glue that works with linen. Second, I have practical knowledge, i.e. embodied knowledge on how my theoretical knowledge has transformed through my making into the knowledge that best suits my making. My body and its natural movements, my body posture, play a crucial role here. For example, I do not use any instrument to measure the exact amount of ingredients for the glue, or to measure the proportions of dammar and stand oil to make a proper painting medium for my type of making, or to make tempera colour; instead, I sense the right amount of the ingredients, water, egg yolk, oil and pigment, that make a perfect mixture and that work with my physical making: my body's physical proportions and weight in relation to its movements and plasticity. This practical knowledge is something that I call embodied knowledge. Third, there is this knowledge that I call carnal knowledge and here I follow Juha Varto's line of thought, or self-regulative knowledge, which is a sort of a mixture of the two previous ones, and yet it is something more. Carnal knowledge concerns the particular decisions that I make in a certain situation. It has to do with my sensibility, since I have to take into consideration my whole situation, my body and its mind and the materials that I work with in a given time and place. Carnal knowledge is knowledge in action involving power that overcomes the general and two previous kinds of knowledge. Perhaps,

a stroke of a genius, can also be considered to be part of carnal knowledge.

*How come my preparations, hammering frames, gluing canvases, for example, stay the same? This is the necessary and profounding work of all the paintings that I make. However, this work is mostly based on experience and skill that I have acquired during my painting years, as I do not scale or measure the ingredients that I use. All is based on sensuous knowledge: how much water is needed for a certain amount of pearls of hare glue to dissolve into proper glue. How warm the glue must be so that it works with the canvas and absorbs paint. I have a strong feeling that I am very strong with my preparatory work, I do not have to worry about it. This is important: it makes a safe base. However, a funny thing is that hare glue is the only one that works for me. I am not at all with ease with synthetic glues. 1 June 2012*

Carnal knowledge is something to which only the author, the maker, has immediate access. On the contrary scientific knowledge is based on gathered data that has been analysed for example by computer programmes and that has been translated into some language of a formal discourse. It is something already dealt with; something already conceptualized and stabilized. It is something that looks to the past and relies on it, unless otherwise proven. A practitioner may naturally possess this kind of knowledge that is written on manuals and taught by teachers. The embodied or practical knowledge that I master I have gathered through making, it is based on my previous material experiments and experiences. The different kinds of knowledge have a dialogical relationship. However, carnal knowledge is something that aims at novelty and originality, it is future-oriented, it paves my way for striving completion and resolving acute problems. In this sense it is knowledge that is exposed singularly and is unfastened.

Making is an act of saying to myself: I matter, there is more to me. I perform myself into being a subject that matters by making my experiences mine. Making is a method of inquiry. It invites further dialogue, calls for further research and lives in questioning. The experience of incompleteness is intensity, presented in a form material resistance and thinking in movement. Even though it cannot figure itself out. The now of an experience is tinged with the presence of materiality and movement:

*I observe the painting with which I have been working. It is absolutely incomplete; it is too monotonous, and dull. I have to bring something at a closer distance and to paint something at a distance. What is my relation to this painting? Who is the subject behind it, perhaps me, but also culture, universal humanity mingled into a vortex of forces? I cannot isolate myself. I matter through all that and those who matter. Why do I paint? Do I seek some kind of answer? Is there an answer? What am I after? 26 June 2012*

*The Experience of Incompleteness is a Determined Intensity of Indeterminacy*

The perplexed me hovers between the incomplete and the complete, but when I think that I have succeeded in completing a work, I have only just reached a limit where, as the choreographer Kyle Abraham depicts, on the one hand, I have gotten over a cliff and got to a new place with the work and, on the other hand, I realize that again and again I have been and will be put down. This kind of movement reflects making as a full circle history.<sup>553</sup> The complete does not exist anywhere, not in artworks, not in thoughts, not in humans, yet it exists somewhere in Nature and in each one of us because otherwise I would not be after it. No matter how much I work, how skilful I am, how close I am approaching the limit, how close I am to completion, I am confronted with the chance, as Blanchot illustrates, ‘... of being turned back’<sup>554</sup>

Gilles Deleuze suggests that difference between completion and incompleteness is a difference in kind, because it is varying with itself;<sup>555</sup> it is multiple in its essence within itself. Why is this? As I see it, while making I am investigating the work’s incompleteness in rela-

553 Kyle Abraham, Joyce Theater Residency Artist: Kyle Abraham’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrCxzTju040> [accessed 16 May 2016].

554 Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 8.

555 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. by H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 31.

tion to its completeness in the realm of art, and I do not have the intention to scrutinize the work's technicality but to study this relation with my sense of completeness on the plane of my sensibility. This is pure quality of the work in its essence based on carnal knowledge. However, this is not all; hence the thing, a painting for example, has, on the one hand, an aspect of space 'by which the thing can only ever differ in degree from other things *and from itself* (augmentation, diminution); and, on the other hand, the aspect of duration, by which the thing differs in kind from all others *and from itself* (alteration)'.<sup>556</sup> The fate of things and beings is space and time.

556 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

What I have before and in me is the multiplicity of those indeterminacies that are active and that become the cause for any lacunae, gaps, tears and any kind of interruption that turns the work incomplete. However, I try to fill in these gaps to the best of my ability: my task is to finish the work of such indeterminacy. Bergson points out that '... the feeling itself is a being which lives and develops and is therefore constantly changing; otherwise how could it gradually lead us to form a resolution'.<sup>557</sup> However, and as I have pointed out in this research to form a resolution is an issue of great complexity.

557 Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 133.

Beginnings and endings are not in relation with any kind of limitation. Limitation turns out to be a fantasy. A momentary intensity of the work plays a crucial role here. Intensity, which is every time singular, is a felt experience. According to Bergson, the deep-seated conscious states of intensity of a conscious life are pure quality:

they intermingle in such a way that we cannot tell whether they are one or several, nor even examine them from this point of view without at once altering their nature. The duration which they thus create is a duration whose moments do not constitute a numerical multiplicity.<sup>558</sup>

558 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

The qualitative feature of singular intensity of my making becomes very tangible, hence each moment when I try to finish a painting or that I have a feeling that now it is finished is a decision that is never something absolutely definite but depends on a multiplicity of states of things that encroach on one another. Everything is about shared environs and temporality. Intensity is an interruption to the current state of things: it is a gathering of energy and materials. In Maurice Blanchot's words:

559 Blanchot,  
*The Writing of the Disaster*,  
p. 56.

... intensity is the extreme of difference ... Intensity is an excess, an absolute disruption which admits of no regimen, region, regulation, direction, erection, insurrection, nor does it admit of their simple contraries; thus it wrecks what it makes known ...<sup>559</sup>

As a consequence of its nature of multiple forces that gather, intensity that is at play is irreducible to conceptualization. Intensity as open multiplicity is always turned towards the future, towards the probability of fact, towards concrete conditions of appearing and gathering of something. Could this be taken as some sort of sign of completeness or a sign as if the world were designed? What is more, an evidence of completion is manifest in a work as an intensity of a sudden satori, recognition, a burst of joy, anxiety, anguish, irony – the chances are multiple. I have a sense that the distance between the incomplete and the complete operating in a piece of work is what matters. In reality this distance, and whenever I sense it, actually is present all the time, however, not as something that words will suffice to describe. This sense of distance marks the point where I know that I am ready to finish the work and leave it. When I work the sense of completion is there on the horizon.

Experiencing incompleteness is a disaster on the plane of intensity: the work is not meeting my expectations or just answering them momentarily. This experience marks both the falling short of a work and the feeling of intensity becoming the manifestation of negative anxiety. I cannot make the intensity of incompleteness something separate from the making or from the work although I can well sense that it is there; it is each time singularly mine, it is my own failure's intensity that weighs heavy on me, and at the same time I strive for an intense work and to go past anxiety. Yet, I must work, this is my task, in uncertainty and in necessity. Not to work is to fail without fail. As Blanchot rightly notes: 'The disaster alone holds mastery at a distance'.<sup>560</sup> This is to say that the experience of incompleteness is fundamental.

560 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Yet, what is essential is this experienced intensity of incompleteness at work affecting me is its singularity. This is to say that incompleteness becomes reopened each time. The intensity of the work has to do with its individuating nature. As Deleuze points out, the individuating aspect is 'much more profound than that which appears in the "I think"; it is established in a field of intensity which already constitutes the sensibility of the thinking subject'.<sup>561</sup> That is to say that intensity is the determining factor in the process of actualization

561 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 189.

and that it is intensity, which dramatizes. Through dramatization, the things that appear differentiate themselves but it does not happen without a subject and sensibility.

Intensity is the condition and reality of incompleteness. Intensity never reaches its limit because its limit is undetermined. Intensity is the principle of all adventure, as Roland Barthes illustrates when he examines the notion of punctum being an element 'which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow and pierces me' and 'for punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole – and a cast of the dice'.<sup>562</sup> I read this Barthes' notion meaning that the punctum stands for the intensity of the work, it marks the work's highest point, it makes it different. However, the experience on incompleteness differs from punctum, it is its negation. Punctum is a discovery that makes a difference, sets the work apart from other works and from itself. What is of importance is that the intensity of the punctum deconstructs completeness that what could be if there was no incompleteness that destroys everything. Incompleteness is fundamental.

562 Barthes, pp. 26–27.

### *Material Resistance*

I have countless of times heard: 'let your painting breathe,' 'let it flow' and in dance classes 'have air under your arms'. The felt experience of materials can be both fascinating and frustrating. I try to control materials, or at least to make them appear controlled. However, this is to make material a not-being, to take off its worldly, experiential and affective qualities so that it can be mastered. Yet, I should not forget breathing.

Working with materials is communication. The imaginary material exploration that takes place solely in my mind disregards the tactility and sensibility of my body and the physical exploration of materials at hand offer. The ideas that have kept my mind busy switch modality when I try to implement them in my making, both the lived experience and the physical materials, my experimenting and exploration with them and my animated body interfere with my mind's pre-organized image of the intended work. The feel of materials evokes my sensibility, emotions and thoughts and stirs up the carnal knowledge.

Henri Bergson discussed matter over 100 years ago, in a way that I still find very fresh. He writes: 'I call matter the aggregate of images, and perception of matter, these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body'<sup>563</sup>, and he continues:

563 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 12.



You may say that my body is matter, or that it is an image: the word is of no importance. If it is matter, it is part of the material world: and the material world, consequently, exists around it and without it. If it is an image, that image can give but what has been put into it, and since it is, by hypothesis, the image of my body only, it would be absurd to expect to get from it that of the whole universe. My body, an object destined to move other objects, is, then a centre of action: it cannot give birth to representation.<sup>564</sup>

564 Bergson, *Matter and Memory* pp. 10–11. Indeed, there are new material movements. The most recent theorems on materiality are termed as immateriality, dematerialization, hyper-materiality, transmateriality and new or neo-materialism. What is common to these approaches is that they claim to have a new approach to the art object as a non-object. At the same token, they bring to light different processes in which art manifests itself, like dialogues, things and happenings, performances that involve other senses than pure visual perception, such as hearing, tasting and smelling. I do not oppose these thoughts, yet, I want to emphasize that something does not become out of nothing. I have discussed the notion of nothing as a precursor of something elsewhere in this dissertation.

Matter is out of my command because the material world that I live in is not something that can be repeated or wholly traced or understood. Materiality as such is an open system and unrepeatable. What appears within materiality is neither the same nor the contrary but a difference. Matter cannot be squeezed into a discourse or into concepts, yet it concerns us all in the same singular way. The singular is what we share as material beings. Matter takes place between these singularities that it itself calls upon. Matter concerns being, it is part of being's ontological order. The resistance of matter makes things real. We exist bodily through the matter the body is composed of in the world that is of matter. Why one so eagerly wants to deny it and replace the real material resistance with fiction? I shall address later the reasons why I find fiction so important in relation to incompleteness.

Does not the fiction of an isolated material object imply a kind of absurdity, since this object borrows its physical properties from the relations which it maintains with all others, and owes each of its determinations, and consequently its very existence, to the place which it occupies in the universe as a whole?<sup>565</sup>

Venturing into the very medium of art and that of materiality forms a fascinating paradox: the artwork is always elsewhere but it needs the work that is in some way material, as a place of appearing. Matter is productive all the time and it seems that I cannot keep up with it as I chase after the perfect work. The tempo of materials is entirely its own, it has its own momentum: my mind stays behind and my body cannot obey. Matter constitutes the presence as an expression of something uncontrollable, expressive and affective, the always-already-lost motley leap of suddenness. This is particularly true

565 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 13.

in creative making, hence the play of materials and their unpredictability as an elemental part of making is the allure as well.

*I have been painting and working with three different paintings. Everything finally seems to fall into place. I feel content. I have trusted myself on my making, colours and brush strokes. I am not yet sure if the works are complete but at least they are going somewhere. I build paintings layer after layer, and even though the layers that are underneath are not visible in the final work, they are very important in finishing the work, and they are noticeable, as they create bumps and shadows, lines, hints, whisperings. 20 July 2013*

Materiality disobeys my aim to try to tame it; it takes the here as its immediate given as it manifests itself and surprises me. Any painterly gesture that I make is a flush with materiality, as if the felt experience of making came together as a carnal and materialized thought on canvas. Thus, every act or a piece of art is of something and presupposes a reference to something material and belonging to an order other than itself.

*Roses*, the ekphrastic poem below by Barbara Guest makes a compelling argument for levity and illustrates the fluidity between a representation and self-metamorphoses of art.

‘painting has no air ...’ – Gertrude Stein

That there should never be air  
in a picture surprises me.  
It would seem to be only a picture  
of a certain kind, a portrait in paper  
or glue, somewhere a stickiness  
as opposed to a stick-to-it-ness  
of another genre. It might be  
quite new to do without  
that air, or to find oxygen  
on the landscape line  
like a boat which is an object  
or a shoe which never floats  
and is stationary.

Still there  
 are certain illnesses that require  
 air, lots of it. And there are nervous  
 people who cannot manufacture  
 enough air and must seek  
 for it when they don't have plants,  
 in pictures. There is the mysterious  
 traveling that one does outside  
 the cube and this takes place  
 in air.

It is why one develops  
 an attitude toward roses picked  
 in the morning air, even roses  
 without sun shining on them.  
 The roses of Juan Gris from which  
 we learn the selflessness of roses  
 existing perpetually without air,  
 the lid being down, so to speak,  
 a 1912 fragrance sifting  
 to the left corner where we read  
 'La Merveille' and escape.<sup>566</sup>

<sup>566</sup> Barbara Guest, 'Roses', *Poetry Foundation*, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/52765> [accessed 15.5.2016]. The reciting of Barbara Guest is found on these same pages. However, she ends the poem with the word *breath* instead of *escape*. I find *breath* more fitting.

<sup>567</sup> Andrew Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, p. 6. Benjamin refers to Heidegger's *The Origin of Work of Art*.

Barbara Guest's poem *Roses* is a celebration of grace and imagines the possibilities of an open and fresh encounter that is carnal in its nature yet pointing beyond a representation towards an experience that is unconfined in its nature. The poem makes many references, also some that are not so obvious. For example, 'a shoe that never floats' could, as I read it, point to Martin Heidegger's locked-into-place analysis of Vincent van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant shoes. Andrew Benjamin discusses his view of Heidegger's use of van Gogh's painting *a pair of peasant shoes* solely as an example, first, of equipment and, second, as a complete example of a painting, i.e., as an end.<sup>567</sup> The poem also made me think of incompleteness as air, as opposed to a stick-to-it-ness that of fake completeness.

Slavoj Žižek has mulled over Edvard Munch's and Vincent van Gogh's paintings. What Žižek is fascinated by is the incredible density of colour in their works. Žižek claims that in the paintings of both Munch and van Gogh, the sky is no longer experienced as the sky, i.e., light, vast and empty, but instead as something dense and heavy.

Žižek's point is that this kind of material heaviness that one experiences is not the heaviness of an object, for example that of the sky, as normally the sky is the symbol of light airiness. Instead, according to Žižek, when van Gogh paints something light and fragile like the sky, his mode of painting, i.e. the heaviness of the material, undermines it. However, it is neither the depicted object nor the immediate and dense materiality of the painting that is remarkable but that there is some spectral preontological materiality within this kind of use of materials. According to Žižek, the massive heaviness of van Gogh's stars resist being as part of some transparent realistic depiction. Instead van Gogh's work points towards the border between inside and outside that of in-betweenness, a spectral space.<sup>568</sup>

Materiality is the realm of the sensible and the condition of the presence, in Jean-François Lyotard's words the way in which he follows Immanuel Kant, the material creates a 'second nature' from actual nature. If materiality ever sees the light of day, it is through sensibility and, as Jean-François Lyotard elaborates,

... in one or other of the dispositions of sensibility, in one or other of the *sensoria*, in one or other of the possibilities through which mind is accessible to the material event, can be 'touched' by it: a singular, incomparable quality – unforgettable and immediately forgotten – of the grain of a skin or a piece of wood, the fragrance of an aroma, the savor of a secretion or a piece of flesh, as well as a timbre or a nuance'.<sup>569</sup>

One may try to name it, this 'that there is', this *quod*; however, it always remains singular and unnamable, an instant that cannot be either counted or measured, it remains in between discourse and figure. This material moves towards the immaterial, the anobjectable. The 'that there is' the nothing that is unnamable, yet, it is certain but transcendent in that its object remains unknown and in that experience supplies no material for it.<sup>570</sup>

In his elaboration on the sublime feeling, Lyotard puzzles over:

As every presentation consists in the 'forming' of the matter of the data, the disaster suffered by the imagination can be understood as the sign that the forms are not relevant to the sublime sentiment. But in that case, where does matter stand, if the forms are no longer there to make it presentable?<sup>571 572</sup>

568 Žižek, 'Ontological Incompleteness in Painting'.

569 Lyotard, 'After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics', pp. 140–141.

570 Lyotard, *Lessons of the Analytic of the Sublime*, p. 211.

571 Lyotard, 'After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics', p. 136.

572 I find wrongful the claims that Lyotard misread Kant. See, for example, Jacques Rancière, 'Lyotard and the Aesthetics of the Sublime: a counter-reading of Kant', in *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. by Steve Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

Lyotard's response is that matter that is present and active for and in an experience as something soul-stirring becomes something immaterial, for example a tone, timbre or nuance. Lyotard emphasizes that we should get closer to matter and its presence particularly when there is no form presentable or a definite concept to grasp.<sup>573</sup> He further examines the unrepresentable through the concepts of privation and anxiety, through the question: *arrive-t-il?*<sup>574</sup> Lyotard deciphers that an occurrence, *arrive-t-il*, stands for something taking place, happening or not happening, within a blink of an eye, that which arrives unexpectedly and is gone suddenly. Without this flash or blink there would be nothing, or there would be chaos. He writes: 'The flash is always there, and never there. The world never stops beginning',<sup>575</sup> and 'What we do not manage to formulate is that something happens, *dass etwas geschieht*. Or rather, and more simply that it happens, ..., *dass es geschieht*. Just an occurrence.'<sup>576</sup> The presenting of nothingness, the unrepresentable, the presence of the tumult of exaltation, or a *Schwärmerei*, *Wahnwitz*, or a disorder, an *insanitas*, gives rise to an illumination, to 'Seeing something beyond all limits of sensibility, to thinking that there is presentation when there is not'.<sup>577</sup>

A work needs to be understood as an activity according to Andrew Benjamin. He describes mattering and the material as becoming of 'the complex interarticulation of the material and the immaterial', saying that 'works always work to incomplete and that incompleteness is a continuous process'.<sup>578</sup> In this sense incompleteness becomes a form of finitude of the work in that sense that it is staged in the work's working, i.e. its coming into relation.<sup>579</sup> What appears are the materials that work through one's sensibility and in this sense the work becomes tangible in its particularity each time singularly. According to Benjamin the particular is always a consequence of a series of relations. What is of importance is that 'Relations, once established, call for judgement precisely because they operate outside the realm of that which is determined in advance'.<sup>580</sup> However, relations are meaningless till one performs an act of meaning bestowing upon them.

The painting does not really mean what you say, when you begin to work with an idea you have eliminated so much from the process of painting. What one wants from a painting is a sense of life. One wants to use all one's facilities when one paints, the final statement has to be that you cannot avoid saying ... painting = mind with a view.<sup>581</sup>

573 Lyotard, 'After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics', p. 139.

574 Ibid., pp. 90–99.

575 Jean-François Lyotard, 'Newman: The Instant', in *Lyotard Reader*, ed. by A. Benjamin (Cambridge: Blackwell publishers Ltd, 1998), p. 243.

576 Jean-François Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', in *The Inhuman, Reflection on Time*, trans. by G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 89–107, p. 90.

577 Jean-François Lyotard, 'The Sign of History', in *Lyotard Reader*, ed. by A. Benjamin (Cambridge: Blackwell publishers Ltd, 1998), p. 403.

578 Benjamin, *Art's Philosophical Work*, p. 19.

579 Ibid., pp. 7–8.

580 Ibid., p. 41.

581 Johns, p. 149.

*Thinking in Movement*

Today I continued to cover more – even though the paint that I used was quite transparent, I also took the oldest painting out, the one that I had hidden for some time. I painted it over using transparent bluish and greenish colours. It seems that the red is now much more vivid. All three paintings lie on the floor now. I have worked on the floor again. Painting on the floor must have something to do with how I can grasp the work as a whole; how I can have a sense of space, manage and work with it with my whole body, work with materials such as colour and brushes and oils more freely. I think, I have a better grip of my work when I work on the floor. I can access the painting from all directions much easier. I find it much more exciting when I work on the floor than if the work was hanging on the wall. It is much more natural to me to kneel or to sit on the floor and work from this kind of angle, all over the work. I have been working with the three paintings for such a long time. I wonder; do they form a series? I will see later. Perhaps I should give the largest one a shower with red vermilion all over. 15 August 2013

Action is making the sense of myself and of the world: it is about being in relation and responding. Action is our faculty of effecting changes in things and in ourselves whereas sensibility is the faculty of receptivity and connection. Action takes place on the level of my body's perceptual processes and motion.

Everything living is in a continual state of being actively animated. 'I can' happens first in the flesh. This remark made by Juha Varto as he reads Michel Henry means that before I can come up to a conclusion, to decipher meanings out of things, I have to start from my initial and internal experience. Varto emphasizes that the way in which the body is usually taken as an object has as the consequence that research can become blinkered and biased.<sup>582</sup>

582 Varto, *A Dance with the World*, pp. 90–92.

*My work has proceeded like a metronome, precisely and steadily. It has had its own specific phase, but then, quite often I find it hard to get started, yet I have learned that to start is the only way. Sometimes it bothers me, how to start, how to get over with starting, starting marks a fine line; when*

I have crossed it, there is no return, starting is difficult, it causes nervousness if I do not find a certain colour or cannot mix it up. Small canvases are especially hard, I feel that I am not capable of using my body in its whole capacity when painting on them, as if I were an invalid or I had to shrink to myself. To paint on a small canvas feels like doodling on the margins of something bigger that happens to be invisible but that I can sense around, as if I had to reach out and at the same time stayed imprisoned with the small canvas. I miss the feeling of a sense of depth and wholeness, not to say bodily action, stretching myself all over the canvas, all the bodily involvement, and how colours would mingle on a large scale with each other and how emotions intertwine with my making and materials; I mean, when I am making smaller paintings, I miss all this. 7 March 2012

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone studies creative thinking: she elaborates that thinking in movement is to bring something into being. Thinking is movement. The process of creating is to create in a dynamic flow, and as she depicts:

... thinking is itself, by this very nature, kinetic. It moves forward, backward, digressively, quickly, slowly, narrowly, suddenly, hesitantly, blindly, confusedly, penetratingly. What is distinctive about thinking in movement is not that the flow of movement is kinetic, but that the thought itself is. It is motional through and through; at once spatial, temporal and dynamic.<sup>583</sup>

583 Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Movement* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), p. 421.

Creative making is taking the world into account in the way in which it exists for me here and now in its ongoing ever-expanding present so that there is no mind-doing that is separate from body-doing.

Maxine Sheet-Johnstone asserts that there is a dynamic accord between emotion and movement: emotions move through the body at the same time as they move us to move. Within emotion we are caught up in the dynamics of the immediate life, we are living. According to her: 'Whatever affects us moves through us, permeating the whole of our being and moving us to move in ways dynamically congruent with the ongoing stirrings and commotions we feel.'<sup>584</sup> She elaborates that emotions rest on animation, on the qualitative corpo-

584 *Ibid.*, pp. 456–457.

real-kinetic engagement with the world, and that the felt body is the experiential foundation of consciousness.<sup>585</sup> As she illuminates, experience is dynamics woven into our bodies, sheer sensuous density of being in the flesh. In her opinion, emotions are a way to be in a body, through its flesh, and to know the world just as knowing is a matter of carnal knowledge, language of the flesh.<sup>586</sup>

585 Ibid.,  
pp. 457, 464, 469.

586 Ibid., pp. 82–84.

*I used rubber gloves to paint today. I have not done that for a while, the hand in the glove glided on the canvas. It felt so much freer. The large painting changed a lot. I painted over it and covered old traces of the painting with some new and different layers. I cannot say anything about my feelings right now. The smaller one of the bigger paintings, which has some flowers on it, and the smallest painting seem both finished, but as always, at this point and hour of the day, I cannot tell for sure. I need at least one more meeting with them. 14 July 2012*

*I paint mostly sitting on the floor or on my knees with the big canvas before or beside me. This way I have a sense of control over the space with which I am working. My studio is a mess, but this is the way it should be for me. The space is for working, not for tidying up. Sometimes I might sweep the floor but not too often, perhaps once a year. When do I know when the work is finished? When the picture is right. While working with a painting I tend to leave hints for the next time, like a colour tube or a brush. 12 March 2012*

Thinking in movement exceeds any conceivable measure. Thinking has its own momentum, its own tempo, yet it is capable of realizing and finalizing. I cannot separate thinking from making; they take place simultaneously. This is to say that thinking is creative when it takes place within making; it has to be because it is confronted with complex issues that arise inside it and around it, it has to be in constant movement because body is already on its way.

Thinking is tinged with anticipation: it is thinking on the edge of what one cannot yet think, thinking that is incommensurable itself, thinking that exceeds any measure, thinking for which sensibility constitutes the foundation as a sensuous extension and as something abstract yet tangible, thinking that is never completed, thinking that is ruled by something minute, something that first seems sec-



ondary but turns out to be the most perfect expression of body and mind. Therefore, thinking while making is always something fleshy, bound to a blind desire, thinking that tries persistently to bring a glimmering light to an immensity of chaos that the maker finds before her. What creative thinking leaves behind is objective thinking, Sheets-Johnstone argues<sup>587</sup>.

The unpredictability, the off-balance and often the vertiginous thrill of inexactitude of the making and the ground of a certain groundlessness on which the whole builds a figuration paved with a maze at best. This is a pristine place and time for the formation of something to appear, which cannot be mastered solely by skill but is the manifestation of thinking in movement as the very ground of all knowledge. The process is like breathing, it is breathing, an active present of transformation, even if it ends up transforming myself into every conceivable nightmare.

*I have worked the whole day. The atmosphere has been very relaxed. I have wiped out the paint and added it back, sounds crazy. I have still been working with those three paintings, the ones that I have been working with for ages. Finally, I think that the picture with flowers at hours of darkness is ready. Thinking arises from a movement when I paint. No matter how clumsy or fragile I feel, thinking approaches something yet unknown and involves my whole body. Thinking has been associated with the brain, but this is not true at all, thinking concerns my whole body. What would a mind without a body be? The mind is in the body, some say that the body is in the mind, both are true. The living body is the central locus of all action. 12 September 2013*

I find my own thinking very physical, as if my mind and my body were interwoven parts of my thinking. However, here thinking in action is not the same as losing all track of time or all sense of place. This is not at all time-travelling but being self-aware as a sensible and whole being of time and space. However, time and space correspond to mattering of the work. Similarly, Sheets-Johnstone emphasizes:

My thinking in movement is not an assemblage of discrete gestures happening one after the next, but an enfolding of all movement into a perpetually moving present. Thinking in

movement is an experience in which the qualitative dynamics of movement combine to form an ongoing kinetic happening. A singular kinetic density evolves that is nothing other than this moment in which my arm is sequentially waving, this moment in which my head is turning, this moment in which my torso is bending, and so on.<sup>588</sup>

588 Ibid., p. 425.

This is to say that there is nothing that belongs to either making or thinking, or the body or the mind alone. Making has a dynamic density, a density that stretches out the present moment, transferring it into a work. What is characteristic of making, is that it captures the artist's involvement completely but is something never complete but porous, as if a constant dislocation and anticipation within kinetic thinking agitated one's flesh for a better performance. This is a complex situation because thinking and making body live out several possible scenarios simultaneously. Then when I choose one scenario it produces a new sequence of possibilities. However, this is not to read that thinking in movement always escapes my grasp, my understanding. This is not the case. Actually, understanding is not the right term to use here as it refers always to something that is limited into a form or concept. Instead thinking in movement is limitless, one can only apprehend what is presented and what appears.

Robert Crease provides an analysis on dance improvisation that I have found important. He discusses improvisation as a spontaneous invention and action of shaping that is about filling up an opening that appears while making and creating with something that works but is not originally intended or planned for that place.<sup>589</sup> The empty slot that sensibility, as the core and foundation of making, needs to fill, in order for a thing to become a work of art, is, as Crease notes on improvisation, nothing intended nor planned but a motion and thinking that carry one forward as a presence in a world in a manner that is both playful and meaningful.<sup>590 591</sup>

589 Robert Crease, 'The Improvisational Problem', *Man and World*, 27.2 (1994), 181–193, p. 182.

590 Robert Crease discusses in his essay 'The Pleasure of Popular Dance', *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, xxix (2002), pp. 106–120, joy and pleasure as means to examine the boundaries of one's subjectivity and as creating possibilities of developing new forms of bodily identity.

Crease discusses Eugene T. Gendlin's notion of felt meaning, as if the felt meaning of what has just previously taken place amounted to understanding what comes next.<sup>592</sup> Crease notes that a bodily or felt meaning is involved in all creative processes and that it is not the bodily or felt meaning as a mental counterpart of some mechanical activity but as something indispensable in the process of creation, as one, for example, 'goes on to be "taken in" by Julius Caesar' on stage.<sup>593</sup> In a dance performance where I was one of the dancers, not long ago,

591 Crease, 'The Improvisational Problem', p. 192.

592 Ibid., p. 187.

593 Ibid., p. 190.

the choreographer told me to go to be taken in as Jesus on the cross while dancing. I find that felt meaning is identical to carnal knowledge. Felt meaning is immanent and it cannot be fully explicated afterwards.

The uniqueness of painting, its felt meaning reveals the reality as heterogeneous and relational. Moreover, I have to be aware, or better I am compelled to work according to the work's own phase, time and space, to solve the problem of the work and to finish it. The eagerness and anxiety that I feel like quivering inside myself is present as if I wanted to be one step ahead of presence. As such the sense of the tense of reality becomes something tangible so that the duration one experiences, is very intensified and cogent. There is no way out of the tempus of a work in progress except finishing it.

*The magical spell of the incomplete work, its dangerousness, makes anxiety grow in me. The wicked charm that it casts on me, it is like a magnet. Its glamour that predicts chaos and complexity forces me to address the issues of my subjectivity anew, I am person completely lost in myself. To begin is an ambivalent moment. Nevertheless, this is the moment that I desire the most. I wonder if I actually desire for an unfulfilled desire; the appearing of it, the appearing of this perplexing experience. This much I know; this kind of moment cannot be mastered by knowledge; it is completely about sensibility. 2 February 2012*

The transition to desire is the transition to the other. The painting that I have accomplished is a work achieved by my incompleteness. It is the uttermost completion of my experience of desiring completion. Maurice Blanchot describes this infinite longing as follows: 'Desire: let everything be more than everything, and still be all'.<sup>594</sup> What is expressed is sensibility in motion, as if its essence were made of fiction and fantasy, hence the sense of a work of art is a sense beyond sense yet being absolutely real. It is on this other level on which a work operates, the level of sensibility, which is in relation with the outside as a fictitious image that appears and affects. The outside is constituted in that when one recognizes a wound, an empty slot or a gap that needs to be filled, when imagination reflects it and makes it resonate.

Incompleteness is the uttermost completion of the work of incompleteness: desire of a work of art that has become the artwork of

<sup>594</sup> Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 10.

desire. Blanchot writes: 'It is only inasmuch as I am infinite that I am limited'.<sup>595</sup> The desire to be able, at least once, to finish a complete work of art is indeed a paradox; I am finite, yet drawn towards the openness of the future and its infinity. Thus, any sign of completion would mean death, and death implies destination, a journey's end, the end of thinking, the end of becoming, the end of creativity, the end of being. Death is built on the ruins of lack and violence. What the artist, the creator, masters, is the measure that of the essential lack of work against completeness. In Blanchot's words: 'For the poet – the one who writes, the "creator" – could never derive the work from the essential lack of work'.<sup>596</sup>

595 Ibid. p. 64.

Incompleteness takes place only after having taken place. The artist is always starting over from the origin of art that nevertheless remains unknown. The proximity of completeness becomes an obsession that afflicts, that weighs down upon oneself, yet separates oneself from oneself, perhaps opening to a difference that makes sense singularly. The desire of completion becomes then the Overlord, or, as Blanchot portrays, '... indeed the Persecuter, he who overwhelms, encumbers, undoes me, he who puts me in his debt no less than he attacks me by making me answer for his crimes, by charging me with measureless responsibility which cannot be mine ...'.<sup>597</sup> In Friedrich Schlegel's words:

596 Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 37.

597 Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 19.

This longing for the infinite and complete must always be longing. It cannot appear in the form of intuition (*Anschauung*). The ideal never lets itself be intuited/viewed. The ideal is engendered through speculation.<sup>598</sup>

598 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Introduction to the Transcendental Philosophy' [1800], in *Theory as Practise, a Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 246.

#### EMOTIONS MATTER

The absence does not surprise me. Large, empty rooms hung with canvases are repugnant and capable of casting one into pits of depression.<sup>599</sup>

599 Gombrowicz, p. 28.

When a painting is finished, I often look at it and wonder what all the trouble was about. So, for example, I didn't feel downcast

at all when the director of the Tate rang me up to say that my portrait of Francis Bacon had been stolen.<sup>600</sup>

We share the world on the level of its affectivity through the receptivity of our own particular sensibility. However, the experiences we encounter are something that we can discuss with each other. At first I was troubled to research my own experience of incompleteness but then I ran into, Maija Lanas' research. She has analysed as a researcher her own emotions and how she has encountered them. She was especially interested in how non-verbalized emotions influenced her fieldwork and how these emotions could be articulated in the research. Her research took place in Northern Finland in a reindeer-herding village of 150 inhabitants.<sup>601</sup> Her research encouraged me to research my own experiences as well.

601 Maija Lanas, 'How can non-verbalized emotions in the field be addressed in research?', *International Journal of Research & Method in education*, 34.2, 131-145.

Experiencing emotions undoubtedly plays an important role in my making. However, experience neither empties exclusively into a work of art nor into descriptions that I have written about it. Rather, experiencing emotions and then reflecting on those feelings of emotions create an inexhaustible relationship between me and the works and the materials. This relationship seems almost like fictitious one, and then writing seems to lose touch and get distanced of what is real, of experience.

*The work as such directs my making. The work is the initiator, not some idea that has been formed beforehand. It is the work as such which introduces new associations, connections and relations. These are born in the course of the physical action. The whole engagement and thinking emerges in my working body in relation to the work. Even when I am at the beginning of starting a new painting and have some ideas on how to perform it, then I suddenly realize that the work wants to take over. In days when I am feeling down, the work carries me on, and I get immersed in it. Most of the time the work is nothing but trouble that follows me wherever I go. While painting, there is no sense to imitate or pretend, it is absolutely essential for me to be me as I bring myself about. I did swipe off one work totally today; this happens quite often. 12 March 2012*

Emotional reactions depend on human evolution, as emotions are an important mechanism in controlling our defense systems. An

emotion is an experience in which one's mind and body react towards the body's inner events. According to Antonio Damasio: 'When we talk of emotion we talk of necessity'.<sup>602</sup> Emotions are essential for the maintenance of life. Emotional reaction requires at least three phases: first, physiological changes in the body, second, changes in behaviour and third, the subjective experience that emerges. Emotions do not happen accidentally, they are mechanisms in our brain and body and take place automatically. Emoting is an action carried out by one's body. Feelings of emotions, which result from the concert of emotional changes in the body and brain, take place even when emotional expressions have stopped to take place.<sup>603</sup> Damasio notes that 'feelings are images of actions rather than action themselves'.<sup>604</sup>

602 Damasio, p. 116.

603 Ibid., p. 133.

604 Ibid., p. 117.

*I took some photographs and painted, the work carried the making, and it went on smoothly, I trusted myself and left the painting when I felt so. I did some scraping but also I did some covering up. Uik, I am feeling fine. My thoughts have drifted to other kinds of mindscapes. I think I have made some progress although at least three of the works are still unfinished. My own painting is my biggest astonishment and my biggest disappointment. 15 March 2012*

Emotions stem from the limbic system of our brain. From the evolutionary perspective the limbic system is very old and, what is notable, one cannot control it as it informs one's body. Just imagine what it is like to feel fear, love, joy, amazement or anger – one's whole body takes part in this emotional intervention. What does it mean? It means that the limbic, emotional system fiddles with the cognitive side of the brain, as if the cognitive side were subordinate to the limbic system, to emotions. We all know the proverb: love is blind. So, if the situation is like this and our cognitive side is weak, can one ever think straight, and what if emotions lead one astray?

Every experience, as Damasio emphasizes, is a process of action, and the result of action is a change in one's body state. The structure of emotion and feeling is different. Briefly, emotions are complex and, as Damasio indicates, largely automated programmes of actions: emotions work when the brain calls into action a number of emotion-triggering regions. Feelings are mental experience of body states. Emotions are triggered when past events are being recalled or when images of objects or events take place in relation to one. Emotion as

an action is carried out and takes place in one's body, whereas emotional feelings are mostly perceptions, they are images of actions rather than actions themselves.<sup>605</sup> Feelings of experienced emotions are then primarily perceptions of our body state during that state of bodily experience, emotion for example.<sup>606</sup>

605 Ibid., pp. 116–120.

606 Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glelean, Riitta Hari, Jari K. Hietanen, 'Bodily maps of emotions', in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111.2, pp. 646–651, <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/646.full> [accessed 17 May 2016].

In neuroscience, emotions have been defined as a process of re-action, a behavioural response to external situations or stimuli. An emotional response travels from the brain to the body, where physical changes take place, and back to the brain, where a trace of the emotional response to the particular situation is coded and then kept as a feeling. According to Damasio, all feelings of emotion contain an emergence from primordial feelings and 'the substrate of such feelings in the brain should be found in the image-making regions of the brain. Specifically in the somatosensing regions of two distinct sectors: the upper brain stem and the cerebral cortex'.<sup>607</sup>

607 Damasio, p. 124.

This is to say that the feeling of incompleteness that I experience when reflecting on my work is an image, a perception. Yet, while I am immersed in making, I find that the emotion of incompleteness is present as an emotion even though I cannot distinguish it while making and translate it into a feeling of emotion. Emotion is there because it makes me work harder and persistently in order to find a solution to the problem, i.e. incompleteness that the work acutely poses me. The power of focusing my attention, losing the sense of time and place is an evidence of the emotion of incompleteness at work in me while I am making.

Body-brain communication goes both ways, from the body to the brain and in reverse, as I noted above. According to Damasio, body-to-brain signals, both neural and chemical, permit the brain to create and maintain a sort of multimedia record on the body and allow the body to alert the brain to important changes that take place in its structure and state. In addition, brain-to-body signals, neural as well chemical, consist of commands to change the body. The brain informs the body what to do in order to maintain its steady course. Whenever it is called for, it also tells the body how to construct an emotional state. Throughout this interaction, neural channels use nerves whose messages lead to the contraction of muscles and the execution of actions. Chemical channels involve hormones, such as cortisol, testosterone and oestrogen. The release of hormones changes the internal milieu and the operation of viscera. Thus the body and the brain are engaged in a continuous interactive dance, as Damasio

illustrates. As a result, all the interaction between the body and the brain that is implemented in the brain can induce emotional states that are implemented in the body, while the body can change the brain's landscape and thus the substrate for thoughts and experiences.<sup>608</sup> Damasio asserts that even though it is true that the mind learns of the world by the functions of the brain, it is equally true that the brain can be informed only via the body.<sup>609</sup>

608 *Ibid.*, pp. 98–102.

609 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Emotional processes have a hierarchy. Damasio classifies emotions under two main groups: first, primary emotions or universal emotions or early emotions and, second, social or adult emotions. He asserts that primary emotions are innate and that we are attuned to respond to certain events with an emotion when a certain internal or external stimulus is perceived. The primal emotions are pleasure, happiness, fear, disgust, sorrow, hatred and surprise. He holds that primary emotions are universal. Instead, secondary emotions are drawn from experience and are dependent, on one hand, on acquired knowledge of the connection that one makes between objects and situations and, on the other hand, on primary emotions.

Primary emotions are reflexive: they are triggered by an object or an event. They are emotions that are produced and easily identified across cultures. The bringing about of these emotions can naturally have nuances and tones depending on the situation, yet, according to Damasio, the basic routine is stereotypical across cultures. Primary emotions have been and still are highly important in the survival of the species. These emotions are essential for the maintenance of life and subsequent maturation of the individual so that they are reliably deployed early in development.<sup>610</sup>

610 *Ibid.*, pp. 131–132.

According to Damasio, the limbic system, when we are, for example, socially confronted by complex situations, is not sufficient to support secondary emotions; instead, the agency of the brain's neocortex is needed. The process of developing secondary emotions continues throughout our lives. Damasio illuminates that the evolutionary old brain structures handle the

basic biological regulation down in the basement, while up above the neocortex deliberates with wisdom and subtlety. Upstairs in the cortex there is reason and willpower, while downstairs in the subcortex there is emotion and all that weak, fleshy stuff.<sup>611</sup>

611 *Ibid.*, p. 127.



Social emotions, such as shame, embarrassment, guilt, contempt and envy, are learned and based on experience. Yet, social emotions are built on primary emotions, even though they require learning and experience. According to Damasio, 'social emotions incorporate a number of moral principles and form a natural grounding for ethical systems'.<sup>612</sup>

612 Ibid., p. 134.

Damasio also indicates a group of emotions that he calls background emotions. Background emotions can operate without one being aware of their presence. Such background emotions are enthusiasm and discouragement. As a result of my research, and in my view, background emotions are present in my making without me being aware of them when I am immersed in the work. Background emotions may operate as displayed without one being aware of them, yet I am compelled by them to solve the problem that the work poses me.

In my view, any sign, on the one hand, of strangeness, otherness and incompleteness and, on the other hand, of pleasure and eagerness, result from both discouragement and enthusiasm. As Damasio notes: 'Reflection on a situation that has already happened, or consideration of a situation that is mere possibility can trigger such emotions'.<sup>613</sup> According to Damasio, background emotions can be stimulated by factual circumstances in one's life or by one's internal states. Damasio notes that background emotions are close relatives to mood but differ from mood in their more circumscribed temporal profile and in the sharper identification of the stimulus.<sup>614</sup>

613 Ibid., p. 133.

614 Ibid., pp. 133–134.

*As I can sense it, painting and editing give reason to my being. Being creative is part of my existence. Well, I guess that this applies to every being. I tend to forget the surrounding world when I am at the studio. Practising painting is something complete – it takes me completely, no matter how incomplete I feel. A paradox. Today I have been working with canvases, priming them. My thoughts were on the new paintings. In my mind, I am moving towards abstract expressionism after seven to eight years of figurative painting. It feels good. 26 May 2012*

While reflecting on my making, my feelings are then gathered as perceptions, whereas when immersed in the phase of making, I find that my emotions are associated with bodily sensations, the rhythm of my movements and my overall energetic engagement with my eagerness. Perceiving is active whereas emoting is passive, I cannot con-

trol it. This is why a painting can bother me continuously. From my diaries I have also discovered reflections on feelings of emotions that refer to bodily sensations.<sup>615</sup> For example: I have to hold my anxiety still (8 April 2012), anxiety grows in me (2 February 2012), an uncanny feeling ... like I was transformed into something (17 February 2012), this strange feeling of being in two places at the same time (7 March 2012), I cannot control the feeling that rises while making (8 April 2012). I contend that experience is a two-way relation. The work that I perceive and reflect on becomes another me, both inside me, in my flesh, and at the place of the work, as if I were a split person, both here and there.

The faculty of sensibility as an awareness of relations and as a space of freedom beyond oneself opens a plane for emoting, feelings and experiencing: a space to receive and to act upon. In making, emotion goes in concert with movement, both making and emoting ground creative thinking that is necessarily carnal as emotions are actions carried out in our bodies.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty introduced the term *reversibility* as central in embodied perception. He writes:

And everything said about the sensed body pertains to the whole of the sensible of which it is a part and to the world. If the body is one sole body in its two phases, it incorporates the whole of the sensible into itself and with the same movement incorporates itself into a 'sensible in itself'.<sup>616</sup>

Reversibility offers a way to investigate, on the one hand, space as a sort of fold that can be turned inside out and in which there are always in-between spaces. On the other hand, as an access to the relation between the subject and the world as if they could be turned inside out the way in which, perceptions become reciprocal. In a sense, reversibility problematizes the intentionality of a subject, which means for example that the one person who touches and the touched one are never same even in case they are the same person. As I have shown, reversibility is present in my research question through the notions of strange and incomplete: the strangeness in my works turns into the strangeness in myself as if I became an object to my work. Indeed, in painting reversibility manifests itself conceivably.

615 See also Nummenmaa, Glerean & Hari, Hietanen, pp. 646–651.

616 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. by C. Lefort, trans. by A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 138.

The body interposed is not itself a thing, an interstitial matter, a connective tissue, but a *sensible for itself*, which means, not that absurdity: color that sees itself, surface that touches itself – but this paradox [?]: a set of colors and surfaces inhabited by a touch, a vision, hence an *exemplar sensible*, which offers to him who inhabits it and senses it the wherewithal to sense everything that resembles himself on the outside, such that, caught up in the tissue of the things, it draws it entirely to itself, incorporates it, and, with the same movement, communicates to the things upon which it closes over that identity without superposition, that difference without contradiction, that divergence between within and the without that constitutes its natal secret. The body unites us directly with the things through its own ontogenesis, by welding to one another the two outlines of which it is made, its two laps; the sensible mass it is and the mass of the sensible wherein it is born by segregation and upon which, as seer, it remain open.<sup>617</sup>

617 Ibid., pp. 135–136.

Henri Bergson emphasizes the body's role in action and writes: 'My body; an object destined to move other objects, is then, a center of action: it cannot give birth to a representation', and, 'The brain is concerned with motor reaction, not with conscious perception'.<sup>618</sup> Bergson continues that matter is an aggregate of images and this image is, as Bergson alludes, more than a representation but less than a thing, and it foreshadows at each successive moment my body's position. To fill consciousness with images is to create formless matter upon matterless thought.<sup>619</sup> What is more is that the central image of one is one's body and by it all other images are conditioned.<sup>620</sup> Bergson illuminates the role of an artist in giving us a share of the emotion that has inflicted on him or her or elevated him or her while making the work and what he or she cannot make us understand:

618 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, pp. 11–12.

619 Ibid., pp. 5, 12.

620 Ibid., p. 13.

This he will bring about by choosing, among the outward signs of his emotions, those which our body is likely to imitate mechanically, though slightly, as soon as it perceives them, so as to transport us all at once into the indefinable psychological state which called them forth. Thus will be broken down the barrier interposed by time and space between his consciousness and ours: and the richer in ideas and the more pregnant with sensations and emotions is the feeling within whose limits the art-

ist has brought us, the deeper and the higher shall we find the beauty thus expressed.<sup>621</sup>

621 Bergson,  
*Time and Free Will*, p. 18.

*Painting challenges me, it demands so much. It demands my entire attention. I find that there is a sort of constant urge, drive or force and I cannot get rid of it. The unfinished painting is like a siren's allure, it teases me, and I have no peace, whether I am in the same room or not. There are so many things that ask for my attention. The subject matter, for instance; I often think that I have a clearly stated idea in my head but the moment when I enter my studio it turns into something vague and blurred. Then it gets even blurrier when I try to translate it into painting's language with my body as a vehicle. Why do I get so distracted? Why does translation seem impossible? Ideas and painting stem from a different sphere, their essence is different. Also the time and the place intervene in the whole process, not to forget the materials that I use. The harmony or completeness that I strive for never turns out to be the harmony that I had in mind, nor is it harmony in a way in which everything falls into place; it is a sort of disharmony harmonizing itself, completing itself just as it shows itself.* 12 March 2013

There is no creativity without emotions and emoting is not possible without matter. First of all, emoting is carnal. Second, emoting is intertwined with immediacy, and this is where the feeling of emotion, i.e., experience of incompleteness, insatiability, desire, suddenness and pleasure, steps in, the duration and spatiality of the materiality of emoting becomes tangible. The feeling of duration, an eternal presence while making then separates itself from time as an independent and structuring abstraction.

The world is accessible and not barred from experience, but is indeed given in experience. According to Simon O'Sullivan:

... any given world is constituted against a dark background, the 'immensity of the forest' that holds no interest for the organism in question ... It is the background or simply ground, from which body/organism, and its particular perception is a subtraction.<sup>622</sup>

622 O'Sullivan,  
'A Diagram of the  
Finite-Infinite Relation:  
Towards a Bergsonian  
Production of  
Subjectivity', pp. 170–171.

Thus, the background of every experience is vast and immense, and that there is no limit to possible experiences or their authenticity. In that sense, every experience is particular and true, and only one out of several possible alternatives. This makes me ponder that the immense and vast background is in actuality the other in me. Moreover, and according to Michel Henry:

The artwork is constituted on the basis of its material support but goes beyond it. The work of art is imaginary. It develops outside of the real world and thus in a dimension of irreality. It is precisely the misunderstanding of the ontological status of the work of art by scientific knowledge and scientific aesthetics (that extend its objectivist aim) that leads such an 'aesthetics' to confuse the artwork with its support.<sup>623</sup>

623 Henry, *Barbarism*,  
p. 35.

In other words, either the tempus or the locus of a work of art cannot be understood solely in its relation to the perceptual world. Irreality becomes the tempus of the reality of a work of art, and according to Henry, the tempus of art is universal, as if -future in juxtaposition to time as an abstract and quantitative duration. However, rather than not being in this world, Henry argues that the essence of art is located in sensibility and 'its being unfolds where sensibility unfolds, in life, in the radical immanence of absolute subjectivity.'<sup>624</sup> Here experienced time combines reality, imagination and fiction in a way that cannot be counted in identical units.

624 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

#### ENCOUNTERING THE STRANGE AND UNCANNY

Indeed, it might be that a practice stages this event, or even that practice is a name for it. Performance can involve what we might call this magical function: the summoning forth of something hitherto unknown and unseen. Collaboration, or more specifically, collectivity – a scene of some kind – is also crucial for this operation. How else can one make something that is of one but not of one at the same time? That is intended but produces the unintended? For I is indeed a stranger,

but it is only through a specific practice that this stranger can foreground itself from the habitual and familiar. It should be pointed out here that collectivity (again, a scene) need not involve more than a single individual. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari remark at the beginning of *A Thousand Plateaus*, we are always already more than one.<sup>625</sup>

625 O'Sullivan, 'Art Practice as Fictioning (or, myth-science)', pp. 4–5.

And then came, as if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of PERVERSENESS. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart – one has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgement, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such?<sup>626</sup>

626 Edgar Allan Poe, *The Black Cat*, [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2148/2148-h/2148-h.htm#link2H\\_4\\_0006](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2148/2148-h/2148-h.htm#link2H_4_0006), [accessed 18 May 2016].

The conception of uncanny is very much tied to the thinking of Sigmund Freud. Freud describes the feeling of uncanny as something terrifying. When I was first thinking of the word that would best describe my feelings of how I experienced my work appearing, the words uncanny, strange and surprising came first to my mind. The dictionary gives many different meanings to the word *uncanny*, for example: unsettling, ghostly, mysterious and strange. Uncanny can point to something frightening, precisely because it is not known and familiar. The feeling of uncanny is, on the one hand, about intellectual uncertainty and, on the other hand, about novelty. In this sense, it could have been appropriate to use it for my research purposes, but the strong connotation to Freud's thinking made me abstain from using it. Instead, I chose to use the word strange, also because of the word's everydayness. I use the word strange in a sense that something does not seem familiar: it is peculiar, unexpected and perhaps even spooky.

The word familiar means something that is ordinary, well-known and habitual, whereas the word unfamiliar arouses a sense of displeasure and uncertainty. It also means that which is obscure and inaccessible to knowledge, it points to something hidden and dangerous. The German word *unheimlich* is the opposite of *heimlich* and *heimisch* meaning familiar, native, i.e. belonging to home. *Heimlich* is something tamed, whereas *unheimlich* is wild.

Freud used the term uncanny in two different ways, according to Leevi Haapala: first, in a sense that the uncanny is experienced as something real and, second, in a sense that it is purposefully made up. Haapala emphasizes that the uncanny is fictive in Freud's thinking: a way to turn down anything uncanny that can happen in real life. It is way of protecting the self. Haapala investigates Freud's essay *Uncanny* and argues that Freud misses two pivotal themes of uncanny: first, the repetition of violence and, second, the multiple possibilities that the narration of Sandman offers. In addition Haapala notes that Freud misses the relation between sight, perception and desire and that Freud is solely interested in his interpretation on the fear of castration.<sup>627</sup>

In his essay *Uncanny*, Freud elaborates:

It would appear that we invest with a feeling of uncanniness those impressions which lend support to a belief in the omnipotence of thoughts, and to the animistic attitude of mind, at a time when our judgement has already rejected these beliefs.<sup>628</sup>

Freud finds that in this sense the uncanny is, in reality, nothing new or foreign but actually something familiar and old even though reason has judged this feeling fictitious. Freud ponders that the primitive fear of the dead is still strong within us or perhaps it has even become stronger. According to Freud, we are, from this standpoint, now able to understand Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's definition of the uncanny as something which ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light.<sup>629</sup> If I juxtapose the above with my own works then they reveal something of me that I would have otherwise kept concealed. Thus making a painting presents an opportunity, a space and a chance for uncanny to manifest itself. The uncanny is always ready to come to the surface at any opportunity made possible by incompleteness.

Freud notes that our emotions react strongly when they react to something uncanny but our scientific knowledge of it suffers of insufficiency. Freud ponders that the primitive fear of the dead is still strong within us or perhaps it has even become stronger. According to Freud, the uncanny effect is, often and easily, produced by effacing the distinction between imagination and reality. As Freud notes, fairytales many times adopt the animistic standpoint of the omnipotence of thoughts and wishes, or at least they used to do that.<sup>630</sup> For example, the fairy tales collected by the Grimm Brothers were quite differ-

627 Leevi Haapala, *Tiedostumaton nykytaiteessa: katse, ääni ja aika vuosituhannen taitteen suomalaisessa nykytaiteessa* (Helsinki: Valtion Taidemuseo / Kuvataiteen keskusarkisto, 2011), pp. 37–40.

628 Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* [1919], <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freudr.pdf> [accessed 18 May 2016], p. 13, footnote 17.

629 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

630 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

ent from the ones that were published later and are widely read today. As a matter of fact, they were called Household tales, and not all of the stories were intended for a child's ears.

In sum, Freud develops his thoughts towards the conclusion that the uncanny proceeds from something familiar, which has been repressed. He concludes that 'the uncanny experience occurs either when repressed infantile complexes have been revived by some impression, or when the primitive beliefs we have surmounted seem once more to be confirmed'. Freud asserts that the uncanny, as it is depicted in literature, in stories and imaginative productions, is more fertile than the uncanny in real life.<sup>631</sup> This makes me think that the way in which anything uncanny is presented in art actually manifests flexibility that is inherent in being and in what can be taken as a spooky trait of the evident mixing of imagination, fiction and reality. The uncanny is in this sense fantastic: it allows me to understand the world in different, more extraordinary ways. It comes to light when I am immersed in painting or dancing and get carried away. We are living in a multitude of realities.

631 Ibid., pp. 16–18.

Edward S. Casey examines the concepts of imagination, fantasy, hallucination and memory. As these four acts are closely affiliated they are often related to perception, according to Casey. Casey writes that the ambiguity related to fantasy is not just verbal but phenomenal, ranging from children's theories about the adult world to adults' daydream: 'fantasy shades into perceiving, anticipating and planning'.<sup>632</sup> I will examine the conception of fantasy with the help of Casey's line of thought in more detail in the next chapter.

632 Casey, 'Imagination, Fantasy, Hallucination and Memory', p. 79.

At this point, I like to address the exciting theme of a *doppelgänger*? Could the other and the strange in my work be related to the theme of a *doppelgänger*? What does a *doppelgänger* do? If I treat my painting as my *doppelgänger*, am I then revealing myself, disguising myself, playing with my imagination or transferring my mental processes, i.e. fantasies, into another medium? Is there someone who goes along with me? Is there such a thing as a foreign self and is it then doubled, divided and then interchanged with myself in my works? Psychologist Otto Rank has treated the theme or phenomenon of the double, *der Doppelgänger*: reflections in mirror or with shadows, and guardian spirits. According to him, as cited by Freud, the double was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an energetic denial of the power of death, and, as Rank notes, probably the immortal soul was the first double of the body.<sup>633</sup>

633 Sigmund Freud, p. 9.



Are then artworks and all other creative works the place to seek for the immortal soul? Are there two souls dwelling in one breast, as man is capable of self-observation through creativity? Freud remarks:

I cannot help thinking that when poets complain that two souls dwell within human breast, ... , they have some notion of this division, ... , between the critical faculty and the rest of the ego and not the antithesis discovered by psychoanalysis between the ego and what is unconscious and repressed.<sup>634</sup>

634 Ibid., p. 10, footnote 10.

However, as Freud writes, the double does not help us understand the extraordinarily strong feeling of something uncanny. He is of the opinion that the feeling of uncanny is usually connected to the feeling of helplessness.<sup>635</sup> In the beginning of this research I associated my own experience of strange in the same way to the feeling of incompleteness as helplessness.

635 Ibid., p. 10.

A painting is a multiple work and, as Simon O'Sullivan notes, it is the fictioning, the production of a non-subject, in which 'Fragments of previous codes make a re-entry, spliced with other more recent experiments'.<sup>636</sup> And then there are also those unfulfilled but possible futures of which we still like to cling phantasy. O'Sullivan stresses that art is not therapeutic: it is not the production of subjectivity but something within oneself. However, practice needs, in addition to coherence, instances of collapse, or 'else it risks just presenting more-of-the-same'; art practice is thus an introduction of collapse, of rupture, a definition of fictioning.<sup>637</sup> I do not agree with O'Sullivan's stance completely hence I find that making art and experiencing it also are the production of subjectivity. I am limited and incomplete: I produce more than I can understand. I discussed earlier, self is a singular process based on biology, and according to Antonio Damasio self comes to mind and subjectivity emerges when I make emotions and feelings mine. Making art and perceiving it are not separate doing from experiencing and emoting in which case subjectivity is not impervious to art but open towards it and towards itself. Art's independent context seems fictitious in O'Sullivan's thinking, I agree and at the same token oppose his viewpoint. Art seen as an empire of phenomena that cannot be known through experiencing is a misunderstanding: a wish to turn art into fiction and to place fiction out of reality is a fatal mistake.

636 O'Sullivan, 'Art Practice as Fictioning (or, myth-science)', p. 5.

637 Ibid., p. 8.

Yet, according to O'Sullivan, one important characteristic of fictioning is participation. In O'Sullivan's own words:

This does not necessarily mean that an audience/spectator is invited into the work often an artwork is precisely inhospitable (it refuses to give ground), but it does mean that the produced fiction offers something. It is from and for a collectivity albeit one that is masked by more typical (atomized and hyper-individualized) subjectivity<sup>638</sup>.

638 Ibid., p. 9.

Participation does not necessarily mean an invitation into the work, but it means that the produced fiction offers something and this something can be the alienation of the subject-as-it-is and at the same a token denoting to the subject-yet-to-be.<sup>639</sup> O'Sullivan's claim that this fictioning from the world as-it-is and that is present in contemporary art performs its own alienation. In my opinion O'Sullivan distances art from reality by diminishing art's work in reality and not taking full notice that we would not have sense of being in any realm of life if we did not have imagination and fiction since their task is to enable reality realise itself to its fullest possible becoming.

639 Ibid., p. 9.

The strange and uncanny that is at work in my works is the other that makes me distinctive to others and to myself. The other has its hands all over the place as soon as I begin the making, but I do not become aware of the other because I am so engaged with the work. The other in me is the one that highlights my potentialities even though they might seem incomplete and strange to me. To be more precise, I am but exposed to and touched by what abandons its own enclosure. Or in other words, as Andrew J. Mitchell elaborates on Martin Heidegger: 'When everything is understood as open, everything pours out beyond itself. There is no longer any outside and nowhere to escape to when we are already outside of ourselves.'<sup>640</sup> The other calls for continuous completion: my life with the other is constant living on the verge of my own flesh towards the others.

640 Mitchell, p. 52.

Roger Fry in his essay *An Essay on Aesthetics* published in 1909 discusses that man has a peculiar possibility of double life: one of the actual life, the other of the imaginative life. Next I shall discuss this essay in brief, as I find it in many ways riveting. According to Fry, between these two modes of living one's life, there is a great distinction: the actual life is based on natural selection, in which the instinctive reaction constitutes an important part of the whole process of being, whereas in the imaginative life a different set of values and a different kind of perception are at stake; one's whole consciousness may be focused upon a perspective and such emotional aspects of experience

that are imaginative. Fry emphasizes that art is an expression and a stimulus of this imaginative life, which is separated from the actual life by the absence of responsive action and instinctive reactions. Fry asks then: what is the justification for this life of the imagination? Fry claims that the imaginative life comes in the course of time to represent more or less what mankind feels to be the most complete expression of its own nature, the freest use of its own capacities. Fry claims that the actual life is always partial and inadequate compared to the imaginative life, which makes the life freer and fuller.<sup>641</sup>

641 Roger Fry, 'An Essay in Aesthetics' [1919], [http://rci.rutgers.edu/~tripmcc/phil/poa/fry-essay\\_in\\_aesthetics.pdf](http://rci.rutgers.edu/~tripmcc/phil/poa/fry-essay_in_aesthetics.pdf) [accessed 18 May 2016], pp. 2–3.

Art is the chief instrument of the imaginative life. An artist reveals us to ourselves in revealing himself or herself, and this is the purpose of art, according to Fry: to express something that is latent in us. Fry writes that art is an essential part of the aesthetic judgement proper:

Thus, there is no excuse for a china pot being ugly, there is every reason why Rembrandt's and Degas' pictures should be, from the purely sensual point of view, supremely and magnificently ugly. This, I think, will explain the apparent contradiction between two distinct uses of the word beauty, one for that which has sensuous charm, and one for the aesthetic approval of the works of imaginative art where the object presented to us are of extreme ugliness.<sup>642</sup>

642 *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

Fry contends that unity is a necessary element for a tranquil contemplation of the work of art as a whole, since if the work lacks unity one cannot contemplate it in its entirety. In a work unity is due to a balancing of the attraction of the eye. Unity is the result of different elements that trigger our emotions. The first element is rhythm of the line with which the forms are delineated. The drawn line is the record of a gesture. This gesture is modified by the artist's feeling, which is then communicated to us directly. The second element is mass: mass has the power of resisting movement or communicating its own movements to other bodies and, as Fry writes, our imaginative reaction to such an image is governed by our experience of mass in the actual life. The third element that Fry mentions is space, hence same-sized squares can arouse different reactions in us. The fourth element is light and shade. Fry also mentions the background towards which the object becomes totally different depending, for example, on if the background is black or light. The fifth element is colour as having a direct emotional effect, which is often described with such words as

gay, dull, melancholy. Rhythm appeals to sensations, according to Fry, and accompanies muscular activity, mass having a feeling of resistance and our experience of mass in the actual life. Fry continues that the graphic arts arouse emotions in us by playing upon what one may call the overtones of some of our primary physical needs. Fry concludes:

We may, then, dispense once for all with the idea of likeness of Nature, of correctness of incorrectness as a test, and consider only whether the emotional elements inherent in natural form are adequately discovered, unless, indeed, the emotional idea depends at any point upon likeness, or completeness of representation.<sup>643</sup>

643 *Ibid.*, pp 5-7.

In sum, what is worth further study, are the artistic experiments in fiction and in imagination without prior substantiation and with no predefined structure in order to reveal how imaginative and fictitious elements and techniques unmask the unnaturalness of reality.

#### CLOSING WORDS

What Schlegel says of philosophy is true of writing: you can only become a writer, you can never be one; no sooner you are, than you are no longer, a writer.<sup>644</sup>

644 Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, p. 61.

This chapter has shattered down the dichotomies between the subject and the object, between the body and the mind, between scientific and carnal knowledge. It has discussed the elements of experience: materiality, subjectivity, emotion, carnal knowledge, animation and imagination, and explored their validity and reliability.

Incompleteness evokes an experience of absence, a sense of nothingness. It names distance and thus also brings closer. To my mind, here this nothing corresponds to the complete that manifests itself in the never-ceasing desire, as if it spiritualized, demonized itself in me. Often I lie at the borders of destruction, but perhaps and hopefully finally I will start to sound like myself – some day. This is the exact

point where empathy arises. Incompleteness does not follow a detailed notation but is left for a sensuous on-the-spot invention.

The incomplete, meaning both the experience of 'unfinishedness' and 'insatiability', is not the opposite of completeness but a heterogeneous fragment of it. It is a matter of not-knowing except carnally. The complete becomes something tangible via incompleteness. They are in a tense and restless relation with each other, in which the other cannot be ruled out. There is a continuous act of wavering between the two. The simultaneous closeness and intimacy of completeness in making, on the one hand, and its remoteness, on the other, is a paradox. The (mis)fortune of experiencing incompleteness is to experience completeness as a shimmering light, as something unattainable, a stroke of luck by a hand as evanescent as a dream. The prism of light that the completeness casts on making is flashing, whereas the oppressive burden of incompleteness weighs heavy on the maker. However, the space that is created between incomplete and complete becomes a space of freedom and ethics.

Making art offers me a sensible texture of the real: it lays before me a network of threads that need to be unraveled. The sensible is much nearer to and much further away from the actual nearer because it is situated in my porous body and further because I do not know it completely. Bergson elaborates that our tendency to form a clear picture of the externality of things through our conscious states happens little by little and from ourselves. Bergson depicts:

It is the same self which perceives distinct states at first, and which, afterwards concentrating its attention, will see these states melt into one another like the crystals of a snow-flake when touched for some time with a finger.<sup>645</sup>

645 Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 138.

Something is experienced because of its immediacy, intimacy and proximity. Alphonso Lingis emphasizes that the sensuality in us makes contact with the materiality of things, which induce experiences in our material states, and as such an experience is the in-between that folds and ascribes me to the world.<sup>646</sup> With the same accord, Juha Perttula has pondered that it is sometimes hard to understand why knowledge is considered more objective, more reliable, more undisputable than experience or emotion when the ground of knowledge is in the first place subjective experience.<sup>647</sup> In this chapter I have carried Perttula's remark further and tried to discern

646 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 53.

647 Perttula, 'Kokemus ja kokemuksen tutkimus: fenomenologisen erityistieteen tietenteoria', p. 129.

on what grounds knowledge can be produced and what is the role of experience and making in knowledge formation. I have explored knowledge not as a theory or some kind of permanent body of discourse, but more as an ethos and as an attitude of carnal openness and experience of otherness. Juha Varto has provided ample indications of carnal knowledge

The human organism, the body and its brain, interacts with objects and phenomena. The brain makes images of different phenomena, for example of how they look like and sound and act. The brain then, as Damasio describes, records the multiple consequences of the organism's, i.e. body's, interaction with the given entity. In this interaction not only the visual structure is needed in brain mapping but also the sensorimotor patterns associated with viewing the object, the sensorimotor patterns associated with touching and manipulating the object, the sensorimotor patterns resulting from the evocation of previously acquired memories relevant to the object and, finally, the sensorimotor patterns related to the stirring up of emotions and feelings pertinent to the object.<sup>648</sup>

648 Damasio,  
pp. 141–142.

I have found that the major difficulty in studying experience is its complexity, as it is, on the one hand, fleeting and singular, undisciplined and open, never linear and thus abstract; on the other hand, however, it is something which is felt bodily, and thus is concrete and material. In addition, one cannot measure one's experience in a definite way, it is qualitative and sensuous, although it tends to guide one's actions, which, paradoxically, might well be measured with various methods and standards. Thus, knowledge that seems at first certain and finite is based on an experience that is on the whole not fixed, steady or permanent but ambiguous, fleeting, indeterminate and singular.

The next chapter discusses sensibility and the way in which it (em)-bodies the experience of incompleteness as they are understood in relation to each other. Sensibility is being towards being in its appearing.

If one wants to divide the phenomenon of sensibility into its factors (elements), then the positive factor (or element) is desire [Begierde], the negative element is anger, and the point of indifference is fear.<sup>649</sup>

649 F. Schlegel,  
'Introduction to  
the Transcendental  
Philosophy', p. 249.

# 5 THE LIBERATING PROMISE OF SENSIBILITY

## A Short Theory of Sensibility

650 Welsch, 'Aesthetics  
beyond Aesthetics', p. 12.

The cards of sensibility are being reshuffled.<sup>650</sup>

'In any event, good painting will be that about which, always trying to speak, we will never say anything satisfying,' writes Ponge (in *Tome premier*). But perhaps one should measure oneself with this dissatisfaction, perhaps one should disembark there, and perhaps one should get irritated by it to the point of anger.<sup>651</sup>

651 Nancy,  
*The Birth to Presence*,  
p. 346.

I pour my anger regarding incompleteness onto a linen cloth because I am assailed by the desire to at least once create a true work of desire that amounts to completion. I throw myself passionately onto the work that leads me down to a dark and damp cavern. I begin to work with fervour and passion towards the light.

Any heat of criticism paralyzes me just for a short while. I will not immolate myself on its altar. I want to live at my own expense, being not beneath myself but beyond myself. How have I learned to thrust my own fingers into my own wounds without being contorted with pain? How have I learned to carry on without making a clown of myself?

Constantly risking absurdity  
and death  
whenever he performs  
above the heads  
of his audience  
the poet like an acrobat

climbs on rime  
 to a high wire of his own making  
 and balancing on eyebeams  
 above a sea of faces  
 paces his way  
 to the other side of day  
 performing entrechats  
 and sleight-of-foot tricks  
 and other high theatrics  
 and all without mistaking  
 any thing  
 for what it may not be

For he's the super realist  
 who must perforce perceive  
 taut truth  
 before the taking of each stance or step  
 in his supposed advance  
 toward that still higher perch  
 where Beauty stands and waits  
 with gravity  
 to start her death-defying leap

And he  
 a little charleychaplin man  
 who may or may not catch  
 her fair eternal form  
 spredeagled in the empty air  
 of existence<sup>652</sup>

Sensibility makes me aware if something is lacking, and what is at stake in a present situation. The space of sensibility is the space of unravelling and dispersion. The time of sensibility is the time of movement, displacement, replacements, fragments and incompleteness. The time of sensibility is the time of arrival, of manifestation, of abandonment. It is the time of becoming, and if it comes, it is expected. Sensibility is, first, about dialectics in relation; second, a horizon that opens and limits; third, it is linked to movement; fourth, it stands for a whole in a fragmentary way and, yet makes a separation of the whole; and fifth, it is oriented towards the future.

652 Lawrence  
 Ferlinghetti, 'Constantly  
 Risking Absurdity',  
*Poetry Foundation* <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/52319>  
 [accessed 19 May 2016 ].



In this chapter, I shall discuss the integral part of sensibility in making within the explicit presence of the body as sensibility presents itself to one's sensitive-sensible flesh. In the beginning, I will elaborate on the conception of sensibility. Next I shall discuss sensibility and its metamorphoses in both Friedrich Schiller's writings and through the thinking of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. Especially the notions of the subject, fragment and irony are those that I find to be of interest. Then I shall say a few words on affect and the interwoven relation between affect and sensibility. After that, I shall analyze the role of suddenness as a mode of sensibility. Lastly, and via *Dracula* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, I shall shed some light on imagination and fantasy as the qualities of sensibility.

#### IN SEARCH OF SENSIBILITY

The premise with which I start is the following: if the subject is a layout of possibilities, then, in order for the possibilities to actualize, the subject needs to be always already contained by sensibility, as if sensibility were the core, the most concrete and constituent, element of conscious being. Sensibility is both the composer and the mediator of the relations on all levels of being. In other words, everything is built on sensibility, it is an animated capacity inherent the subject.<sup>653</sup> 'Sensibility is the Whole of experience', as Michel Henry asserts.<sup>654</sup> Sensibility speaks on the limits and breaks every limit, as it is a gesture towards the outside. Sensibility is spontaneous self-organization. Here sensibility means an immediate apprehension on existence.

Sensibility communicates with the sensible and produces something new and singular from the workings of the world. Sensibility erases the distance between the subject and the object, putting indeterminate elements into play. If there is any tension between me and the work, sensibility would then work as a mediator, as an intelligence.

*While painting, I am having a conversation with myself, which, I think, touches the realm of infinite possibilities, the openness of the work. This dialogue takes place via sensibility; it is the sensibility in me that talks. It is neither anything transparent*

<sup>653</sup> Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 26.

<sup>654</sup> Michel Henry draws attention to the fact that science is not concerned with sensibility: it has annihilated sensibility, and this is why science has become something abstract, a form of barbarism that ravages our world. Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 27.

*nor translatable nor can it be interpreted by words, Painting, as well as the painter, we are the medium for this conversation that takes place within the plane of sensibility, Sensibility holds together my body and mind and the work at hand, Colours for me do not represent mere charm or appeal, Colours are so much more, they make sense, they make the forms, they function as forces and are the material for all creation, In complete darkness, we do not sense the colours, except greys and blacks, and we feel lost, In loss of colours, the ground and the sense of place have changed and become dependent purely on sensibility, Colours do make sense, 19 June 2012*

Material possibilities are discovered by sensibility. Sensibility is delicate sensitivity for the possibilities that are out there and, as such, it also involves a sense of impossibility. My body and mind open to different colours, to oil and acrylic paste, to brush strokes, to the concrete and stained studio and to myself: I am being laced with the odour of canvas, linseed oil and dammar resin. I am prepared to experience them, to be trembled by them, because I am a body. I am being interwoven into an abstract, but at the same time, a very sensuous bodily experience of something becoming something. This experience does not rise from thoughtlessness but from excess – from the void with which I start. It is not a void that exists somewhere outside, but it is about the relation of myself to myself and to the other as it exceeds my grasp.

If the Other calls me into question to the point of stripping me of myself, it is because he is himself absolute nakedness, the entreaty [supplication] which disqualifies the me in me till it becomes sheer torture [supplice].<sup>655</sup>

655 Blanchot, *The Writing of Disaster*, pp. 22–23.

Sensibility has neither visibility nor structure but provides openness for each one of us: a possibility that I might be alive and living. This does not mean that one could grasp sensibility as such or enter it. It only offers a one-time-possible experience of passing. Sensibility is the mode in which the potential is present in an experiencing and thinking body; sensibility cannot be reduced to senses. It weaves together the sensory fabric, of which the world is made of and turns it into flesh and into an experience. The world happens on this level of sensibility.

Sensibility is power, possibility, chance: all that I feel like quivering in all my organs. Through sensibility, I know that I matter and the world matters, too, in me and with me, in relation to each other. Sensibility is handling myself and the world, as being together and as being apart. Sensibility amounts to carnal knowledge: it is about capturing the sense of things, myself, phenomena, events and other beings in such a way that nothing can be singled out, not even nature: in Alphonso Lingis' words one experiences oneself as a figure 'on a wave of operations picked up from others, passed on to others'.<sup>656</sup>

656 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 16.

*Is painting just some kind of visual activity, something that only makes sense visually? Or does it have some other aspects, perhaps something more important? Could a painting concern the whole being of man? To my mind, painting first and foremost concerns my sensibility, and in this sense it touches my being as a sensuous, intelligible being. Painting is the same as searching and experimenting the limits of myself, and those of the world. A painting is never completed. However, a finished painting manifests a sense of becoming of something. This means that a painting is more about apprehending a whole. Painting affects different senses but there is also something more to it, it concerns the whole bodily being in the world, it resonates being. For this reason, I find that it concerns sensibility more than anything else. This means that when I paint I do not make decisions that are only based on my seeing and other senses but also on my bodily sensibility and my feelings. I cannot separate seeing and other senses, such as touch, hearing and smell, when I paint. It is hard to explain this. Sensibility while making concerns my whole being, it concerns my emotions, experience and skill, it concerns my thinking, it concerns my body, and while I paint, my sensibility is in charge of everything. The painting as a material and sensuous object actually gives me guidance, I am being interwoven with it; we have a mutual aim, completion. It is as if the painting became a subject. My thinking and my sensuousness are activated at the level of sensibility, and materiality, forms and rhythms are mixed with sensibility. I think that perhaps materiality, space and time underlie all sensibility. And perhaps for this reason the materiality of oil paint suits me so much better than, for example, watercolour. 15 March 2013*

Sensibility extends beyond any sovereignty of the self. Sensibility is both an intellectual act and a natural inclination beyond myself: it makes sense. If understanding is something universal, sensibility is particular, and yet, paradoxically, sensibility concerns the whole. In the phase of making, sensibility makes me aware of the moment when prefixed ideas transfer into actuality that differentiates not just them but everything. Sensibility indicates subjective consciousness of one's being extending beyond one's understanding, but not losing one's sense as my sensibility has a hold of me. Being becomes something carnal and not merely a matter of mind, understanding and reason. Sensibility makes my being a whole yet open towards something.

#### SENSIBILITY AT PLAY AND A NOTE OF IRONY

We have all learned that to work successfully does not mean to work without failure and we have also learned that there is not such thing as completeness. That said, failure and incompleteness have nowadays become a precondition at least for artistic work. Bad painting, failure and incompleteness are not just experimenting but have become something intentional. I have been labelled both a *girl painter* and a *bad painter*. However, I have never intended to become either or. On the contrary, for me, incompleteness, strange motifs and vivid colours are not intentional, as if they came from outside of me, but a stratagem whereby I have to live as an artist and as me. As I judge my incomplete work, it can well indicate a failure, and then I will quite certainly destroy the work, but it can also point to a work being finished and, in that sense, completed. That my paintings have traces of endless revisions is one indication of their incompleteness and openness.

Earlier, in Chapter 2, I discussed Immanuel Kant's elaboration on aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement and the way in which Kant made a distinction between sensibility and understanding, between intuition and concept and between the outcomes of aesthetics and those of logic. According to him, sensibility is subjective and private, while understanding is objective and universally valid. According to John H. Zammito, Kant holds that sensibility can be observed

in terms of matter or form. Kant argues that the matter in sensibility is manifested by sensation and senses, whereas the form of sensibility is appearance, *Erscheinungen*, and its faculty is intuition.<sup>657</sup> In other words, for Kant, sensation, *Empfindung*, refers strictly to a subjective state, while appearance refers to an object and is made of passive impressions. In addition, not only are sensations subjective, in that they entail passive responses on the subject, but they are not themselves representations of objects. According to Kant, before sensations can be thought about, they have to be formed, shaped, and understood as concepts.<sup>658</sup>

657 Zammito, p. 50.

658 Ibid., p. 50.

John S. Zammito asks with regard to Kant's third Critique: 'if sensibility and understanding are different in kind, how can understanding determine the particulars given in sensibility with logical and especially with rule-given ontological necessity?'<sup>659</sup> Zammito notes that in Kant's thinking reflection does not concern itself with objects themselves. Instead, reflection is that state of mind in which we first set ourselves to discover the subjective conditions under which we are able to arrive at concepts. According to Kant, different faculties seek unity, and a coherent use of Reason and Understanding legitimately projects a logical world. In Kant's opinion, sensation is already worked up through the play of cognitive faculties in a way in which Reason demonstrates sovereignty. Reflection cannot be articulated except in terms of faculties of the mind; it then contains nothing empirical and Reason alone would legislate over the faculty of feeling.<sup>660</sup> In the passage below and in Kant's own words the way in which he unites perception and his logical and cognitive worldview is following:

659 Ibid., p. 52.

660 Ibid., p. 58–63.

However, a perception can also be immediately combined with a feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) and a satisfaction that accompanies the representation of the object and serves it instead of a predicate, and an aesthetic judgement, which is not a cognitive judgement, can thus arise. Such a judgement, if it is not a mere judgement of sensation but a formal judgement of reflection, which requires this satisfaction of everyone as necessary, must be grounded in something as an a priori principle, even if only a merely subjective principle (if an objective principle for this kind of judgement would be impossible), but which, as such a principle, also requires a deduction, by means of which it might be comprehended how an aesthetic judgement could lay claim to necessity.<sup>661</sup>

661 Kant, p. 168, §36.

*To work hard pleases me very much, my body and mind needs the physical action that only painting provides. The pleasure is doubled if I think that I have accomplished something in my painting. I try to kill the fixed ideas. Actually, the more the actual work progresses the more the pre-existing ideas have changed. The work process is interlinked with something sensuous, feeling of connectedness with myself and the world. I think that the work process is the most important stage and not the finished painting. 11 July 2012*

Kant describes that aesthetic judgements, or judgements of taste, are two-layered experiences: first, they result from the free play and harmony of the imagination and understanding, and second, from a reflection on the appearance of the object. The *a priori* principle on which aesthetic judgement is based on is the feeling of existence accompanying thought that is an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e. perception, which is not based on knowledge but is the prerequisite of aesthetic judgement and thus shows that sensation belongs to sensibility. Jochen Schulte-Sasse takes Kant to mean that this indeterminate empirical intuition is not part of the theory of knowledge. Knowledge cannot be derived from experience, according to Kant. Schulte-Sasse notes that ‘the theory of knowledge is exclusively concerned with determinate thoughts and objects.’<sup>662</sup> In Kant’s thinking, in order to draw knowledge from experience we need to know the reason for something to take place and this can only happen through our cognitive faculties.

662 Schulte-Sasse, p. 15.

Kant’s aim to separate the beautiful as finite from the infinite sublime, caused controversy among the Early Romantics. For them beauty is in connection with the infinite because the sublime and beauty pass through each other. Beautiful is infinite represented in a finite form: it exceeds its own concept. The Early Romantics put great emphasis on the sensibility of the subject. The method that they used relied on a poetic and fragmentary form of the autonomous object, an object that explains itself without any help from a concept and through which a subject gains one’s subjectivity.<sup>663</sup> Thus, the emergence of subjectivity and the experience of individuality and particularity in freedom, the whole idea of complete humanity, required a sensible accord between the autonomous and the sensible self, in which the notion of the infinite and the discursive nature of the universe play a crucial role.

663 Michel & Oksiloff, p. 159.

Kant's system had a profound effect both on the Early Romantics, and here I refer especially to Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, and on Friedrich Schiller. The Early Romantics opposed Kant's twofold conception of Man split into being of sensuousness and that of reason, whereas Schiller adopted Kant's duality in his theory about aesthetics, with the exception that Man must become an aesthetic Man before he can be a moral Man.<sup>664</sup> However, both the Romantics and Schiller were convinced that freedom defines what it means to be human. Whereas the notions of play and semblance were central in Schiller's thinking, the Romantics had at the centre wit and irony presented in a form of fragment that is necessarily incomplete. The Early Romantic concept of a work of art differs from that of Friedrich Schiller's. According to Andreas Michel and Assenka Oksiloff:

In Romanticism, the work of art and interpreter together constitute a continuum of infinite reflection, whereas in German classicism the work itself in its finitude came to foreshadow the eventual resolution of theoretical and social antagonisms.<sup>665</sup>

Schiller puts forward a theory in which he emphasizes that mankind must first commit itself to Beauty before it can commit itself to Freedom. His aim is to demonstrate that, more than reason, what man needs is to become a moral being; in other words, he introduces aesthetics to both the historical and political realms of society. Schiller asserts that the moral involves the sensible, the free play of sensibility, and that the autonomy of art is necessary to support political freedom. In line with freedom, he assigns to art an educational function in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, later *Aesthetic Letters*. The nucleus of his thinking is the establishing of an aesthetic state, filled with equality that would reunite its citizens like a work of art.<sup>666</sup>

Schiller argues for greater attention to sensibility in society. What he wants is to deepen Kant's formalism in a sense that would introduce human meaning and purpose into aesthetic reflection, to bring back both individuality and aesthetic enjoyment and finally to free sensibility from its submission to reason, so that it could serve freedom. Schiller recognizes the inherent pleasure of emotions and argues that emotions and sensibility are connected to morality, which is the agency for action.

One should neither remain content with what Nature has made of man, nor with the conditions under which knowledge, morality and

664 Reginald Snell, 'Introduction', in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [1794] by Friedrich Schiller, trans. by R. Snell (Mineola: Dover Publication, Inc. 2004), p. 12.

665 Michel & Oksiloff, p. 178, footnote 2.

666 Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 219.

reflective judgement operate. The dematerialization of nature marks an era for man in his striving toward a new freedom. The new freedom, Schiller claims, is manifested in an aesthetic play. Schiller writes that the sublime opens to us a road to overstep, on the one hand, the limits of the works of sense, in which the feeling of the beautiful would forever imprison us, and, on the other hand, to exult in us a power more superior than Nature:

Beauty in the form of the goddess Calypso has enchanted the valiant son of Ulysses, and, through the power of her charms, she holds him for a long time imprisoned upon her island. For long he believes he is paying homage to an immortal deity, since he lies only in the arms of voluptuousness – but sublime impression seizes him suddenly in the form of Mentor: He remembers his better destiny, throws himself into the waves, and is free.<sup>667</sup>

For Schiller the crucial question is: how Man has to be to be human?<sup>668</sup> It appeared that modern life, after the French Revolution of 1789 failed, had become shattered, as the expectations had not been fulfilled. In his *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller puts forward a programme concerning what should be done. According to him, it is obvious that man needs more than Reason in order to become a moral being. Kant's system, which did have a great effect on Schiller, lacked an adequate moral motivation. It is obvious that the Schillerian radicalization of Kant's Third Critique includes immediately an attempt to politicize aesthetics in a sense that aesthetic sensibility is taken as the manifestation of freedom established between man and universe, beauty and truth.<sup>669</sup> However, for the purpose of the aesthetic education of man, Schiller chooses a transcendental path, instead of an empirical one, in which a rational conception of beauty is required to establish a secure, unshakable ground of knowledge.<sup>670</sup>

In other words, Man is a combination of two heterogeneous faculties: that of reason and that of sensible, according to Schiller. This connotes that Man is a creature in which two worlds, empirical and free, pulling towards opposite directions, coincide. Man has to satisfy these both sides and somehow bring them into harmony with one another, so as to be free. The way in which Man frees himself is through aesthetic play, according to Schiller.<sup>671</sup>

667 Friedrich Schiller, 'On the Sublime' [1801], [http://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/trans\\_on\\_sublime.html](http://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/trans_on_sublime.html) [accessed 19 May 2016].

668 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, p. xxxiv.

669 Ibid., p. 189.

670 Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [1794], trans. by R. Snell (Mineola: Dover Publication, Inc. 2004), pp. 59–60.

671 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, p. 87.



Schiller makes it clear that freedom appears in a sensible form, but it is at the same time conveyed materially: ‘Without form no matter,

without matter no form’<sup>672</sup> It is the material object that becomes the source from which freedom manifests itself. Schiller emphasizes that matter has something determinate within itself and is not merely undermined by form but takes its due place alongside and autonomously of form.<sup>673</sup> In short, matter brings reality to form.<sup>674</sup> This is how Schiller formulates his argument on form and matter in his *Aesthetic Letters*. However, earlier, in his *Kallias or Concerning Beauty* and in his letters to Gottfried Körner from 1793, he had taken a different viewpoint. In these letters he discusses the relation between beauty and freedom, claiming that beauty is mere appearance.

In *Kallias* Schiller writes: ‘In an artwork, the matter must lose itself in the form, the body in the idea, the reality in the appearance’<sup>675</sup> and ‘Beauty is thus nothing less than freedom in appearance’<sup>676</sup> Then he continues: ‘Freedom in appearance is thus nothing but the self-determination of a thing insofar as it is available to intuition’<sup>677</sup> He insists that material should be defeated and that everything should be through the form:

Thus the materia of the marble must disappear into the nature of flesh which is flexible and soft and neither feeling nor the eye may be notified of its disappearance.<sup>678</sup>

Matter must subjugate itself under form, the body must lose itself in the idea and reality in appearance. Only the form should be noticeable. The form is objectively necessary and does not include any subjective elements. The nature of the material should be fully dominated.<sup>679</sup> What at that point seemed essential for Schiller was that the object should not suffer heteronomy of the nature and of the medium. It takes only a year for Schiller to realize that his thesis on beauty as appearance is void of sensibility and lacks what the new humanity would require. After that, in his *Aesthetic Letters*, he departs even further from Kant.

672 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [1794], trans. by R. Snell, p. 68.

673 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, p. 85, footnote 1.

674 ‘Form is never made manifest except in some material, nor the Absolute except through the medium of limitation’. Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, p. 81.

675 Friedrich Schiller, ‘Kallias or Concerning Beauty: Letters to Gottfried Körner’ [1792], in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. by J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 179.

676 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

677 Friedrich Schiller, ‘Kallias or Concerning Beauty: Letters to Gottfried Körner’ [1792], in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. by J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 154.

678 *Ibid.*, pp. 179–180.

679 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

In his *Aesthetic Letters* Schiller brings sensibility and freedom into the subjectivity of man. He also introduces the notions of semblance and illumination. For him, that which constitutes semblance or illumination concerns not harmony, proportion or perfection in their classical sense but autonomy and precisely the will's autonomy in opposition to mechanical causality.<sup>680</sup> Man exercises his freedom in the art of semblance and, according to Schiller, aesthetic appearance can never become a danger to moral truth as long as it is truthful, honest and perhaps even naïve.

According to Schiller, beauty is crucial to the development of a moral life, since only beauty can reveal the necessary harmony between sensibility and reason; beauty rests between man's inclination and duty.<sup>681</sup> In Schiller's view, beauty alone can provide us with the motivation for a moral life. He criticizes Kant on the ground that Kant's moral philosophy demands that duty alone provides the motive of action.<sup>682</sup> Schiller himself claims that beauty is a decisive element to freedom and, accordingly, morality means that an artist who creates a beautiful work of art contributes something purposeful to the formation and education of humanity. Instead, according to Kant, beauty has as its determining ground solely the purposiveness of the form.<sup>683</sup> It is only the form that can be communicated universally.

Schiller introduces the notion of play drive, *Spieltrieb*. According to him, without play drive Reason is not able to function.<sup>684</sup> The object of the play drive is called a living form and it serves all the aesthetic qualities of phenomena.<sup>685</sup> The play drive is a combination of the sense drive and the form drive.<sup>686</sup> The latter drives one toward freedom in the form of universal, eternal laws, whereas the sense drive aims at the extinction of time and at reconciliation with the absolute being. In the play drive, feelings and thoughts emerge:

But why call mere game, when we consider that in every condition of humanity it is precisely play, and play alone, that makes man complete and displays at once his twofold nature? What you call limitation, according to your conception of matter, I call extension according to mine, which I have justified by proofs. I should therefore prefer to put it in exactly the opposite way: Man is only serious with the agreeable, the good, the perfect; but with Beauty he plays.<sup>687</sup>

680 J. M. Bernstein, *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. by J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. xxi.

681 Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860, The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 134.

682 *Ibid.*, p. 165.

683 Kant, p. 108, §14.

684 Drives are the only forces in the sensible world. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, in a series of letters [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, p. 49.

685 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

686 *Ibid.*, p. 101. Schiller adapts Kant's concept of form when he introduces the form drive as a concept that includes all formal qualities of things and all their relations to intellectual faculties.

687 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [1794], trans. by R. Snell, p. 79.

688 Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, p. 97.

689 Schiller assures the right of sensibility and the rights of individual in the 5th letter, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, p. 25.

690 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [1794], trans. by R. Snell, p. 95.

691 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

692 Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a series of letters* [1794], trans. by E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, pp. 70–71.

693 *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

694 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. by G. Rockhill (Great Britain: Continuum, 2006), p. 12.

695 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

As a result of the play drive, freedom becomes an inner necessity for man both physically and morally<sup>688</sup>: a new freedom is manifested in a play when man gives himself his own rules<sup>689</sup>, and aesthetics becomes materialized by the free play of sensibility. I can well associate to the characteristics of the play drive in my making and I have found reading Schiller meaningful in reflecting on my own making. However, to my mind, Schiller overemphasizes Man's capability and omnipotence within the aesthetic realm: he states in his 19th letter<sup>690</sup> that in human being there is no other power than his will, and in his 24th letter<sup>691</sup>, that man acquires mastery over nature in the moral. In addition, his thinking of Beauty as ultimately a rational concept when in use for the interest of a better society misses the essence of Beauty as concerning first and foremost sensibility that is carnal and distributed carnally.

Overall, Schiller's main scheme is that beauty should be taken as a necessary condition of humanity.<sup>692</sup> He considers aesthetic education as the only coherent device to unite man and society. The autonomy of art delivers its model to aesthetic education. Schiller emphasizes art's role as a saviour through the importance of art-form, the transformation of life-materials into semblance, *Schein* and the transformation of life-interests into a play that has its own kind of seriousness, *ein ernstes Spiel*.<sup>693</sup> There can be no doubt that Schiller pursues a life esteemed as an artwork or as aesthetic and that the aim of aesthetic education is that one can express oneself in diverse ways and, as much as possible, using one's spiritual and sensory powers in the greatest possible harmony and, also in this way, leading an aesthetic life of free play, in which one's consciousness of the self arises and one's humanity is established.

Jacques Rancière has further elaborated on Schiller's idea of an aesthetic state and awakened the political question concerning the politics of thought in his theorem of the aesthetic regime. He claims that one cannot identify art as such but within the distribution of the sensible that actually reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community, based on what one can do and on the time and space in which the activity is performed.<sup>694</sup> The aesthetic regime of the arts is the regime that strictly identifies art in the singular and frees it from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of arts and from any subject matter of genres.<sup>695</sup> As Rancière sees it, what is pivotal in Schiller's treatise is that art becomes an instrument of the reformation of Man and society against the monarchy of Reason. What is at

stake in Schiller's work is that it recomposes the whole and, in free accordance between the moral and the sensible, the idea of a complete humanity.

The aesthetics of Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel have much in common, according to Daniel Dahlström, who argues that, most of all, what is at stake for both of them is humanity as self-liberating potential. However, the difference between the two, and in my perspective a most important difference, lies in Schiller's concept of play and Schlegel's concept of irony. Schiller's emphasis is on aesthetic education, human condition as an aesthetic condition, whereas Schlegel's romantic irony is based on an on-going process of self-overcoming reflection that is necessarily iterating and infinite, i.e., there is no harmonious totality but a disequilibrium between experience and reality.<sup>696</sup>

The Romantics, as they emphasize that each person carries his own poesy inside himself, argue that the world of poesy is as immeasurable as it is infinite and as inexhaustible as living nature is rich in plants, animals and creations of every kind.<sup>697</sup>

In Friedrich Schlegel's view, a new mythology – there is no culture that is without its myths – must be formed from the deepest depth of the spirit. He explains that our particularity rests on a universal ground in which mythology resides in an artwork of nature and in which everything is in relation and in the state of metamorphosis. This transforming is both a process of its own and a method of its own. In Schlegel's words:

Where the naïve profundity allow the glimmer of the absurd and the crazy or of the simpleminded and the stupid to shine through. For this is the beginning of all poesy ... the original chaos of human nature. This is what I mean by the new mythology;

... all of the holy games of art are only distant imitation of the infinite game of the world, of the work of art that is forever forming itself. Therefore the deepest mysteries of all arts and sciences belong to poesy.<sup>698</sup>

What is at stake here is the thought that comes to think of itself as a necessary fiction or fable where the paradoxes that arise are themselves part of the logic of that fable. Friedrich Schlegel reminds us: 'For the spirit, it is equally fatal to have a system or not to have one at all. It will therefore be necessary to join the two'.<sup>699</sup>

696 Daniel Dahlström, 'Play and Irony: Schiller and Schlegel on Aesthetics', <http://www.bu.edu/philo/files/2013/09/d-play-and-irony.pdf> [accessed 20 May 2016], pp. 126–128.

697 F. Schlegel, 'Dialogue on Poesy', p. 180.

698 *Ibid.*, pp. 185–189.

699 F. Schlegel, 'Athenaeum Fragments', fragment 53, p. 320.

700 Ibid.,  
fragment 22, p. 319.

Schlegel describes a project as the subjective seed of an object that is in the process of becoming. According to him, a perfect project should be both completely subjective and completely objective, an indivisible living individual.<sup>700</sup> After reading my diaries and pondering over my making, Schlegel's claim seems plausible: I constantly ask why is it that the object takes the lead in making and initiates and suggests my next move.

*I want to postpone the beginning, to withdraw myself from any predefined action, any thought, any sensation, and only to linger at a threshold of the yet not known. How to begin: all but confusion, chaos. How to tame the eagerness of imagination, of my body? It seems that I paint everywhere, in a tram while travelling back home from my studio, indeed the tram is the place I usually paint in my mind. I have a notebook in my cell phone full of finished paintings, however, verbal ones. And, when I enter my studio and encounter an empty canvas, all that is shattered, the reality is so different from my mind. I have entered a different world, a real world of making. The ghostly image in my mind is an iridescent soap bubble. The real treasure box is the canvas before me. 4 December 2011*

For Friedrich Schlegel, the infinite is the source of existence from which all objects and subjects are formed. The infinite can only present itself in a finite form and on an empirical level. What is novel in Schlegel's thinking is that he makes a distinction between matter as infinite and form as finite. Matter is material that possesses infinite possibilities. According to Schlegel, nature is in a constant state of becoming and this creative aspect is made manifest through material aesthetic practice. Matter and form are both accessible to the subject. Imagination is an aesthetic activity that links the finite with the infinite realm.

However, what seems pivotal for Schlegel is that the whole can never be grasped in a single finite object, but it is through the continuous production, i.e., *poiesis* that the infinite reveals itself. This is why matter is infinite and why the genre or medium chosen by the Romantics was a fragment. It is the poetic, fragmentary process that links the subject with the matter of infinite universality. The infinite is the source of existence from which all individuals, both as objects and subjects, are formed, however, any origin as such is unrepresentable.<sup>701</sup>

701 Michel & Oksiloff,  
p. 168.

For Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, the promise of *poesis* as the creation and production of new forms of reflection, in which an artwork and an interpreter together constitute a continuum of infinite reflection, is of crucial importance. However, *poesis* in their thinking refers to anarchy, to creating an aesthetic chaos – chaos that is an empirical manifestation of an infinite world. Reason is confronted with chaos as it is involved with the question of the sublime. The purpose of such chaos is to reconceptualize social and discursive hierarchies.<sup>702</sup> In other words artist can be anarchic, however, art itself is anarchic in its essence.

702 Ibid., p. 159.

Reflection is an endless process. Infinity and incompleteness combine the structure of a romantic reflection. It is the strategy of incompleteness and the genre of the fragment that incline man toward poesy, a progressive universal poesy. As Friedrich Schlegel writes in his Athenaeum Fragment No. 116, Romantic poesy

wants to blend and merge, make life and society poetic, poetize wit and fill up and saturate the forms of art with every kind of genuine cultural material and animate them through the oscillations of humor.<sup>703</sup>

703 F. Schlegel, 'Athenäum Fragments', fragment 116, pp. 320–321.

Any determinacies are insufficient to Early Romanticism: 'A romantic kind of poetry is still in the state of becoming, that, in fact, is its real essence'.<sup>704</sup> For the work fully to articulate the idea of art in Romanticism, it should cancel itself as a work, unwork its being as a work, forfeit its status as material presence in favour of art's, nevertheless be itself and always beyond itself, in other words, articulate itself as a further determination of the idea of art. This marks the irony of Romanticism and the incommensurability of any concept that is made beforehand.<sup>705</sup>

704 Ibid., fragment 116, p. 321.

705 Bernstein, p. xxxiii.

*I continued to work with the big canvas today. There appears to be quite a lot of what I call bonbon colours on it. Actually I do not know what to think of it at the moment. The next time when I come back to my studio I can discuss more of my thoughts. It is like that, I have to take a pause and get out of the studio and then come back from outside and have a fresh look on the work. I think I have progressed with another work, the dark painting. At the moment I call it the Helsinki painting. However, my mind is not restful with it yet, and I left a colour tube beside it as a hint for the next time. For me, painting is*

*so much about play, and this play is in its essence paradoxical, actually a riddle that I try to solve, something quite enigmatic. Perhaps, and as I see it, this indicates in the direction of irony, as if a painting were proof of the irony of being. I find that there is a lot of irony in my workings.* 26 June 2012

I = Non-I: highest statement of all science and art.<sup>706</sup>

For Novalis, the realm of the I is the foundation for everything; it is the ground for all determination of all form. The I is split into self and other, the non-I.<sup>707</sup> The drive to be I contains the drive to think, to reflect and to feel. The I and the non-I are expressed in matter and in form, which oppose each other. Novalis suggests that only within feeling that concerns matter can reflection establish its pure form. Novalis argues that both drives, feeling and reflection, are effective in unison, and only after a simultaneous performance of the two can the conceptualization and reality arise.<sup>708</sup>

*A feeling of wholeness while making is awesome, it simply means that I cannot separate the thinking me from the body, mind and soul.* 21 April 2012

*I am usually absorbed in the painting that I am making. It is my way of being. I just cannot paint as if I should try to observe it objectively, from the outside that would be a mere waste of time. In the contrary, the painting stems from my inner life, which is in relation to the outside. What is then my inner life? A mixture of my personal history, the culture, the place and time where I live in, of all the things that I have learned so far mixed up with understanding, feelings and imagination. The painting is a part of me, and I have a tendency to think that it is the other in me and, better, the actual me, turned inside out, as if I happened right here, right now, while I am painting.* 15 March 2012

Novalis expresses that fantasy, fiction and illusion have an essential prolific role in the composition of all synthesis, of all knowledge: 'The world of the fairy tale is the *complete opposite* of the world of truth (history) – and precisely for that reason *completely similar* to it – just as *chaos* is similar to the *completed creation*'.<sup>709</sup> Aesthetic as the condi-

706 Novalis, as cited in Jochen Schulte-Sasse, 'Romanticism's Paradoxical Articulation of Desire', p. 59.

707 The other, or the non-I, is subordinated to the subject. The subject recognizes the otherness within himself/herself as a link to the outside world. The desire of the other is recognized in a free relationship of communication. The I seems a repository for a vortex of existence in Novalis' thinking; hence the I posits itself in representing as an infinitely representing I. And, finally, according to Novalis, it is the object that should determine us – as a product of the I. Novalis, 'Fichte Studies' [1795–96], in *Theory as Practise, a Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 90, 110.

708 Schulte-Sasse, pp. 97–99.

709 Novalis, 'The Universal Brouillon' p. 230, fragment 234; see also fragment 940 on p. 239 and fragment 986 on p. 240.

tion in which things are happening is necessary, Novalis asserts: 'Life is something like colour, sound and force'<sup>710</sup>, a necessary process in which meanings are constantly made and remade and in which fantasy has a productive role.<sup>711, 712</sup> Novalis, with good reason, notes the abundance of fantasy and its meaning in making. Romantic poetry oscillates between the presented and the presenting, free from all interests. Yet, it has an educational core but one that is different from Schiller's. The purpose of romantic poetry is invention, actually consisting of two inventions, because in the invention the form itself also is reinvented.

I find that the thinking of Schiller, Schlegel and Novalis is very contemporary and that through it I have been able to examine the hollow niche that the feeling of strangeness and incompleteness has evoked in me and furthermore what are the conditions of finishing a work of art. Especially the Early Romantics' notions of fragment, aesthetic chaos, the non-I and fantasy have been very helpful throughout my research in studying the experience of incompleteness. I have witnessed that concepts are very fluid and they get their content and meaning within making and that neither the content nor the meaning are something fastened. Making is also an intervention, where there is a lot of self-deprecating irony. Questioning and accepting both my limits and my potentiality have made me more conscious of my sensibility and the carnal knowledge that resides in me. Contemplation and interference happen on the layer of my sensibility, as if sensibility were a very fine weave interlacing the inside and the outside. A work is a form of experimenting an appearing of difference: the way difference becomes woven into the work. In this sense every work is an open experiment and experience.

*As I came today to the studio I felt very happy and excited. The time that I spend here seems utterly important. Working with my paintings is something that is really meaningful in my life. What am I after while I paint? I know that I can never paint a perfect picture. Perhaps all that I can achieve is a fragment of a complete picture. Perhaps it is just a glimpse or a hint of something that there is something more. When I look at my paintings it seems as if my whole body were reacting. What is the point in painting pictures? For me, it is to achieve or to reach something, which is outside of me but that is at the same time somehow an extension of me. 16 January 2014*

710 Novalis, *Schriften*, as cited in P. Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, p. 17/132.

711 Michel & Oksiloff, pp. 173-175.

712 A. W. Schlegel, Friedrich Schlegel's brother, who was also a member of the circle of the Jena Romantics, asserts: 'It is true that we are assured of the infinite only through our reason and fantasy; We can never capture it with the outer senses or the understanding, for these exist only through a constant positing of things finite and a negation of the infinite. The finite constitutes the surface of our nature, otherwise we could have no definite existence; the infinite constitutes the foundation, otherwise we could not have reality at all. How, then, can the infinite be brought to the surface? How can it be made to appear? Only symbolically in images and signs.' A.W. Schlegel, 'Theory of Art' [1798-1803], in *Theory as Practice, a Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by J. Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 209.



What the artist does is weave together a new sensory fabric by wresting percepts and affects from the perceptions and affections that make up the ordinary experience. Weaving this new fabric means creating a form of common expression or a form of expression of the community – namely, ‘the earth’s song and cry of humanity.’<sup>713</sup>

713 Rancière,  
*The Emancipated Spectator*,  
p. 56.

Sensibility opens me to the other as the other affects me. Sensibility addresses things possessing sensuousness and an excess of form and in the virtue of this sensuousness and excess sensibility calls for aesthetic rather than analytical. However, sensibility addresses one’s responsibility, wherewith to come with oneself and the world. Alphonso Lingis highlights the relational nature constitutive of sensibility and illustrates the realm of relations wonderfully:

Responsibility is coextensive with our sensibility; in our sensibility we are exposed to the outside, to the world’s being, in such a way that we are bound to answer for it. The world is not just a spectacle spread before us but a burden with which we are entrusted. What opens us to the exterior, what makes us exist, makes us be a sensibility, is exteriority, which approaches of itself, and touches us, affects us, afflicts us. For Heidegger, this exteriority is what is exterior to our being and to all being – nothingness, or death. The approach of this exteriority is also what casts us back upon our own being and upon being and makes existing for us both a response to the nothingness and a responsibility of being.<sup>714</sup>

714 Alphonso Lingis,  
*The Sensuality and the  
Sensitivity, in Face to Face  
with Levinas*, ed. by R. A.  
Cohen (Albany: State  
University of New York  
Press 1986), pp. 219–230,  
p. 226.

Brian Massoumi elaborates on affect in line with Lingis, but then he has a more political tone in his voice. Massoumi writes that affect

as the openness of being affected, is directly relational. It is pure sociality, in the sense of the social in the openness of its incipency, ready to become all manner of social forms and contents. That readiness is not simply a passive availability. It is an active pressure toward taking-form.<sup>715</sup>

715 Brian Massoumi,  
*Politics of Affect*  
(Cambridge: Polity Press,  
2015), p. 205.

For Massoumi, there is no affect as something raw, irritating, joyful and fleshy but affect as developing into a specified type of relation or role. An affect is neither good nor bad but mediates the social and acknowledges norms only in order to exceed them, in becoming,<sup>716</sup> and, to cite Massoumi, ‘All experience is in-formed by prior takings-form’.<sup>717</sup> An affect according to Massoumi can then well be fascist or progressive, reactionary or revolutionary.<sup>718</sup> This is to say that in Massoumi’s thinking an affect is, as it takes its form, already something intentional, to which it finds itself ordered. Therefore the voice of the mass is heard in Massoumi’s thinking of the affect. According to him:

716 Ibid., p. 209.

717 Ibid., p. 207.

718 Ibid., p. 209.

Affect in no way excludes freedom. It does, however, require it to be redefined. The redefinition is necessary because the workings of affect do contradict freedom, if freedom in any way implies the body/mind, physical/mental duality.<sup>719</sup>

719 Ibid., p. 214.

Massoumi’s theory of affect connects with the notion of totality and a pre-ordered structure, and it ‘expresses itself in collective individuations’<sup>720</sup>; thus, in Massoumi’s thinking affect’s social expression takes place actually in mass psychology.<sup>721</sup> This I find problematic, working as an artist, because I consider myself my best critic regardless of the ‘masses’, i.e. critics and viewers. I must admit that one reason to start this research was that some people, one of my close relatives, for example, had a trouble in understanding my work. What I find is of importance here is that my feeling of incompleteness takes place in myself in relation to myself by myself. It is an intimate feeling yet the demand of completion defines both the finitude and the universality of the work. What is my priority is that I do try to reach beyond myself in my making. Despite that I do agree that the world affects me and that being affected is directly relational but the viewpoint that I have in my making is solely my own stemming from my sensibility. I make the decision whether to jump on a band wagon of conditioned culture. Here I like to cite Theodor Adorno’s thought:

720 Ibid., p. 205.

721 Ibid., p. 206.

Art, however, is social not only because of its mode of production, in which the dialectic of the forces and relations of production is concentrated, nor simply because of the social derivation of its thematic material. Much more importantly art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art. By crystallizing in itself a

something unique of itself, rather than complying with existing social norms and qualifying as 'socially useful,' it criticizes society by merely existing, for which puritans of all stripes condemn it.<sup>722</sup>

722 Adorno, p. 296.

In this study I address the peculiarity of my works and the ways in which they evoke unrest in me. Earlier, I discussed Ernst Barlach and the raw and sensuous materiality of his sculptures, and the way in which he was accused by the Nazis because his work did not meet the standards of the German nature. For sure, these allegations must have affected Barlach, and perhaps in Barlach's case we are approaching what Massoumi is after when he calls affect a socially formative force that can be even fascist. In Massoumi's thinking an affect becomes something that is divorced and differentiated from sensibility, instead in this study the instances of an affect and sensibility are interlinked with each other and disclose and expose the subject privately to herself and publicly to others as if I became part of the flesh of the world privately in each instance. In this sense, my work cannot open up to include every other; what remains is only a possible opening to the other, being-with-one-another, if I am allowed to use Jean-Luc Nancy's phrasing. In this sense being is spacing between all beings as bodily beings. According to Nancy, there is a necessary plurality at the foundation of being: 'Presence is impossible except as co-presence',<sup>723</sup> and, 'Being is together, it is not togetherness'<sup>724</sup>, and what is more:

723 Jean-Luc Nancy,  
*Being Singular Plural*,  
p. 62.

724 Ibid., p. 60.

What is presented in this way, each time, is a stage [scène] on which several [people] can say 'I,' each on his own account, each in turn. But a 'we' is not adding together or juxtaposition of the 'I's.' A 'we,' even one that is not articulated, is the condition for the possibility of each 'I.' No 'I' can designate itself without there being space-time of 'self-referentiality' in general. This 'generality,' however, does not have a 'general' consistency; it only has the consistency of the singular at 'each time' of each 'I.'<sup>725</sup>

725 Ibid., p. 65.

In other words, the determination what is common is no news: it is a prevailing attitude. I find that Massoumi's thinking of an affect is significant particularly in relation to what Wolfgang Iser has recently written about the aesthetics of the masses as becoming a spectacle that makes the reality both weightless and horrid. The world's affectivity is then diminished into a tabloidization of the nightly news

and reality television series. In my opinion, diminishing an affect into something like a jump on the bandwagon does not allow access to each singular person's inner life, one's sensibility and intimacy. Implying that affect is the nature of culture<sup>726</sup>, even though the evidence on the whole seems fastened, is after all precarious. This said, the kind of relationship where an affect is placed and how it resonates with people's sensibility deserve further study particularly when in the present world sensibility is under threat.

726 Massoumi, p. 208.

Community is the community of others, which does not mean that several individuals possess some common nature in spite of their differences, but rather that they partake only of their otherness. Otherness, at each moment, is the otherness of 'myself,' which is 'myself' only as an other. Otherness is not a common substance, but it is on the contrary the nonsubstantiality of each 'self' and of its relationship with others.<sup>727</sup>

727 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, p.155.

My sensibility is revealed in the work of art singularly, while at the same token I am as a maker, affected by the work and its materials, as if my sensibility and the affectivity of the work and the world were just two sides of one and the same thing. Deleuze and Guattari depict: 'The artist, including the novelist goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions on the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer.'<sup>728</sup>

728 Deleuze & Guattari, p. 171.

My hand that grips the brush and applies paint on canvas each time differently and over previous layers of paint is in unison or becomes a clash with the materiality of the work. The work becomes with my body posture that is most of the time anything but in unison with the materials. The work and my making, my touch of colour, the brush strokes that I make heavy or light, and then the sensitivity of the colour itself, its density and bulkiness affect me, and I receive and respond to them and their resistance. There is a whole atmosphere or mood, a whole other wave of time in which I take part with my work, a sensory flux, a sphere, in which edges extend, layers and spaces open paths and cracks, colours intensify themselves beside each other and send their overtones into one another.

For Lingis, the sensitive-sensible flesh is also a form of behaviour through an imperative that calls for one's competence, and this imperative manifests itself through the sensibility of my body: casting myself toward the world even if it was just a painting through which I manifest myself. Through making, I am being oriented, affected, at-

tuned and disposed by the world. While making, my being is imperative in the sense described by Lingis:

It is one's own being that is imperative; the being that is given to me is a destination to a potentiality for being which my actual being engenders, and a destination to the nonbeing that is to come for me. The imperative is not an imperative for the universal and the necessary, but for the singular: it is the imperative that my singular potentiality for being come to be.<sup>729</sup>

729 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 79.

The other affects me. Affectivity of the world is a mode of the world to manifest itself. My sensibility, and how it manifests itself through my flesh, is my mode of being in the world, being affected by the world is to recognize it and to recognize my relation to it. My sensibility stages my freedom.

My own body figures that what takes place in my sensuous field of sensible perception, not only carnally and intelligibly but as a volume and extension of my sensibility. In Lingis' opinion there is sensuality in my sensibility that is sensitive to matter, to substance. I perceive things in a sensuous medium, light darkness, an odour, density and vaporosity that fill me with their vibrancy<sup>730</sup>. This is the zone, according to Lingis, in which representational and affective sensations are located, the sensations of tone, pressure, buoyancy, fatigue, warmth, coldness, pleasure and pain. This region of sensation is kinesthetic, a nexus of actual and potential mobile forces that I feel.<sup>731</sup> Thus, the relation between sensuous sensibility and affectivity is not, anything intentional, the way in which it is for Massoumi, but it is of substance, of material and flesh. What is more, Lingis notes:

730 Lingis, *Phenomenological Explanations*, p. 107.

731 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Sensibility opens us not upon empty space but upon an extension without determinate frontiers upon luminosity, elasticity, vibrancy, savor. The sensuous element – light, tonality is not given as a multiplicity that has to be collected, or as a data that have to be identified, but as medium without profiles, without surfaces, without contours.<sup>732</sup>

732 Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 79.

For Lingis, openness towards the world is about vulnerability in which 'there is sensibility when our existence finds itself exposed to nothingness, finds itself in a clearing'.<sup>733</sup> For Lingis affect manifests

733 *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81.

itself from nothingness and from singularity, whereas for Massoumi this is not possible and affect is always conditioned.

Nature is not complete in any other sense than its affectivity and openness. Nature is essentially a sensible nature, writes Michel Henry, because the ek-stasis of being and any relation is necessarily of nature and auto-affective in its transcendence; for example, seeing is sensible seeing. According to Henry, 'the world is a sensible world because it is a life world and not a pure consciousness. It is affective in its basis, according to the innermost possibility of its ek-static display'.<sup>734</sup>

734 Henry, *Barbarism*, p. 25.

Every encounter with the work at hand traces the possibilities of becoming and marks a path toward a point of no-return, no matter how much I erase or cover or destroy. Then, as I am turned back, I never return to the same place where I started. Sensibility makes the voice of the differing heard, the voice of the materiality of the world that overlaps any physical, sociological or symbolic order. Sensibility is the passage through which difference manifests itself. Then every work, every attempt to make something, is the locus of my sensibility, sensibility as the medium or transformer of my creativity, of my thoughts, of my experience and emotions. Sensibility makes the incomplete resonate within me as the world affects me. Through the world affecting me, I sense that I am nothing without it: being in the world is being reciprocally singular plural.

#### ABUNDANCE OF SUDDENNESS

Life consists of little sudden touches. Suddenness, the strange feeling when something falls into place is, first, the evidence of the abundance of the world and, second, it is a relation in itself that cannot be spoken of with any determinacy. Suddenness is a phenomenon that I seldom experience. Suddenness: here I have a thing but I do not have a concept, as if suddenness were a product of another mind stemming from my sensibility and the affectivity of the world. However, it is as if suddenness marked a point in time, a placing of time that comes and goes, always abandoned in its own movement: a place that is simultaneously a location and an extension that takes place within the blink of an eye. Moreover, I may describe this tense moment of sud-

denness as being a rip in the veil of existence, a sudden clearance of being's approval, as if I had a chance to have a glimpse of what is on the other side of the draperies, or there behind the fog. Suddenness, a foreshortening of the otherwise infinite and blurred horizon to which I do not have an access, distorts my feelings and thoughts for a short slot of time, taking me by surprise and grasping me from myself, then making me aware of the momentariness of life. Suddenness: an opening to the intimate vertiginous thrill of exactitude.

*Layer after layer, and suddenly something new and unpredictable appears on canvas, something sensuous that cannot be determined right away, perhaps not even for weeks. The material painting is the threshold to this something that can take place so suddenly. 27 July 2012*

Suddenness is a mode of sensibility as a discovery that without warning becomes aware of itself: a collision between that side of individual subjectivity that is yet unknown to itself and that had not yet begun, irreducible to any phenomenon. Suddenness shows itself as a cut that leads to satori. A cut marks a birth, as Nancy illustrates:

There is only one scene that of coming into world. The thing that comes into presence has no interiority: it is not an image, it is the thing offered, it is the offering of a thing, the coming and going of its presence. It is the gift that is in question, of the offering and the coming. It is intimacy, the intimation and the intimidation of intimacy.<sup>735</sup>

<sup>735</sup> Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, pp. 353–354.

Bodies exist in space and only the present exists in time as eternally coming, as gathering together what is left of the past and shedding light for the future.<sup>736</sup> The carnal body becomes then a space, chiasma of the past and the future as the threads of life get tighter or looser. According to Deleuze, an instant of the present expresses an unlimited future and an unlimited past. The present makes the instant all the more intense, instantaneous.<sup>737</sup> In Deleuze's view, we can examine time either as Chronos, mathematical measuring, or as Aion, a transcendental and empty form of time. Chronos presents time only as a successive time and one that can be measured, whereas Aion subdivides the past and the future to a present that addresses to both directions at once: always already passed and eternally yet to come. Aion is

<sup>736</sup> Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 7.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

the condition for Chronos. As Deleuze puts it, Aion is the time of the event.<sup>738</sup>

738 *Ibid.*, pp. 186–189.

Suddenness indicates the empty form of time, aion, completion of something becoming as something, awakening that is essentially carnal and concerns the whole of being. Deleuze cites Blanchot: ‘this is the moment or point, where all events gather together in one that transmutation happens: this is the point at which death turns against death.’<sup>739</sup> When I have a sudden feeling that the work with which I have struggled is finally finished and that everything is locked for once and for all, this sudden feeling of completion marks a possible point, a death of the artist: it is the point where the work has gone forth of its maker’s hands and reached beyond any conception of art: it has become an empty form of time. Emitting tremulous radiance, the work could soar into the sky and grow immortal as works on museum walls do.

739 *Ibid.*, pp. 172–173.

Suddenness is like a satori, which shoots out an arrow and suddenly punctures me, if I am allowed to use Roland Barthes’ words, passes over and then leaves a trace in me. What then happens to me, struck by such an arrow? Am I awakened by a sensuous and intelligible spirit towards life or away from it? Such a moment of pleasure, a happy moment, a moment of discovery, a moment of suddenness, is the safety net, guaranteeing that I do not hurt myself but that I matter. Then the everydayness comes and spoils it all. The essence of a work is that it gives its promise one day, only to take it back again the next day.

And suddenly I experience, at precisely the same moment, a wondrous fulfillment and a painful division. Yet one revelation stands out above all the rest: I have become boundless, unpredictable to myself, multiple in possibilities through this alien, fresh but identical power, which approaches me as if I were approaching myself from the outside.<sup>740</sup>

740 Gombrowicz, p. 24.

Suddenness resembles a split within the rhythm of the world, an occurrence that cannot be conceptualized in any other way. Later, what I have is just a remembrance about a past event that possesses my spirit and perhaps a trace of it in my painting. Suddenness is an excess, it comes from somewhere, then it gathers, envelops and embraces firmly. The purely breaking or bursting quality of suddenness may be understood as an experience of completion. It is an empty



form of time but an absolutely carnal experience in the way in which spirit inhabits body. Blanchot elaborates:

This milieu is, so to speak, absolute. Distance is not excluded from it, but is immeasurable. Distance here is the limitless depth behind the image, a lifeless profundity, unmanipulable, absolutely present although not given, where objects sink away when they depart from their sense, when they collapse into their image.<sup>741</sup>

741 Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, p. 32.

Blanchot's depiction is nearly abstract and his suddenness is void, it is an abyss, an indistinct plenitude, which is empty: a place for passion, for *élan vital* that is both terrifying and tantalizing. However, and accordingly, as Blanchot suggests, the proximity or distance of suddenness draws the person close even though it leaves one absolutely at a distance.<sup>742</sup> By the same token, suddenness is blinding since it means losing one's distance and one's perspective to that by which one is illuminated. Suddenness is what escapes representation, it has no form or figure, it is destined to disappear, and it puts the world face to face with itself. Suddenness is depth that has no ground and no return. It goes hand in hand with sublime.

742 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

I want to describe this tense moment of suddenness as a foreshortening of the otherwise infinite horizon of possibilities and my sense of time and forcing me to think about something about which I had never thought before, making me suddenly aware of both of myself and an other. Suddenness is a mode of sensibility as a discovery that without warning becomes aware of itself: a collision between that side of individual subjectivity that is yet unknown to oneself and that had not yet begun. Without sensibility and the affectivity of the world there would not be suddenness. Suddenness is an ephemeral demonstration of the infinite in a singular, concrete and carnal manner. It makes life worthwhile and brings rise to the feeling of enthusiasm. Suddenness is something a work of art withholds. Jean-Luc Nancy emphasizes that 'this withholding makes art a reserve on our limit, a promised reservation a date that will come to our surprise. This withholding makes art'.<sup>743</sup>

743 Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, pp. 363–364.

The foremost notion that I come up with is that, besides the sudden revelation of the work's finiteness, its completion, each work is different, unique, heterogeneous, and yet it forms with other works a sequence, a series, a discourse, a passage to being, a chronology of

events. Still a particular work works as if it pushed aside from itself, as if the place, the boundaries provided by it, did not suffice to it, as if it willed to stand out from the shower of shine that sprinkles from inside out.

Nancy writes that a work's finitude is the sensing itself of the infinite in action<sup>744</sup>. Art exists but never in a manner of being general. Can art then be a collective noun when the experience of it is always singular? Its appearance is only that of presence of an absence, or of disappearance of suddenness. According to Nancy, its presence is always singularly and absolutely a presence, which comes and goes from its own discreteness, the infinite in the finite or, rather, the infinite of the finite.<sup>745</sup>

Suddenness calls for unity of both the subject and the object, of space and time. It engages the entire person in the marvel of the sensible, as if suddenness distinguished itself from the world as if it were a gift. Think of the most wonderful experience of your life: the happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps falling in love, or listening to music or the birds singing late in the evening, or suddenly 'being hit' by a book or a painting, or the scent of past. *Sensibilité à fleur de peau.*

<sup>744</sup> Nancy, *The Muses*, p. 33.

<sup>745</sup> Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, p. 348.

#### THE IMAGINING BODY

This project will seem fearsome to many, but on examination it gives no cause for alarm. Hearing sounds which are just sounds immediately sets the theorizing mind to theorizing, and the emotions of human beings are continually aroused by encounters with nature. Does not mountain unintentionally evoke in us a sense of wonder? Otters along a stream a sense of mirth? Night in the woods a sense of fear? Do not rain falling and mists rising up suggest the love binding heaven and earth? Is not decaying flesh loathsome? Does not death of someone we love bring sorrow? And is there a greater hero than the least plant that grows? What is more angry than the flash of lightning and the sound of thunder? These responses to nature are mine and still not necessarily correspond with another's. Emo-

tion takes place in the person who has it. And sounds, when allowed to be themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly. The opposite is what is meant by response ability.<sup>746</sup>

746 John Cage,  
*Experimental Music*,  
<http://academic.evergreen.edu/a/arunc/compmusic/cage1/cager.pdf> [accessed 16.12.2016],  
p. 3.

I usually have an idea to begin with; but it seems that my body is the first obstacle that I have to overcome, and it seems to stay so, since I am clumsy and paint like an idiot. My hands shake, my mixing of paints and mediums never happens in the right proportion, and the shades of colours seldom match the shades that I had earlier figured out in my mind. At best the finished work might reveal some glimpses of my initial intentions – if they matter any more. Painting turns out to be a play of Peek-a-Boo, and I cannot find it a stable object any longer.

As such, my own painting operates like a distorting mirror in the midst of the most proper and intimate sphere of my own work, my own creation, and turns it into a monster, and it turns me into a queen of incompleteness. In such an experience, I am unavoidably looked at and touched through a stranger's eyes that happen to be my own. If I were simply I, I could recognize myself, but now that the strange and unsatisfactory is ceaselessly concerned with me, I am constantly exposed to a surprise, either disappointing or astonishing. The strange and incomplete experience that I have makes me try to make sense of it through my constant, endless work. However, this is in vain; I can neither grasp it nor answer it. Yet, this vertiginous thrill of inexactitude gives rise to a creative trait in me, a scent of threat.

To make an image: what an indefinite, unsettled and risky position to take. I take the risk and enter the intimate space and stand the chance of frustration, of shame. I can always abandon or destroy the work if I did not like it, if it caused too much annoyance, if it made me hate myself. Nevertheless, I cannot wipe off what it had revealed to me of myself: my clumsiness, my lack of skill, the other in me. All that is at stake is that the work keeps me working and I try in vain, except the scarce moments of suddenness, to get ahead of it trying to get even with it, trying to understand it as the incomplete manifests itself in the work.

Not long ago I read once again the story of the Frog Prince by Brothers Grimm. This tale calls into question the givenness of the contrasting categories of the human and the nonhuman. In the story, the youngest and most beautiful of the King's daughters experiences

something uncanny: a horrid frog. The frog does the daughter a favour and, in return for the favour, he asks the poor girl to do some good deeds to him, deeds that are actually very human. However, she shows her unwillingness and tries to postpone her promises because the frog disgusts her. As it seems that the daughter does not have any morals and is behaving badly, the King orders her to fulfill her promises. She throws the frog with all her strength against the wall and, falling, the frog turns into a prince. In the end, they get married: she becomes a bride and the Frog Prince, a bridegroom. The moral of this fairy tale is that one's performance is connected not only to the formation of the subject but also to the production of the matter of bodies and the mattering of objects, which actually is an important viewpoint. Being is a constant experience, and it is about encountering difference, strangeness and incompleteness from inside and outside oneself, which indicates that an experience takes place in between: here, it unites the King's daughter and the horrid frog and as such their being becomes something transgressive.

I suffer from a desire for an unfulfilled desire that never gets fulfilled. My aim is to paint outwards, expressing an inward desire. Then comes a moment of recognition, always involuntary in that I never know which moment it might be or when it might surface, a moment that I will never understand since it configures itself with all the lack of preconfigured knowledge: a split second, a pause, time within time: a moment that stands before all the moments, a moment for which I have waited for so long, a declaration of sorts. Perhaps the unpredictability of that sudden moment when I sense that the work is finished offers a novel possibility for the formation of new subjectivity, at least a new perspective.

Descartes' view on the separation of the body and the soul is still accurate; hence action and the mind are even now often studied as separate entities. An idealistic view states that the psychic is primary and the material and bodily secondary. A materialistic view states that the ground of everything is the material world where we are living and that the psychic side of one is only its outcome.<sup>747</sup> In other words, my body is the vessel of conceptual meaning, and yet my body cannot represent itself, it must be represented by other means, for example by a mute art object or a horrid frog in a tale.

Mental activity is not possible without the body and its nervous system. The nervous system is subordinate to the aims and target hierarchy of an organism and functions as a whole in order to realize

<sup>747</sup> Timo Järvillehto, *Missä sielu sijaitsee? Psyykkisen toiminnan hermostollinen perusta* (Oulu: Pohjoinen, 1987), pp. 14–18.

748 Ibid., pp. 88–146.

these aims and targets. Mental action is not something that would have evolved suddenly but is the result of gradual evolution of an organism in relation to its environment. Cognition and emotion are bound to the organism's target, and motivation, according to Timo Järvillehto, target is what binds them together.<sup>748</sup> For example, a pianist who has practised well a quick passage does not play as an automatic machine just following the notation with technical accuracy, but as subservient to the music that she/he wants to generate. In a same manner a dancer who performs brisk allegro steps, for example *petit battement*, does not perform solely technically, according to the book but with aplomb, ballon and bravura. The piece of art takes place in between the pianist's or the dancer's body and mind, between the materiality of the notes and the instrument, between one's sensibility and the affectivity of the world, in between what is nothing in itself and all together. The work oscillates between bodies and materials as agents and bodies and materials as objects. Then, if I follow John Cage's line of thought, one could try to give up one's attempts to control the materials and complicate one's musical technique towards an approximation of new possibilities and awareness:

Or as before, one may give up the desire to control sound, clear his mind of music, and set about discovering means to let sound be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments.<sup>749</sup>

749 Cage, p. 3.

My work proposes interruptions, juxtapositions, a threat, discontinuity, unfinishedness and open-endedness. We both, the work and I, point to a future outcome, we both verify becoming, alluding to a future, a finished unfinishedness, a continuous incompleteness, to a moment of closure that will never arrive. We co-habit an irreversible, permanently open field of becoming, and we are both being found through the process of making.

*I was in despair with my biggest painting. Once again I started to cover what I had previously done. I also highlighted some parts that I found interesting. I used rubber gloves to paint, which seemed to help me a lot, both to cover and to point out. Wearing rubber gloves and painting with them somehow made my working process more free and fleeting. I do not know if the paintings are ready yet. It is a very big mystery when is the*

*moment that the painting is finished; I feel like someone is playing a trick on me with every fragment of my imagination on that.* 14 July 2012

The work is staring at me or, better, it penetrates my whole body. Nevertheless, I cannot perceive it with my eyes but with my sensibility. I can only sense its physical absence: what is not there, what I most desire I cannot see there, and yet it stares back at me. The materiality of the existing painting that I have realized blurs the desired image but, nevertheless, it is a material foundation, something to build on. Thus the painting that I have painted is never the painting that I wanted to paint, but a near miss, a substitution, a consolation, as good as it can get. I examine the break or gap between these two. I find myself in two places, in two different moments of time, in between. The work rips me away from myself. Do I suffer from this uncomfortable situation of not being in or out of the scene but somewhere in between? Slipping in and out, as if I were out of my own reach, within an imaginative space where time and space intertwine in a peculiar way, as if all this happened as some sort of ghostly formation of a state, in which neither time nor place has no application in an everyday sense.

My body and I: we go together and I keep my body with me. For me to paint is about listening to my body on what to do, about being sensitive to it. I paint the body as it paints me: the sphere of sensations, efficiency, recollecting my sensuality and my passion as I delve into the painting's matter, which indicates my body's workings and my sensibility. I come as my body's friend whereas the work comes and challenges me, taking possession of me and occupying my time. However, the quarrel that we have over and with the work is more about mutual affection and intimacy than anything antagonistic.

My body is trained, skilled and experienced; it is obedient, even cooperative. But, most of all, it is clumsy when I am painting, and then it is lyrical, pliable, energetic when I am dancing. I have finally learned to live with both of these sides. However, there is more to me than clumsiness and plasticity: my need to experiment, to put my savagery, unsophistication, primitiveness, all the mysterious life forces that I feel stirring inside me, into practice. These feelings escape into my work. My work gives me another place from which I perceive myself. My studio is my wilderness. I work in the midst of the incomprehensible. The incomprehensible has fascination that works upon me.

In painting, the fascination works in order to ease something, to ease the strange, which is struggling to escape, a primitive scream needing to be released, a deformed baby eager to be taken out of its mouth.

My body dreams of exceeding its limits on a daily basis, and when it paints, it begins to share fantasies. This is not easy because my body and my mind speak different languages of different origin, or so it seems, and each puts itself at risk by its means. Yet they are both present in my work, they confront each other, they fall and stumble into each other, exhausted, drowning in waves of confusion. This is why I find that my work is first of all about motion. It is not about looking but about sensing and experimenting, about arranging and listening, about my soul's connection between me and my demons present in my work: art and creativity seen as demonology. The work conveys a sense of agency, but whose?

*As a rule, there are many paintings beneath each other in one painting. I wish they were visible to all. Yet the painter is the only one who knows this, even though there might be some wrinkles and bumps that give hints to the spectator of something being under the surface. I wonder if it is a certain rule in life to cover and cover, so that in the end there are endless layers. I like the idea of painting from darkness to light so that the dark and gloomy colours are replaced by colours with lots of light in them. As if there were hope and a new beginning in each work and lightness were in the end stronger. However, usually it does not go like this; instead, I use dark colours on the top to hide the glimmering lightness, to postpone it, and what is left is just inklings. When I observe the two paintings on which I have been working, I see that something new has emerged and that there is also a round figure in one of them. I wonder whether it represents something. At the present, I am not yet able to answer this question. 27 March 2013*

I have ideas and thoughts on how to proceed but somehow, even paradoxically, I cannot grasp these when working. I realize that I cannot be forced to operate within those kinds of restraints my mind presents. I start to negotiate the space between my mind, my body and the work in progress. I take action, my body bends forward and something happens. I love to compose a painting although it causes a

lot of agony, but I have learned to tune myself into the unknown and unpredictable. Actually, my studio provides me with a huge opportunity of discovery, of being moved, of even creating a sudden wow moment.

*The painting I did today did not go anywhere although I was deeply immersed in the work. I had some obstacles, but I did not give up and finally found some energy and passion inside me. What is the purpose of difficulties, do difficulties and obstacles have a purpose? Obstacles, difficulties and problems are everywhere in my work; they concern both the beginning and the middle and the finishing of the particular work. What is the relationship between ideas and problems and obstacles? I do have ideas before I start working, however, I do not want to become a slave of my ideas. Ideas, if I follow them promptly can really flatten the work. Anyhow, I want to question are ideas transparent and translatable as such into a painting? 21 April 2012*

I am grateful of my body. I need it: it comes out of necessity, naturally. The mystery of painting is that even though it is something essentially natural to me and my body, it is something that I cannot make naturally at ease most of the time. At least this is how I experience it. What is normal to me is that I often have to take detours: scrape and hide and even destroy. Perhaps this kind of process eludes categorization, defies definition and evaporates under any cold, scrutinizing gaze of traditional academic discourse. Instead of being scholarly, I embrace my body poetics.

The experience of incompleteness has challenged me to rethink my body: I am dispersed within my body, I am a concrete being, a corporeal, animate and engaged being. My body functions as a passage beyond itself, it extends beyond my skin, my hair, my limbs, my veins, my fingers. The gestures that I make are an evidence my body entering outside itself; my body is my entrance to the world. My body is the site of all that concerns me. I can be touched from a distance only because of my body. My body transports me past myself. I am a bodily phenomenon: my body is not *I can*, it is *I am*. My body is already outside myself. There is no mind-doing that is separate from body-doing, as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone argues: "Thinking in process is not an assemblage of discrete gestures happening one after the next, but an



750 Sheets-Johnstone,  
*The Primacy of Movement*,  
pp. 487–490.

enfolding of all movement into a perpetually moving present', and the movement has a dynamic density, a density that stretches out the present moment, transferring it into an artwork.<sup>750</sup> Therefore, there is nothing that belongs to either the artwork or thinking or the body alone.

Painting exceeds any conceivable measure yet it falls short of completion. It has its own momentum, its own tempo, yet it is capable of realizing an aesthetic configuration. In John Cage's words:

And what is the purpose of writing music? One is, of course, not dealing with purposes but dealing with sounds. Or the answer must take the form of paradox: a purposeful purposelessness or a purposeless play. This play, however, is an affirmation of life – not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we're living, which so excellent once one gets one's mind and one's desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord.<sup>751</sup>

751 Cage, p. 5.

752 Damasio, p. 19.

#### FANTASY AT PLAY – TELL ME: IS IT A F(R)OG OR IS IT ME?

753 What we have to keep in mind is that in human interpretation or reading, the human perspective is part of the phenomenon, and that no one speaks exactly the same language, yet it is always a human perspective. There are infinite ways to relate phenomena, language, concepts and the world with each other. To seek the universals of natural sciences seems to gain importance over other views, even though reality is much richer than with what natural sciences are concerned.

The brain makes the mind conscious. According to Antonio Damasio, images are the main currency of our minds. With the word 'image' Damasio refers to patterns of all kinds of sensory modalities, not just the visual but also the abstract, as well as concrete patterns. The patterns represent things and events located outside the brain, either in the body or in the external world, but some patterns also represent the brain's own operations of other patterns. The mind emerges when the activity of small circuits is organized across large networks so as to compose momentary patterns.<sup>752</sup>

Minds can be either non-conscious or conscious. According to Damasio, the very distinctive feature of one's consciousness is a much felt thought of oneself<sup>753</sup>: 'Conscious minds begin when self comes to mind.'<sup>754</sup> Consciousness is a state of mind. When selves do not occur within minds, those minds are not conscious. If there is no mind, there is no consciousness; a conscious state of mind is always experi-

754 Damasio, p. 24.

enced. It is always a first-person perspective of each of our organisms, never observable by anyone else.<sup>755</sup>

755 Ibid., pp. 167–170.

The combination of flesh and neural probes constitutes the body's border. Damasio describes:

Because of this curious arrangement the representation of the world external to the body can come into the brain only via the body itself, namely via its surface. The body and the surrounding environment interact with each other, and the changes caused in the body by that interaction are mapped in the brain. It is certainly true that the mind learns of the outside world via the brain, but it is equally true that the brain can be informed only via the body.<sup>756</sup>

756 Ibid., p. 97.

In Bram Stoker's gothic horror novel *Dracula* from 1897, a big bat flaps and buffets its wings against the window of Lucy Westenra, Dracula's first victim, frightening her out of her wits. To my mind, in the story of Dracula bats can be seen as representing the strange, fearful and mysterious darkness of nature; and moreover, as we humans are part of nature as well, anything strange, uncanny or unidentifiable within us.

What is of importance in *Dracula* is also to recognize the interdependence between the human body and the mind, which both constitute an animate being made of animated material that can easily amount to a surprising sequence of events, imaginative or not. In *Dracula*, Lucy's horrid experiences are manifested as something internal, as a differentiation and transformation that takes place inside her but that has external effects in her. Do these alterations in her being stem from her sensibility or from her being under the spell of nocturnal bats or both? Be that as it may, Bram Stoker prods his readers to expand and explore their own experiences of the relation between the human and the extra human, i.e. the other and (un-)nature, as nothing fixed nor pre-given.

I became interested in *Dracula* after I had made two paintings, one named *Transylvania* and the other *A Bat*. I was not acquainted with this tale although I had heard of it. It was after painting these two works that I also read the novel. It was a surprise to me that I had painted such works – especially the *Transylvania* painting that is a landscape. I started it with light and vivid colours that awakened in me joy and happiness, and then I painted it all over with green and bluish blacks.

After that I scraped the surface of the painting with a knife so that what appeared was a landscape of churches, castles, graveyards, houses, bridges and hills. I was very surprised at the work. I did like the technique that I had used, but it was the motif that was unexpected and that astonished me.

Earlier I had painted the work called *A Bat*. It has a bat and a Siamese twin ballet dancer on a vivid purplish-red colour background. In an exhibition where it was being exhibited a mother came to me. She had visited the exhibition earlier with her six-year-old daughter and she told me that her daughter had been strongly affected by this work. According to the mother, this painting presented exactly how her daughter felt in dance classes. I was not sure myself why the dancer had to be a Siamese twin or why I had painted a bat on it. Strange. I toast my ghost: so much for me being on the intended course of action that without any warning changes into something else. Gradually, the touch of strangeness becomes something tense, an unpleasant state that punches a hole in me. Perhaps one day I will be all holes and nothing but a hollow grin. I have to box for my profession: I am an artist after all.

*I want to postpone the beginning, to withdraw myself from any predefined action, any thought, any sensation, and only to linger at a threshold of the not-yet-known. How to begin; all but confusion, chaos. How to tame the eagerness of imagination, of my body? It seems that I paint everywhere, in a tram while travelling back home from my studio; indeed, the tram is the place where I usually paint in my mind. I have a notebook in my cell phone full of finished paintings, but verbal ones. And when I enter my studio and encounter an empty canvas, all that is shattered; the reality is so different from my mind, I have entered a different world, a real world of making. The ghostly image in my mind is an iridescent soap bubble. The real treasure box is the canvas before me. 4 December 2011*

Fantastic means that something extraordinary and imaginative attracts me. When something fantastic takes place, something exceptional and striking appears. The word has a Greek origin, *phantastikos*, stemming from the verb *phantazein*, which means 'to have visions', 'to imagine'. Fantastic is usually taken as something remote from reality and used as a synonym for imagining. Fantasy is an embodiment of

both hopes and fears. Fantasy is inherent in creativity; also, fantasy as perception aims at the thing itself, the thing that it imagines. It does not content itself with a mere representation of the imagined or fantasized.<sup>757</sup> Fantasy separates itself from intuitive knowledge. Yet, the meaning-making verve of fantasy strives to go beyond fiction, as if reality did not suffice in making meanings, as if fantasy were needed for better understanding of the whole. This is to say that fantasy is an important method in researching reality.

However, Edward S. Casey warns of defining fantasy: ‘attempts at strict definition are in danger of effecting premature foreclosure’.<sup>758</sup> One’s ability to fantasize is an indication that one does not have a limit. Moreover, Casey elaborates that the ambiguity of fantasy is not only verbal but phenomenal and corporeal as it can well become something increasingly involving, dramatic and sensuously vivid.<sup>759</sup> As such, all kinds of phenomena can be constitutive of reality, even fantastic ones. The meaningfulness of fantasizing comes from the relation between me and the work at hand, from that space between us, as if there were an open door between us. Fantasizing is a mode of creating meanings that are not under control of any other faculty. Also, if there were not fantasy or imagination in the world, there would not be anything meaningful either.

Imagination is needed to improve and complete the human and the non-human world. Casey makes an effort to examine how to differentiate between fantasy, on the one hand, and hallucination and imagination, on the other. He depicts that fantasy has a narrative character, a tendency to tell a story, whereas imaginings are non-narrative, episodic at best. Fantasied narratives also involve the fantasist. Casey then discusses Sigmund Freud’s and other psychoanalysts’ tenor of fantasy as reflective self-representation or as erotic or ambitious. The subject can control fantasy more than when one is hallucinating. Furthermore, a sense of fulfilment is of importance for the fantasist. Then, what comes to the thetic that is constituting character of fantasy, it does not necessitate, according to Casey, that it takes place in actuality, but it takes place in one’s inner reality.<sup>760</sup>

However, while making, I am fantasizing in actuality via my animated body and with the help of the materials that I use. Fantasizing enables me to see the world anew, as if animated by a perceptual power. I find fantasizing a consequence of strength, an expression of not just a desire but also a will, of an increased coordination and of a harmonizing and making the sense of chaos. Yet, it is a wonder-

757 Julia Jansen, *Phenomenology, Imagination and Interdisciplinary Research*, [https://www.academia.edu/3222717/Imagination\\_in\\_Phenomenology\\_and\\_Interdisciplinary\\_Research](https://www.academia.edu/3222717/Imagination_in_Phenomenology_and_Interdisciplinary_Research), [accessed 24 May 2016].

758 Casey, ‘Imagination, Fantasy, Hallucination and Memory’, p. 79.

759 *Ibid.* p. 79.

760 *Ibid.*, pp. 80–85.

ful play of non-sense and means to achieve the complete that lies ahead.

Perhaps a sense of fantasy is hidden in the way in which all languages are inherently ambiguous to begin with. Language, or any language, has more than one meaning; one's reality goes to conform to what one sees, to what one feels and believes. Yet, I want to communicate my works and I believe that viewers want to have some sort of sense of my doings, so there is an inclination toward an agreement between us. In other words, it is the communality of our being that makes us create meanings. However, it is not just the meanings that communicate with each other but also the mediums: matter or media. In this sense imagination and fantasy as they point beyond have a say.

I made a painting named *In a Middle of a Forest* that was later bought by a lady who told me that the work reminded her of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I am familiar with the story but I had not thought of Alice while painting the work. However, this lady told me that in that work she had immediately recognized Alice falling down the rabbit-hole. I thought that this was fantastic since I find this wonderful piece of children's literature fascinating.

One thing that makes *Alice in Wonderland* such a wonderful book is Lewis Carroll's extraordinary use of language. His paradoxical use of language can be seen in the various ways in which he plays with words and in how his characters use and misuse words but also through the poems that are full of nonsense words. These words and poems say their own sense. This is of course the power of any art form.

Gilles Deleuze has noted that in *Alice in Wonderland* sense and non-sense have a special relation with each other that cannot imitate true or false. The nonsense is 'always defined by a deficiency of sense and a lack'.<sup>761</sup> Sense is always an effect, just a surface product; it is a product of heterogeneity, which actually marks the presence of nonsense within sense.<sup>762</sup>

Fantastic creates another world or, better, another of the world. This is not a world in which I am escaping while painting but a world of possibilities that can actualize at any moment. Fantastic is dependent upon the fact that language can and must be able to mean more than one thing at a time. This indicates that nonsense cannot be truly a lack of sense, but it is always co-present to sense.<sup>763</sup> There must be something in common to each. In the beginning I did not make sense of the strangeness of my works, but now I have started to get a more coherent picture in which this strangeness is situated within sense.

<sup>761</sup> Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 82.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

*For me in painting there are neither rules of etiquette nor any standards, except those that I set myself. However, I often ponder if there are some rules that have an impact on me, as I am born in a certain place in a certain time within a certain culture. Since I am curious to know what happens in society and around me, the world and its happenings must have an effect on my making. Sentimental provocative naïveté is how I would describe my work; slightly linked to a woman's point of view. I have been working with a scrapbook and it feels good to build images that way. What is amazing is that the mind tries to keep things together, no matter how chaotic they seem. The mind sews things together, makes sense and starts to create plots. 9 January 2012*

The ground rules of fantastic are built on nonsense and chaos. Here the importance of sensibility, incompleteness and imagination come into the picture: fantastic is a response made possible by sensibility and imagination to reverse the ground rules of the narrative world.

Normally the games that we play are played by their rules and we behave accordingly. The games in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are chaotic and lack rules. Both games in which Alice takes part in the story, the caucus-race and the game of croquet, turn out to be games of chaos and disorder. What is at stake in these games of nonsense and what does it mean?

In the caucus-race, one begins and finishes when one wishes. It seems that there is neither any rule according to which one could know beforehand that the race is over, nor is there any principle by which to announce the winner. In croquet, live hedgehogs are used as balls and live flamingos serve as mallets. Players do not have turns; instead, they all play at once, without waiting for their turns. All this resembles the way in which my painting proceeds: there is not a precise or right moment for the work to be finished or completed, there is no definite plan of action, but the game of painting proceeds chaotically.

Traditionally, the rules of the game pre-exist and are understood by the players. Otherwise there is no sense in playing. Rules determine whether you win or lose. The chances are distributed within the plane of rules. This is to say that rules organize the game and the chance that might take place. Rules pre-structure the play, as if it had been designed as something stable and graspable. Actually it is. Any sur-

prise, any event is something that can be expected or something that can at least be intuited, something that seems plausible and is always governed by the rules of the game. This said, playing by the rules is a game of skill in which chance plays a role within a given and existing set of rules. Paradoxically, chance here becomes something else than what is normally understood by it. Contrary to a chance that takes place within a set of rules, a chance within making art has another nature that of disorder and chaos.

What do the nonsense rules in *Alice in Wonderland* then mean? They mean that games become singular experiments and that one puts oneself outside the usual and pre-ordered, one puts oneself into a world of fantasy. As a result, the game that one is playing becomes a work of art. The premise in *Alice in Wonderland* is that the games in Wonderland are significant, and the fact that they have no rules is significant and noteworthy as well. Chaos, disorder, singularity, effort, attempt and taking chance all become valuable, important and powerful.

In creative work, there are no existing rules, or if there are, they are perhaps more easily abandoned than in other fields of life. It is commonly said that you first have to know the rules in order to abandon them. In creative work, each move invents its own rules, or, to use Deleuze's words, 'all throws affirm chance and endlessly ramify it with each throw', and, 'The unique cast is a chaos, each throw of which is a fragment. Each throw operates a distribution of singularities, a constellation'.<sup>764</sup> According to Deleuze, when in a game chance and skill are no longer distinguishable:

This game is reserved then for thought and art. In it there is nothing but victories for those who know how to play, that is, how to affirm and ramify chance, instead of dividing it *in order to* dominate it, *in order to* wager, *in order to* win. This game, which can only exist in thought and which has no other result than the work of art, is also that by which thought and art are real and disturbing reality, morality, and the economy of the world.<sup>765</sup>

*When I paint I feel the most conscious of myself, of my presence, of something more than my skill, memories or experience. It is a moment that I cannot understand, but a moment of expression, experimenting, experiencing. I try to set ideas and thoughts*

<sup>764</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

*in some sort of order or into a cohesive whole, into something that makes sense. I never succeed. Still, I might succeed in a different manner if I just obeyed the painting's rules that I have yet not discovered. I never succeed, and I still manage to finish a painting. There are no barriers in my studio, no limits, no fences, no veiling, no ground, just a spaceless space, a space of pure quality and possibility. As if time and space created another space, as if they exceeded themselves and melted into one another. Can it ever be described in images or in words where I have been in making, what I have encountered and experienced? Words and images do not suffice. These are only the echoes of experiencing, moments of recognition. A moment that is a sensuous moment but that lacks all the qualities that can be formulated. A painting cannot answer any questions, it is an answer itself. On days like this, rainy and grey, I try to capture ideas, thoughts and feelings into a complete work. However, the work captures me, it makes me expand myself, unravel myself.* 16 February 2012

Alice kept using her knowledge to make sense of the things happening around her in Wonderland. The ability to describe things logically, at least with the knowledge we have established in everyday life, is also defined as the 'normality' of a person. Besides, grasping the knowledge of the common world is usually equated with one's existence, subjectivity and identity. In the Mad Tea Party, Alice would see the March Hare, the Hatter and the Dormouse as mad, for they could not fit into her logic and knowledge of the world. How then can an unorganized conversation become something meaningful?

When Alice was falling down the rabbit-hole, she kept talking to herself about what she had learnt at school. She used words like *Latitude* and *Longitude*, yet she had no idea of their exact meaning. After changing sizes a couple of times, she tried to convince herself that she was still herself by reciting to herself the multiplication table and the capitals of countries. As she mixed up the knowledge that she had acquired, she came to the conclusion that she had turned into another person. Here Carroll wants to tell his readers that knowledge, logic and rationalizing can well fail. This might, at the same time, give us insights into how to stay open in, first, adopting the seemingly nonsense in the world and in ourselves, and, second, attending to an unorganized conversation or any kind of interaction that seems cha-



otic. Here again what is of importance is one's sensibility in a given experienced situation, as if sensibility became the only lifeline one can lean on.

Later the Hatter has a watch that Alice notices because it tells the month but not the clock. Time moves forward as the month changes but stays still as the clock remains unchanged. Alice remarks on it but the Hatter finds nothing odd about it; his time is always frozen at six o'clock because he has angered Time. The Hatter moves through space as Alice observes: "Then you keep moving round, I suppose?" However, that movement is not tied to the linearity of time. Instead, it shows that only the present exists. As the clock is frozen to six o'clock, it indicates towards what Deleuze notes on Aion as the eternal truth of time, as a pure empty form of time, 'which has freed itself of its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound its own circle'.<sup>766</sup> This is what happens to the paintings: they give a glimpse to the ambiguity of time, action and mattering. A painting becomes a structure of being in constituting simultaneously a space between passivity and activity: it moves through space. It is exactly the space that Penelope, the way in which I cited Homer's *Odyssey* at the beginning of this study, creates her own space by working at her loom and then unravelling the cloth.

766 Ibid., p. 189.

The sense of painting is a sense beyond sense: it is nonsense. It is on this level on which painting operates. The paradox is that what is expressed exists outside the expression. Without fantasy and imagination, without the casting of a dice and taking a chance, there would not be paintings, and without one's non-sense there would not be sense.

Even though Alice's Wonderland is a fantasy world seen from a child's perspective, it reflects the features of anyone's lives, i.e. the running White Rabbit who worries about being late and the mouse who is hostile towards cats. Alice's difficulties and struggles are shown in an amusing and enigmatic way, but we all know that they are just reflections of our mundane troubles and the rules of co-existing as part of collective living. I cannot but think about the reversing of the ground rules in other realms of life than art in a sense the Early Romantics advocated the notion of chaos.

In terms of incompleteness, the moment of difference, lack or limit emerges through the ways in which I negotiate and cast a dice between that which is knowable and that which is never exactly knowable but is always desired for and ahead of me. This desiring reinforces the contradictions between presence and absence as present, making

use of allegory, archetype and myth and then reversing the ground rules. Thus incompleteness creates a space for creativity, fantasy and imagination. The unknowability inherent in incompleteness is the inherent theme of all creativity.

#### CLOSING WORDS

This chapter has attempted to examine the ways in which sensibility is at work in creative making. The concept of sensibility has been put forward as a means for both apprehending and comprehending reality as something not only incomplete but also as abundant. Art and aesthetics, the original disciplines of multiplicity, singularity, difference and sensibility, question our cultural beliefs and desires that understand reality a matter of imitation and standardization. I associated the concept of sensibility with the formation of the subject and the notions of fragment, suddenness, play, fantasy and imagination. Thus, I have opened a discussion on the ways in which sensibility manifests itself. The first and foremost notion is that sensibility gives evidence of experiences and phenomena being real and meaningful even when they take place within a relation between artwork, a maker and a viewer and perhaps take place solely in one's imagination. However, this dissertation is far from being complete when it comes to grasping the essence sensibility, and for this reason the area of sensibility is worthy of further study.

With sensibility I emphasize the carnal and pre-linguistic conscious, experiential emotional and sensory-perceptual conditions of orienting myself in a situation that is neither known nor predictable before hand. The rejection of the mind-body dualism and the representational approaches to human consciousness has led me to treat experiences as bodied and interdependent on affectivity of the materials and of the world that takes place regardless of me. Sensibility is the loom that weaves those different threads of experiencing the affectivity of the world into a fabric that is later unravelled for example into art works.

Sensibility is a type of intelligibility of body and mind. Sensibility can well turn into knowledge. This is the pivotal point. However, the

exact way in which sensibility is combined with the different kinds of knowledge presented in this work is worth examining further. Then again, we have to be careful with what we mean by knowledge, and we have to remember that knowledge is inferior to sensibility that might well invert and contest what is understood as knowledge. Sensibility may well bring down existing conventions through one's physical engagement with making, it represents an engagement that generates an animation, a movement which places one within an aesthetic space in which fragmentation, chaos, fantastic, uncanny, moments of irresolution and suddenness are the all-embracing characteristics of making. Sensibility is a condition of possibility: experiencing and perceiving happen from out of sensibility. I find myself in the world through my sensibility. Sensibility is a gesture towards sense through the heterogeneity of sense, nonsense and chaos.

*I continue to work with the three paintings; adding new layers and wiping colour away. It is kind of an ironical play. I also draw by adding and erasing, one can do it either way, but there must be something in order to wipe something out. Colours have a tension between each other, as there is a tension between different kinds of lines. Where does a painting take place, on the surface of the work? Every stage of the work is important; every hidden layer and every erased line, part of the work, part of the journey. My paintings affect me although I do not know their language. What is it then that unites us? In my view it is the sensibility and fragility of all being that weaves us together. 24 July 2013*

This finding of being, one's own being, as a power and exigency that lays claim on one is conscience. Conscience is, first of all, an imperative that calls one and orders one to be. Someone becomes a singer by saying to himself or herself: I have my song to sing, a song that can only come from my voice, my heart, my loneliest, my unrequited grief, my heart, my nerves and sensibility.<sup>767</sup>

<sup>767</sup> Lingis, *Sensation: Intelligibility in Sensibility*, p. 5.

The essence and the generative aspect of sensibility is to expose that there is something that is yet to be discovered and that is still being disguised within oneself and the other, somewhere in between. Sensibility unlocks one's potential to express an excess of meaning; it

guides understanding that comes later, it leads imagination and the desire to satisfy one's curiosity, inquisitiveness and the experience of incompleteness. Sensibility marks a sensuous encounter, a plane where any existing presentation is ruptured as if a novel experience vibrated through one's body as something unrecognizable, something affective, which cannot be repeated and which overflows any concept, until it is over. Sensibility as a faculty is unlimited and flexible, it composes; it is a poetic tool. Sensibility externalizes through my body and my inner experiences, emotions and thoughts. Sensibility is the dramatic element of my making, the turning point without which I, any sudden revelation, imagination and fantasizing, would not be possible. For sensibility always reaches out beyond itself and oneself. The concept comes later.

# Conclusion

The initial objective of my research was to determine the reasons for my paintings seeming so strange, clumsy and unsatisfactory to me. In pursuing this question, it became fundamental to investigate the kind of role incompleteness has in my making and creative thinking and whether it is stagnating, crippling, paralyzing or something else. The outcomes of this research show, first, that incompleteness, relating to unfinishedness, imperfection and insatiability, is in fact a positive factor that promotes creativity and guides toward new possibilities and perspectives even if the word under normal conditions in daily use has a negative connotation and a crippling effect. Second, this research indicates that the experience of the strangeness of the work acts as evidence and a symptom of the inherent incompleteness of the work and the maker. In this research, I have aimed to show the ways incompleteness works, all that is at stake and all that it means. Indeed, incompleteness is explained by our future.

In this dissertation I have defended the thesis that the theory of sensibility is an elementary requirement in investigating the sovereignty of incompleteness in creative making. The essence of incompleteness cannot be discovered until it is put into relation with sensibility. This research coalesced into artistic research; however, it has been grounded in theoretical theories of art and aesthetics and participatory philosophy. This study has defined the concepts of incompleteness and sensibility within the creative making of a practitioner-researcher by accepting the truth that both incompleteness and sensibility are complicated concepts to define and unfold.

This study has adopted an artistic perspective. Thus, creative making and an artwork are the basis for contributing to new knowledge. The findings of this research reveal that the experience of incompleteness is not determined by means of the faculty of understanding but by those of the faculty of sensibility. I shall conclude this work by discussing the purpose and relevance of this dissertation, as well as

the methods and the theoretical background of this work, and then by summarizing its findings and limitations.

### *Discussion*

This research has examined the concept of incompleteness within creative making in a broad way, touching upon the material aspects in and around the work and the interactive relation between the work and the maker. This study has explored works that have been unintentionally left incomplete and unresolved and that have perhaps later been destroyed, as well as works that are finished yet incomplete. I have explicitly taken a practical perspective in examining the blurry distinction between an incomplete work and a finished one. However, I have extended this boundary into philosophical reflections on the notions of sensibility, experience, emotion, the body, matter and appearing. All these notions, common in making, amount to the difference experienced by the maker.

The aim of this dissertation, with its five chapters, has been to provide a view and a concretization of both incompleteness and sensibility. This study has been conducted of the material, the experiential and bodily aspects of incompleteness in relation to creative making and the role of a maker's subjectivity, one's self, that ground both action and its subsequent evaluation in order to create deeper understanding of both incompleteness and sensibility. The experience of incompleteness falls beyond the hold of intentionality; thus, the question that arises here highlights the corporeal aspects in making.

This study is grounded on my own experience of incompleteness and became necessary after my own paintings hit me as being strange and incomplete. The intimacy of this experience grew into a scale that could not be incorporated into either private or the public. My central concern was my embodied and experiential encounter while making and the way in which my work oscillated between satisfactory and unsatisfactory regardless of time and space. As one of the findings of this study indicate, the presence of incompleteness in its coming and going manifests itself as an opening of the incessant mattering of the work. In this way the notion of difference is inevitably present in creative making. Difference and, as a consequence, the distance created by it between the actual work and the destined one makes its way into the work, disrupting it constantly. The notions of completion and finishing are no longer able to constitute or render

the work at hand either objectively or privately intelligible. Instead, sensibility has to be worked in. The objective of this dissertation has been to solve the struggle of finishing a work, to unpack the experience of incompleteness as a phenomenon, to discuss its characteristics and to obtain and reflect upon its potentialities. In other words, my aim has been to shed light on the ontology of incompleteness in creative making.

The topic of incompleteness is currently exhibited also elsewhere. For example, while I was finishing this dissertation, the Modern and Contemporary Art Program at the Metropolitan Museum of Art hosted an exhibition under the title 'Unfinished: Thoughts left Visible' in New York.<sup>768</sup> The exhibition addresses 'a subject critical to artistic practice: the question of when a work of art is finished'. The artists explored in this exhibition can well be considered as geniuses, among them Titian, Rembrandt, Turner, Cézanne, Jackson Pollock and Robert Rauschenberg.

Often great art is considered as absolutely complete, or even as something sublime and miraculous, something that the human experience seems not to be able to pass. Accordingly, the artist who has created such great pieces of art is considered as someone exceptional, as a genius. The question remains whether incompleteness has then all at once vanished or whether it is in one way or another concealed. Furthermore, these great pieces of art may mask incompleteness within their lustrous veil. The same applies to my own experiences of feeling incomplete before my own work and finding them incomplete either because of bad luck or lack of skill. Importantly, however, the aesthetic aspect of incompleteness and its uniqueness may enhance attraction that may, on the one hand, provide ethical value and, on the other hand, emotional connectedness between one and another. One finds oneself and is repositioned within the domain of incompleteness with others and with oneself.

By the same token, the notion of aesthetics belongs to the present time and has media goals: aesthetics is present not just in art but in people's everyday lives, in the various ways of embellishing the body and soul and in the overall way of living.<sup>769</sup> For this reason, examining the aspects of beauty and the sublime, the ugly and the uncanny, in addition to the incomplete in this study is a contribution to the field of aesthetics in general. The findings fall within the domains of both creativity, art theory and aesthetics. On a descriptive level, the study is illustrated with fragments from the maker's diaries.

768 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Unfinished: Thoughts left Visible*, <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/unfinished>, open from 18 March 18 to 4 September 2016 [accessed 25 November 2016].

769 Welsch, 'Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics'.

This study has offered not just an evaluative perspective on two important phenomena in creative making, namely those of incompleteness and sensibility, but has also canvassed knowledge of the ways how to make things and divorced it from the carnal knowledge of actual making, one of the main viewpoints of this dissertation.

### *Methods and Theoretical Background*

Incompleteness embraces practical, aesthetic, theoretical and ethical considerations. It is a challenging concept to define and its two-partial taxonomy that of insatiability and unfinishedness complicates the matters even further. What is more, incompleteness is available through theoretical and practical knowledge but also through other kinds of human endeavours, such as perceptions, experiences and communication, through making and repeating, through aesthetic engagement, participation and relations, and through imagination, to name just a few of its interactive aspects. However, to study incompleteness in order to present a definition of it would disfigure it because it is in itself an answer to the question posed by it. It is an impossible task to maintain a view of incompleteness and its characteristics as a graspable whole. Thus incompleteness cannot be completely exhausted by this or any other research. This study represents only one study on incompleteness. That said, paradoxically, the way in which it affects a maker's life calls for research; it is neither willed nor intended to find oneself overtaken, defined and held by such an experience.

Artistic research has a fairly short history. This dissertation has emphasized the importance of artistic research what comes to research of experience and has aimed at describing, interpreting, analysing and discussing the problems addressed by it. This study has introduced one approach of doing artistic research, which is characterized by the research having taken shape all along the journey and the data having been composed of many layers. This research consists of the making of three exhibitions, reflections on making by using diary writings as well as video recordings and photographs as other means for collecting research material. Each exhibition has been made during a phase in which I have investigated one perspective relating to the research problem. These perspectives have become the corpus of this written work. The interpretations presented in this research are not definite but subjective and concern the quality of incompleteness.



770 Elliot W. Eisner,  
'On the Differences  
Between Scientific and  
Artistic Approaches to  
Qualitative Research',  
[http://www.jstor.org/  
stable/1175121?  
seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_  
contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1175121?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) [accessed  
28 May 2016].

What is more, this research has employed not just the researcher's own reflections on her own work but also poetic and metaphorical interventions in order to convey other significant insights into incompleteness. Elliot W. Eisner concludes that the validity of artistic approaches to research 'is the product of persuasiveness of a personal vision: its utility is determined by the extent to which it informs'.<sup>770</sup> This dissertation has aimed to question the common assumption that the experience of incompleteness is something to be eliminated as soon as possible, without ruminating on the open possibilities provided by it. Introducing the faculty of sensibility and focusing on experience, this study has contributed to a broader meaning of incompleteness and of the way in which it shapes one's view in creative making and worldview in other realms of life.

The sources and material of this research have been versatile. The major source of research material has been myself. My experiences have first been reflected in works and diaries, then juxtaposed with the thinking of Immanuel Kant the way in which he formulates the notion of judgement, then with the Early Romantics who understood the creation of the individual as a transforming encounter with one and an other and then with methods provided by contemporary philosophy, such as the phenomenology of the body and research of experience. Last my thinking was enlightened by the experiences and thoughts of other artists.

Although not intended to represent a comprehensive treatment of the topic of aesthetics, this study has as its starting point examined some of the central aspects of aesthetic theory that I have found important in encountering incompleteness: the concepts that Kant describes as beauty and the sublime. We can learn from these concepts that have a long history of philosophical ponderings behind them and that still have a substantial influence in the contemporary everyday world in which such matters as the good and bad, beauty and the ugly have become mass phenomena. This area is worth further examination; here artistic research as a method may function well in unfolding the meanings and values that are present in contemporary aesthetics in people's everyday living and the ethical implications.

In this study, the relation between the subject and the object has played a crucial role. The desired artwork can never be grasped in a single finite object, and it is precisely through an endless creative process that incompleteness manifests itself. The distance between the incomplete and the complete reveals itself in the modes of difference,

strangeness and the work remaining in a state of being unfinished. This study has revealed that the experience of incompleteness can be seen as an anticipation of future promises without content and that the object of the desire is present only as a fantasy that, nevertheless, is actual.

The question of incompleteness has been researched in this study by exploring the notions of appearing, experience and emotions by emphasizing the role of the body and carnal knowledge in making. A maker ought to be conceived both as a subject and a body that does things: making is an obdurate fact that falls beyond the subject. Creative making is linked to the materiality and animation of the body that explores and acts before the conscious mind is able to reflect on its makings and that would ground both action and its subsequent evaluation. This is a particularly interesting aspect of making that requires further research.

### *Findings and Limitations*

This study has tried to locate the general in particular and singular and shed light on the way uniqueness and vividness of incompleteness can possibly be addressed; thus, there is no such thing as the universal essence of incompleteness. Besides naming and evoking distance and difference, incompleteness marks potentiality that is present in absence. It makes itself a sign of the nothing, of the nonsense, paradoxical, ironical, invisible, inaudible and untouchable, fantasy, hence it is a sign of being that is valid for anyone. The intimacy it incorporates is neither private nor public. The experience of it necessitates ethical inquiry. Having arisen in the relational encounter with the world, the experience of incompleteness develops a powerful function because of its constitutive openness, multiplicity and transgressive nature.

This dissertation has restricted its focus on the experience of an artist-researcher. Naturally, one interesting perspective would be to research and discuss the viewer as the one who experiments and perhaps, as it is commonly claimed, completes an art object. Giving each person a voice is what builds a community, a community of others, an issue posed also in this research. Another interesting point of view would be the artworks that have intentionally been left unfinished and the way in which those kinds of works embrace the notion of finishing a work as a struggle.

This research has shown that incompleteness is a particular kind of relation between the subject and the object. The findings of this study reveal that the experience of incompleteness is built primarily on the sensibility of the maker, not on one's understanding. Thus, this study has conveyed incompleteness as lived through the experiencing body of a maker and through her desire to express and externalize the world inside her in order to communicate her relation to the world and to herself. An artist becomes the conduit of her experience, which makes her socially responsive.

This study has been conducted with an attempt to contribute to the fields of art, aesthetics, research of creativity and research of experience. Its main benefits are fivefold:

1. It outlines the creative process as a relation that proceeds like a dialogue between the maker and the territory of an other, the work and the material, forever oscillating back and forth. The work becomes a trace and a gathering of this relationship.
2. It illuminates the role of an animated, experiencing and emoting body and carnal knowledge in creative making and decision-making.
3. It depicts as one of its key insights that incompleteness unwraps a space for play and playfulness, nonsense, uncanniness and fantasy that all promote creativity and thus expose incompleteness as a sort of un-naturalness of reality, however, essential.
4. It illustrates the difficulties and struggles related to finishing a work in a real life situation, which aspect is entangled in relation to the maker's desire to thrive in one's work. This paradox inevitably results in crossing perceived boundaries and exploring new territories.
5. It provides concrete evidence on the importance of the faculty of sensibility in both experiencing incompleteness and in the decision-making within creative making. Making is an act of sensibility.

This research suggests that experiencing incompleteness can be understood as striving towards authentic experiences and novelty,

and by means of an artistic reading of sensibility new understandings may emerge that can expand the outlook of incompleteness in creative making and in general. In this dissertation I have argued that aesthetic sensibility plays a crucial role in creativity and that in order to experience incompleteness as a source of creative power, the sensuous presentation of the object cannot be defied. In contrast, semantic debate on incompleteness shows insensibility as failing to sense the need to take action, experiment and to stay open in front of the vastness of future possibilities. Any work that I confront with the reality of incompleteness seeks to readjust my presence and my subjectivity from passivity to activity. In other words, I perceive with sensibility the places of both thought and action in the centre of imaginative creativity that sometimes faces its own limits. What is more, sensibility is capable of rejecting conventional norms of perception.

Based on the findings of this research, further investigation is required for the purpose of developing artistic, art-based and experience-based research by means of creative practice. In other words, the tools and methods provided by artistic research can be discussed, employed and implemented in other fields of research and disciplines.

Incompleteness refers to experiential and carnal knowledge that the practitioner can recognize to be founded on one's own genuine experience, as not only being aware of it but also in order to perform gradually better according to that knowledge. The temporary nature of incompleteness keeps the creative work in flux; thus, it has a much broader meaning than just trying to fix what is wrong.

My experience of incompleteness springs from my encounter with my own work. The work makes a claim on me, and this, I find, is an aesthetic claim. The question that I was at times so painfully entangled to answer in this study has been whether this aesthetic claim is of such quality that it can support and actively encourage my making. The question later expanded to whether it could consequently also challenge other disciplines to consider aesthetic claims of importance in valuing research overall and, last, also have ethical cognition. My preliminary answer here is yes to all of these questions, but then it is required that art works are not reduced to some kind of mechanical and material object but are taken as relations that are necessarily animate and that creative making is a form of living, not some isolated endeavour, but comparable to any other way of experimenting, re-searching and wondering. It is communitarian in spirit.

And as for Owen Warland, he looked placidly at what seemed the ruin of his life's labor, and which was yet no ruin. He had caught a far other butterfly than this. When the artist rose high enough to achieve the beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to mortal senses became of little value in his eyes while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the reality.<sup>771</sup>

771 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Artist of the Beautiful* [1846], <http://www.online-literature.com/hawthorne/124/> [accessed 28 May 2016].



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# Glossary

*Disclaimer: The following glossary is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the concepts discussed in the dissertation but, rather, to guide the reader for the purposes of the research at hand.*

**AESTHETIC** An experience based on sensibility as confronted carnally with the intensity of an appearing of something. Here the aesthetic concerns sensuous issues of experiencing.

**AESTHETICS** For Immanuel Kant, aesthetics is about how the subject is being affected by the empirical world: first, about how the experience of an object is formed by the cognitive faculties and, second, about the definition of the beautiful and the sublime, i.e. the judgment on the beautiful and on the sublime also is of objects of art. Since Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, aesthetics has been understood as a philosophy of art, its aim being the establishment of a universal and timeless concept of art. Nowadays there is no single essence of art, which implies a move towards a pluralistic type of aesthetics stretching also beyond anything artistic.

**AFFECT** Ability to be affected by something or to affect something. It is an intensive trans-subjective and -objective passage from one state to another.

**AFFECTION** Something, which makes a difference in the qualitative register of a person.

**APPEARANCE** Things within our experience.

**APPEARING** Becoming of something that is intense and within one's perception but not yet grasped.

**ART** Something of which experience is in an initial stage ineffable. Art acts differently and finds its satisfaction and sense of purpose in itself, in art's work.

**ARTISTIC RESEARCH** Research in which new knowledge is gained by means of artistic making.

**BODY** A body is carnal organism, the foundation of the conscious mind and subjectivity, displayed by sensations, affects and emotions as one's sense of aliveness. The body signals the brain neutrally and chemically to alert it, whereas the brain commands the body to maintain an even keel. The body is a part of the subject, of oneself; it is that region from which subjectivity emerges and to which it returns. The body cannot give birth to a representation: it is an organism that engages in the activity of broadcasting.

**CHANCE** Something that is neither planned nor known and that cannot be foreseen.

**CHAOS** A shapeless diversity of everything, for example such incidents as disorder, transgression, an accident that takes place against a background that seems orderly.

**COMPLETE** Something, which is always in progress and in that sense infinite though it might seem concluded and finished.

**DESIRE** A want, a future-oriented hope of pleasure and satisfaction, an incomprehensible force that concerns one's whole body.

**DISTANCE** Distance can be both quantitative and qualitative.

**EMBODIMENT** A carnal and sensual actualization of a quality of something.

**EMOTION** An intense bodily and largely automated sensation presenting novelty and difference in one's state of being: an emotion is constituted simultaneously as a mental event and a bodily one. Emotions are necessary in life regulation. The mental side of an emotion is called appraisal and the bodily side, arous-

al. Without a cognitive activity there can be no emotion; there can only be bodily arousal.

**EPISTEMOLOGY** A theory of knowledge through which the relationship between a knower and what can be known is established.

**ESSENCE** That which makes a thing what it is within one's experience.

**EVENT** That which is coming in all of its unforeseeable force and novelty. An event is a disruption because it disobeys knowledge, habits, acquired skills, inclinations, desires, and wishes, i.e., everything that comes in the form of repetition or recollection. An event challenges, shatters, puts one out of tune.

**EXPERIENCE** Experience is an absolute immediacy of a felt quality directed by one's sensibility and the affectivity of the world. An experience presents novelty and it has an end and a beginning, it is relational in that it creates a space of in-between between body, self and other.

**FEELING** Feeling is an image of one's attitude and perception toward an occurred emotion and experience. A feeling is the perception of the object's relation to the pleasure or displeasure of a subject during emoting.

**IDEA** An idea is a concept pointing towards an object however beyond experience. It is a screen behind which there are other, and perhaps more important, and experiential and material issues. In this sense, an idea can be grasped and understood as a tool. Its time-lapse refers both to the past and to the future.

**IMAGE** An image is not a pictorial form of presentation of an object, but rather a mode of presentation that takes place in one's mind and body; in other words it is a mode of givenness experienced by any sense organ visual, auditorial, visceral, tactile, and so forth.

**IMMANENCE** An immediate qualitative presence.

**INCOMMENSURABILITY** Incommensurability is a condition of being that is impossible to measure.

**INCOMPLETENESS** Not opposite to completeness if the complete is taken as something exhaustive, satisfying and total. Incompleteness refers to imperfection, rawness and unfinishedness, however, in a manner that embraces the presence of completeness as absent. Something that is incomplete encounters the issue of completion as incomplete and stages a plane of an appearance-as-disappearance of completion.

**INEFFABILITY** An in-between state where the division between the subject and the object is not valid; a natural felt transition of a lived experience, too great to describe in words.

**INFINITE** Something that exists without limits and that is impossible to measure. Making is potentially infinite as it is also always incomplete; however, the work obliges the maker to finish at some point.

**INTUITION** The action of anticipating something to be likely to take place as one relies on past experiences and on knowledge already gained. As such, intuition is based on a representation of recollections presented by the faculties of understanding and imagination.

**JUDGEMENT** Making something one's own as one values it.

**KNOWLEDGE** A justified belief that can be shared in some way. Something empirical becomes knowledge when it is translated into concepts and language. Knowledge is inferior to sensibility, and it is always outside that which it is concerned about. The notions of embodied knowledge and carnal knowledge are discussed in this study.

**LIFEWORLD** What I experience prior to reflection, categorization or conceptualization.

**MAKING** To put materials together in order to make something out of them.

**MEANING** Something that is shared by a community of people. There is no meaning if it is not shared. Human nature is revealed in meanings. A meaning is an attempt to organize something in a word. A meaning is inferior to sensibility and experience as it is an after-effect. A meaning is thus too poor to express something infinite, for example when one tries to capture the experience of love in words.

**MEDIUM** Any kind of means of support.

**MIND** The mind can be unconscious, but when it has become conscious and aware of things, to think and to experience, it has acquired subjective content.

**MOOD** A mood is a frame of atmosphere. A mood neither has a precise beginning nor an ending.

**OBJECT** An object is something to which a specific action or feeling is directed.

**ONTOLOGY** Ontology addresses the question of the nature of being, existence and reality.

**PAINTING** A field of possibilities.

**PERCEPTION** How objects and things, even imaginary ones, appear to subjects. Perceptions are something temporal that one captures by the flow of one's senses and sensibility. Perceptions accompany or follow in the aftermath of every such occasion.

**PHENOMENON** An event on which the conscious mind and the animated body intentionally focus.

**PHENOMENOLOGY** A philosophical project grounded on the notion that knowledge is embodied and in relation to the empirical world. However, the problem of phenomenology in general is that novelty cannot arise from the knowledge to which we have already been attuned in meaning; instead one's sensibilities and sentiments toward a phenomenon must be brought in.

**PRACTICE** Everything that is possible through freedom and needs to be done bodily. In this dissertation practice refers to my whole artistic practice.

**REFLECTION** A conscious operation of acknowledging something as distinct. For Immanuel Kant, reflection is a state of mind where we first set ourselves to discover the subjective conditions under which we are able to arrive at concepts.

**REPRESENTATION** A claim of making present something that is non-present.

**RESEARCH** A repetitive search in which there is room for potentiality and novelty.

**SCHEIN** Illumination or semblance as a manifestation or a hint of something that cannot be grasped or intuited completely.

**SENSATION** The way in which one feels something. An unrepeatable experience of something – an interruption and a shift without an immanent meaning, yet with an impact. A sensation never takes place but on the occasion of sensibility.

**SENSE** An immediate apprehension of the existence, exposition and inner essence of something, which one cannot grasp with concepts.

**SENSIBILITY** The faculty of sensibility opens up one's bodily capacity and potentiality and its passions when one encounters oneself within the world. Thus, sensibility is a faculty of receptivity and an extension of the body-mind; it is both a passage and a medium. Sensibility is a transcendent exercise. Sensibility unveils a whole, not as divided into one's senses, but as having a sense of the whole as something experienced and apprehended before it becomes understood as something intelligible, conceptual and rational. Sensibility makes experiencing and perception possible.

**SENSIBLE** The sensible implies appreciation of the value of an empirical experience whereas *intelligible* refers to the non-empirical

extent of the mind, to thinking and to understanding by way of concepts.

**SUBJECT** The subject emerges from a field of experiences as a particular point of view in relation to how the world appears to one, how one appears to the world and how one appears to oneself. Subjectivity emerges when self is added to mind and body processes, i.e., when one makes one's experience one's own.

**SYSTEM** A togetherness of things under a guiding principle.

**TENSION** A state of unrest.

**TRANSCENDENT** In this study transcendent is taken as a natural world that appears and shows itself and turns into flesh.

**TRANSCENDENTAL** A condition of possibility of knowledge. It is independent of practice or experiential knowledge. One can think of subjectivity as something transcendental I know myself through the senses but not by the senses. In Novalis words 'The I is only thinkable by the means of a *Non-I*; for an I is only an I insofar as it is a Non-I. Otherwise it could be whatever it wanted to be, it just wouldn't be an I'.<sup>772</sup>

**TRUTH** A matter of perspective.

**UNDERSTAND** To stand under, to be able to support the meaning, explanation, signification or the cause of something.

772 Novalis, 'Fichte Studies' [1795–96], in *Theory as Practice, a Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. by Jochen Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 90–112, p. 107, fragment 562.





