

Research Residency Case Study:

The Conjugated Museum



The Fitzwilliam Museum

March 2018 to March 2019

University of Cambridge

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A research residency exploring the communication between audience, artist and institution. The research focused on the agency of a creative engagement with the museum collection. This agency and creative engagement were afforded by the allowance of mobile phone photography in museums.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank The Fitzwilliam Museum for allowing me access to their collections for this research residency. It was a very enriching experience to spend time looking deeply into objects in the collection. A very warm thank you to David Evans who was my guide and liaison to the museum. David's knowledge of the collection, his interest and insights into my research, and his gracious interventions with other staff and museum procedures made my research experience a very pleasant one indeed. As always, gratitude to my supervisors, David Ryan and Jeannette Baxter, is given in abundance for their thoughtful guidance. And finally, a special thank you to Margaret Greeves who helped to make this project possible. It would have never happened without her kindness and generosity.

Abstract

As an artist-curator, the research done for *The Conjugated Museum* considers the three-way communication between artist, audience and institution. In this instance, I am a member of the audience, given the institutional affordance to photograph in the museum galleries. This means that increasingly the audience has the agency to engage creatively with artwork collections and to distribute these images in ways that the institution has no control over. The exploration in this research interrogates the agency of this creative engagement.

1.0 Introduction

As I considered how to approach this project, I first explored classic texts on the museum such as, "Museum without Walls," by André Malraux (1953), "On the Museum's Ruins," by Douglas Crimp (1980), "The Exhibitionary Complex," by Tony Bennett (1988), and "Exhibition Rhetorics," by Brian Ferguson (1996), among others, but those soon formed the background rather than the foreground of the research. What foregrounds *The Conjugated Museum* project are three texts: *The Dialectics of Seeing*, a forensic exploration of Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project (Passagen-Werk)* by Susan Buck-Morss (1989), *An Aside* exhibition catalogue of the project curated by Tacita Dean (2005), and *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum*, a meditation on virtuality by Griselda Pollock (2007). I gained insights on three different issues for the project from these three books.

1.1 Three texts and one counterpoint or 'distant viewing and dialectical seeing'

Before introducing the relevant concepts in these three works, it is important to understand that Benjamin's philosophy cannot be extricated in any totality from Buck-Morss. In order to build the structural themes of her thesis, she must quote and explain Benjamin, but the intention of this explanation is not to 'interpret,' but to illuminate the context within which he was influenced and working. This means she is not 'replicating' his text in order to explain it, she is pulling from it to create new meaning. *The Dialectics of Seeing* is:

a story (of nineteenth century Paris) told within a story (of Benjamin's own historical experience) with the goal of bringing to life the cognitive and political power of the *Passagen-Werk* that lies dormant within the layers of historical data of which it is composed. But perhaps most of all, this is the story of the interpretative process itself. (Buck-Morss, 1989:ix-x)

Buck-Morss (1989:ix) says herself, that her text "is not an English-language summary of the original German and French manuscript." I cannot speak German, so any reading of Benjamin that I can make must be through a translation, so I'm already receiving a mediated interpretation of his language. I can get no closer to the integrity of the original text than to use a translation which is also at pains to consider the influences of historical context and Benjamin's life experiences on his writings and philosophical interests, as Buck-Morss has done. The eloquence of her translations show loyalty to a necessity to make her own judgments on the text, and to "benefit from the associations

of meanings that come through more clearly in the original” (Buck-Morss, 1989:xii), rather than turning to other English translations to bolster her efforts.

Buck-Morss’ meticulous scholarship in illuminating the world Walter Benjamin experienced, which left the unfinished *Arcades Project (Passagen-Werk)*, extrapolates from Benjamin’s notes to construct the philosophical notion of ‘dialectical seeing.’ Buck-Morss’ construct articulates the kind of seeing necessary to form the historical philosophy, which so enthralled Benjamin, but whose suicide in 1940 after being refused entry to Spain fleeing Vichy France (Osborn and Charles, 2015:np), prevented the full formulation of his thesis. She makes an historical-translation-appropriation in order to formulate her own philosophical thesis of dialectical seeing. Just as I have made an intuitive-appropriation-reanimation of artworks from history to make new imagery. These new images are inextricably linked with the original artworks, as Buck-Morss is linked to Benjamin.

Dialectical seeing is a process of intuition and imagination, which makes meaning from encounters with historical objects. This process results in the dialectical image; an image that is fleeting and breaks free from a former context to enter a different sphere of meaning. That is, for objects to be taken out of the continuum of the past and made “‘actual’ in the present” (Buck-Morss, 1989:221) involves the mediation of a viewer’s¹ imagination and “the active intervention of the thinking subject” (1989:222). “As an immediate, quasi-mystical apprehension, the dialectical image [is] intuitive”² (1989:220). It is the articulation of such a philosophical proposition as dialectical seeing that is so important to my own exploration of an active simulacrum, because many of the same mechanisms are at work in both. The temporal displacement of bringing the past into time with the present, shifts in meaning, ruptured continuums, and the mediation of a thinking subject run tandem in each. For my research, an active simulacrum is an almost imperceptible force that affects the dynamics of a situation, causing slight alterations in the apperceptions of those involved, and as a result, bringing about a change in thinking. However, any discussion of dialectics must involve Hegel, and I will briefly discuss this in relation to Benjamin’s dialectical image below.

Tacita Dean’s discussion of the intuitive way she curated the exhibition, *An Aside* (2005), for the Hayward Gallery at London’s South Bank Centre grounded and gave

¹ I use the word ‘viewer’ here, but Buck-Morss’ word was ‘author’: “How are we to understand the ‘dialectical image’ as a form of philosophical representation? Was ‘dust’ such an image? fashion? the prostitute? expositions? commodities? the arcades themselves? Yes, surely – not, however, as these referents are empirically given, nor even as they are crucially interpreted as emblematic of commodity society, but as they are dialectically ‘constructed,’ as ‘historical objects,’ politically charged monads, ‘blasted’ out of history’s continuum and made ‘actual’ in the present. This construction of historical objects clearly involved the mediation of the author’s imagination. The cognitive experience of history, no less than that of the empirical world, required the active intervention of the thinking subject” (Buck-Morss, 1989:221-2). Buck-Morss goes on to pose these two questions of Benjamin’s dialectical image: “Are dialectical images too subjective in their formulation? Or, are they not subjective enough?” (Buck-Morss, 1989:222). In my view, the significance of Benjamin’s dialectical images is not in their subjective function, but in the action of synthesising subject with visible object and object with viewing subject. It is in this synthesis that meaning arises, not in the singular identity of the subject or the object alone – which if considered, each of those singular identities are constructed from a long history of concatenated instances of subject-object syntheses to begin with, so where exactly is the ur-history or ur-existence of any subject or object?

² I changed the verb tense in this quote from ‘was’ to ‘is’ in line with my current enquiry.

practical application to the interpretation of dialectical images as ‘intuitive’ for my study. For example, Dean explains in the exhibition catalogue how the mention by a colleague of an image of a typewriter in a winter scene by Rodney Graham led her back through memories of an old postcard that depicted children playing with cotton snowballs, to the recollection of her own discussion with Graham years earlier of a film he had just made about a mint condition German typewriter from the 30’s. His response to the duality of this typewriter in its condition of being “obsolete but still brand new” (Dean, 2005:40) was to sift flour over the typewriter. For Dean, this became a poem of purity—pristine typewriter, pristine snowfall. It was one of the works she selected for *An Aside*.

Her commitment to ‘working blind,’ that is, not fully knowing what was coming next, and the circumstance of being pregnant during the development of *An Aside* meant developing a curatorial methodology based on intuition and memory. As I’ll explain below, seeing a slide show in New York of Lothar Baumgarten’s work ignited the spark to trace the course of her own memories. While a story he told of seeing Gerhard Richter walk his dog along the river front where Baumgarten was photographing, led Dean to the next work, a landscape by Richter, and formed the structure of one work leading to the next of her curatorial methodology.

Dean’s curatorial process for *An Aside* gave inspiration and validation to the intuitive approach I allowed myself to take in making work for the Fitzwilliam project. Engaging with the intuitive is one of the leading forces in my own work. I believe in the power of chance occurrence to make a more profound statement in the work than I can contrive. Because intuition involves duration, there is a latent coherence to events as they unfold which I find inexorable and fascinating.

And finally, Griselda Pollock’s analysis of a virtual encounter of *The Three Graces* by Antonio Canova through postcard reproductions from the National Gallery of Scotland museum shop in Edinburgh not only thematically compliments the thesis of dialectical seeing and Dean’s method of intuition through the mediation of postcard imagery and other objects, it offered a basis to think about the encounter in the museum and the virtual spaces I was working in, both with the virtuality of the computer, and the virtual space of my mind and memory.

A chance encounter with postcard reproductions of the newly acquired neo-classical sculpture by Canova became, not an art historical interpretation of the work, but a concern of “the encounter with sculpture mediated by photographic reproduction within the extended museum setting that leaks beyond the confines of the gallery and academic art history into that imaginary space [Pollock calls] the virtual feminist museum” (Pollock, 2007:9). She uses the term ‘virtual’ ironically to signal a museum that could never be actualised. Pollock then outlines the feminist concerns behind her irony, however, I will not engage in the feminist debate here, because my thesis does not go into these identity politics. My thesis remains firmly within a discussion of human experience, and it does so because I believe before there can be divergence in discussing the perspectives of differing identity, there must be a foundation exploring the generalities and commonalities of experience.

My interest in Pollock's thesis is her discussion of the virtual as a space that can't be actual, and also a question of "what the artwork might be introducing into the world through its specificity as both a semiotic and aesthetic practice" (Pollock, 2007:10). In other words, how a work of art communicates through symbolism and as an aesthetic object. These themes resonate with me because, with regard to the virtual, there was no way that I could realise the images playing in my head as I strolled through The Fitzwilliam galleries. I discuss this below. And I am in a semantic battle with myself at the moment; I struggle to square the objects I make as beautiful with the divergent characteristics I wish to convey. Their beauty is not a primary concern, but they persist in being beautiful. Perhaps this is a case of beauty being in the eye of the maker! Nonetheless, a discussion of these issues with regard to how art communicates interests me. I also found that Pollock's discourse elucidated key questions for *The Conjugated Museum* research, which I will address below. She states:

If we approach artworks as propositions, as representations and as texts, that is as sites for the production of meanings and of affects by means of their visual and plastic operations between each other and for viewer/readers, they cease to be mere objects to be classified by aesthetic evaluation or idealised authorship. Artworks ask to be read as cultural *practices* negotiating meanings shaped by both history and the unconscious. They ask to be allowed to change the culture into which they intervene by being considered as creative: *poietic* and transformative. (Pollock 2007:10)

Pollock's argument was compelling for me because this is precisely the function I expect of artworks, and how I wish for my own artwork to function in the world. But Hal Foster's 1996 essay, "The Archive without Museums" problematised this notion of meaning being shaped by both history and the unconscious. He asked, "how can art be autonomous *and* imbricated in social history?" (Foster, 1996:101, emphasis in original).

In an attempt to grapple with this question, Foster interrogates the status of artworks represented in digital form by invoking Foucault's archive; meaning not a dusty repository, but "the system that governs the appearances of statements" (Foucault cited in Foster, 1996:108). By this definition, Foucault means the archive is at the root of every statement, and it "defines at the outset *the system of its enunciability*...[the archive] is that which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is *the system of its functioning*." (Foucault, 1969:146, emphasis in original). From this monolithic conception of the archive, Foster makes a dialectic of two opposing views of photographic reproduction: Walter Benjamin's notion which "strips art of context, shatters tradition and liquidates aura" and André Malraux's which "provides the means to reassemble the broken bits into one metatradition of style" (Foster, 1996:108-9). "[I]t is the very flow of a liquidated aura that allows all the fragments to course together in the River of History" (Foster, 1996:109).³ To be clear, an art object whose aura has been liquidated is one whose material duration and place has been disrupted by the speed of its apprehension (the immediacy of seeing the object in reproduction), and subsequently the dissolution of its material character accumulated over time; and

³ In "Museum without Walls," Andre Malraux (1953:24) says, "...and we can detect in their succession, by way of modulations hitherto unobserved, the persisting life of certain forms, emerging ever and again like spectres from the past. In the realm of what I have called fictitious arts, the fragment is king."

whose conditions of ownership, which includes the context for which it was made, shift from discreet privacy to a multiplicity of locations, incidences, and uses. The liquidated aura of an art-object goes from being its materialisation in a location to its actualisation in any situation and under any condition.

From this dialectic of seeing permitted by photographic reproduction, Foster asks, “Is there a new dialectics of seeing allowed by electronic information? If, according to Malraux, the museum guarantees the status of art and photographic reproduction permits the affinities of style, what might a digital reordering underwrite?” (Foster, 1996:109). Indeed, beyond a digital reordering of history, what might the digital reconfiguring of the visual continuity of an artwork, like I made for *The Conjugated Museum*, signal?

Applying Foucault’s vision of the archive to visual works of art, which Pollock has already suggested are to be read as texts, the fluidity of a liquidated aura is precisely the issue at stake in my research residency with The Fitzwilliam, because I am tampering with the archival system of functioning and enunciability of the artworks that I reimage. And indeed, the decision to allow mobile phone photography in museums raises questions with regard to Foster’s dialectic between Benjamin and Malraux. Foster deals with the digital archiving of museum collections in his essay, but the circulation of these ‘free-agent’ mobile phone images raise the stakes on how images function and the manner of their enunciation.

Updating his 1996 essay in 2002 with “Archives of Modern Art,” Foster still had no answer to these questions. But in 2015, Claire Bishop presented a paper called, “Against Digital Art History,” to an inter-departmental seminar at the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. She explained that digital art history sits in an agitated position between history and interpretation, where it is unclear whether facts are found or produced, or if data sets exist before or after being digitally sequenced.

What is clear is that aggregated data avoids argumentation and interpretation (Bishop, 2015). “Computational metrics can help aggregate data and indicate patterns, but they struggle to explain causality, which in the humanities is always a question of interpretation” (Bishop, 2015:np). A “disjunctive simultaneity of proximity and distance” is the condition for viewing images in the twenty-first century, states Bishop (2015:np). Therefore, she applies the concept of Franco Moretti’s “distant reading” to the visual arts saying, “[d]istant viewing is my expression of this distance” (Bishop, 2015:np).

To give an example of the kind of distance Bishop is referring to, imagine a tennis ball sitting on your desk; this is a first order engagement with sensory input of the tennis ball. Then image, you received a postcard of a tennis ball from a friend, which you place behind the tennis ball on your desk. This photographic image is a second order distance from the tennis ball—much like Pollock’s postcards of Canova’s sculpture. Now imagine seeing on your desktop computer an aggregate computation of all round objects to distinguish those round things called ‘tennis balls’—this is distant viewing; ‘seeing’ the tennis ball through the computational reduction of true/false values that return all the objects matching the true values which were coded into the algorithmic search. This

distant viewing takes the liquidation beyond just the *aura* of an art-object's materiality to liquidating the art-object itself. The art-object is reduced to binary coded 1s and 0s, then reassembled through the algorithmic function of true/false to invoke a flattened representative of the object; losing all relationship to authorship, ownership, function, context, "material duration" or "historical witness" (Underwood, 2008:7). Instead of these values being intrinsically related to the object, they would have to be reconceptualised as the context within which such an object is placed. While the technical reproduction that Benjamin (1936) discusses in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" gains an autonomy not given to the original, because the original is locked in relation to its context, it also brings the object out of the "infinite distance" of history closer to the viewer by bringing a facsimile of the object into the "infinite proximity," or context, of the viewer (Buck-Morss, 1989:160).⁴ But distant viewing moves the object out of reach, losing all context, whether of history or of proximity, and it requires that all known information of the object be reassembled to support the understanding of the object. However, just as Benjamin's concept of mechanical reproduction brought a certain liberation to the art-object, it may be that distant viewing has the potential to make visible what is otherwise invisible about the object.⁵

Distant viewing may be the "new dialectical seeing allowed by electronic information" questioned by Foster. What it underwrites, according to Bishop, are free-floating visual data sets, flattened by the erasure of individual narratives of genius (Bishop, 2015); we lose all understanding of why you keep a tennis ball on your desk and why your friend was compelled to send you a postcard depicting a tennis ball. While this may seem a good thing in order to democratise the art historical canon, it ultimately defaces *every* individual narrative. This has the potential to obliterate, or at very least, to disengage the meaning-making process from the production of art, and subsequently the rhetoric of the image, discussed by Griselda Pollock below.

1.2 Working to find answers

For me, the task of being an artist is to be a creator of meaning, which also means the artworks must generate meaning in their own right, beyond my input into them. This is contingent on the notion of Foucault's archive in action and on how the artworks communicate with a viewer. However, this notion of 'meaning' is a problematic one, because meaning no longer resides in the art object, nor is it derived from an object's formal structure as it once was. Meaning now suggests performativity; as both the performance of an artwork's own singularity, and also the synchronous dispatch to its

⁴ I'm conflating ideas from Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk/Arcades Project* and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" here, as Buck-Morss (1989:207) points out, "The *Passagen-Werk* files were the working lexicon of Benjamin's research and ideas, or more accurately, his historical warehouse of documentary parts and supporting theoretical armatures, out of which during the thirties he constructed the wide range of his literary-philosophical works." But Rolf Tiedemann (1988:929) points out in "Dialectics at a Standstill" that the two texts had no thematic connection because of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they both addressed respectively, sharing a relevancy to each other only due to methodology. Tiedemann explains, quoting Benjamin, "[he] tries to 'pinpoint the precise spot in the present my historical construction would take as its vanishing point.'" This idea of a 'historical vanishing point' may illuminate my own conflation of ideas here.

⁵ I write this when the equivalent of distant viewing in science has for the first time imaged a black hole, as discussed in *Supermassive Black Hole* (2019).

wider contextual network. It isn't enough for an artwork to hang on a wall and look pretty, it is obliged to engage our attention, shock us, make us think and provoke us. Often, in order for this engagement and provocation to be amplified, the single artwork is placed in relation to situations or locations where meaning resides in the *relationship* between artwork and location. The relationship, or its performativity, is a virtual in-between place where this meaning and its presentation happens. It happens in time, which suggests the need for a certain narrativity (Joselit 2013:43) to be part of its contextual network.

Tacita Dean is an artist engaged with time, and "working blind" (Griffin 2018). "Blindness, too, is involved in Dean's process of trusting in what she calls 'unconscious guiding forces' and the munificence of chance" (Griffin 2018). She wrote in the exhibition catalogue for *An Aside*, "I have had to rely latterly [during her pregnancy] on more internal and domestic mechanisms, such as books to hand, or conversations, or my own experience and memory" (Dean 2005:4). She goes on to say:

I did not and could not have, pre-imagined this show; it is not at all what I expected it to be, and that's the point: I have at least been faithful to the blindness with which I set out and even if my methods have veered from the intuitive to the social, and from the orthodox to the inexplicable, this exhibition has taken form from itself, and not despite itself. (Dean 2005:4)

Just as Dean's intuitive process emerged through time to manifest *An Aside*, it was through the articulations of one connection leading to the next which produced the exhibition's meaning, invigorating the meanings of already existent artworks. So, this performative meaning isn't exclusive to the creation of artwork; it clearly is relevant to artist-curatorial activities as well.

But Pollock's argument raised questions for me, which I soon realised were the questions I needed to answer through the research residency. Can artworks create meaning outside of their own time? Does a creative reinterpretation or appropriation keep artworks relevant, or does it fundamentally change them? Is a reinterpretation reflective of the life of the viewer or the power of the artwork to reinvent itself through the nuanced meanings instilled by the artist? Pollock goes on to say:

There is indeed a rhetoric to the image...such a rhetoric—that is the capacity to create a figurative level of meaning, connotation, beyond literal denotation—is an effect, in the visual arts, of the specific conjunction of space, form, colour, materiality and the capacity to solicit from the viewer a work of multi-levelled decipherment across these materialising processes of both thought and affect in a unique conjunction which I will call the aesthetic. (Pollock 2007:10-1)

We could reasonably assume then, that it is not only me speaking through these reconfigured images, but the works themselves speaking in a new language to a new time, lifted from the comfortable beds of their past—being *conjugated* in real time.

I considered how I would select the artworks in the Fitzwilliam collection to focus on, because as an artist-curator, the process of selection in this case study would be a kind of latent curatorial process. At first, I was going to devise a rather elaborate process of

selection involving deliberate choices of allegorical works and artworks that were expressive of repetitions, temporal disruptions, fragments and indexical traces, in conjunction with selection by chance occurrence, either by stumbling on something unexpectedly in the museum or by inviting curatorial staff to select objects for me to engage with. In the end, I gave way to the pull of intuition and selected work to photograph that I responded to in some way; whether it was a positive or a negative response, I had to feel a *tug* from the work. Curiously, many of these works became touchstones for me for the rest of the collection, even if I didn't make an appropriative work based on them.

I took hundreds of photographs of the museum collection, however, due to time constraints on the project, I arbitrarily stopped making works at the point where I needed to focus on the logistics of producing the outcomes for the residency. Nonetheless, I made over forty altered images from the collection. This would be enough to realise the transparent book and to make a cycle of fine art digital prints that I wanted to make from the project. I'll discuss these in more depth below.

2.0 Case Study Design

The study was designed for a simple modality of engagement and response; I allowed myself to engage intuitively with the works in the museum, using my mobile phone to photograph only work which I responded to in some way, whether it was a positive tug of aesthetic appreciation or a negative lure of repulsive fascination. I then selected some of these photographs to alter in Photoshop, in an effort to visualise the kinds of lucid and elusive mental imagery and fantasies I experienced as part of the viewing process in the museum. This was an equally intuitive response. I engaged with the image in front of me as I worked with it in Photoshop without knowing or asking why I was making the alterations. This intuitive approach allowed the engagement of my own seeing and memories to become active in the research. Any attempt to direct a response based in attempting to answer specific questions, such as those posed by Foster above, would have resulted in a different research project, and the delicate appearance of the mind's eye of intuition would have been trampled. It was only in a period of literature review on the original artworks, the artists, the relevant art historical period or the allegorical content of a work that I discovered a rationale for the images I had created. I discovered that I was reacting to visual clues in the original which were sparking fragmentary memories from my own experiences, and the new imagery was a manifestation of recognition in the act of seeing before I cognitively knew what I was seeing.



I briefly discussed with curatorial staff the display of some objects in the museum. I discovered, in one instance, what was a practical rather than a conceptual placement for the curators, held narrative meaning for me as a viewer. The location of an Italian baroque harpsichord case (Boni, c.1680) underneath the painting, *Tarquin and Lucretia* by Titian (1571) seemed significant to me, but I couldn't articulate why. I was just struck by the incongruity of the

jubilance associated by the musical case, and the horror of the sexual violence depicted in the painting above it. I learned that the placement of this harpsichord case had to do with finding a more integrated location in the museum, but also with its protection because it is so fragile. But my experience of viewing the musical instrument case in relation to this particular painting felt meaningful because of the disparity of this juxtaposition.

The immediacy of my looking became an articulation of constellate moments from my past, the painting's past, the historical record of Rome (Cornell 2012:215), the provenance of the works in the museum collection, their installation in the museum, and all the decisions involved in making this juxtaposition of objects. The ordered pattern of narrative that developed in my mind was born out of an unrelated set of differences that converged into a momentary comprehension of the importance of the incongruity of these differences. With further research into the legend of the rape of Lucretia, I discovered the context of a dinner party.

The story of the rape of Lucretia begins with a social gathering over dinner and drinks, where Lucretia's husband boasts of her virtue (Fisher, 2016). One could surmise music would have been part of the evening's ambiance. Therefore, the relationship of the harpsichord case to the painting suggested to me a narrative of hospitality turned violent. This gave a frisson to what felt like a validation of my ordered narrative from looking. It also raises an issue of a temporal disruption in historical painting, as related to a broader debate between Hegel's dialectic of progression, and Benjamin's dialectical image as a fragment extracted from its temporal continuum. Titian painted *Tarquin and Lucretia* in a contemporary sixteenth century setting, which was 'normal' at the time as with all religious painting, rather than in its historical context of ancient Rome. That is, as a resonant narrative from history that had significance for sixteenth century society. This suggests that history and its narratives have long been treated, by artists at least, as fragments of time or meaning, evocative of mutability; not as a continuity building to a synthesis of resolution.

The theoretical discussion to come in the following sections will look at the dialectics of seeing. However, seeing with our eyes isn't the whole story. We see with our memories, too. This means that we encounter the virtual in more ways than through a digital space. Memory, creativity, intuition, duration and fantasy are all virtual spaces, or

events of the virtual, that allow seeing, materiality and history to unite in unexpected ways.

An example of how this unification happens lies in the choices I made for the outcomes produced from this research. It is a common belief that visiting a museum is a reverential experience.⁶ Therefore, I made the decision to print the individual images on bible paper, and to make the transparent book similar in size to a prayer book.⁷ These materials correspond to personal experiences of my childhood. However, the palm-sized book also relates to the size of, and attachment to, our mobile phones. The kind of emotional bond we have for our phones was once reserved for intimate objects of devotion such as prayer books. Making the book transparent becomes an awkward materialisation of a virtual space. The task of trying to convey in material terms what is in someone's mind is an impossibility, as is any attempt to materialise virtual space, therefore the transparent book is meant to be an awkward, quirky object. Imagine trying to hold a thought in the palm of your hand, and perhaps the effect will translate.

Finally, an animated video presents an expression of the experience of flipping through the book pages. While this is an outcome of the research in its own right, it also acts as an interpretive aid to the book. Words, other than those in the book, seemed wrong somehow.

3.0 Assessment of Study Elements

⁶ Hal Foster makes an interesting point about reverence in the museum in his essay, "Archives of Modern Art." He says, "Indeed design and display in the service of exhibition and exchange values are fore-grounded as never before: today what the museum exhibits above all else is its own spectacle value – that is the principal point of attraction and the chief object of reverence" (Foster, 2002:95). His argument is that museum digital archives (i.e. digital collections) split the experience of the artworks into mnemonic and visual, whereas previously, the museum experience contained memory in the viewing as a single unified engagement. "[T]he mnemonic function of the museum is given over to the electronic archive, which might be accessed almost anywhere, while the visual function is given over not only to the exhibition-form of art but to the museum-building as spectacle – that is, as an image to be circulated in the media in the service of brand equity and cultural capital. This image is the primary form of "art" today" (Foster, 2002:95).

⁷ Another significant factor in this decision comes from a description of the simulacrum by Scott Durham (1998:17-8) in *Phantom Communities*. He says: "The encounter with the simulacrum is thus more akin to memory and fantasy than it is to perception or communication. Through the simulacrum, one recalls, awaits, or imagines what is virtual or unactualized in the very object that one sees. The simulacrum, as Foucault puts it, 'presents an image that depends on an ever-receding truth.' In this, he argues, it is closer to the typologies of biblical exegesis, with their infinitely displaced figures and their layered and embedded narratives, than to the diacritical space of the Saussurean sign, whose meaning may in principle be derived from its differential relations with other elements synchronic with and on the same level as itself. For, like the types dear to the Fathers of the Church—for whom each tree in the Old Testament was at once a prefiguration of the Cross and an allusion to 'the First Tree at the foot of which Adam succumbed'—the simulacrum is 'bound to the history of a manifestation that is never completed' and which must somehow be reconstructed. The appearance of the simulacrum is in this sense not so much a phenomenal as an interpretive event. In its movement of doubling, it neither offers its evidence to our gaze nor communicates its significance to our understanding: it veils itself in a series of enigmas—is it the same or different? before or after? present or absent? real or imaginary? —which force the viewer and interpreter to come to terms with what, beyond the field of visibility, is nonetheless repeated in the image." I refer to elements of this description elsewhere in the report as well. These quotes by Foucault (1964) and used by Durham come from "The Prose of Actæon."

The main elements in this study are: my engagement with the museum collection, the affordance of mobile phone photography within the museum galleries, intuition and the process of seeing, and bridging the gap between the virtual and the material through digital alterations.

3.1 My engagement with The Fitzwilliam Museum

I wanted to work with The Fitzwilliam Museum because I sensed a very personal characteristic to the collection, which manifested in the kinds of objects on view in the Museum. I could see much of the collection was given to domestic and personal objects. Objects, such as porcelain figurines, crystal and china tableware, jewellery, ladies' fans, linen samplers, and Valentine's cards, to name just a few, held a depth of intimacy for me because they reminded me of objects belonging to members of my family, for example, my paternal grandmother. She was a very cultured lady who wore her hair in a French twist, accessorised with pearl necklaces and white gloves, and she never *ever* wore trousers. She was a musician. Her instruments were the piano and harp. As a child, I played with her gold Lyon and Healy harp, which I inherited when she died.

Many of the paintings and sculptures represented in the collection were portraits, or in one case, was the demonstration of a personal passion for small bronze sculptures of animals, mostly. Intimate settings or close familial relationships depicted in the paintings suggested these objects were remembrances of loved ones, or were possibly selected by the collectors because of the empathy and familiarity captured by the artist; this came to signal layers of human intimacy, bound through provenance, like pages of old vellum. I found the collection of medieval armour and weaponry to be painfully human, considering these were armaments of battle. I was confirmed in my apperception of the collection by the Head of Exhibitions who explained that The Fitzwilliam Museum was made up of a variety of personal collections bequeathed to the Museum. This offered a comfortable set of objects for me to engage with to research the very private activity of looking.

At first, I thought I would take photographs of objects that were allegorical in nature, repetitive, fragmentary, indexical or somehow showed a temporal disruption because these were concerns of the simulacrum I was researching for my doctoral thesis. This started to feel rigid, imposed and artificial however, so I turned to an intuitive engagement focused on the act of looking and responding, which ultimately proved fruitful. I soon discovered that I was photographing objects that drew me in. This led to discoveries in how I was reading the artworks and their curatorial presentation within the museum setting, and how those readings were informed by my life experience and the conditions of living in the digital information age of the twenty-first century. For example, I spent a lot of time in Gallery 6: *Italian Art of the 14th and 15th Century*. The space is filled with the radiance of gilt frames. I found myself drawn to the gold in that gallery because I equated it with my grandmother's harp, which factored so prominently in my childhood. Much of the gold leaf that figures in my images from this residency are linked to memories of her harp.

This process also revealed latent categorical groupings to come from the act of seeing which were developing as I amassed a number of altered images. These categories were

significant for the development of the transparent book because they gave order and meaning to the images in the book, which otherwise were overwhelming in number for a viewer. The images in the book, while the same as those made into prints, had a different aspect taken in number, and in the form of a book. As with curating, what was situated in proximity had bearing on the meaning of an image, and had the potential to change its meaning. Placing the images into groupings eased the burden of assimilating so many digital alterations within the book for the reader, and gave coherence to the non-verbal communication of the images. It soon became evident that these categories were suggestive of keywords for significant personal experiences in my life; words like 'Women,' 'Domestic' and 'Grace' carry meaning for the important women in my life, who played pivotal roles in the development of my sense of self, and the domestic lives they led, but who faced the world and its challenges with immanent grace.

My engagement with The Fitzwilliam Museum then, became a reflection of personal experiences triggered by visual clues I was subliminally responding to in the art objects of the collection.

3.2 Mobile phone photography within the museum

Allowing mobile phone photography in museum galleries is a relatively new policy. Most often, people take selfies next to artworks (Berlins, 2009). However, many museums have seen the marketing benefits of allowing mobile phone photography in their galleries (EyeforTravel, 2015). The Fitzwilliam allowed me to photograph in the main collection galleries, but not in the temporary exhibition, as is the case with most museums. I only ran into one questionable situation with the work I created by appropriating El Greco's *St John the Evangelist*. This work by El Greco (c.1590-1600) is in the collection by loan, rather than being owned by the Museum, and may raise copyright issues.

In addition to the use of mobile phone photography for my research in the galleries, I really enjoyed the experience of being able to take detail shots of paintings. This activity in itself was an alteration and distortion of the original artwork, resulting in compositions which only exist from my perspective, and therefore take on new meaning by nature of being reframed. Not only did I take detail shots, but I also took photographs of installations and architectural features of the museum. I took several of these kinds of images, and they figure in number in the transparent book, both as visual relief from the demands of the altered images, and for their own compositional value. Some of these photographs count among my favourites from the project. It can be fun taking photographs with a mobile phone. However, I often felt conspicuous doing so in the Museum, and hoped that I was not interfering with the experience of other visitors. This has been an argument against photography in museums (Berlins, 2009; Zagorsky, 2016).

I didn't use any of the in-phone features, such as applying filters or mark-up edits to the images, nor did I take any panorama views or videos. Though on occasion I used a square rather than rectangle frame, and would switch between vertical and horizontal framing. The decision not to use these in-phone photography features was mainly because I wanted to photograph what I was seeing in time with the act of looking. I

wanted adjustments and alterations to come later, as a different intuitive engagement of response.

3.3 Intuition and dialectical seeing

The act of looking is an act of dialectical engagement; seeing is a temporal synthesis bringing past into unison with present. Immediacy is not just 'of the moment,' it is the temporal disruptions which allow history to resuscitate in fleeting fragments, bonding with the fluidity of seeing. Walter Benjamin, obsessed by these temporal nuances, strove to articulate a philosophy of history. His unfinished thesis, *Passagen-Werk*, provides the material Susan Buck-Morss engaged to extrapolate the philosophical notion of *dialectical seeing*. I treat Susan Buck-Morss' *The Dialectics of Seeing* as primary source material, not as a secondary source for Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* (*Passagen-Werk*). Her thesis is not mediated criticism, but an autonomous methodology inextricably linked with "a book that was never written" (Buck-Morss, 1989:ix). Buck-Morss casts light onto Benjamin's world in order to understand the influences Benjamin faced. Her aim was not to reinterpret the *Passagen-Werk*, but to net the fleetingly articulated concepts in Benjamin's writings in order to realise the impact and implication of seeing dialectically. In exploring the atmosphere of Paris, against the personal history of Walter Benjamin, Buck-Morss maps out the philosophical stance that Benjamin left latent and incomplete.

History for Benjamin was not a legitimising structure, it was a source of critical knowledge that allowed for the interpretive power of seeing (Buck-Morss, 1989:x-6). In other words, 'history' was the engine of intuition. Benjamin's interest in history was for its constellate nature of origins; for those elements that continue to return as influences, but which are perceived as a culmination rather than a recursion. In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin (1940:252) criticising Social Democratic theory writes, "The concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogeneous, empty time. A critique of the concept of such a progression must be the basis of any criticism of the concept of such a progression itself." This 'progression,' while not explicit in Benjamin's text, seems to refer to Hegel's dialectic, where a progression of understanding builds by simultaneously cancelling out and preserving the moment of understanding, moving forward to infinity (Maybee, 2016). But it passes through *nothing* to get there, what Benjamin calls "homogeneous, empty time" above. The void of this *nothing* is where the context in Hegel's historical progression is left unaccounted for in his theory. Buck-Morss explains that Benjamin wanted to break the myth of immediacy of the cultural continuum by exploding out bits of the forgotten past; actualising the past to question the present (Buck-Morss, 1989:x).

Benjamin's history was the sociological history of lived experience, that took its symbolic form in the Arcade where "urban objects, relics of the last century, were hieroglyphic clues to a forgotten past," and which emanated from "the *unconscious* of the dreaming collective" (Buck-Morss, 1989:39, emphasis in original). For Benjamin, this collective history was "not 'life as it was,' nor even life remembered, but life as it has been 'forgotten'" (Buck-Morss, 1989:39). This concept of a forgotten collective history formed Benjamin's notion of the 'dialectical image,' which appeared at an axis where opposing elements meet, not at the end of a Hegelian progression. At this axis stood the

commodity, which for Benjamin contained “contradictory ‘faces,’ like two sides of a coin: fetish and fossil; wish image and ruin” (Buck-Morss, 1989:211).⁸

If we applied this notion of the dialectical image as commodity to art history, the oppositions of fetish and fossil; wish image and ruin are perceptible in the art objects in any museum collection. Strolling through the galleries, as I did at The Fitzwilliam, the intuitive nature of dialectical images (Buck-Morss, 1989:220), which appear like a “lightning flash” (Buck-Morss, 1989:250), meant that I could read the collective objective traces of a Benjaministic history in the art objects. These traces comingled with my own subjective seeing, leading me to question where the ‘commodity’ really was. Was it in the artworks displayed within the museum, or was I this commodity?

While Buck-Morss (1989:13) described a “young Benjamin that believed in the possibility of metaphysical knowledge of the objective world,” his belief that “it would not end up showing him his own reflection” gave way to the influence of Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*,⁹ and “an external physical experience that paralleled the internal, mental experience of ‘involuntary memory,’” which Benjamin realised controlled his imagination (Buck-Morss, 1989:38).¹⁰ Therefore, intuition *is* dialectical seeing. It reveals subjective experience through the experience of unfamiliar objects, and brings new meanings to those objects, activating them in real time. This describes the experience I had of *looking* at the Fitzwilliam, and the subsequent images created out of that encounter. The force of this kind of activation can be seen in the curatorial project, *An Aside* by Tacita Dean (2005), where tangential links between works gave rise to curatorial meaning for the exhibition. I discuss this in my assessment of the study findings below.

3.4 Digital alterations and the encounter

⁸ To explain this further, Buck-Morss says, “Here the *fossil* names the commodity in the discourse of ur-history, as the visible remains of the ‘ur-phenomena.’ Even after his early, metaphoric ur-landscape of consumer dinosaurs and modern ice ages recedes, Benjamin sustains the physiognomy of the fossil in the idea of the ‘trace’ (*Spur*), the imprint of objects particularly visible in the plush of bourgeois interiors or the velvet lining of their casings (—here ur-history turns into a detective story, with the historical ‘trace’ as clue). The *fetish* is the keyword of the commodity as mythic phantasmagoria, the arrested form of history. It corresponds to the reified form of new nature, condemned to the modern Hell of the new as the always-the-same. But this fetishized phantasmagoria is also the form in which the human, socialist potential of industrial nature lies frozen, awaiting the collective political action that could awaken it. The *wish image* is the transitory, dream form of that potential. In it, archaic meanings return in anticipation of the ‘dialectic’ of awakening. The *ruin*, created intentionally in Baudelaire’s allegorical poetry, is the form in which the wish images of the past century appear, as rubble, in the present. But it refers also to the loosened building blocks (both semantic and material) out of which a new order can be constructed” (Buck-Morss, 1989:211-2, emphasis in original). This is the materialist understanding of the dialectical image. There is also a metaphorical understanding of the dialectical image: “The ‘lightening flash’ of cognition they provide is like illumination from a camera flashbulb; the images themselves—‘dialectics at a standstill’—are like camera shots, that ‘develop’ in time as in a darkroom.” Buck-Morss continues, “These images are to be juxtaposed like film,” concluding “The ‘shock’ of recognition with which the juxtapositions of past and present are perceived is like electricity,” where “Benjamin compares his own activity in ‘constructing’ dialectical images to that of an engineer, who ‘blasts’ things in the process of building them” (Buck-Morss, 1989:250).

⁹ Benjamin worked for several years translating Proust’s novel with his Berlin editor, Franz Hessel. Both were living in Paris in 1927, when the first notes for the *Arcades Project* were written collaboratively with Hessel (Buck-Morss, 1989:32).

¹⁰ For Benjamin, this external experience was the public space of the city of Berlin (Buck-Morss, 1989:38).

The computer became my studio and exhibition space; a temporal and virtual bridge between past and present/here and there; metaphorically mirroring the process of dialectical seeing. Cohesive elements fragmented and broke apart to reform in repetitive enumeration. Traces from the past came into present time and new meaning. While my own imagery and memories mingled with objects from the Museum as I encountered them. This kind of encounter is the space “that opens up new critical relations among artworks, and between viewers and artworks” (Pollock, 2007:13).

The process of making alterations to the imagery from the Museum was never intended as ironic or to be taken as institutional critique. Instead, my purpose was to explore how *seeing* was transformed in real time and to understand how my own process of looking maps onto unknown cultural objects. And also, to understand how objects were being transformed by these processes. The latter was perhaps the most challenging, because these transformations would not be visible—could not be made visible; they would remain in a latent state. The fact that I created imagery exemplifying these kinds of alterations, does not mean that I actually succeeded in visualising the transformations. It only means that I created examples of what these changes might look like. Therefore, the space of these images is neither photographic nor cinematic¹¹—the space is virtual, with temporal disruptions, cascading fluid repetitions, spatial displacements and isometric geometries.

Working within the Photoshop software, where the blank screen of the past flickers with activated and immediately-active memories, was akin to peeling back transparent layers of time, and conversely, building up layers of meaning semantically, phrase by phrase, because the construction of these images flowed in both directions; they were both deconstructive and constructive. It was a curiously conceptual process to work in layers within the programme, where elements of performance, instruction, action, the body, found objects, and documentation were used to make the work. But all of these historically defined aspects of conceptual art (Tate, n.d.) were only gestures¹² of this postmodern art movement used to respond to the mechanical imposition of the software in the work created for this project. They were also used to question the material relationship of communication, viewing and creative agency. Tim Griffin quantifies this succinctly in his explanation of Roland Barthes’ discussion of Cy Twombly’s work, in relation to the work of Wade Guyton:

¹¹ Pollock discusses this photographic and cinematic space created by postcards of Canova’s sculpture, *The Three Graces*: “In relation to the potential movement and hence narrativity that a sculpture in time and space inevitably incites, the still photograph of a sculpture denatures it, flattening it out as an ‘image,’ entraining a different kind of visuality that offers mastery in place of contingency and sustained curiosity in the open encounter. The postcards as photographic reproduction, amongst many other effects, introduce into our visual encounter with sculpture’s representations the paradox of narrativity through serial stillness. Instead of the synthetic concept of idea realised through a symbolics of form that Wölfflin posited, art reproductive photography dislocates sculpture from any originary or fixed site and initiates a quasi-cinematic space of fantasmatic visual encounter, transforming succeeding spaces of different framings of the piece into a certain kind of delusional time, alternating closeness and distance, movement and stillness, generating that cinematic mix of voyeurism (mastery and mobility) and fetishism (petrification and commemoratively ambivalent repetition)” (Pollock, 2007:40-1).

¹² I borrow this idea of ‘gesture’ from Tim Griffin’s (2018:15) Introduction to *Writings on Wade Guyton*, where he discusses Roland Barthes’ comments on Cy Twombly’s work as “[The painting’s markings] are not messages themselves but instead the gestures of messages.”

“[The paintings’ markings] are not messages themselves but instead the gestures of message.’ In other words, Twombly’s canvases frustrate the very readings they invite, prompting viewers to reconsider the meanings they bring to the work merely by being members of a given culture structuring experience; the frequently de facto procedures by which significance is assigned become as much the object of contemplation as any aesthetic material placed before the eye.” (Barthes cited in Griffin, and Griffin, 2018:15)

So, what appears as a mechanism of communication, is in fact, an object of aesthetic contemplation, not a meaning-making structure at all, or at least not a conventional language system as we, or Foucault’s *system of appearance and enunciability of statements*, would otherwise understand it. As an example of where this logic can lead, Catherine Chevalier’s (2015:67) essay, *2008–2014*, traces the self-reflexive gesture of “an exhibition speaking to itself in the past.” In Wade Guyton’s reduplicated exhibition, *26 avril – 7 juin 2008*, where he made an exact replica of the original iterative processes to make the work, Guyton duplicated his exhibition of 2008 at Galerie Chantal Crousel again in 2014. Chevalier explains that making a reiteration of the show by reproducing the artworks as new prints of the original data file, and recreating the installation exactly in every detail, Guyton sees the repetitive nature of his work as objectifying the first iteration of the exhibition, while materialising the memory of it in an exhibition that functions as an afterimage. Chevalier (2015:68) says this afterimage of the exhibition “highlights the singularity of the gallery space and the context it brings with it.” In this way, the exhibition functions as an image of itself where a temporal transformation “activates recognition of other things we believe we have already seen,” which also “implies an indexical relation to [its own] discourse” (Chevalier 2015:70). In other words, this results in paintings that speak of themselves in terms of a materialised recursion of the past, actively synthesising with the present through a durational afterimage of itself.

Questioning this gestural system of signification factors forcefully in the work I’ve created for the Fitzwilliam residency. In the analysis to come, I will describe how I’ve made my own excursion into this logic of self-reflexive gestures that mimic themselves. In the works below, I present three related examples of stylised processes that result in imagery that does not emanate meaning, so much as pulls meaning to them. The first exemplifies duration (*Blue Sky Entanglements*). The second signifies the intersection between thinking and looking (*domineco-ocenimod*). While the third, indicates the dialectics of seeing (*Fête*). To sum up, Griffin (2018:15) writes, “The stylization of critical procedures in art underscores—and extends—the very circulation of their motifs.” This ‘extension’ is the question I had on my mind during the residency.

Those layers in Photoshop and in the works I created came to represent the focused attention given to looking as I experienced it, and the distinctly non-historical, though historically referenced, apperceptions that played in my mind as I looked: I would see a painting from across the room. Moving closer, I started to focus on the centre of action, only to have my eye taken by a crisp detail in the bottom corner. Stepping back, out of a mystical universe of forgotten memories, and the cultural structuring I was in, brought the sharp focus detail into unison with the rest of the painting, whose meaning was now somehow changed from the moment I first saw it across the room. Its meaning had

grown deeper and somehow became part of my psyche; part of a newly altered worldview where I was and was not at its centre, *simultaneously*. This act of looking, and the agency afforded by being allowed to photograph in the museum—in other words, being given permission to appropriate—are important mechanisms required for this extension of art's motifs and the stylisation of critical procedures; such as making a gesture of a message, instead of communicating in a message.

4.0 Assessment of Study Findings

The substance of this section will be to discuss the immaterial nature of this research project; that is, intuitive selection, dialectical seeing, and visualising virtual space. Much of this will be discussed through selected altered image outcomes, and the surprises I encountered through the research. There are always inevitable problems, paradoxes and conundrums that come with doing research. These will be discussed in this section too.

4.1 On intuitive selection

Tacita Dean's way of working is deeply intuitive, following threads that will later become the narrative...without knowing where they will lead...Her deployment of 'objective chance' as a procedure is unsystematic, not grounded in a quasi-mystical belief in the unconscious, but finely balanced between self-revelation and the empirical world of others....

(Malbert, 2005:69)

Intuition is a remarkably powerful force. My own engagement with intuition has formed this opinion. However, I'm using Dean's *An Aside* project as an example of its directive influence. Like Dean, intuition plays a significant role in my practice. I think it is not accidental that a serious engagement with intuition should manifest in the disciplines of artmaking, curating, and writing in both of our practices. Intuition seeks outlet in different forms, for different reasons, at different times. But the relationship between intuition and creativity is as hard to define as the words themselves. What is intuition? What is creativity?

We can take some clues from Dean in her statement below. Words like 'unconscious process' and 'internal mechanisms' situate the concepts of intuition and creativity to the interior world of the self; to the constant inner conversation. While 'associative' suggests the action initiated in the intuitive and creative processes. Therefore, we could say we tap into our internal mechanisms to associate our sensory input through an unconscious process of conversation with the self. "Intuition leads us to go beyond the state of experience toward the *conditions* of experience" (Deleuze, 1966:27, my emphasis). In other words, intuitive seeing, or dialectical seeing to use Buck-Morss' term, allows us to go beyond the conscious moment of an experiential encounter to uncover the historical, personal, material, physical and psychological context involved in the act of looking. Dean illustrates this when she describes the context of her curatorial plan for *An Aside*:

I have shown no fidelity to the true unconscious process: some of my decisions have been associative, while others feel they have been very formally arrived at.

There is also one other element that has played a part in the experience of making this show, and that is that for the last nine months of its most intense working period I have been pregnant...I have had to rely...on more internal and domestic mechanisms, such as books to hand, or conversations, or my own experience and memory. (Dean, 2005:4)

64 The boundaries created by circumstance and the choice to make do with resources to hand opened Tacita Dean to an “otherwise inaccessible reality” (Iverson, 2010:20) of association, coincidence, and intuition. Dean allowed one work to lead to the next in her process of selection. She also took lead from her encounter with artist, Lothar Baumgarten, to find the structure for the exhibition. She says:

I am not sure if, as I have always believed, this whole process began in New York when I first saw Lothar Baumgarten’s *Da gefällt’s mir besser als in Westfalen* (There I like it better than in Westphalia), El Dorado, 1968-76, or if, in fact, it began earlier when I bought a postcard of his *Moskitos in Kopula*, 1969 – boy mounting girl – from the Deutsches Guggenheim, only to flick later through his 1985 Stedelijk catalogue in Walther König’s bookshop in Cologne and recognise those mosquitoes again, only this time in the context of images from the above work. Somehow, the path my experience took me in those months culminated in my watching the slide projection piece in the summer of 2003 and knowing that I had found the first work for this show. And not only did Lothar Baumgarten give me the gift of initiating the process, but he then gave me by a story he told, the very structure of the exhibition itself. (Dean, 2005:6)

Recounting this tale from Dean’s book, *An Aside*, illustrates the circuitous logistics, duration, layering of memories, and the subtle process of differentiation involved in intuition. It may also illustrate the Deleuzian method of intuition, based on Bergson’s philosophy and discussed in *Bergsonism* (1966:13-35). Deleuze (1966:32-3) says, “Intuition is...the movement by which we emerge from our own duration, by which we make use of our own duration to affirm and immediately to recognize the existence of other durations.” In other words, intuition is a virtual space we enter taking us out of our present into a fused temporality of past-present-future, where we can more easily access the temporal space of other situations.

For Deleuze (1966:42-3), this duration represents an equivalence with the subjective and the virtual. But it is also the way in which we differentiate other experiences from our own. By thinking in terms of duration, intuition becomes a process of identifying an internal virtual multiplicity of succession and fusion (Deleuze, 1966:38), where memory enters into a circuit of coexistence with the present (Deleuze, 1966:66-71). Recollection-images coalesce with perception-images to actualise the virtual (Deleuze, 1966:96-7).

68 The term ‘actualise’ here means that the virtual does not become real through the realisation of an idea; that is the definition of potential. For the virtual to actualise is for it to create its own pathways of movement converging and diverging through difference; creating “its own lines of actualization in positive acts” (Deleuze, 1966:97). The real looks like the possibility it realises, whereas “the actual...does not resemble the

virtuality that it embodies.”¹³ So, by using a method of intuition, Dean could not have possibly know what her exhibition would look like, until she had actualised it. Her aim was not to realise an idea, replicating it by making it real, but to follow a path leading to an unknowable outcome, relying on “a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers” (Deleuze, 1966:38, emphasis in original). In my own practice, and I surmise for Dean as well, I have learned how to open myself to the opportunities of discovery intuition brings. And I’ve learned how to stay alert to the actualisation of the virtual within the method of intuition.



An example, is *Blue Sky Entanglements* (Boyer, 2018) from the Fitzwilliam residency. I was drawn to this painting by Veronese (1576-84) because of the sexual tension between the two figures on the left, who I later learned were the god Hermes and Aglauros, sister to Herse, who is pictured to the right of the painting. The engagement between Hermes and Aglauros felt electric. The erotic nature of their entanglement made this painting stand out for me amongst the others in the Museum collection. The other thing that drew me in was the blue sky visible through the window behind Herse. I can’t say why. But the first thing I did in modifying this image was to replicate that section of sky and use it like wallpaper to cover the green of the Museum setting. There were also museum labels that I wanted to remove from the image. So, as I worked with these fragments of replicated

image, I started to notice the sites where Photoshop was bringing them into the image. It began to feel important that I leave trace of these pathways visible in the image, though I couldn’t articulate why at the time. These pathways are located by the various rectangles of colour visible in the work. I also wanted to do something with the male and female nymphs at either end of the table (Anon., c.1700) below the painting in the image. I had done some preliminary experiments with them, which had failed, but trying again, I found a solid black in place of their forms felt right to the image. The final

¹³ “On the other hand, or from another point of view, the possible is that which is ‘realized’ (or is not realized). Now the process of realization is subject to two essential rules, one of resemblance and another of limitation. For the real is supposed to be in the image of the possible that it realizes. (It simply has existence or reality added to it, which is translated by saying that, from the point of view of the concept, there is no difference between the possible and the real.) And, every possible is not realized, realization involves a limitation by which some possibles are supposed to be repulsed or thwarted, while others ‘pass’ into the real. The virtual, on the other hand, does not have to be realized, but rather actualized; and the rules of actualization are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference or divergence and of creation.... For, in order to be actualized, the virtual cannot proceed by elimination or limitation, but must create its own lines of actualization in positive acts. The reason for this is simple: While the real is in the image and likeness of the possible that it realizes, the actual, on the other hand does not resemble the virtuality that it embodies. It is difference that is primary in the process of actualization – the difference between the virtual from which we begin and the actuals at which we arrive.... In short, the characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualized” (Deleuze, 1966:96-7).

adjustment was to cover the table top sculptures with blue sky replications, but this time as transparent rectangles. Again, I didn't know why. This gave me the image pictured here.

Doing research into Veronese, I found he had a reputation as a master colourist (Ball, 2012:149), which could explain my fascination with his blue sky. I also discovered some significance to the entanglement of Hermes and Aglauros. Interlocking erotic figures were a speciality for Veronese (Cocke, 1990), and like his colour, this could have been why I was so fascinated by the sexual tension I was seeing between Hermes and Aglauros. Overall, this painting intrigued me. The relationship between the figures and the lux of the scenery was captivating. Richard Cocke (1990), in his essay "Wit and Humour in the Work of Paolo Veronese" described Veronese's mastery in all these areas, and it was the deftness in the artist's skill that captured my attention.

Further to the brilliance of *Hermes, Herse and Aglauros* (Veronese, 1576-84) as a painting, was its presentation in the gallery atop the Italian *Console Table* (Anon., c.1700). I found these two objects as inextricably entwined as Hermes and Aglauros, and I worked to capture photographically what I was seeing visually. Using the blue sky as wallpaper in the altered image, solidified their relationship. While blacking out the nymphs at either corner of the table created a 'gapping mouth' full of devouring teeth. Therefore, responding to the visual cues in the painting, *Blue Sky Entanglements* is suspended between the freedom of a blue sky and the pull of a dark underworld whose entrance is through a hideously gapping mouth. The descent is held in check only by the sites of intersection where time is disrupted by the appearance of a recursion—the rectangles of colour.

All of this was an entirely intuitive construction of what I was subconsciously reading; first in the Veronese painting, and then in its relationship to the table. But reading the story of Hermes, Herse and Aglauros in Book 2 of *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (c.AD 8:82-8). I learned of the curse of consuming envy levied on Aglauros by the goddess Minerva, and of Hermes entry into the scene by dropping from the sky, where Aglauros bars his entry into Herse's chamber. My intuitive construction made sense after reading Ovid's tale.

4.2 On dialectical seeing

In order for a piece of the past to be touched by present actuality, there must exist no continuity between them...Truth [. . .] is bound to a temporal nucleus which is lodged in both the known and the knower.

(Benjamin quoted in Buck-Morss, 1989:218-9, bracketed ellipsis in original)

The condition of *no continuity* in Benjamin's quote suggests there must be a gap, but perhaps this is not a gap as we know it, rather a gap that is also a fusion. This discontinuity creates the space for synthesis where objects of past meaning merge with the present perception of their encounter. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze (1966) elaborates on Bergson's theory of intuition, similar to Buck-Morss' elaboration of Benjamin, albeit through different methods. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze applies Bergson's methodology of intuition in order to develop the ideas within the book and Bergson's philosophy.

Deleuze addresses Bergson's notion of recollection, a process which is central to Benjamin's undertaking. Deleuze says:

In the same way that we do not perceive things in ourselves, but at the place where they are, we only grasp the past at the place where it is in itself, and not in ourselves, in our present...the past is "contemporaneous" with the present it *has been*...The past would never be constituted if it did not coexist with the present whose past it is. The past and the present do not denote two successive moments, but two elements which coexist.... In other words, each present goes back to itself as past. (Deleuze, 1966:58-9).

And in this way, there is a gap which fuses time as contemporaneous, as present becomes past and the past is recollected in the present. Benjamin's *no continuity* could be seen as both a gap and a fusion, because according to Deleuze's discussion of Bergson, we both leap into the past of Being and fuse with the virtual space of Becoming where recollection takes place (Deleuze, 1966:56-7).

Living in an era of 'post-truth,' I feel more comfortable with the term 'communication,' rather than the 'truth' mentioned by Benjamin in his statement opening this section. So, to apply that, "[*communication*] is bound to a temporal nucleus which is lodged in both the known and the knower." In other words, the object and the observer communicate in time, but it is not a linear time, it is a collision of temporal constellations; a clash of contemporanities. Buck-Morss (1989:219) describes the components of this collision as 'fore-history,' the possibility of an object, and 'after-history,' what an object has become.¹⁴ But, it is through a metaphorical act of turning this fore- and after-history inside out,¹⁵ that the remnants of what an object was (its after-history) communicates the utopian possibilities (an object's fore-history) as truth¹⁶ in the present, and actualises the object as a "presence of mind" in the observer (Buck-Morss, 1989:219).¹⁷

Dialectical seeing then, is "a way of seeing that crystallizes antithetical elements by providing the axes for their alignment" (Buck-Morss, 1989:210). Benjamin plotted these opposing elements as coordinates of intersecting axes. Their 'synthesis' is not a point of resolution for these oppositions, but the central axis point, which bring them together (Buck-Morss, 1989:210).

¹⁴ "As fore-history, the objects are prototypes, ur-phenomena that can be recognized as precursors of the present, no matter how distant or estranged then now appear. Benjamin implies that if the fore-history of an object reveals its possibility (including its utopian potential), its after-history is that which, as an object of natural history, it has in fact become" (Buck-Morss, 1989:219).

¹⁵ Benjamin visualised the methodological solution of "a stocking turned inside out" (Benjamin cited in Buck-Morss, 1989:21) to the question of how metaphysical speculation is possible "[i]f the historical transience of the world is its truth," (Buck-Morss, 1989:21). Buck-Morss (1989:210) reiterates later in the book, the "tension between the historical and the metaphysical poles of interpretation...haunted the Arcades project from the start...."

¹⁶ Again, in a post-truth era, instead of 'truth' we might say 'immediate presence' in this statement.

¹⁷ "In the traces left by the object's after-history, the conditions of its decay and the manner of its cultural transmission, the utopian images of past objects can be read in the present as truth. It is the forceful confrontation of the fore- and after-life of the object that makes it 'actual' in the political sense—as 'presence of mind' (*Geistesgegenwart*)—and it is not progress but 'actualization' in which ur-history culminates" (Buck-Morss, 1989:219).

For Benjamin, the dialectical image was related to allegory and surrealist montage—fragmentary. It is through Peter Bürger (1984), that Buck-Morss finds validation for Benjamin’s thinking on allegory. “Bürger draws on Benjamin’s own understanding of literary traditions as *discontinuous*, a convergence of the long-past with the most modern” (Buck-Morss, 1989:225, emphasis in original). This enabled Benjamin to relate his notions on allegory within the avant-garde to literature of the Baroque, but in a way that the modern informed the past, not the past culminating in the modern (Bürger, 1984:68). Ultimately for Benjamin, through allegory “[t]he finished work is the deathmask of its conception.... That which is eternally true can thus only be captured in the transitory, material images of history itself” (Buck-Morss, 1989:19-20).



In my image, *Fête* (2018), made during the Fitzwilliam residency, two completely unrelated pictorial worlds carry a similar narrative of apparent masked identity and intrigue, but which seem more sinister on closer inspection. The black masks in Guardi’s (c.1755-60) painting, *The Sala grande of the Ridotto, Palazzo Dandolo, S. Moisè*, completely obliterate the women’s faces. The masks have no human form at all, they are flat. Whereas the masks the men wear in this painting have a form which moulds to the structure of the face. This flatness of the women’s masks reads as a denial, defacement and subjugation, to me. If

such masks were actually worn, they would squash the nose and feel stifling on the face. But the ladies’ deportment in the painting suggest they may find a liberation in the obliteration.

Paired with two images from my own body of work, the significance of the masks become supercharged in the Guardi painting fragment. The series of images I created in 2015 are called *Portraits of the Non*, because they depict non-beings. I was working on the notion of finding spectres as I deconstructed older works, then reconstructed the fragments in Photoshop. *Fête*, also the title of these two images, paired with the Guardi fragment, presents a description of the simulacrum, where the mask is removed only to reveal another mask behind it; on and on with each mask that is removed to infinity (Deleuze, 1983:52-3).

Placing my works in relation to this fragment from Guardi’s painting synthesises these disparate notions of masked identity to form a dialectical image. That is, an intuitive image that spans the gap of a discontinuity in time. The dialectical image comes into existence in the moment where past memory collides with present perception causing a disruption to the continuity of thought through its fusion. In this moment, there is a temporal conflation of past, present and future and the simulacrum manifests as an interpretive event (Durham, 1998:18). It is the moment of synthesis for the networked self in its relation to the world as a total concern (Ricoeur, 1990:314), and a construct for describing this production of meaning through synthesis (Buck-Morss, 1989:218-222).

4.3 On virtual space

The work of art is a repetition of an always-lost memory...But it is as Kofman insists paradoxically, an originary repetition; for that non-memory had no charge, no shape, was no part of consciousness without the image that prompted its apparent re-emergence...Kofman can show therefore, that there is not a psychic source and its secondary representation. In effect, there is only one text, and the artwork is to be understood, therefore, as the paradox of an originary double.

(Pollock, 2007:58)

Griselda Pollock is discussing Sarah Kofman's (1970) *The Childhood of Art: An Interpretation of Freud's Aesthetics* in the quote above. This originary double is a manifestation of formative psychic experiences; like a childhood obsession with the girl next door that turns into an unformed and never-to-be-satisfied yearning in maturity.¹⁸ This kind of originary experience turns into psychic repetition via a virtual space within the self where the non-material appears through the mediation of a material encounter, for example having an otherwise unexplained attraction to a marble sculpture of a running girl with the wind billowing her garments. The paradox of this doubling is not the psychic repetition of yearning, but an original occurrence that returns a mirror-image of the girl from the childhood obsession. What we see in the originary double is not a mirror-image of ourselves, in the form of yearning, but a duplication of the thing that shaped us—our first love. Kofman (1970:1987-9) speaks of the artwork and a life as a text. She says, "The work is not a double of the author [which is] understood as the reflection of a being or of a pre-existing life; it is an originary double, a replica which is necessary precisely because the text of life is lacunary." In other words, the originary double that is an artwork exists "as a compliment" (1970:187) to a life lived precisely because the life lived has gaps in memory; things forgotten that manifest as derivatives of what has been forgotten. In such a compliment, we see the 'heterotopia' of our formative context.

Foucault discussed the mirror and its doubling-effect as a heterotopia,¹⁹ a place that is counter to the network of the real sites we encounter daily.²⁰ One such heterotopia is the museum, "in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit" (Foucault, 1967:26). It is the museum where the experience of the originary double has such a profound effect of presenting mirror-images to our mind. Looking in a mirror, we see a replication of our face, but more significantly we see the context which shapes the form of the face in the mirror. We see all the things that differentiate our face from the

¹⁸ Both Pollock and Kofman discuss Freud's study of Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva* novella, which uses this kind of doubling imagery of a 'real' girl and a bas-relief sculpture. However, Jensen's tale has the happy ending of 'boy gets girl' (Jensen, 1902).

¹⁹ Heterotopia was a term introduced by Michel Foucault in a March 1967 lecture. This lecture was subsequently published in October, 1984 as "Des Espaces Autres" in the French journal, *Architecture-Mouvement-Continuité*. In 1986, translator Jay Miskowiec secured permission to translate the text, which was published in the journal, *Diacritics*, published by Johns Hopkins University. "Of Other Spaces" is not part of the official corpus of Foucault's work because he never reviewed the text for publication. But the manuscript was released into the public domain shortly before his death in June 1984. The editor's footnote containing this information can be found on page 22 "Of Other Spaces" (Foucault, 1967:22).

²⁰ "we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another" (Foucault, 1967:23).

surroundings, and we see the light that falls across the features of our face giving them shape. But our face is as two-dimensional as everything else in the mirror. The virtual space of the mirror that allows us to see ourselves within a context is a displacement of duration; we look at ourselves in a moment in time, but we experience the result of that looking in a different moment and in a different place. Foucault says, “The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there” (Foucault, 1967:24).²¹ Like this, the originary double that is an artwork is a mirror-image of the (forgotten) context which forms our features; a displacement of duration which takes us out of ourselves and situates us in a different place and time—in the virtual.

Pollock discusses the virtual in terms of what cannot be realised, (what Deleuze would call ‘actualised’), and the ‘afterlife of images,’ a “meaning-bearing image [that becomes] the basis for a visual history of the mind” (Pollock, 2007:18).²² For her, the virtual is the potentiality for the dissemination and mediation of an image fostered through the photographic that lodges in the memory-archive of the mind. Speaking of her concept of the Virtual Feminist Museum, where she responded to a museum encounter through postcards of Canova’s *The Three Graces*, she says:

Art is both the product of the creation of the first public survey museums that provided the actual housing for these...collections and of their virtual expansion through photographic reproduction that, by manipulation of scale, angle and uniformity of surface, creates new objects entirely for a proximate lens-based visual appropriation, where, in effect, viewing twins consumption with voyeurism. Hence the dissemination of our generic knowledge of things as ‘art’ is structurally dependent on technologically expanded modern musealisation itself which always implied a certain virtualisation: a creation of an archive transcending time and space. (Pollock, 2007:16)

²¹ The full quote from Foucault is: “There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there” (Foucault, 1967:24).

²² This statement is actually made in relation to a description of the accomplishment for the practice of art history by Aby Warburg through his *Mnemosyne Atlas*, but is also relevant to explain what is meant by the ‘afterlife of images.’

So, we have a doubling that is not a repetition through the originary double, a real place that is unreal in the heterotopia, and an undead image of the photographic reproduction with an interactive afterlife. In each of these is repetition that reproduces not itself, but a new experience of engagement; a decentred reflection of us in context; a virtual us looking back at ourselves in the compressed temporality of past, present, and future. In the virtual we have space to manoeuvre between what is actual and what is displaced, or what is temporally dislocated—like memories. In short, the virtual is a space that gives room to shift between what is immediate and what is distant; what is real and what is imaginary; what is internal and what is external.



domenico-ocinomod (Boyer, 2018) is possibly one of the subtlest of the images I made during the research residency, but it is one that intrigues me the most. Actually, this was one of the preliminary images I made for my proposal to The Fitzwilliam, so technically, it was pre-residency. When I look at this image I see a collage. I also see a temporal disruption in the fabric of visual continuity, which arguably, could be said to be the definition of collage. But more than either of these things, I see objects which have been levelled to an equal degree of density. This kind of ‘levelling’ first became significant in Robert Rauschenberg’s work in the late 60s.

Critic Leo Steinberg (1972) observed that Rauschenberg’s paintings moved from the vertical pictorial plane of art history, which was in relation to erect human posture, to the flatbed surface which collects debris and is sensitive to the inscription of information. The significance of this shift is one from the experience of nature as an erect body, to the operational process and “the psychic address of the image” (Steinberg, 1972:np). In other words, the image becomes an imaginative experience, rather than a given precondition of standing. Rosalind Krauss (1974), saw a correlation between the equal density treatment of imagery in Rauschenberg’s paintings and the levelling of remembered images we store in our memories. She shifted Steinberg’s inflection of the receptive flatbed to the virtual space of memory:

There is, of course, another space, one to which we all have recourse, in which this kind of experience of levelling occurs. It is a space in which the image of a painting we have seen in a museum, and the image of an actual event we have witnessed, and the image of one we have merely fantasized or dreamed, all *do* possess an equal degree of density. This is the space of memory. (Krauss, 1974: 50-1, emphasis in original)

The implication of Krauss’ inflection to the space of memory is one of time; of the image being experienced as duration. “What Rauschenberg was insisting upon was a model for

art that was not involved with what might be called the cognitive moment...but instead was tied to the *durée*—to the kind of extended temporality that is involved in experiences like memory, reflection, narration, proposition” (Krauss, 1974:41, emphasis in original). Within this *durée* is an experience of syntax; a reading of part-by-part that unfolds like the reading of a sentence (Krauss, 1974:40-1). The object, in relationship to the viewer, takes the form of an address, and by being situated within this kind of discursive space, “could the art object challenge its fate of being absorbed as a commodity only” (Krauss, 1974:42-3)?

Could this psychic address of the image mean there is an engagement that takes place outside of all other commodified experiences of the work? That is, outside the context of an art institution in direct relation to an art market, and corporate sponsorship given to the art institution in exchange for audience approbation and tax write-off. This is the dialectic I see in *domenico-ocinomod*. However, its intonation is not of a personal phraseology. It uncovers the syntax of the institution. Uncovering an institutional syntax suggests that I am, as viewer, in the axis of dialectical seeing; that is, in the position of commodity. The sentence is being spoken to me. The organisation and installation of artwork within the museum galleries is addressed to me, the viewer. I am being traded into the space of looking as a commodity of the museum.

This notion of being a commodity of the museum is not just about buying and selling goods, but more about being an object of value for the museum’s existence. Without an audience, the museum would cease to exist, because it is through its audience that a museum leverages governmental and philanthropic funding support. But there is a kind of economic trade that takes place. When a sponsor gives money to a museum, they do so in part to raise awareness of their business, and as is often the case, to improve a problematic reputation with the general public, including museum audiences. They also do it for tax relief, in countries that offer this kind of incentive, like America. It should be no mystery that tobacco, oil, pharmaceutical and other global companies—even weapons manufacturers, support the arts as a way to be seen doing ‘good’ in the community, while garnering huge tax write-offs for their donations. This means that the audience is a ‘traded’ commodity between museum and sponsor.

But through the creative agency of appropriating images from the collection, I get something for myself.

In this axis position of being a commodity of the museum, I look back to the situation of the institution’s address to find another kind of syntactical rendering. To alleviate the pressure of being the commodity, I make meaning of what has no meaning in order to soothe the enthrallment of this social control. I find my internal experience reflected in the external scene of the curatorial installation, and by doing so, I make the internal available in present time, but more importantly, this reflection safeguards my internal experience. The images I’ve made will always be seen as someone else’s—mine. Just as the original art object or appropriated image is seen as belonging to another space, another artist, or another time. Internalising these image-experiences of viewing leaves them vulnerable to loss and dismissal by a commodified world. Whereas, externalising them strengthens their existence by reclaiming them:

Yet the personal history and strong feelings are composed by images which are external to the artist...By insisting on their own external character, they suggest that the nature of [Rauschenberg's, (or my)] feelings, and the space of his art, and his personal history, are the product of the material world. At the same time, by being absorbed into his world, by being "delayed" there as an incorporated part of his experience, the objects themselves are registered as images. By being deposited onto the pictorial field of experience, they are redeemed from a fate of functioning solely as commodity. And the work, as Rauschenberg conceives it, shares in—by inventing—this redemption. (Krauss, 1974:54)

Like Rauschenberg, I am a product of the material world I live in, but I too have rebelled against the tyranny of it by making images which speak to the mind and the internal virtual space of the viewer.

4.4 Problems, paradoxes and conundrums

For me, the most successful images from the research outcomes are the ones with the most complexity, with a couple of exceptions, like *domenico-ocinomod*, and a few others not mentioned in this report. There were times that I ran out of ideas of how to engage with the images, and therefore the drive to make quantities of images in order to have enough for a book, sometimes felt like an artificial parameter to the research. Because I had a limited amount of time for the research, I focused on two of the works from the residency, *Blue Sky Entanglements* and *Lucretia*. There started to be a lateral reading between the two in relation to the depiction of rape and sexual coercion in art, which would have been very interesting to investigate further. In going forward, I would pursue this kind of dialectical interchange of two images, or experiment with selecting a single work to research and engage with. This strategy would make a more focused effort to achieve a meaningful investigation and response.

The simple modality of engagement and response as a methodology of intuition was not structured enough to make a full enquiry into the mechanisms of intuition and how it manifests within an art practice, driving creativity forward. At best, I could speculate through analyses how this could be taking place by identifying the intersections between my thinking process and the artworks from The Fitzwilliam collection. For example, in *domenico-ocinomod*, where what is apparent in the work is not the alterations I made, because these are subtle, but the thinking involved. Nor did this simple modality address duration inherent within intuition. Again, the best I could do was to identify when a durational process appeared in the work, as it did with the replicated blocks of colour in *Blue Sky Entanglements*. Neither could it uncover a dialectic of looking with which the intuition is fundamentally involved. I could only indicate the possibility such a dialectic might exist through juxtaposing my work with images from The Fitzwilliam, such as in *Fête*, where the suggestion of a mask made the masks in Guardi's (c.1755-60) painting stand out semantically.

While I enjoyed developing my own simple methodology of intuition, it may have been more rigorous to follow an already established methodology of intuition, such as the method outlined in *Bergsonism*, by Deleuze (1966). But that raises its own questions because of the necessary translations needed to apply a philosophical method to fine art research. For example, Deleuze (1966:13) says Bergson's strict rules of intuition

brought precision to philosophy. While there is a certain tidiness to my artwork, precision is not an aim I strive for. In fact, it is anathema to my personal philosophy of making art because it suggests a hyper level of control that I simply do not believe in. However, to discuss Bergson's method of intuition only in terms of precision is to miss the bigger point of chance and uncertainty entangled with duration, which I have great respect for. So, in many ways, implementing such a philosophical methodology as Bergson's, or Deleuze's elaboration of it, would potentially risk cherry picking aspects applicable to my artistic aims. But it would be worth investing time to test the application of the Bergsonian methodology of intuition to my own practice research, because it could uncover unexpected results in the thought processes involved in my work.

5.0 Reflections and Conclusions

In section 3.4 I said, "my purpose was to explore how *seeing* was transformed in real time and to understand how my own process of looking maps onto unknown cultural objects. And also, to understand how objects were being transformed by these processes." Seeing is entangled with memory. Malraux (1953:16) suggests as much when he says that before photographic reproduction, art connoisseurs visiting the great collections had to remember what they saw. Photographic reproductions allow us to remember what we have seen, while they also represent what we have not seen, providing the means to move between memory and the activated virtual space of intuition. Photographs also act as placeholders, allowing the *idea* of an object to detach from its object and be transported elsewhere, taking meaning from and giving meaning to new contexts. It's in this fluidity that we see the simulacrum at play in the photographic reproduction:

In its movement of doubling, it neither offers its evidence to our gaze nor communicates its significance to our understanding: it veils itself in a series of enigmas—is it the same or different? before or after? present or absent? real or imaginary?—which force the viewer and interpreter to come to terms with what, beyond the field of visibility, is nonetheless repeated in the image. (Durham, 1998:18)²³

There is an inherent uncertainty to what becomes of these images taken on mobile phones in museums. In taking the gamble that the distributed images will do more to peak interest than do harm to the imaged artworks, the museum relinquishes control of the reproduction and distribution of these images. They invest in what Hal Foster (2002) calls the 'Mona Lisa Syndrome,' betting that the cliché of over-distribution will bring an aura of fascination to the work; the same aura which so concerned Walter Benjamin (1936), and which he was sure the photographic reproduction destroyed in the artwork. In *The Conjugated Museum*, this virtual dissemination and mediation is collapsed in my encounter with the artwork in the museum. It becomes conflated with the dialectics of seeing in a heterotopic space where I am charged with visually interpreting what I don't fully know—can't fully know.

²³ Durham is describing the simulacrum in this passage, but it also serves as pertinent description of the photographic image.

Can these artworks become more democratised by allowing visitors to photograph them, than they already are by being on display in a public museum with free admission? And what of the institutional address to visitors? Does it still carry the same kind of social control promoting good and cultured behaviour as it once did, or is the message a different one? With the allowance of mobile phone photography in museums, a transactional aspect has come into the relationship between museum and audience, complicating the notion of commodity discussed above. What was a form of “inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power...throughout society” (Bennett: 1988:82) through the creation of the public museum in the nineteenth century by allowing the public to view heretofore private objects owned by the wealthy, and therefore instilling in them the coded messages of civilised behaviour, has become a manifestation of vulnerability. In the face of conservative disdain for supporting cultural institutions, museums struggle financially. The decision to allow mobile phone photography in museums is an act of financial preservation. In short, images taken by visitors in museum galleries are free advertising. So, not only am I a commodity between museum and sponsor, I’m also a free-agent in supplying free advertising for the museum.

Pollock argued for the artwork as a site of meaning-making, does this kind of imaging activity in museum galleries engage the artworks in creating new meaning or does it render these works meaningless? Have I distorted the meaning of the artworks that I imaged, or have I reinvigorated their existence by reanimating them? Can artworks create meaning outside of their own time? For Bergson, because time prevents the revelation of everything at once:

It retards, or rather it is retardation. It must therefore, be elaboration. Would it not then be a vehicle of creation and of choice? Would not the existence of time prove that there is indetermination in things? Would not time be that indetermination itself? (Bergson 1920:273)

I find this view of time as indetermination provocative. It suggests that nothing is ever resolved and it gives leeway for the possibility of continual development. Applying this to my question, ‘can artworks create meaning outside of their own time?’ It first should perhaps be corrected to say, ‘can artworks create meaning beyond their own era?’ Because Bergson makes it clear from his statement above, there is no possibility of being outside of time. Does a creative reinterpretation or appropriation keep artworks relevant, or does it fundamentally change them? The virtual spaces discussed in this report start to form a kind of temporal syntax, articulated meaning and narrativity reliant on the passage of time. This virtuality also raises the issue of an active simulacra, “‘bound to the history of a manifestation that is never completed’ and which must somehow be reconstructed. The appearance of the simulacrum is in this sense not so much a phenomenal as an interpretive event” (Foucault, 1964 cited in Durham, 1998:18).

Nearly everyone who I’ve shown *Blue Sky Entanglements* (Boyer, 2018) to who is not familiar with my research, has asked, “so what am I looking at here?” They have failed to immediately see the unreality of the blue background, perceiving it as part of the natural conditions attached to the Veronese painting and the Italian console table. However, the blue of the background is the most prominent aspect of the altered image.

For me, this response indicates a change of relevancy in the work, because viewers are not seeing just a Veronese painting and an Italian baroque table; they're seeing a fantasy scene that does not exist, but yet, which does not trigger a response of incredulity. They believe in what they're seeing, and aren't quite sure what I've done to call it my own. This kind of exploitable fantasy-belief is at the core of many of the most intensive debates on the issue of communication and politics in the news and social media today.

Is a reinterpretation reflective of the life of the viewer or the power of the artwork to reinvent itself through the nuanced meanings instilled by the artist? Likewise, with *Blue Sky Entanglements* (Boyer, 2018), the nuanced meaning doesn't start and stop at Veronese; we have to go all the way back to Ovid and his *Metamorphoses*. Possibly, further back than that to archetypal stories of transformation (Cupitt cited in Coupe, 1997:6). In tracing this course, it isn't just a question of how the nuance of the narrative is communicated, but also how its transmission through the centuries has affected social thinking. So, for any individual viewer, myself included, the response to an artwork, in this case a Veronese painting, involves a long history of social interpretation—a distant reading of dialectical seeing.

What might the digital reconfiguring of the visual continuity of an artwork, like I made for *The Conjugated Museum*, signal? The new dialectics of seeing brought by electronic information is one of cult value. Benjamin said in the past, cult value meant artworks had to be hidden (Benjamin, 1936 in Arendt, 1969:7), but Foster (2002:94) says the ubiquity of a work shared in digital media brings cult value through the 'Mona Lisa Syndrome.' And the issue of autonomy becomes a trigger to questions of ownership, identity or power—power mostly, if what Foster says is correct:

But there are more recent developments to consider along these lines, such as the extent to which exhibition value in art has become all but autonomous, to the point where it often overwhelms whatever is on view. Indeed design and display in the service of exhibition and exchange values are fore-grounded as never before: today what the museum exhibits above all else is its own spectacle value—that is the principal point of attraction and the chief object of reverence. (Foster, 2002:95)

Therefore, if I claim the autonomy to alter these images which the museum complex has put at my disposal by allowing me to photograph them, am I not breaching the reverent and sovereign space of that very museum complex; challenging its power of ownership? Speaking of the effect of the mediating eye of photography on sculpture, Pollock says:

In relation to the potential movement and hence narrativity that a sculpture in time and space inevitably incites, the still photograph of a sculpture denatures it, flattening it out as an 'image,' entraining a different kind of visuality that offers mastery in place of contingency and sustained curiosity in the open encounter. (Pollock, 2007:40-1)

In other words, the photograph of an artwork in situ within a museum becomes a vision of the photographer taking the shot, disrupting the situational experience of a personal encounter in the museum. In making these *reanimated* images, for surely this is what they are—not just appropriations and more than alterations—I insinuate my view of

the scene, my fantasy of the scene. "Through the simulacrum, one recalls, awaits, or imagines what is virtual or unactualized in the very object that one sees" (Durham, 1989:17-8). It is with this thought in mind therefore, to bring up the function of *The Conjugated Museum* (Boyer, 2019) book, with its visibility of all the images created and selected for the project as a 'networked' whole, while at the same time allowing an individual page by page view of each image, brings these issues into a reformulated material virtuality through its transparent pages. However, despite the singularity of vision in these images, the single view of each page is always disrupted by the link to its totality. The past is always present in the future, actualised in the turn-of-the-page that is the present.

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