College of Arts and Social Sciences
Research School of Humanities and the Arts
School of Art & Design

**Visual Arts Graduate Program**
**Doctor of Philosophy**

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# *SPATIAL PAINTING AND THE MUTATIVE PERSPECTIVE: HOW PAINTING CAN BREACH SPATIAL DIMENSIONS AND TRANSFER MEANING THROUGH ABSTRACTION*

A thesis submitted for the degree of the
Doctor of Philosophy
of The Australian National University
April 2019

**Acknowledgements**

For unique and fantastic support of my practice-lead research I very much want to thank:

in particular Bojana Pejic, Charlotte Galloway, Denise Ferris, eX de Medici, Gordon Bull, Jacinta Lai, Kerry Crowley, Louisa Elderton, Milovan Destil Markovic, Toby Golson, Vesna Milosavljevic and Vivien Silvey, who all guided and encouraged me beyond the expected; and I want to thank David Williams, Emma Beer, Elisa Crossing, Erica Seccombe, Jennie Lamensdorf, Julie Brooke, Julie Spencer, Lara Nicholls, Marie Hagerty, Millan Pintos-Lopez, Peter Alwast, Peter Maloney, Peter Vandermark, Raquel Ormella, Ruth Waller, Simon Ramsey, Sue Banks and Terence Maloon for their valuable input.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship, by a VC Travel Grant and the Harris & Hobbs Material Award.

My deep gratitude.

**Declaration of Originality**

I, Claudia Chaseling……3. April 2019 (sign and date)
hereby declare that the thesis here presented is the outcome of the research project undertaken during my candidacy, that I am the sole author unless otherwise indicated, and that I have fully documented the source of ideas, references, quotations and paraphrases attributed to other authors.

*For my Mum and for my Dad*
*Irmgard Annemarie Poetzsch (*Ederer) and Klaus Poetzsch*

# SPATIAL PAINTING AND THE MUTATIVE PERSPECTIVE: HOW PAINTING CAN BREACH SPATIAL DIMENSIONS AND TRANSFER MEANING THROUGH ABSTRACTION

Fig. 1: *devolution*, 2017, ink, aluminium and egg tempera on wall, floor and ceiling, 325 x 665 x 450 cm

## ABSTRACT

My practice-led PhD research investigates the broadening of physical boundaries of the painting medium and inquires into the ways abstract, non-representational painting can communicate narratives that have a socio-political meaning, namely, the radioactive contamination of depleted uranium munitions. It considers how painting can extend into space to affect the viewer's sense of two- and three-dimensional boundaries and convey specific socio-political meaning as such.

This inquiry has comprised two parts: firstly, I conducted research into the historical and contemporary use of perspective in painting from the Byzantine period to the contemporary day, exploring painting methods that have challenged conventional, rational notions of perspective. This laid the foundations for the second part, during which I developed a new perspective in painting that I have termed 'Mutative Perspective' and 'Spatial Painting'.

I selected these phrases because they reflect the subject matter that my experimental approach investigates: radioactive contamination and its effect on living forms. My interest in this issue concerns the abuse of depleted uranium munitions in wars since the 1990s.

Accordingly, I have developed a narrative that explores these events and uses abstract painting as a medium to transmit the meaning of contamination in visual terms. Over a four-year research period, I focused on interweaving these elements so that the materiality of abstract painting expresses a social narrative. Taking into account both historical and contemporary artistic approaches to perspective, my intention has been to alter today's conventional understanding of space to establish an ambiguous field, one hovering between the two- and three-dimensions. My painting method affects our perception of space and depth; these elements are an active part in the painting, visually adjusted to reflect the mutative affects of my subject matter. I also embed subtle elements such as familiar forms, symbols, and text to disrupt an abstracted painting method, keeping the space in flux. Once our perception adapts to this visual environment the information can be decoded.

My process of Spatial Painting and the Mutative Perspective engages with our current time and offers a new pathway for navigating and connecting with abstract painting.

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## INTRODUCTION

> Art enables matter to become expressive, to not just satisfy but also to intensify – to resonate and become more than itself. This is not to say that art is without concepts; simply that concepts are by-products or effects rather than the very material of art. Art is the regulation and organization of its materials – paint, canvas, concrete, steel, marble, words, sounds, bodily movements, indeed any materials – according to self-imposed constraints, the creation of forms through which these materials come to generate and intensify sensation and thus directly impact living bodies, organs, nervous systems.
>
> Elizabeth Grosz [1]

During my practice-based research, which began in 2013, my aim has been to investigate the discourse between painting abstract forms and the communication of a clear social message on the pictorial surface. I am searching for a perspective in painting that captures the unstable realities that we are experiencing today. Today we live today in a multidimensional reality that spans the physical and digital worlds. We can be in two places at once: online and offline. We can experience both time and space via the flatness of digital screens, and as such, our relationship with physicality, with touch has shifted. It too has impacted the capacity for memory: what is recorded digitally can be deleted in a fraction of a second, and it can also live eternally if its online life allows. Moreover, our memories can be overwhelmed by the stimulus of today's digital world so that no one piece of information meaningfully computes. Arguably, this multi-dimensional reality obscures what is 'real' in our reality – the natural world where soil and moisture make plants grow, which feed animals and humans, who evolve and die as light and shadow move with the day and night and years elapse. During my research my investigations have lead me to create 18 Spatial Paintings, which take over walls, spaces and environments, as well as 46 paintings on canvas and innumerable works on paper.

Prior to beginning my thesis, my work continuously evolved towards visualizing invisible conditions in the landscape. The spaces I painted had been forcefully impacted by chemical and technological changes that impacted the natural landscape. In particular I was investigating radioactive pollution. The primary question for me has always been: how do we as humans relate to our environment via various perspectives that are determined by our psychological, political and philosophical state, and how are these impacted by technology. Moreover I wondered about how the environment has been shaped by technology: today, is nature ever really natural, or rather a form of 'post-nature' that has been mutated and altered by harmful radioactivity? I first encountered the dangers of nuclear radiation in 1986 as a child in Munich. Europe and, indeed, the world was threatened by the spread of radioactive pollution as a result of the Chernobyl disaster – a catastrophic nuclear accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Soviet Ukraine. Later, in 2005, I saw a documentary by the German film

[1] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art – Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 4.



producer Frieder Wagner about Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegwart H. Guenther[2], which explored the impact of radioactive poisoning by depleted uranium munitions. It was this documentary that deeply affected the development of my work, became the foundation of my research and will continue to direct my future practice.

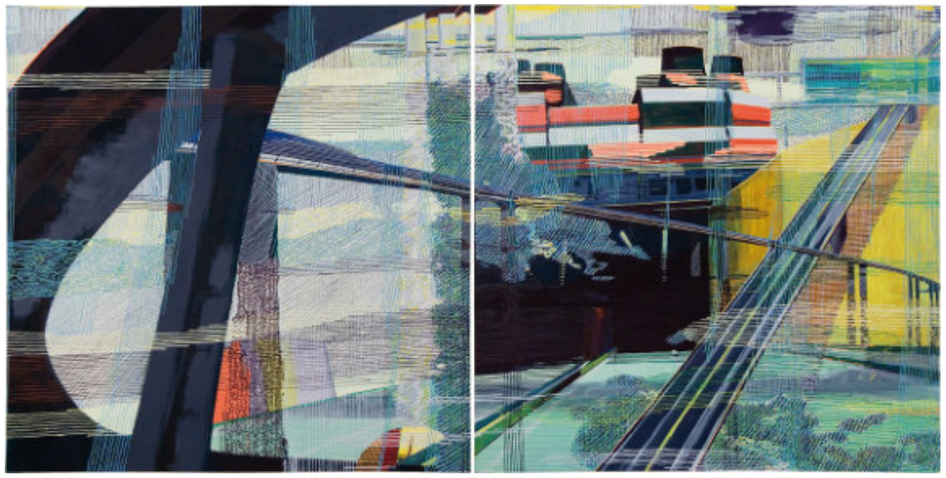

Fig. 2: *Aporie 1*, 2007, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 200 cm x 400 cm

From 2011–13 my painting became directed by this subject – previously it had been less significant. As such, I started my PhD as a means of further investigating this interest in representing radioactive pollution caused by depleted uranium munitions. My belief is that this is part of the nature in which we exist at present, and thus should be depicted. My paintings ask: is our environment a form of *post-nature* that has been mutated and altered by harmful radioactivity? In other words: can we believe our eyes? As such, my paintings dissolve landscapes into compositions of toxic colour that comprise negative shapes and abstract forms.

Fig. 3: *beetle 1*, 2013, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 40 cm x 40 cm

[2] *Der Arzt und die verstrahlten Kinder von Basra,* by Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegfried Horst Günther, accessed between 2005 – July 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERmabAyg4X0 or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwrFRqZKqUw

My initial PhD research proposal was titled *Painting and Spatial Ambiguity: How Painting Can Bridge Dimensions*. I planned to focus solely on demonstrating how paintings can surpass the physical reality of the painted surface, blurring two- or three-dimensions to shift the viewer's experience of space. I sought to argue that the physical volume and geometry of an interior space can be overwritten by the presence of a painting. Furthermore, I wanted onlookers to be *inside* the painting, akin to being inside a landscape, or indeed, inside a specific idea. Which forms should cover such a space to achieve this affect? I researched painting methods, forms, colours and materials to create an experience for the viewer that would reflect the sense and meaning of radioactive contamination.

The early research period of my PhD concentrated on how my expanded painting creates a particular sensation that overpowers the common perception of the given interior space. I wanted to demonstrate that the experience of viewing my paintings, whether it is two- or three-dimensionally composed, or in other words painted on canvas or expanding to encompass the architectural space itself – overpowers the architectural surrounding to become the primary reference point. The visual and sensory aspects of the painting create a new *spatial* reality. Therefore, with my painting practice I propose a novel understanding of spatiality, one that reaches beyond formalism, reaching into today's political landscape.

Given that the works are not permanent, being installed only temporarily, my first group of Spatial Paintings is documented through the photography in my monograph *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting* in 2016.[3]


Fig. 4: My book: *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting,* 2016

During my research I had two primary concerns: the first was the *materiality* of the paint. I wanted to reconsider and re-think how a painting could be materially structured,

[3] Benedikt Stegmayer et al., *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting* (Berlin: Verlag fuer Zeitgenoessische Kunst und Theorie, 2016). The focus of this book was on the paintings that envelop viewers; paintings that become a place in and of themselves, instead of being something to look at from afar. The first section examines my three-dimensional painting, which encompass walls, floors and ceilings; the second section looks at my paintings on canvas, which become wall-like, depicted on a two-dimensional surface.



extending it into architectural space as a means of re-invention– transmitting the specific meaning of my subject matter. Colour and form can bridge dimensions to become object, space and, thus, a visual language in its own right. In my research I wanted to find out how I could conceive 'the affectual tone'[4] of my painting: I wanted the abstract visuals to materially project the meaning of my paintings.

My second and equally important focus lay in conveying particular *content*. This concerned our contemporary political condition, particularly warfare, genetic engineering and use and abuse of science for military aims. The motivation was, and remains, to awaken our attention to environmental damages caused by man-made radioactive radiation, which is mutating nature – from humans to natural forms in the environment. As such, my practice had dual concerns and became a hybrid that focused on both the material aspects of painting – colour, surface and form – and the narrative being expressed.

Given that I am an abstract painter, I am not interested in literal storytelling. The narrative that I speak of is triggered by events that have occurred in the real world. I am mapping the places contaminated by depleted uranium munitions. These are visualized by combining my dynamic abstract shapes with verbal indicators and web links that are embedded in both my canvases and three-dimensional paintings. It was this question of 'why' that propelled my PhD research as an abstract painter, and soon after starting my program, I wanted to expand my field of research. I started to question whether how my work could fuse abstraction *and* figurative aspects. My practice has included text, graphic novels and photographs; I wondered whether I should introduce any of these additional elements into my environmental paintings. Might this help viewers to decode the content of the work? If so, should I incorporate them inside the painting – placing photographs or the graphic novel within the delineated area – or alternatively, could there be new methods that would could be an affective means of conveying meaning? In order words, I asked myself the same question that accompanied the birth of abstract painting in the early twentieth century: can abstraction transmit a specific idea with accuracy?

I devised my own terminology through my research, which was not invented *a priori* but as a 'by-product' (see quote by Grosz above) during the process and development of my painting practice. Accordingly, there are three concepts that I consider central to my work; these are discussed respectively in the chapters of this thesis: *Spatial Painting, Mutative Perspective* and *Site-mutative Painting.*

[4] See Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling, Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde* (London and New York: L.B. Tauris, 2011).

Fig. 5: *symbiosis was long ago*, 2012, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor, canvas and concrete objects, 350 cm x 600 cm x 600 cm, installed in a public car park

The phrase 'Spatial Painting' encompasses the *entirety* of my pictorial practice – both my two- and three-dimensional work. I owe this notion to a fellow artist and colleague, Milovan Destil Markovic, who coined it in 2012 during a studio visit during which we analysed my works. So essentially, this term refers to all of my artworks: to the two-dimensional canvases and works on paper, videos and to the paintings that extend into three-dimensional space to cover walls, floors, ceilings and objects.

I consider the concept of 'Mutative Perspective' to be the primary aim of my practice. The term points towards the idea of the potential for extreme change in our biological construct. As such, the Mutative Perspective in painting addresses the idea of a shifting truth, namely, the mutation of DNA in living creatures that have been exposed to radiation. This phrase derives from a graphic novel that I produced in 2013, titled *Murphy the Mutant*, which featured a landscape that had been devastated by a nuclear disaster. The term also suggests my intention to actively change the perception of space; it derives from the Latin *mutation[n]* – from *mutare,* meaning 'to change'. My interest lies in transforming perception, distorting it to disseminate political content. Therefore, this graphic novel was a turning point that shaped how my artistic practice was to proceed.

I utilize the expression 'Site-mutative Painting' for my three-dimensional, large-scale and environmental works, which I produce outside the studio and are often specific to a location. The term 'Site-mutative' is used to describe my interest in something undergoing change as the result of radiation, and in this case, in something transitioning or taking on a new form to provide a different sense of space. As such, my painting process is concerned with investigating perception and perspective. I alter the existing



view of a space so that it can be perceived differently and, thus, derive new meaning. I focus on the notion of instability, distortion and infiltration.

I will argue in this final chapter that 'Mutative Perspective' in painting responds to and, most importantly, *investigates* the impact of radiation during this period in our history. The space itself in which my work is situated is not of particular interest to me; rather, I use the geometry of the walls, floor and ceiling as a surface onto which I can paint, my aim being to mutate the space and, as such, give it a new meaning.

Considering this idea of 'Mutative Perspective' encouraged me to look back into art history and historical approaches to perspective. Being an artist brought up in the west, within a Eurocentric tradition, I was familiar with the idea of linear and central perspective (creating the illusion of depth on a flat surface using parallel lines that converge at a vanishing point), as codified during the Italian Renaissance. Practices introduced by modern artists in the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century distorted this rationality, but nonetheless, its basic tenets persist. Even today in the twenty-first century, lots of photography and video art is dependent upon this historical approach to rational perspective. In the 1920s, German art historian Erwin Panofsky elaborated on the classical idea of linear perspective and his theory is a commonly cited approach to the subject. [5] A later revisions of this study is the ground-breaking volume *The Origin of Perspective* by French art historian Huber Damisch, which destabilized this time-honoured Eurocentric position, arguing that:

> Panofsky is ignoring those civilizations that seem to have been unfamiliar with perspective – at least with linear perspective – taking into consideration only those periods of western art that knew of it, or that refused it in a more or less deliberate and radical way: that refused it or *negated it*, in a dialectical sense of the word.[6]

Damisch proposes that the term 'perspective' should be used in plural rather than singular form: perspectives.

In developing 'Mutative Perspective', I have investigated and incorporated non-European notions of such pluralities – of perspectives. For example, as part of my research in 2015, I encountered the Byzantine icon tradition in numerous medieval churches and monasteries in Serbia and Kosovo. Indeed, my interest in reverse perspective (where the objects depicted are placed between the projective point and the viewing plane) had begun as early as 1995 during a trip to Syria led by my painting Professor Marwan while I was studying painting at University of the Arts in Berlin (UdK). I was deeply impressed by the Byzantine paintings and mosaic icons in Damascus, Palmyra and Maaloula.

I came to understand that the anonymous Masters who painted these church walls and ceilings and who created floor mosaics were staging the icons in space. In other words,

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[5] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 13. Translated by Christopher S. Wood. Originally published as "Die Perspective als 'symbolishe Form'," in the *Vortäge der Bibliothek Warburg* 1924-1925 Leipzig & Berlin: 1927, pp. 258-330.
[6] Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 13 Italics in original. Translated from the French original of 1987 by John Goodman.

they were inventing what I understand to be the earliest examples of spatial painting. In this non-Western, Eastern-Orthodox religious tradition, icon painters intended to transmit the content of space but not its organization per se. As Florensky, in his 1919–20 text *Reverse Perspective* asserts:

> In order to represent a given space with all of the points that comprise its content, figuratively speaking one must either grind it into the finest of powders and then, having carefully stirred it, sprinkle it over the depicted surface so that no trace of its initial organisation remains. Or else one must cut it up into many layers, so that something of its form remains, but position these layers with repetitions of those same elements of form, while at the same time mutually interpenetrating these elements among each other, causing several elements of the form to become embodied in the same points of the representation.[7]

In the book *Installation Art*, art historian Claire Bishop remarks that in the late 1960s when contemporary artists staged their environments, situations and spaces outside their studios, using the gallery space as a site of production, art theory experienced a growth in critical writings on perspective. Bishop writes:

> In *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (1924/25), the art historian Erwin Panofsky argued that Renaissance perspective placed the viewer at the centre of the hypothetical world depicted in the painting: the line of perspective, with its vanishing point on the horizon of the picture, was connected to the eyes of the viewer who stood before it. A hierarchical relationship was understood to exist between the centred viewer and the world of the painting spread before him. Panofsky therefore equated Renaissance perspective with the rational and self-reflective Cartesian subject (I think therefore I am).[8]

Certain artists working at the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly those engaged in making abstract art, dismantled the prescriptions imposed by the canon of central perspective, exploring original ways in which to render space on a picture plane – I am referring in particular to the Cubists, Futurists and Russian Constructivists.[9]

In the 1960s, when contemporary artists began working with space itself or in a site-specific gallery, they were not interested in the rational Renaissance codes of perspective. French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose theory of phenomenological thinking addressed this alternative approach of the perceiving body moving in space, inspired a number of American Minimalists[10] including as Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Donald Judd and Eva Hesse. He too inspired other artists engaged in performance and body art such as Vito Acconci, Yayoi Kusama, Yoko Ono, Marina Abramovic and Hermann Nitsch. I consider Merleau-Ponty's observations as being directly relevant to the theory of my Site-mutative Paintings, particularly his statement:

[7] Pavel Florensky, Reverse Perspective 1919/20, *Monoskop*, accessed May 13, 2017, https://monoskop.org/images/1/11/Florensky_Pavel_1967_2002_Reverse_Perspective.pdf
[8] Claire Bishop, *Installation Art - A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), p. 11.
[9] Margit Rowell, "The Planar Dimension 1912-1932: from Surface to Space," in *Planes: The Planar Dimension –Europe, 1912-1932* (New York: The Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1979), pp. 9-31.
[10] See: Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: the Search for the Motivated" (1970), reprinted in: Baker Sandback, Amy, ed. *Looking Critically: 21 Years of Artforum Magazine* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Umi Research Press, 1984), pp. 88-92.



'I do not see it [space] according to its exterior envelope; I live it from the inside; I am immersed in it. After all, the world is around me, not in front of me.' [11]

My questions evolved to ask: can my abstract painting incorporate a narrative component and still remain purely abstract? A key influence on the development and trajectory my artwork was hearing the Austrian avant-garde artist Hermann Nitsch's personal opinion that painting can be a direct imprint of the painter's action and thinking – from spatial understanding beyond the canvas's borders and the belief that thought can be directly present in the abstract painting.[12]

Fig. 6: Hermann Nitsch inside his painting, 1987

In the 1970s, when we entered Postmodern era, many artists, art critics and historians started to question the formalist interpretation of abstract art. They posited that abstract painting should deal with pure forms and should avoid any reference that may point to the *real* world existing outside the pure pictorial field. As such, explicitly or implicitly, they suggested that abstract artists should avoid representing anything outside of the work itself. This was a belief that Frank Stella once summarized in the statement: 'What you see is what you see.'[13]

These Modernist statements were exposed to a radical critique by artists and art critics, including the American video artist Douglas Davis, whose cynical quote I use as the motto in Chapter One of this thesis:

[11] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" 1964, accessed May 15, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/485645/Merleau-Pontys_EYE_AND_MIND_Re-Thinking_the_Visible
[12] Hermann Nitsch in conversation with the artist, August 1993 and August 1997.
[13] Bruce Glaser, *'What You See Is What You See': Donald Judd and Frank Stella on the End of Painting, in 1966*, Interview, ed. Lucy R. Lippard, Art News, 7 October 2015, 'All I want anyone to get out of my paintings is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any conclusion. What you see is what you see.' See: http://www.artnews.com/2015/07/10/what-you-see-is-what-you-see-donald-judd-and-frank-stella-on-the-end-of-painting-in-1966/2/

> Form and Content approached each other on the infinite line, travelling fast. 'Where are you going?' asked Content of Form. 'To the end of the line,' answered Form, 'away from you.' 'So am I,' said Content. Then they collided. [14]

One of the most prominent art critics who dismantled the dogma of the formalist doctrine was Thomas McEvilley, who wrote that formalist critics from Benedetto Croce to Clement Greenberg 'denied the appropriateness of any acknowledgment of content' and particularly the content the modern artists provided by rendering 'verbal supplements' in their abstract works:

> Many of the artists whom these critics represented – and on whose work they based their arguments, supposedly – did not agree with this at all. In written supplements in the forms of titles, interviews, essays, and catalogue statements, artists from Kandinsky and Mondrian, to Rothko and Newman rejected the pure form analysis of their work and specified the contents they intended to carry […] This is why formalists critics in their heyday insisted that one should never listen to artists.[15]

Coming closer now to the contemporary condition of abstract painting, I situate my Spatial Painting in the context of contemporary art theory. The thinking offered by British art historian Peter Osborn about painting made 'after conceptual art' are relevant to my practice. He writes: 'What is peculiar about post-conceptual painting is that it must treat *all* forms of painterly representation "knowingly," as themselves the object of a variety of second-order (non-painterly) representational strategies, if it is to avoid regression to a traditional concept of the aesthetic object.'[16] In his view, this does not rule out the possibility of post-conceptual abstraction. Following this line of thought, art historian, writer and curator Bojana Pejić  has identified my works as 'referential abstraction.'[17]

Therefore, over the period in which I have been working on Spatial Paintings I have thoroughly rethought and expanded my research questions to ask: what rules in painting perspective do I need to subvert in order to achieve a new sensual reality in the exhibition space and, moreover, why and how do I want to transform the space? I realised that it is the *narrative moment* that drives my need to paint and, indeed, it is this factor that initiates my will to begin an artwork. There is always something that deeply touches me, something I see as vital information that should not be forgotten or that needs to be distributed. The resulting artwork is painted as a form of biomorphic abstraction; it can be non-representational and still contain precise content that can be decoded. The Spatial Paintings expand over the walls, floor and ceiling to enhance a physical moment for the observer, which aims to support the subject matter of the work further.

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[14] Douglas Davis, 'Post-Modern Form: Stories Real and Imagined/ Toward a Theory,' in his *Artculture: Essays on the Post-Modern* ( New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), p.155.
[15] Thomas McEvilley, 'On the Manner of Addressing Clouds,' in *Artforum*, Summer 1984, Vol. 22, No. 10, p. 67.
[16] Peter Osborne,,' Modernism, Abstraction, and the Return to Painting,' in *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics,* eds. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1991), p. 72. (Italics in original).
[17] Bojana Pejić, art historian based in Berlin, unpublished interview with the author, January 17, 2016.



***Chapter Overview***

My exegesis traverses thematic and chronological developments. In 'Chapter One: The Practice of Spatial Painting', I address my art practice using the example of the Spatial Painting *blender* (2013). This work was made during the first year of my research when I was dealing with blending the borders of walls and floors. To introduce an additional narrative element I combined my painting with my drawn and filmed graphic novel *Murphy the mutant* (2013), incorporating a video screen in a huge environmental work occupying the gallery's floors and wall. Therefore, within this Spatial Painting I consciously included precise content about the subject matter of radioactive contamination.

I give an insight into the art-historical and artistic influences that have been role models for combining painting with narrative content, either on stretched canvases or within space on the walls. I discuss here the term 'Site-mutative Painting'. My term only applies to the environment works, large-scale paintings on canvas and paintings that reach over corners and wall-floor-ceiling paintings. I describe here in detail my working procedure. I also communicate my experiences of working with space and on a flat surface, and how these were informed by my trips to Serbia and Kosovo, and when meeting an Aboriginal women painter, Banduk Marika, in 1999 in Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia.

'Chapter Two: The Perspective Paradigm', investigates perspectives in terms of cultural determinations. I explore how changing perspectives signify new thinking, even new epochs, and what this knowledge means for my painting. I firstly discuss the Renaissance theory of central and linear perspective, written in the 1920s by Erwin Panofsky, and then rely on relatively recent polemical accounts on this perspective by writers such as Hubert Damisch. Of particular importance is the relationship between central perspective and the rise of easel painting, which conditioned central perspective. Once the painted scenes that occupied the walls of churches or public buildings became detached from the walls, they were converted into portable objects and were available for private purchase. In this chapter I offer several statements by the artists and theoreticians who constituted the Russian/Soviet avant-garde for whom the icon tradition was important including Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin and Vladimir Markov, all of whom renounced the use of the central perspective. I subsequently elaborate to discuss contemporary artists whose interest in perspective and spatial thinking resonates with my own work, such as Donald Judd, Elizabeth Murray, Felice Varini and George Rousse.

'Chapter Three: Mutative Perspective as My Tool', is dedicated to my own concept of the Mutative Perspective, and how I, through the development of my research, have formulated a novel spatial system. I explain the infiltrated and distorted perspective and as well the idea of dissolving three-dimensional space into two dimensions. In short, infiltrated perspective is when rational perspective breaks down into fragments that incorporate multiplicity. I consider the precursors to infiltrated perspective and investigate the use of negative shapes in works by early modern artists, focusing on Paul Cezanne and later Modernists such as Sam Frances and Lucio Fontana.

I propose that mutative perspective captures distortions and infiltrations of our time. Investigating distorted perspective and applying reverse perspective led me to stop using small format rectangular canvas paintings hung inside Spatial Paintings. Trying to find a solution for combining wall-floor-ceiling painting with paintings on canvas led me to build stretchers for paintings. These are my oviform paintings: shaped canvases that are labour intensive to produce and function within the Spatial Painting as defined forms. The chapter concludes with an examination of the artists who could be recognized as belonging to Post-conceptual abstraction, a term British art historian Peter Osborn used to describe abstract paintings of the 1990s. I also situate my work in this context and identify differences and similarities with artists such as Michel Majerus, Franz Ackermann and Milovan Destil Markovic.

In 'Chapter Four: Radiationscapes' [18], I primarily discuss my research into contaminated landscapes. I introduce works dealing with a mutated or damaged natural environment, which Bojana Pejic first identified as 'landscapes'.[19] I discuss the medium of landscape and paintings representing a particular natural wonder: the rainbow. In my thesis the rainbow stands for a visual sensation which is layering the two dimensional vision of the rainbow above the three dimensional depth of the landscape.

I subsequently situate my works in the historical context, including my paintings' relation to nature in 'biomorphic abstraction' – a term coined by Alfred H. Barr. Through the 'Atomic Sublime', an essay by Peter B. Hales, and the reactions of painters such as Jackson Pollock, Lucio Fontana and Wols Tapies to the Atomic Bomb, I introduce my own works, which deal with the invisible pollution of our age. I then explain the origin and purpose of the narrative moment in my works, found through over-painting postcards and adding text, which subsequently led to the use of texts or verbal supplements embedded in my current Spatial Paintings.

I continue writing about the political content of my Radiationscapes, which visualizes the invisible silent genocide that occurs when communities and countries are exposed to this hidden hazard: radiation. Closing this chapter I consider the concept of affect and draw on the work of art historian and critical theorist Susan Best, to place my visual research outcomes within contemporary art-historical discourse.

[18] *radiation scape* was the title of my exhibition at Krohne Art Collection in Duisburg, Germany 2014.
[19] Bojana Pejić, "The Day Before Tomorrow," in *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting* (Berlin, Germany: ed. Benedikt Stegmayer, Verlag für zeitgenössische Kunst und Theorie, 2016), p. 9.



## CHAPTER ONE: THE PRACTICE OF SPATIAL PAINTING

Form and Content approached each other on the infinite line, travelling fast. "Where are you going?" asked Content of Form. 'To the end of the line,' answered Form, 'away from you.' 'So am I,' said Content. Then they collided.

Douglas Davis [20]

This chapter deals with my Spatial Painting practice, my artistic intentions and my working method. Spatial Painting reaches beyond the canvas and is simultaneously political and abstract. Focusing on that visual power of the painting, recognizable shapes, speech bubbles and video links lead to the content that I want to communicate to the viewer. As a term, 'Spatial' refers to the space becoming *part* of the painting's composition.

Fig. 7: *9 out of 10*, 2016, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 330 x 400 x 340 cm

My principle aim has been to investigate the paradox between painting abstract forms and the communication of a clear social message via the pictorial surface. Hermann Nitsch's work has been an invaluable source for this bridging of content and form. Hubert Klocker writes about the Viennese Actionism, stating that the artists (Hermann

[20] Davis, Douglas, 'Post-Modern Form: Stories Real and Imagined/ Toward a Theory', *Artculture, Essays on the Post-Modern* (New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row Publishers USA, 1977), p.155.

Nitsch, Gunter Brus, Otto Mühl, and Rudolf Schwazkogler) 'never totally abandoned the representative object. On the contrary, they were concerned with giving back to the work of art, be it painting or object, the narrative potential of the text which had been lost to abstraction.'[21] I have oscillated between figuration and abstraction – erasing the recognizable forms – and have ended at the point at which I began: with abstract forms that have been developed from a consideration of precise topics. I started to question whether it is possible for the viewer to read abstraction in painting in conjunction with a narrative, for example a text, a graphic novel or even narratives implicit in photographs.

I have considered how placing a text, a graphic novel or photographs containing a specific narrative either *within* or *near* the painting can allow the audience to decode the content of the work. However, can the dynamic of the painted abstract transmit an exact message? In other words, do my Spatial Paintings need such elements in close proximity or should I incorporate them inside the painting itself? Are there alternative methods that could add information to the abstract painting, which will direct the viewer to an understanding of the painting – to help transmit content beyond the formal aspect of the work?

This chapter's opening section addressed one of my exhibitions and how I included the work *Murphy – A Parallel Universe* within a Spatial Painting. I will go onto discuss the specific content of this work, why I decided to make it and what I discovered in the process.

***Murphy – A Parallel Universe***

The original plan of my PhD research was to focus solely on demonstrating that paintings can override the physical reality of the painting support. But when analysing my working process I came to understand that a narrative underpins each and every one: this is what drives my need to paint.

Fig. 8 and 9: *Murphy the mutant* (page 1 and 2 of 68), 2013, watercolour and pens on paper, 15 x 21 cm

[21] Hubert Klocker, 'Gesture and Object - Liberation as Action: A European Component of Performance Art,' in *Out of Action – Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979,* ed. Paul Schimmel, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, and Vienna: Museum of Applied Arts, 1998), p. 175.



As I explored this further, I drew and painted a graphic novel called *Murphy the mutant.*[22] By 2005, I had reached a point in my work where I was unable to express and comment on specific socio-political events in my canvas paintings in a way that could be accessible. Reading and researching particular events touched me deeply and I had to somehow address this information in my work. This had become an increasingly important challenge since 2005, when I watched a documentary on the damages that depleted uranium weapons cause. This documentary has since had an enduring influence on my work.[23]

In my utopian story, told in the form of a graphic novel, I made disadvantaged creatures – such as my protagonist *Murphy* – the ones who would survive in the future because they are immune to radioactive contamination. This graphic novel became the anchor of my work to follow. It made me aware of the driving force of my paintings: to communicate political issues. This was the first time that I started a series of works with the story itself, and not with abstraction.

The first chapter of *Murphy the mutant* comprises seventeen watercolour drawings. I produced these during a creative outpouring, which was, at that stage, a singular event running in parallel to my studio practice. The second chapter consists of 32 watercolour drawings and was completed in 2013. I drew the graphic novel again in parallel with my canvas painting practice, but in the following years, comic-like elements became merged with my paintings and were an increasingly dominant part of each work. While I rarely personally read comics or graphic novels, it satisfied me that I could tell such a story in pictures: a story that communicates war crimes and radioactive contaminations that only few people in the western world notice and which the media mostly ignores.

I first encountered the danger of nuclear radiation in 1986 as a child living in Munich when the nuclear reactor in Chernobyl, Ukraine, caught fire and radioactive material was released into the environment. It was carried by the wind over much of Europe. This incident highlighted the very real health risks that radioactive contamination can cause. When I saw the documentary from Frieder Wagner, mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, I learned that some countries are still using radioactive munitions in the form of depleted uranium weapons, though their toxicity is officially denied.[24] As such, the abuse of depleted uranium weapons became a central point of focus for my interest in our contemporary environment. In her article about my work, art historian Bojana Pejic eloquently describes my approach to the environment and captures my intentions:

> 'Chaseling does not critically respond to general problematics of post-Nature, the galloping climate disaster, and the exhausted urban landscape central to

[22] I had created the character *Murphy the mutant* in 2011 and drew and coloured this graphic novel over the next years.
[23] *Der Arzt und die verstrahlten Kinder von Basra,* by Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegfried Horst Günther, accessed between 2005 – July 2015, Directed by Frieder Wagner about Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegwart H. Guenther and his research, the 92-minute film follows over years Siegwart Guenther who devoted himself to proving the impact of depleted uranium. The use of depleted uranium warheads in most conflict zones today is one of the worst radioactive pollutions on earth. https: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERmabAyg4X0 or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwrFRqZKqUw
[24] Frieder Wagner, *Deadly Dust – Depleted Uranium*, Documentary 1:32:27, 2007, Minutes 14:45 - accessed January 28, 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djv8UyrrC34

environmental activism of our days. Her landscapes, as a title of her exhibition of 2015 indicates, are *Radiation Scapes*. In these works, but also in *Spatial Painting* in general, her procedure could be perhaps best described as the "inscriptions of the invisible." The pieces like *cloud* and *omen,* or paintings *mutant 2*, *mutating tomatoes*, *orange mutant,* for example, and particularly in her dystopian graphic novels narrating the adventures of her little science-fiction hero, *Murphy the Mutant,* display views of damaged or rather mutated nature, adultered by the radioactive fallout resulting in dust circulating in the atmosphere but remaining undetectable by the human eye. She is concerned with the *invisible* effects produced by the harmful long-term radiation, felt particularly in the post-war regions in which the role of science was used in the service of warfare: as an abstract artist, she is making these effects *visible*.'[25]

There are limitations to the possibilities of painting being a medium that can communicate exact messages, but the advantage of painting is the ability to evoke *emotions* and this can initiate in the viewer a search for inherent content and meaning. In the following sub-chapter I explain how the content that I first defined and sketched out in this graphic novel subsequently directed my painting process.

Fig. 10: *mutant 2*, 2014, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 264 x 143 cm

[25] Bojana Pejic, 'The Day Before Tomorrow,' in *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting* (Berlin: ed. Benedikt Stegmayer, Verlag fuer zeitgenössische Kunst und Theorie, 2016) p.11.



***Content, Abstraction and Space***

In the first year of my PhD research, I finalized the second part of another graphic novel – I titled it *Murphy and his shadow.* Both stories, *Murphy the mutant* and *Murphy and his shadow,* are set in the future with the hindsight of what is happening in our present day. Murphy is a child born with deformities in a region where radioactive depleted uranium weapons were used prior to his birth (in Iraq's city of Basra). Immune to radioactivity, Murphy is one of several survivors from a third World War. Experiencing different adventures, Murphy slowly understands the context in which he was born. As such, Murphy, for me, is a symbol of survival and consolation.

These stories of Murphy are interlinked with my abstract painting practice. My paintings changed from looking at space and trying to visualize the invisible – the dynamic movement in the landscape – to trying also to visualize the concealed *destruction* that these radioactive munitions cause. Such weapons are now used in nearly every conflict zone on Earth. The radioactive dust from the exploded weapons can be found in water, sand and the air and is quickly distributed over borders into neighbouring countries.[26] Therefore, I began to consider how I might discuss these facts on a larger platform through my paintings and, as such, communicate the significance of this issue to the world.

At this stage, I had two strands of work within my practice: small figurative drawings and large-scale paintings on canvas, walls, floors ceilings and concrete objects. I also made a video of my graphic novel, in which I show and describe the drawings; you can see my fingers turning the pages as I tell the story. I deduced that, in this way, each drawing would get its full exposure and makes sense. The sound in the video is simply my voice: it is perhaps comparable to a narrator describing a fairy tale.[27]

Fig. 11: *Murphy the mutant,* 2013, Video, 14 minutes

[26] Daud Miraki Mohammed, *Afghanistan after "Democracy"* (Philadelphia: 2006), pp. 19-23.
[27] Chaseling, Claudia, *Murphy the mutant,* since June 2013 on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqcr1Ev2FVc

Subsequently, I wanted to consider how I could fuse my paintings on canvas with such impactful and focused storytelling? In other words: how could I embed this narrative within my Spatial Painting practice?

***Site-Mutative Painting: Redefining Concepts of Pictorial Space***

*blender*[28] was my first work that fused my graphic novel with a Spatial Painting. This work instigated what I came to call Site-mutative Painting – a term reflecting the key aims of my investigations. The painting measured 3 x 12 x 6 metres: upon the walls I hung two monitors showing both parts of the graphic novel. The abstract painting highlighted and reflected forms within the graphic novel: for example, both mutated and normal forms of human DNA.[29] In this way, the work was not just an abstract composition, but directly reflected the subject matter by using the shape of damaged chromosomes. As such, I decided to give this narrative a stronger presence within the work, lending it the same value as the abstraction.

Fig. 12: *blender*, 2013, egg tempera and video monitors on wall and floor 360 cm x 1200 cm x 600 cm, X-Border Biennial, Museum Valo, Rovaniemi, Finland

[28] *blender* was exhibited at the X-Border Biennial in Rovaniemi, Finland in 2013.
[29] The DNA tests were first used in criminological investigations in 1986. I visited the biological Department at the ANU and met with Prof. Susan Howitt to discuss cell structures, DNA and how radiation affects cells and DNA.



The spatiality of my work does not necessitate interactivity. It is not necessary to walk into the painting, but it is possible. Scale is a deciding issue: the Spatial Painting needs to be larger than a human body, so the body gets immersed into the composition. For my *blender* I chose a composition so that visitors could walk into the painting. To hear the audio component of the two monitors screening the graphic novel, visitors needed to walk up close, immersing themselves within the painting. Each part of the graphic novel could be listened to without hearing sounds from the other monitor. So essentially I added another aspect to this painting through the screens and moving image. This brought the abstract painting to life because I put a clear message into the visual experience. It was this content that led to the extension of the formal aspect of the abstract painting.

Fig. 13: *blender*, detail

After I showed the video of the graphic novel to the artist eX de Medici she described the importance of the narrative in my work:

> '…Then came Murphy. The Mutant. A shift happened in the work. It exploded. It exploded out of the frame and onto the floor and around corners. Murphy becomes, like the postcards, the code-breaker to a politic within the hyper-colour and spilling action of the paintings. So how does a narrative, a fictional character who, like in the novelist's art, takes a life of its own? Becomes. Exists. Murphy exists on U-Tube[30] for anyone to see. *Murphy the mutant* lives separately

[30] Claudia Chaseling, *Murphy the mutant,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqcr1Ev2FVc

from the paintings, but is the portal by which the secrets within the abstraction make sense. There is outrage from the hand that draws Murphy.'[31]

This project became the foundation for the rest of my research. I came to discover: distorted perspective, dissolving perspective, and infiltrating perspective – all ways to express topics that are relevant to our time. These methods formed the basis for developing Mutative Perspective and Site-mutative Painting. Site-mutative Painting bridges formal aspects of painting with the expression of a precise subject matter though abstract means: thus, mind and form melt. My Spatial Paintings can adapt to every possible space. The space is, for me, like a piece of paper, or a canvas on which to paint. This is why I stepped away from the term site-specific in relation to my work. The paintings alter the space and my entire aim is to twist it to complement my subject matter to create a particular impact. The space is merely a given setting – a random stage, so to speak. My work is about what I turn the space into. As such, it is *site-mutative painting*. A static wall will be confused with floor, ceiling and neighbouring walls; the floor can open up and the most distant point will jump into the foreground. I plan the concept carefully before it is superimposed onto the space from one designated viewpoint. If I move away from the viewpoint the painting will loose its defined structure and flatness and the geometry of the space re-emerges. Even if the mutative aspect of the space is diminished through a change of viewpoint the overall energy of the work remains. The work still retains its character as a Spatial Painting.

Fig. 14: *omen*, 2014
, aluminium and egg tempera on wall, floor and ceiling, 400 x 700 x 300 cm

[31] eX de Medici, Text as e-mail message sent to author, March 16, 2015. *The postcards* are a continuing series of over-painted postcards and photos of places I have been to. Painted in a concentrated and meditative manner, a text accompanies these small paintings pointing out the essence of a particular time and place.



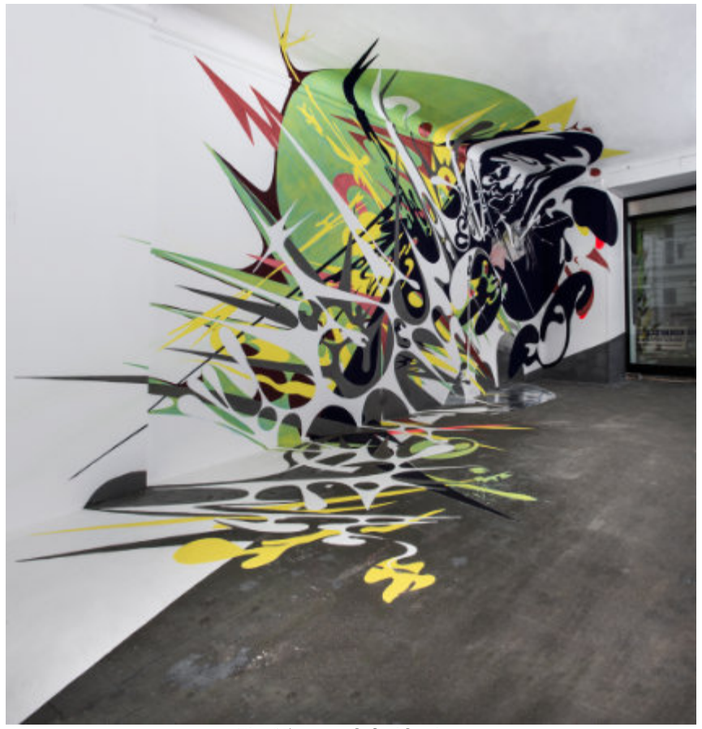

Fig. 15: *omen*, left side view

Site-mutative Painting resulted from dismantling central perspective and using the reverse form, which is seen in Byzantine Icon paintings. The key focus, for me, is to capture a notion of the instability of time. My Spatial Paintings create a rupture with the conventional Western understanding of space. Through painting I aim to show a new reality, and to break with my own and the viewers' conventional experience of space. My contemporary experience is one of uncertainty, instability and ambiguity. The main driver for this sense of uncertainty is based on my knowledge of on-going radioactive contaminations and the resultant environmental and health effects that this has on all living things.

Fig. 16: *Hadzici*, 2015, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 140 x 140 cm

Linear or central perspective seems to me like a rational support for understanding and representing space. Central perspective is still used in contemporary art, particularly in media such as figurative painting, photography and film, even when artists might seem to challenge this premise. For example David Hockney's work *A Bigger Grand Canyon* (1998), deliberately aims to interrupt the viewer's expectations of perspective. He achieves this by combining multiple images, each of which still relies on central perspective. His method distorts and flattens the view by using photographic images in the first instance and then combining multiple images.[32] This is only one approach among numerous means of defining and understanding space. Looking at pre-Renaissance painting, it is clear that there were different priorities for these artists other than realistically representing an image. The compositions of pre-Renaissance paintings (examples of which will be discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis) are primarily concerned with conveying narrative through a hierarchy based on size and imagery, which are arranged to support such a narrative.

Instead of relying on geometry to create the illusion of space, I used several canvases and created ninety-degree angles between these by leaning them on the walls and floor. So by connecting the canvasses I introduced three-dimensional space to the paintings. The painting then distorts this real three–dimensional space.

Fig. 17: *this is all*, 2013, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 250 x 170 x 320 cm

[32] Jane Kinsman, David Hockney, *A Bigger Grand Canyon*, 1998, oil on 60 canvasses, 207 x 744,20 cm, Text for the National Gallery of Australia, see: https://artsearch.nga.gov.au/detail.cfm?irn=20923, accessed March 2018.



Fig. 18: *black swan*, 2017, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 250 x 170 x 220 cm

After the completion of *blender*, I continued to develop the technique of my Spatial Painting. Fine-tuning the site-mutative aspect required careful study of perspective techniques. The starting point for the realization of a Site-mutative Painting is an architectural space. The first step is to delineate the room in which the piece will be installed and to view this as a flat plane rather than a three-dimensional space. On each draft on paper I start with the geometric outlines of the space, sketching just a few lines on a white surface. By using the word 'flat' I mean that I ignore the corners of the space and create my composition as if the painting itself were being prepared for a flat surface. This process will often take months and by producing up to twenty drafts the complexity of the painting grows. I sketch in where possible canvas paintings could be placed, or objects – whatever I need to communicate my subject matter.

Sometimes the Spatial Paintings simply comprise pigment, egg tempera and aluminium placed upon the wall, floor and ceiling. This is the case in a work such as *omen,* for example.

Fig. 19: *omen* draft, 2014, watercolour and pencils on paper, 42 x 59 cm

When converting the work from my plans during the installing period, I decide on the viewpoint and mark it out on the floor of the actual space. I then compose the whole work, so that from this point the three-dimensional painting in the space will seem flat, just as planned in the draft. Then follows a concentrated period of drawing the composition with chalk onto the walls and, and with a window marker onto the floor. I continually step back and forth, from my single viewpoint and the walls themselves, to find the exact lines and form that reproduce my draft – finding the correct lines that flatten the space, dissolving three-dimensionality. It often times surprises me how much it matters if a line is 1 cm further left or right than planned, this can negatively impact my desired dynamic. During the making process I continually wipe away, draw anew, wipe away and so on until I finally find the lines that make the space itself change and shift into something new, – as if it would lift of the ground, tip into one corner or create some other particular motion. After painting the colours into the dynamic composition, the space seem flat from one designated viewpoint.



Fig. 20: setting up *omen*, 2014, 68 projects, Berlin

***Mutative Perspective***

In the Spatial Paintings I apply reverse and parallel perspectives, a representation of space I researched in Byzantine icon painting. In doing so, I negate the central perspective.

The Renaissance perspective of realism enabled the artists to create on a flat surface an illusion of three-dimensional depth. My aim is the opposite: to flatten a three-dimensional space and to erase linear perspective. In his book *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger summarizes the visual effects produced by central perspective:

> The convention of perspective, which is unique to European art and which was first established in the early Renaissance, centers everything on the eye of the beholder. It is like a beam from a lighthouse – only instead of light travelling outwards, appearances travel in. The convention called those appearances *reality*. Perspective makes the single eye the center of the visible world. Everything converges on to the eye as the vanishing point of infinity. The visible world is arranged for the spectator as the universe was once thought to be arranged for God.[33]

In the watercolour drafts that I create before realising my final paintings, I develop the composition avoiding central perspective; I use composition to suggest the content matter of the Spatial Painting. Then I transfer these systems onto the walls, floors and ceilings. My concept is that painted shapes close to the main viewpoint need to be narrower than what lies further away from this viewpoint, on the wall. In this way I reverse central perspective. This technique works for all shapes and the result is that

[33] John Berger, *The Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), p. 16. Italics in original.

the structure painted on the wall is optically moving towards the observer who is standing at my designated viewpoint.

It is necessary for me to calculate this compositional narrowing so that the distance always appears larger than the foreground. This system also applies to parallel perspective. The foreground shapes are then, essentially, a similar size to the ones in the distance. As such, parallel and reverse perspectives are the basic tools that I use to alter the reality of the spatial dimensions.

I decided not to research optics and visual manipulation, because my work is not about the use of technology that might be used to trick our vision. I use the three-dimensional space in the same way that I would use a canvas. In the long preparation process of the watercolour drafts I define how I need to transform the space in order to indicate the subject matter. Each Spatial Painting has its content and an atmosphere that reflects this. I define a composition in the space in the same way that all paintings create a composition upon a flat surface: I use curves, spirals, zigzags and innumerable other forms. It evolves through the integration of different forms. Through painting I overwrite the physical geometry and create a new environment, enlivened by the content I aim to transmit.

Fig. 21: *mutating tomatoes*, 2013, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 350 x 400 x 500 cm

In the Spatial Painting *mutating tomatoes* my aim was to erase the corners of the space, between floor and wall and to create a movement upwards from deep down in the floor – as if this was a void. I reached this energetic configuration through a large pink form spreading over the wall and reflecting in the aluminium shapes on the floor. The pink form spread out more and more as it climbed the wall. The piece also included a canvas



painting, where the pink colour was concentrated using many shades and layers. My original guide for the pink shape was a picture of mutated tomatoes, which grew near the site of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power plant in Okuma, Fukushima Prefecture two years after the nuclear disaster in 2011.

Fig. 22: *mutating tomatoes* draft, 2013, watercolour and pencil on paper, 17 x 24 cm

While linear perspective is not being utilized in my paintings to define a hierarchy of importance, as it was in Byzantine painting, I draw on such techniques to enable the reading of space. Depth in many Byzantine painting was created out of colour and also by using light sources (from church windows or lit candles) that existed in the given architectural environment. It was the viewer's knowledge and experience that completed the painting – in most historic cases knowledge of religious narratives.[34]

Fig. 23: *time machine*, 2012, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 350 x 220 x 1000 cm

[34] See: Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration* (Boston: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1955)

A void painted in Cadmium yellow as in the image on the previous page 33, or in Milori blue can be optically deeper than the light sky blue that for example Andrea Mantegna used. I address Mantegna's work later in the chapter *Depth on Working Surface* (p.39-40) and the colour Milori blue in the chapter *Depth in my Paintings and the Language of Colour* (p.44-51). We relate sky blue with the infinite sky that we know – we use our knowledge. However, for my Spatial Paintings I use a one-point view not to mimic nature but to flatten the space and to create a new environment.

Fig. 24: *time machine* draft, 2012, watercolour and pencil on paper, 20 x 20 cm

I have a personal artistic relationship to the three-dimensional space used in my works where I must imagine it to be optically flat during the painting period. Only in this way can I can be in charge of my composition and reach my conceptual aims. Intuition pays its part in the process but the idea is drafted entirely two-dimensionally. My compositions do not try to be anything taken from the world that we see; they do not try to resemble the visible world. Mine is a new environment. I take forms that I see and use them in my work. However, the resulting Spatial Painting is never a copy, a place or thing. The resulting painting only relates to places in a conceptual sense, which might be felt by the viewer. I will go onto explain my reasons for employing this mutative perspective.

Standing in a landscape, the foreground is at your feet and the distance narrows down and disappears into infinity. We call this perspective; a word that originates in the Latin meaning 'seeing through' (from the verb *perspicere*, from *per-* 'through' and *specere* 'to look').[35] For me, however, it has always seemed that the point furthest away in a landscape is larger than what lies closest to me. Optically this is contrary to the principles of central perspective in painting. Imagine a stone lying in front of your feet: it is small and you see it in detail. When looking into the distance, for example over a bay, the horizon, the large area with water and maybe land on the opposite shore is a large mass of volume. This distant volume is more prominent than the tiny details closer to me. Therefore, I try to paint the distance larger than the closeness.

Practically I paint shapes, the closer they are to my view or composition point the smaller they are. The shapes further away I paint wider and larger. The optical result is that the shapes in the distance appear to move closer to you – they even jump out at you.

[35] See: Oxford Dictionary, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/perspective



***My Field Research: Encounter with the Byzantine Icon Tradition***

In the early 1990s I became familiar with the writings by Russian philosopher Pavel Florensky who in the course of the 1920s extensively wrote about icon painting and reverse perspective. (I will discuss his theoretical work in Chapter 2). During my field research in 2015, during which time I visited monasteries in Serbia and Kosovo, the perspective used in icon paintings intrigued me. I became interested in how the perspective was applied in these two-dimensional icon paintings when they were placed in the three-dimensional architectural settings – frescoes in the Byzantine churches. I examined these paintings as a means of investigating how the painters active during the Byzantine Empire dealt with the flat two-dimensional surface in three-dimensional architecture.

Fig. 25: *Studenica* Monastery (Twelfth Century), Serbia, 2015

I wanted to investigate how the architectural geometry of the church was transformed into, or rather, became merged with the picture plane, and simultaneously, how space was depicted within a single fresco painting. What perspective did the painters use; from which point were they looking at the painting and, furthermore, what role did three-dimensionality play in these paintings, if any at all? My empirical researches led me to these monasteries, which dated from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. Many of these old monasteries have been destroyed by time and war conflicts occurring in the Ottoman age and, even recently, during and after the post-Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. The interiors had been painted and remarkably well preserved – often the frescoes had been restored. Expanding from the ceiling over the walls and down, directly to the floor, these paintings are usually composed from the cupola spiralling towards the ground and from east to west.

My fieldwork included investigating how perspective appears from different angles in these large church buildings. Through drawing the structure and compositions of the frescoes I studied how the paintings were constructed and if the observer's view was calculated and pre-empted by the artist. If yes, I wanted to decipher from which viewpoint the artist wanted the viewer to stand. I studied the painted geometric forms, houses, halos and continuing lines to understand the perspective used. Visiting these churches I began drawing the architecture and the frescos trying to see every angle used in the painting. I strived to understand how the concept of space was applied to the frescos and how the space of the architecture itself had been used. My focus was entirely on the interaction between the building's geometry and the painting.



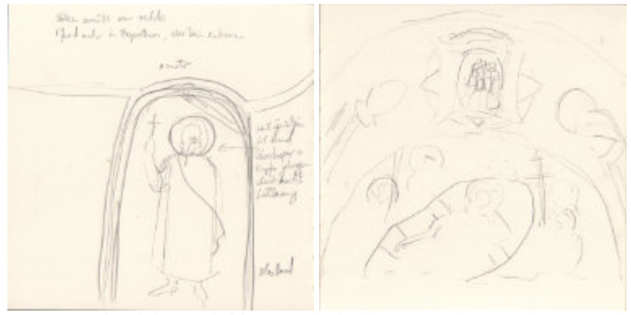

Fig. 26 - 34: drawings made whilst my field trip to: *Arilje* Monastery, *Decani* Monastery, *Patriarch of Pec* Monastery, *Ravanica* Monastery and *Zica* Monastery in Serbia and Kosovo, 2015

The conclusion of my field research has been that the older murals in monasteries are more abstractly reduced. The focus seems to have been the meaning and emotional charge of the painted scene. The corners of the building were not particularly integrated into the paintings and I would call it an immediate and direct approach, painting the subject as it would have been painting on a flat wooden Icon. The church structure determined the placement and the size of the frescoes. The perspectives in the painted scenes of the frescos were reduced – reverse or parallel – serving the meaning of the image.

The later frescoes from the twelfth century onwards show more detail and an interest in painting volume. With incredible aesthetic precision, but still in reduced styles of Byzantine painting, the compositions were placed inside the architectural forms. The corners of the building were partially optically altered by the composition of the painting. The painting's perspective serves the meaning: they deliver a core message and shift the view of the observer.

For me these frescoes are the oldest Spatial Paintings. Within seemingly strict rules the painters applied an individual and creative approach. I did not see one Byzantine painting in these monasteries that felt disassociated from the architecture – architecture and painting together formed an environment. These very old frescoes carry a magic of abstraction, power, and generate a strong atmosphere.

Another aspect of the icons' relevance to my painting practice is an interaction between the single paintings, which are often combined in sequences for creating a narrative. In the churches the icons are structured in sections leading from top to bottom and from east to west. The older 'monumental style' of fresco painting shows prominent large icons taking over most parts of the wall. The other style is narrative fresco painting in which the icons are arranged in a comic strip, surrounding the observer. Both techniques are relevant for my work. I strive for the presence of the painting as a centre point and I also aim to embed the narrative story.

Fig. 35: *Decani* Monastery, Kosovo, narrative style of painting frescos

Fig. 36: *Arilje* Monastery, Serbia, fresco painted with reverse perspective



***Depth on Working Surface***

I elaborate in this subchapter on how colour and composition can alter a sense of space, in relation to my painting technique upon walls, floors and ceilings and art history. In her influential article, 'The Planar dimension 1912-1932: from Surface to Space,' Margit Rowell writes:

> 'The planar Dimension is the painter's Dimension. Yet, to the generations which came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, planar is synonymous with sculpture and planar sculptures with one aspect of modernism. […] Here we do not mean a plane to be outer surface of a concave volume, the result of the process of hollowing out of the representational, three-dimensional figure, which leaves a void. In this context we are referring to the flat picture plane used as a two-dimensional environment or support. It exists in space as a geometric surface, having length and breadth but no thickness. In painting the plane is an abstraction, a translation of visual images into conceptual forms.'[36]

The use of central perspective is still present today in lots of contemporary art. I aim to free my work from this automatism. Hubert Damisch, a French Philosopher specialized in art history and aesthetics, and whose works are crucial for theory of visual representations, points out colour as a medium to overwrite central perspective, feeding into imaginary spaces.[37] This awareness drives my painting. Essentially, I create colour space. This means that arranging colour can generate a sensual space; depth can be felt and experienced through eyes.

This could be called an illusion but I go back to the key idea of the physical presence of a painting and not in terms of depicted visuals that can be understood logically. Illusion always relates to something that has been seen to exist in reality. Abstract art cannot be illusionistic; it is a 'conceptual form' as writes Margit Rowell.[38]

German literary scholar and essayist Karl Heinz Bohrer mentions two different ways of understanding illusionism: today, he says, illusionism would rather be understood as clarification of the reality. He continues to note that Ersnt H. Gombrich saw the illusionary qualities of a painting as simulated reality. Opposed to this idea, several scholars, including Wolfgang Iser, Eckhard Lobsien, W.J.T. Mitchell, Bernhard Waldenfels, Viktor Sklovskij and Jurij M. Lotman now agree that art is defined by the act of transgression.[39]

I always thought that historical ideas of illusion were bound to naturalism with the aim to exaggerate the seen, or to copy its original volume onto something flat. Examples for my understanding of illusionism are the frescoes by Mantegna in Mantua in the Palazzo Ducale di Mantova in the late-fifteenth century.

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[36] Margit Rowell, 'The Planar Dimension 1912-1932: from Surface to Space,' in *Planes: The Planar Dimension –Europe, 1912-1932* (New York: The Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1979), p. 9.
[37] Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 30. Translated from the French original of 1987 by John Goodman.
[38] Margit Rowell, 'The Planar Dimension 1912-1932: from Surface to Space,' op. cit. p. 9.
[39] Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Ist Kunst Illusion?* (Munich, Germany: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2015), p. 9. Bohrer undertakes a comprehensive review of illusion in his recent work and refers to his colleagues and earlier art historians through out the book.

Embedded in the analytical linear perspective of the Renaissance these frescoes picture volumes on the flat surface. I don't call my painting illusionary because my overall aim is to create an atmosphere using abstraction. My wall, floor and ceiling paintings are composed from a one-point view like the Mantegna frescoes. The source of the motifs is a direct study of nature, but I avoid using the term illusionary, because my aims are somewhat different. The reason for this is that I am not copying anything I see; in my painting I am transforming ideas, thoughts and the character (nature and essence) of spaces, places, things and situations.

Fig. 37: *deer*, 2014, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 265 x 143 cm

A sense of depth can actually be created on the surface of the canvas or wall through the intensity of pigments. It can also be created through the layering of paint, using translucent shapes or lines. I first adapted a particular method of 'line painting' after my visit to the Aboriginal community Yirrkala in 1999. Depth in painting and the avoidance of central perspective are prominent in crosshatched paintings in northeast Arnhem Land. Through my conversation with the artist Banduk Marika I adapted this method – intuitively at first. I still use some of these references in my current work; the intense layering of lines gives a feeling of depth to the painting, complicating the surface plane. Ultimately, combining this with colour fields of pigments results in a strong composition.



Fig. 38: my sketchbook from 1999 with photos from Yirrkala

During this visit to Yirrklala [40] and speaking with the artist Banduk Marika, she showed me her paintings – dense line networks using yellow, red, ochre, black and white pigments. The painting demonstrated an amazing depth and movement – reminiscent of looking at the Pacific Ocean. Thinking about this painting, I became confused about how these earthy colours could embody such depth. The artist explained to me that what I see is a painting of water and the infinite skies that reflect in the puddles at your feet. How the lines and colours were arranged represented the flickering and endless movement of the sea. I was struck by how such profound abstraction could result in a representational image – one that doesn't use illusion. For me, these crosshatched paintings are a highly developed form of abstraction. This painting style has existed for over 20,000 years. Through this encounter I became aware of how potent it can be to abandon the strict geometry of central perspective behind.

Fig. 39: my sketchbook from 1999, comparing icons with cross hatched bark paintings

[40] Conversation with the Aboriginal artist Banduk Marika in Yirrkala, July 1999.

During my PhD research I returned to this experience. I compared Aboriginal crosshatched paintings with Medieval icon paintings. The reason for this was not the spiritual qualities of these paintings but the powerful atmosphere these works generate in the absence of central perspective. By referring to natural forms and figures, these painters create something new; a picture in its own right, but one that doesn't rely on techniques of illusion.

I decided to revisit a series of works that I had painted up to 2008, titled *Grids*. The 'Grid Painting' series has continuously evolved to depict and describe invisible radioactive conditions in the landscape.

Fig. 40: *grid 2*, 2006, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 175 x 175 cm

Creating a sense of depth by painting the surface is a key element of these works on canvas. I layer lines and colour fields to achieve this sense of depth. The result is often a dense variety of painted structures. It is this combination of pigment and structure that shifts the viewer's perception of space and, essentially, changes that sense of the painting support. I am interested in achieving the same effect whether working with three-dimensional space or on the flat canvas – however working with *actual* space is more complex because I need to factor in the corners of the room. Creating a sense of depth on a flat surface is akin to looking through physical walls. Indeed, when working to a large scale, the painting expands into space to surround the viewer. The painting turns into a place, an environment.



Fig. 41: *canola 1*, 2013, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 200 x 450 cm

I have been strongly influenced by the work of German artist Renate Anger's (1943-2008), who piqued my interest in extending my paintings into space. Anger studied painting during a time in which the conceptual artist, Professor Franz Erhard Walther, had prohibited painting. According to Walther, painting was an out-dated medium; to oppose this dogma, Anger used pigments and egg tempera binder to paint on wall-size canvases. Her work remained conceptually driven. The artist used canvases within larger expanses where she would paint on surfaces including windows and walls. Her approach was poetic and she often completed her pieces with text. Take, for example, her 2008 spatial installation at the AT Gallery in Poznan, Poland. The composition responded to the long, rectangular space, egg tempera painted along the walls of the building. The work included two photographs of tulip flowers on the room's shorter walls: one set of flowers were fresh, the other faded. What was notable to me about this exhibition was the artist's combination of a sensual and visceral abstract painting style with poetic and psychological photography. Although very different media, these felt integrated and the architecture also became part of the work.

Fig. 42: *Arco*, Renate Anger, Gallery AT, Poznan, Poland, 2008

The purpose of this subchapter has been to summarize how and why I use particular painting techniques to alter the viewer's perception of space, as well as highlighting the sources of influence that have shaped my thinking. I have discussed how I transform the flat surface plane of the canvas using colour and form, also painting within three-dimensional spaces with colour field techniques, layering line, colour and using methods of collage. In summary, my aim is not to copy nature, but to create a space with its own unique atmosphere.

***Depth in my Paintings and the Language of Colour***

How can a flat painting use structure and line to embody the vast depth of a sublime landscape? What are the methods that can be used to create a sense of space upon a canvas, piece of paper or, even the walls of an architectural space?

From time to time I produce landscape sketches as a means of studying space. Examples for this practice are my sketches that capture Port Philip bay near Melbourne. I return to this area often; the scene from the Mornington Peninsula overlooking the calm Bay feels like a view of infinite grey on overcast days. For me, this is pure and powerful space. The palette of greys in the view is varied, and one is always deeper than the others. Indeed, I often collect and remember colours that I see by making small water-colour paintings. I try to examine what I see and reproduce the sensation of the elements I see. These reference points are often the subtle shapes of light behind clouds, which vary after a few seconds. So what shifts this impression of space is its colours, these grey tones between me and the clouds. I look at such spaces and use them as the grounding atmosphere of various works.

The materiality of the paint that I use has a defining role in my work. For example, glossy surfaces, like oil paint, are reflective and will therefore enhance the foreground of a work, whereas matt pigments can seem to enhance a deep field. Placed near each other, upon the picture plane, the glossy paint will appear to enhance the surface in contrast to the matt. As such, I work with this tension between matt and glossy surfaces.

It was for this reason that I researched what I call depth-generating pigments – for example, Milori blue. This colour initially appears black but, in fact, it is a velvety dark blue. Applied to the wall or canvas – with a small amount of binding medium – this pigment appears like a hole, a space beyond. Milori blue is best used with egg tempera, applied in one thick layer. The velvety character of this pigment will then appear at its deepest. If a second layer is applied the previous smoothness is destroyed and the colour becomes reflective. Every little reflection is a disturbance, because the viewer's perspective no longer sinks into this colour, which is needed to create visual depth.



Fig. 43: *beetle 2*, 2014, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 140 x 140 cm

Take, for example, *beetle 2,* where I used Milori blue to compose a form that produces a new space within the canvas. The expanse can emerge without geometric frames, such as central perspective; instead, a space that appears limitless, like a dark abyss is created.

Each colour has its own physical, optical and sensual qualities, from which the composition of any painting is formed. Furthermore, each pigment has its own character and depth of field. I have found that egg tempera and the medium MDM binder[41] combined with dry colour pigments reduce light reflection. Its matt surface has a velvety finish and lends specific pigments an immense depth and an intensity of colour. Using Milori blue, Prussian blue, cadmium yellow and some pink, grey and light blue tones can give the look of a hole. I also use pigments that visually resonate in the foreground of a work, such as neon orange, which I consider to be one of the most aggressive colours. Conversely, neon yellow can create a sense of distance.

[41] The artist Milovan Destil Markovic invented a new binder for pigments and shared his knowledge with me. This binder had the matt qualities of egg tempera but is extreme resilient and can even be used outdoors, whilst being with soft and strong colour space.

Fig. 42: *infiltration*, 2012, ink, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor, canvas and paper, 350 x 600 x 450 cm, Slag Contemporary, New York City

Black ink also remains in the foreground because of its reflective qualities. Ink was a medium that I used for *it goes deeper* and also for *cloud* because ink resembled the colour of the respective linoleum floors. I painted black ink forms on the wall and, resultantly, the wall began merged with the floor, shifting the perception of the space's parameters. However, because ink is a fragile substance that can easily change form, I stopped using it in permanent works on canvas and concrete objects. I continuously expand my vocabulary of colours, testing new pigments and using these in different contexts.

Dry colour pigments are the basic material from which all colours are made. Using dry pigments allows me to select and mix colours that serve my specific needs. Each pigment has its own qualities. The neon colours are strongest when applied above a dry layer of titanium white. Cadmium red needs to soak for a few hours before used so that the pigment grains can dissolve within the binder. Dark green needs to be dissolved slowly – ox gall or dishwashing liquid needs to be added to allow the fatty pigment to dissolve, which is the same with the colour of burnt umber. Cheaper pigments, which are used for stage painting in theatres, need to have cellulose added because the pigment-binder mixture separates after a short time. Without celluloses, painting a homogenous colour field is not possible. The heavy cadmium colours are the easiest to use; they dissolve quickly and emit and opaque intensity. I use cheap pigments in combination with the intense colours because their different characters generate a specific tension.

The art of Anish Kapoor is both formal and conceptual. He often utilizes a dialogue between colour and form, pigment and object. Indeed, my interest in Kapoor stems from



his production of pigmented colour sculptures. I saw one of his sculptures, *Memory,* at the Deutsche Guggenheim Museum back in 2008.[42] The work takes the form of a gigantic steel object, which is coated on the inside with pigments. Kapoor examines the contradiction that can exist between physical reality and perception. As such, the interior space of this sculpture appeared endless, to continue for infinity, which conflicted with the clear boundaries of the work's exterior. Kapoor creates such voids by using pigments; his focus is on the pictorial effect and how this impacts the viewer's perception. He uses non-reflective pigments, which seem to swallow light and create depth. Conversely also works with the glossy nature of colour, which can create vibrant energy. The two are often combined to create confusing forms where the *actual* physical qualities of the object get overwritten by the visual effects. His pigments create an optical space that triggers emotions, and his choice of colours is often guided by his own subjective reactions to specific tones.

His works use distortion on convex and concave sculptures. Often fabricated from mirrored forms, his sculptures investigate the 'in-between state' of objects whose internal makeup is at odds with their surface. As he states in relation to the *Non Objects* series, of which *Memory* is a part:

> In a way they are technological but they are also a very, very simple idea. I have been deeply interested over a long period of time in geometry. I'm interested in taking certain forms, triangles, squares and turning them into something else ... It's a stupid, simple idea but it does something – it becomes something else.[43]

My work diverges from Kapoor's in that our forms and methods have different concerns. For my paintings I invent unpredictable natural and biomorphic forms, considering how these might change and mutate over time. My main focus is not on the creation of effects with the pigments I use, but to establish a dialogue between pigment and form to convey meaning regarding the potential for biomorphic mutation.

My work also has similarities with Kapoor's. While he works in the materialist, formalist tradition of Modernity, he believes that art needs to be subjective and that a transition begins when the materiality of an artwork follows the subject matter. Kapoor wants his pigment voids to appear to expand beyond the sculpture itself. The impact of his work results from the discombobulating contrast between finite object and the infinite space it seemingly expands into. In this respect, I follow a similar approach: the optical impact of the painting needs to override the geometry of the space within which the painting is made. The forms that I depict in the distance need to seem closer than shapes in the foreground, and in this way, I believe that colour can overpower reality and should be used as such.

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[42] Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, Germany, *Anish Kapoor: Memory,* 2008.
See https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/anish-kapoor

[43] Brigid Delaney,' 'You could disappear into it': Anish Kapoor on his exclusive rights to the 'blackest black' Interview with the Guardian, accessed February 25, 2017.
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/sep/26/anish-kapoor-vantablack-art-architecture-exclusive-rights-to-the-blackest-black#img-2

Fig. 45: *Round up cloud in valley*, 2016, collaboration with artist Milovan Destil Markovic, aluminium, egg tempera on wall and floor, 350 x 500 x 300 cm, Bundonon Residency, NSW

In 2016 I worked on a collaborative Spatial Painting with the artist Milovan Destil Markovic. During this time, my aim was to deepen my knowledge of binding mediums used in combination with pigments. I wanted to achieve a matt quality for the colour's finish, which absorbs light. Egg tempera is often brittle and I wanted a more robust substance. For the first time I used MDM binder, which Milovan Destil Markovic invented. This binding medium had exactly the qualities I was looking for: matt like the egg tempera, which I had used previously, but with stronger binding qualities. When dry, this binder becomes so solid that it can't even be removed from glass. This unique binder does not disturb the matt-nature of pigments. Stronger binders such as linseed oil or acrylic often result in the colour becoming glossier. Matt acrylic binder makes the pigments look like they have been covered with a very thin layer of plastic; as such, pigments lose their depth and intensity. Again, this does not happen when using MDM binder. It is therefore the ideal binder for pigments used to create permanent Spatial Paintings.

Following the making of our collaborative painting *Roundup cloud* (2016), I began introducing this binder into my work more generally, first in combination with egg tempera and oil paint; later, I experimented with replacing the egg tempera altogether.



In summary, MDM binder allows me to create colour voids that have an enhanced intensity because reflection is eradicated.

I constantly assess my material approach to art making. Colour has both aesthetic and symbolic qualities. Take, for example, gold, which has been used throughout history to represent light and divinity. The way in which humans perceive colour is determined by culture, combined with an intuitive, emotional response. When I use dark colours such as Milori blue in combination with neon yellow, the viewer's experience of the colour combination is harsh, aggressive. Indeed, this combination is common to insects such as wasps, so arguable humans instinctively feel alert when we come across such matter. In contrast, when this dark blue is used in combination with a warm orange, it becomes harmonic. Throughout my research I have explored neon colours. My subject matter necessitated a colour combination that demonstrated aggression and a sense of artificiality. I see instruments of war as inhumane technology. Through extreme colour combinations I refer to explosions and the force of extreme heat caused by deplete uranium munitions. As such, I began looking for the most intense combinations of neon orange, neon purple and neon red to capture this sense of destruction.

Fig. 46: *carousel*, 2014, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 340 x 335 x 580 cm, International Studio & Curatorial Program, New York City

In the Spatial Painting *carousel* (2014), I achieved high levels of aggressive energy by painting the outlines of an abstract negative-space shape in white; I subsequently used neon yellow, followed by another layer of cold titanium white, and then neon orange and neon purple. The white core of the painting travelled diagonally from the top left to

the bottom right of the room. My colourful lines delineated irregular, pointy forms. The bright core was surrounded by grey tones that became increasingly dark, as well as dark red and Milori blue.

I use such disharmony in my colours to point towards the struggles caused by radioactive disasters. When I find effective combinations I start pushing at the tension between colours. Neon colours are at their brightest when layered over cold titanium white. Titanium white is a cold and bright white pigment and when painted over the corners of three-dimensional space it appears illuminated.

I believe that neutral colours that can be used to create both positive and negative emotional responses. For example, if I layer neon orange over pink this colour becomes more pleasant. Indeed, a particularly harmonic colour is a light blue that I mix using Titanium white, Phthalo blue and Dioxazine purple. The colour reaches far into the distance, is warm and indicates a sense of the sublime. A similar effect derives from mixing greys out of pink, light blue and cadmium yellow. As long as the grey tone is warm, I believe it appears bright and beautiful.

Such layering of colours intensifies their appearance. The brightest red can be built up through painting red with a little white added in two or three thin layers; the last layer is a bright red tone is thinly applied without white.[44] Every colour will reach a higher intensity and uniqueness through this collage-like layering, the next layer being added once the colour beneath is dry.

Of course, I could easily write about what every single colour means in my visual language, and the various results these colours can achieve in different combinations. It is an endless process of growth. It is this process of continual development that drives my regular watercolour painting practice, where I refer to nature to discover new colours and forms. The point is that new colours and forms are always there – the longer I observe a landscape, the more I can see. As such, nature is a never-ending source of inspiration for my colour vocabulary and the forms that I can create accordingly.

[44] *Max Doerner, Malmaterial und seine Verwendung im Bilde* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1994, 18. Auflage), pp. 292-302. English: *The Materials of the Artist and their Use in Painting: With Notes on the Techniques of Old Masters* (San Diego: A Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc., 1949)



Fig. 47: painting *Milori blue dot*, 2014, Metropolitan Avenue, Brooklyn, New York City

In 2014, I tested the possibilities of depth for Milori blue. I had a residency in New York and wanted to see how strong colour pigments can influence the mood of everyday life. I called the project *Milori blue dot*. One night I painted an eight-meter long Milori-blue oval onto one of the busiest roads of Brooklyn, on which lots of trucks drive. The oval was narrow at one end. Seen from the driver's perspective it would look like a large circle because of this distortion. I wanted to see if drivers would stop if they thought there was a hole on the road. I watched the dot till dawn and no one stopped. I took the barrier away and people drove over the colour on the road's surface. By the afternoon the painting had vanished into dust and gravel. My conclusion from this experience was that my art needs to be presented in a very specific location, where people take time and interest. The viewer's perspective is key.

Fig. 48: *Milori blue dot*, 2014, Metropolitan Avenue, Brooklyn, New York City

## CHAPTER TWO: THE PERSPECTIVE PARADIGM

> *Painting in perspective* (…) is certainly not the same as *painting perspective*: a drawing or painting can be *in perspective*; but *perspective itself*, how can this be produced, made prominent, if not in the form of *a* perspective – which immediately implies reference of some kind?
>
> Hubert Damisch [45]

Hubert Damisch demonstrates the endless possibilities of defining a perspective in painting and how this can capture the spirit of a époque. In this second chapter I will elaborate on the notion of perspective and definitions of this term as it was theorized in Western European art, as well as in non-Western cultures. I will mention key influences and writers whose knowledge has driven my research including Pavel Florensky – who analyses abstraction in frescoes – Otto Demus, Erwin Panofsky and Clement Greenberg. Contemporary art writers that I will discuss include Rosalind Krauss, Elizabeth Grosz and Graham Dixon. This research has provided the foundation for developing my own perspective in painting, which, as discussed, is not linear, although is also not entirely built on reverse perspective. Later in this chapter I write about artists whose concern is spatiality and a distinct use of perspective: the Soviet/Russian avant-garde, Donald Judd, Felice Varini, George Rousse and Elizabeth Murray. This chapter's purpose is to underline the theoretical discourse that underpins my practice.

Fig. 49: *fish*, 2013, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 200 x 220 x 250 cm

My research has informed alternatives to the use of central perspectives. Take for example *fish* (2013), which was made for an exhibition titled *Colour Sharks* in a small-scale project space called The Wand in Berlin. The painting acknowledges the architectural forms of the space, which are repeated within my composition.

[45] Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 269. Italics in original. Translated from French original of 1987 by John Goodman.



Architecture and painting fuse. The corner was bridged with a leaning canvas. As such, this painting was to mark the development of my methodology for later large-scale projects. I am using this example of my work to show a starting point for how I have tried to rethink the potential for perspective.

Art historian Johannes Honeck has described my process in his essay 'Hybrid Worlds – From the Surface to Space out of Time':

> This fascination with the two-dimensional picture plane, which can be extended into the realm of the multi-dimensional through painterly adaption and the inclusion of the room, the space, into the work itself, becomes the central concept in Chaseling's paintings. Suspended outlandishly on the painting surface, visual citations are spread across her dreamlike vivifications. They do not confine themselves to the standard panel painting format but rather explode the limits of experiential space, leading towards a confrontation with the quirky, sometimes humorous, sometimes unbearably painful – profane reality of human existence.[46]

Here, Honeck articulates the interaction of spatiality and content that underpins my practice. Indeed, it is this core interest that made me want to investigate the precedents of perspective in painting, historically up to the present day.

Fig. 50: *it goes deeper*, 2012, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor, ceiling, canvas and concrete, 350 x 300 x 550 cm

[46] Johannes Honeck, 'Hybrid Worlds – From the Surface to Space out of Time', *in Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting* (Berlin: ed. Benedikt Stegmayer, Verlag fuer zeitgenoessische Kunst und Theorie, 2016), p. 145.

### *Theoretical Background of Western Practices in Europe*

As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, Byzantine frescoes play a major role in my research because the painting during this period was built on a mode of abstracting reality, rather than on naturalism per se.

Ervin Panofsky's well-known 1927 treatise 'Perspective as Symbolic Form' discusses linear perspective, describing a distinction between artistic perception and more general cognition:

> The laws which the intellect "prescribes" to the perceptible world and by obeying which the perceptible world becomes "nature", are universal; the laws which the artistic consciousness "prescribes" to the perceptible world and by obeying which the perceptible world becomes "figuration" must be considered to be individual – or…. "idiomatic." [47]

In other words, perspective didn't necessarily portray the world correctly; it described the world according to a rational and repeatable system. Panofsky explains that central perspective during the Renaissance shifted art into a science. The regimented and calculable nature of central perspective was valued higher than the so-called subjective artistic perceptions of space.[48]

For Panofsky, perspective transforms reality into appearance; the divine is reduced to a subject matter for human consciousness. It too expands human consciousness into a vessel for the divine.[49] Indeed, tactile space and visual space contrast to the metric space of Euclidean geometry. Exact 'perspectival construction', as described in the quote below, differs form the actual experience of space:

> For it is not only the effect of perspectival construction, but indeed its intended purpose, to realize in the representation of space precisely that homogeneity and boundlessness foreign to the direct experience of that space. Perspective negates the differences between right and left, between bodies and intervening space (empty space), so that the sum of all the parts of space and all its contents are absorbed into a single "quantum continuum".[50]

Panofsky is decoding perspective, highlighting that it can take on many forms. It is a method to transform a three-dimensional subjective experience into a system of understanding. American art critic Rosalind E. Krauss brilliantly describes the restriction of the post-Renaissance gridding of images. This has informed my comparisons of Byzantine and Renaissance perspective. Krauss states:

> In the Renaissance, perspective grids were inscribed on the depicted world as the armature of its organization. Perspective was the demonstration of the way reality and its representation could be mapped on another, the way the painted image and its real-world referent did in fact relate to one another – the first being a form of knowledge of the other.[51]

For Rosalind Krauss, Modernist art is defined by its approach to spatiality and an anti-natural orientation, so to speak. Art was determined by materialism and grid-like structures: "For Piet Mondrian and Kazimir Malevich the grid was a staircase to the universal." [52] Whilst in the Renaissance, grids were applied to support a method of depiction; in Modernism the grid became independent, revealing its fundamental import. Hence, Modernism didn't merely dissolve the space depicted in painting; it distilled it to form a new visual language and compositional system. However, I believe that this 'gridding' has its own restrictions: such grids freed painting from the use of central perspectives, but also created another prison or, let's say, formal prejudice. Arguably, the structure of formal rules can inhibit form and content.

Fig. 51: *metal 2*, 2015, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm
Fig. 52: *fish*, 2013, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 120 x 120 cm

### *Perspective Defined in Non-Western Cultures*

Panofsky restricted his analysis to western culture; however, I'm also interested in non-western discourse. Hubert Damisch claims that the term 'perspective' should be used in plural rather than in singular form. Referring to Panovsky's treaty *Perspective as a Symbolic Form*, Damisch remarked that Panofsky is 'ignoring those civilizations that seem to have been unfamiliar with perspective – at least with linear perspective – taking into consideration only those periods of western art that knew of it, or that *refused* it in a more or less deliberate and radical way: that refused it or *negated it*, in a dialectical sense of the word.' Damisch continues by asking an important question: 'Is it possible to have a figurative art that does not have perspective at its command in one form or another, however this might differ from our own conception of it?' [53]

[47] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York, USA: Zone Books, 1991), p. 13. Translated by Christopher S. Wood. Originally published as "Die Perspective als 'symbolishe Form'," in the *Vortraege der Bibliothek Warburg* 1924-1925 (Leipzig & Berlin, 1927), pp. 258-330.
[48] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, op. cit., p. 66.
[49] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, op. cit., p. 72.
[50] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, pp. 28-31.
[51] Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Origin of the Avant-Guard and other modernist Myths* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986), pp. 9-10.
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective,* op.cit., p.13.

As I've described, I argue that perspective can transmit ideas and that it too can embody time. Every culture through history has used the painted space to reflect its priorities and values, from Neolithic cave painting up to today's digital age. A consciousness of the possibilities of perspective has led to the development of methods used in painting through history; for me, I have extended it to mutate our sense of the three-dimensional.

Other non-western cultures don't rely on central perspective. The focus is on the sense of a place and not on its logical structure.[54] For example, Japanese landscape ink paintings from the fourteenth century do not use such linear perspective. Instead, the landscape is applied in layers and expands over the paper.[55] The landscape's focus is often on an element in the foreground. The middle area of the landscape is absent; foggy or covered by clouds. The contrast between the foreground and distance is captured in this way.

Another example of perspective in non-western painting is remarked upon in the writings of Elizabeth Grosz, who analyses the Warlungulong paintings found two-hundred miles from Australia's Alice Springs:

> This is an art that is understood conceptually. Its effect is largely visceral, dazzling the eyes with color vibrations, beckoning hands to touch and ears to hear its shimmering forms, its stories of origin, its rhythms and movements that are both abstract and realist, both representational and anti representational in one and the same canvas, disorienting our optical and spatial coordinates in favor of more haptic understanding of terrain or earth and of its relations to the living … [56]

Here, the visceral importance of an embodied experience is highlighted, one that distorts optical and spatial 'coordinates' to privilege a conceptual-cum-sensual experience.

Fig. 53 and 54: *tardigrade 2 and metal 1, 2015*, egg tempera and oil on canvas, each 40 x 40 cm

[54] Ken-ichi Sasaki, 'Perspectives East and West', accessed April 2, 2017, on https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/ca/7523862.0011.016/--perspectives-east-and-west?rgn=main;view=fulltext
[55] ibid.
[56] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art - Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 99.



***Byzantine Tradition: The Reverse Perspective***

Linear perspective in the European tradition was superseded by the creation of a *vision* – something that was beyond actual life. I'm referring to the difference between frescoes from the Byzantine period and the Italian Renaissance period. Using central perspective, Renaissance painters created illusionary spaces; Byzantine artists, however, used symbolism.

British art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon described how such 'frescoes with their physical, electric presence…. are proof that there was more to Byzantine art than the formality and otherworldliness of its mosaic and icon tradition.'[57] It was the art writer Giorgio Vasari's description of Giotto di Bondone's paintings that first deemed Byzantine art to be 'primitive'.

According to Vasari, it was Giotto who shifted painting into something more representational. However, Graham- Dixon has later pointed out the influence of the frescoes in the St. Panteleimon Church at Nerezi – today Macedonia – on Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes, found in Padua, Italy. He argues that the Byzantine East played a formative role in the development of Renaissance art – more so than Vasari was prepared to concede. This is logical, given that in the fifteenth century, many of the Greek Byzantine painters who created frescoes around the Byzantine Empire had escaped wars within the Ottoman Empire, finding refuge in Italy. Indeed, Serbian painters taught also by these Greek painters, and they subsequently made Byzantine churches in Serbia – whose frescoes I encountered in the monasteries of Ravanica and Manasija.

Fig. 55: *Ravanica* Monastery, Serbia, fourteenth century frescos

[57] See Andrew Graham-Dixon, *Renaissance* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999).

I first questioned classical methods of painting after reading *The Iconostasis* by Pavel Florenskij in 1995 – and which I returned to in 2015. It has always seemed unnecessary for me to represent in painting what I see. The writings of Pavel Florensky provided me with a theoretical framework that underpinned my intuition regarding the power of perspective in painting. [58]

Pavel Florensky wrote in 1921–22 that Christian Orthodox, Byzantine and also later Russian icon[59] paintings, have a greater objectivity and are more concrete than paintings of later eras because they don't imitate nature through illusionary central perspective.[60] Parallel and reverse perspective in icons emphasise the subject of the painting and don't follow the logical geometric construction of the space that is represented in the picture. Abstraction in icons is obtained through the use of reverse and parallel perspective. I will elaborate to explain this further: during these periods, while the saint was the main subject, it is often small. However, all lines of the architectural walls point toward the painting's protagonist making it seem larger than its surroundings. Optically, this moves the subject into the foreground (see example Fig. 57, p. 60)

The painters of such icons did not use a style of naturalism. Instead they applied reverse perspective. In the Studenica Monastery (Fig.25, p. 35) you can see that that the background architecture in the painting points towards the main characters – in a way 'staging' them. In his book on the Byzantine mosaics, Otto Demus describes the 'abstract verism' of the Byzantine period. The following quote captures his thoughts and demonstrates the need to investigate new perspectives in art:

> Byzantine "perspective" might be described as "negative' perspective". It takes into account the space, which surrounds, and is enclosed by, the image and which intervenes between the image and the beholder; and it aims at eliminating perspective effects of this space on the beholder's vision. The Western artists, by contrast, subjected figures to the laws of perspective in order to make them appear as real bodies seen from below, with all the distortions, which this view brings about. They created an illusion of space, whereas the Byzantine artists aimed at eliminating the optical accidents of space. The result of the Western practice is a picture of reality; the aim of the Byzantine artist was to preserve the reality of the image. [61]

[58] Pavel Florensky (1882-1937) was Russian Christian Orthodox theologian, mathematician, priest and philosopher. He died in Stalinist working camp in 1937. His theoretical writings are translated into German and later English only in the 1990s
[59] In the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, the term ‚icon' refers to any image regardless of the support on which the image is painted. Thus, the ‚icon' is used as for those sacred images painted on portable wooden boards, fresco painting on the walls, as well as mosaic on the floor of Eastern Orthodox churches
[60] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis* (New York: Crestwood, 1996), p. 25. Note: The iconostasis is a wooden or stone 'screen' or a 'grid' in the Orthodox Church where the icons are placed. It separates the altar space (reserved for the priests only) from the central nave of the building, used by the believers.
[61] Otto Demus, quoted in Bojana Pejic 'The Icon Effect,' in *Avant-Garde – Masterpieces of the Costakis Collection*, cat. exh. (Thessaloniki: State Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001), pp.44-58, here p. 52. Original: Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration* (Boston: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1955), pp. 33-34.



I want to paint something that cannot be seen in the real world. I aim for my painted forms, silhouettes and colour to become their own reality.[62] The painted objects are not depicted to describe the thing; the forms serve the composition of the painting and help to generate an idea, as well as an atmosphere.

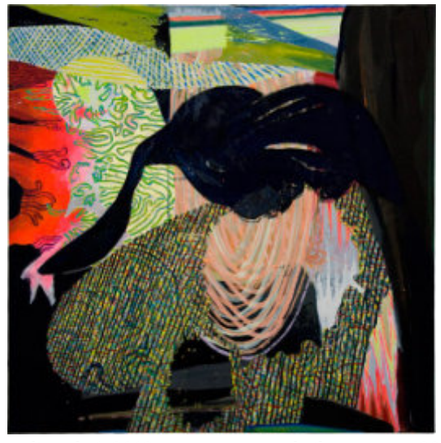

Fig. 56: *tardigrade 1, 2013*, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 80 x 80 cm

The light in icons does not shine from a single point; the figures and elements seem to shine from inside.[63] For example, the famous Russian Icon *The Trinity* or *The Hospitality of Abraham*, painted by Andrei Rublev in 1411 or 1425–27, has a light source that seems to emanate from the entire painting, without one source; it is gleaming from inside, concentrated in the halos and on the table top between the angels.

Laws of central perspective, and therefore shadows, were not applied to buildings in the image. The base on which the angel's feet sit is narrow in the front and widens towards the background. The small building in the background is seen from below. The observer looks at the top of the table, which uses parallel perspective. Our view is guided to the subject of the painting, to the oval of angels and it becomes clear that the perspective we see is actually that of the angles inside the painting. The reduced geometry and harmony of the synchronic figures create aesthetic grace. Writing about this icon, Florensky points out the centrality of the image in the Christian Orthodox spiritual context, summarizing that *The Trinity* by Rublev exists, and therefore God exists.'[64]

[62] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis* (New York: Crestwood, 1996). German version: *Urbild und Grenzerlebnis im revolutionären Russland* (Stuttgart: Verlag Urachhaus, Johannes M. Mayer, 1990), pp. 25-26.
[63] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis* (New York: Crestwood, 1996), pp. 162-165.
[64] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis,* op. cit., p.75.

Fig. 57: Andrei Rublev, *Holy Trinity*, around 1411

Florensky states that the best works of art in western painting diverge from the imposed rules; art then becomes better than the mind guiding the work. Lots of western art has used central perspective, but in my opinion, the strongest works depart from its strict rules.[65] In later periods he names Peter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt as examples for applying 'light from inside the painting', modeling figures and space with and even out of light. A light source in Rembrandt's paintings does not exist. All painted elements are like shining, phosphorescent matter.

Florensky believes that Rembrandt's approach in painting is the self-deification of the world.[66] In Ruben's paintings he points out the innate glow of the painted bodies. In icon painting, it is the light that places the elements. Light cannot be understood as something external; rather, it is a transcendental creative principle that manifests itself from within.[67] During this period, if an artist was to implement the rules of central perspective within these masterpieces, they would be classified as wrong, as failures.

Such a concept of pictorial space offers a flattened image in the twentieth century. Clement Greenberg analyses the parallels between Byzantine and modernist abstract American art. He writes:

> The new kind of modernist picture, like the Byzantine gold and glass mosaic, comes forward to fill the space between itself and spectator with its radiance.' The process of gradual flattening of the pictorial space from Gauguin to Cubism to Newman, Rothko and Pollock, could find its parallels in the Byzantine pictorial tradition since the 'Byzantines dematerialized firsthand reality by invoking a transcendent one.' [68]

Understanding such different systems of perspectives paved the way to my need to dismantle central perspective in my own work.

[65] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis,* op.cit., p.163.
[66] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis,* op.cit., p. 164.
[67] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis,* op.cit., p.165.
[68] Clement Greenberg, 'Byzantine Parallels,' (1958), in his *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 169



Fig. 58: *Murphy and other mutants*, 2013, aluminium, ink, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor, ceiling, paper and concrete, 290 x 360 x 240 cm, Yaddo, New York

**Russian/Soviet Avant Guard and the Icon Tradition**

Some forty years earlier than Clement Greenberg, the artists active in the Soviet/Russian avant-garde dismantled central perspective. The Soviet/Russian avant-garde did not only refer to Russian icons in their writings but in their art practice as well. Today, the lineage between the Russian icons and the avant-garde is well discussed. Around 1911, when a wave of 'primitivism' hit Paris, Berlin and Moscow, Russian artists came to recognize their own 'primitive tradition', as Bojana Pejic writes, in 'various expressions of Russian vernacular imagery like lubki, childrens' art, woodcarving, folk-art, the various forms of applied art.'[69] They regarded icons as a form of native art, as Kazimir Malevich remembered:

> In spite of my naturalistic leaning, of my feelings towards nature, I was strongly moved by icons. I felt some kind of kinship and something splendid in them. I saw in them the entire Russian people with all their emotional creativeness. I'd

[69] Bojana Pejic, 'The Icon Effect', in *Avant-Garde – Masterpieces of the Costakis Collection*, cat. exh. (Thessaloniki: State Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001), p.47.

> then recall my childhood: the horses, flowers and roosters of the primitive murals and woodcarvings. I sensed some bond between peasant art and the icons: icon is a high-cultural form of peasant art.' I discovered in them the whole spiritual side of the Peasant Age: I came to understand the peasants through icons, saw their faces not as saints, but as ordinary people.[70]

This means that the icons have been aligned with folk art or art produced by not academically trained artists and became prized by the Russian 'primitives' such as Natalia Goncharova, Mihail Larionov and Vladimir Tatlin. This was paralleled by the opinions issued by artists such as Henri Matisse, who expressed enthusiasm about the icons he viewed as 'authentic popular art.'[71] During his visit to Moscow in 1911 he was reported to have said: 'Here is the primary source of artistic endeavor. The modern artist should derive inspiration from these primitives.' [72]

The influence of the icon tradition is seen clearly in the works by Vladimir Tatlin, who himself was an icon painter till 1913:

> Tatlin's formal choices – not only in the use of disparate materials or Factura, which had both real and symbolic meaning, but in his spatial organization – derived from the icons. In conceptional Western art perspective may be defined in term of a pyramid of space. The tip of the pyramid is at the farthest point in depth, behind the object, and therefore penetrates the wall. In the icon the tip is in front of the object, in the viewer's eye, and the base of the pyramid is the wall's surface. Thus, the icon's inverse perspective projected the object and its meaning into the viewer's actual space, the space of existential experience. In order to emphasize his notion of "real materials in real space," Tatlin sometimes suspended his constructions at a distance from the wall. [73]

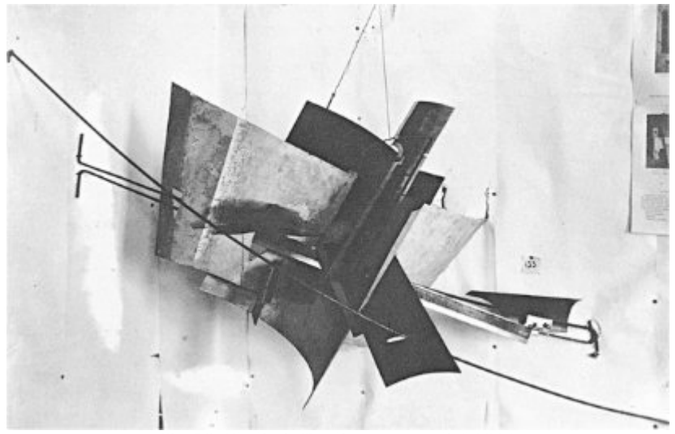

Fig. 59: Vladimir Tattlin, *corner relief*, 1914

[70] Kazimir Malevich," Fragments from 'Chapter from an Artist's Autobiography (1933) ' quoted in Bojana Pejic, 'The Icon Effect,', op.cit., pp. 46-47
[71] Bojana Pejic, 'The Icon Effect', op. cit., p. 47.
[72] Mattisse quoted in Bojana Pejic, *The Icon Effect*, op. cit., p.47
[73] Margit Rowell, The *Planar Dimension 1912-1932: from Surface to Space*, in *Planes : The Planar Dimension – Europe, 1912-1932* (New York: The Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1979), p.21.



Russian avant-garde artists did indeed question the Western tradition of linear perspective, as Vladimir Markov: 'There is a perspective that is scientific, mathematically verified and substantiated ~ constructive; and there is a perspective that is nonconstructive ~ Chinese, Byzantine. But which of them displays more potential and more beauty is still a leading question.'[74] Malevich points out the new path to creating paintings and not paintings of objects.[75] The painting of objects was given value according to realistic representation, whilst self-sufficient painting, so to speak, made the painting itself the focus – a sublime object in its own right. This approach – initiated by icon painting – inspired Clement Greenberg to write theory about the paintings of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, leading to the idea of the painting as an object, or in other words, as an artwork existing in its own right. It was at this point in art history that paintings were objects in their own right, and thus: we arrive at formalism. This formalism, the language of materials, is the substructure of my paintings.

***Painting as a 'Window'***

An aspect of a painting is its capacity for transcendence and it has been crucial for me to understand how perspectives, or the absence thereof, can signify or even embody a specific time or experience. Pavel Florensky and Erwin Panofsky mention the idea of the painting as a window but with different meanings: whilst for Panofsky the idea of the window would help to decode perspective in the landscape, Florensky saw an icon as a window into a spiritual world. The painting is not an illusion but a form of reality. For spiritual people, Florensky says, 'the painting is like glass in front of a window – meaning it will always stay a worldly item'.[76] It is the spirit of the painter making the icon a visionary window. If the painting does not transfer a notion beyond its aesthetics, it is merely a painted piece of wood.

Florensky's decisive thoughts are his belief in the power of a painting, which surpasses the illusionary qualities of a painted surface. He attributes to painting the ability to form something new, visualizing facts and transforming qualities of human spirit. Painting has the ability to produce an effect on human thought for which no verbal language exists. Contemporary writer and philosopher Paul Virilio questions the definition of a painting as an open window. He considers what remains of this optical metaphor today. Staring at screens is leading to humanity's inability to perceive the phenomenological reality of the environment – its life support system.[77] The idea of a painting as a window guides me to use the medium, which I believe can open up a vast expanse. Pavel Florensky's *Iconostasis* demonstrates that perspective could be a tool to work with – just as with any other material. Through this influence I realized that the use of perspective in paintings has an inherent power, one that I can use on a two-dimensional surface and as well in a three-dimensional painted space. Both paintings, *cloud* and *trout*, are showing depth but the pictorial field is flattened.

[74] Vladimir Markov, *The principles of the New Art*, (1912), in *Russian Art of the Avant Garde – Theory and Criticism*, (London: John E. Bowlt ed., Thames and Hudson [1975] 1998), p. 28.
[75] Malevich in Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective,* op. cit., p 29.
[76] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis* (New York: Crestwood, 1996), p. 70.
[77] Paul Virilio, *Art as Far as the Eye Can See* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), p. 21.

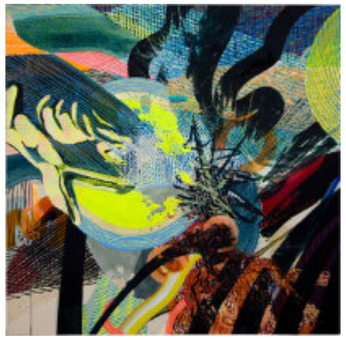

Fig. 60: *trout*, 2013, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 110 x 110 cm

These paintings seem informal, abstract even, but on a closer examination one can distinguish shapes embedded within the abstraction. Initially these paintings began with cartoonish drawings of a mutated trout and an invented mutant. My aim was to dissolve the figuration in what could be the bird's-eye view over a landscape. My elaboration of the painting as window the art historian Johannes Honeck describes as 'with this localization of perspective, the work opened up and became a 'window' to a new reality.'[78]

Fig. 61: *cloud*, 2016, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 213 x 170 cm

[78] Johannes Honeck, *Hybrid Worlds – From the Surface to Space out of Time*, in Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting (Berlin: Benedikt Stegmayer ed., Verlag fuer zeitgenoessische Kunst und Theorie, 2016), p. 145.



Fig. 62: *Buechel*, 2016, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 213 x 170 cm

***Beyond Central Perspective Illusionism***

Central perspective is defined by naturalism. Naturalism is distracting for the potential of a painting and the aura it can generate. French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty states:

> space is not what it was in the Dioptrics, a network of relations between objects such as would be seen by a third party, witnessing my vision, of by a geometer looking over it and reconstruction it from outside. It is, rather, a space reckoned starting from me as the null point or degree zero of spatiality. I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live it from the inside: I am immersed in it. After all, the world is around me, not in front of me. [79]

This quote speaks about how space can be acknowledged and about how I want to address space in my work – not as an image but as a sensation.

In the beginning of my research I was interested in Donald Judd's installations as examples for formalist art. Investigating his work and theory I came to understand that it has a deeply human motivation, based in experiencing space. Therefore, Donald Judd's large installations and his early paintings from the 1950s are an important reference for

[79] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind* (1964), p. 12, accessed May 15, 2018 at http://www.biolinguagem.com/.../merleauponty_1964_eyeandmind.pd

my research about perspective in art. Judd's ideas fascinate me, which I began discovering when exploring his major work *untitled* (1986) – 100 aluminium boxes installed in Marfa, Texas. He was also interested in the landscape. Judd was working between the two- and the three-dimensional with a primary focus on colour and a deep interest in how materials could be used in the space.[80] These are the aspects that make his work an artist of interest for my research, as my colourful work is hovering between two- and three-dimensions.

Judd himself called his work 'sufficiently complex',[81] which is obvious when observing this work in the Texan desert, made of large sheds, walls of square glass windows and 100 detailed and differently composed aluminium boxes, none of which resemble one other.[82] Judd himself felt conflicted when being described by critics as a Minimalist, because of the complexity of his work. I see his installation as not being reduced to purely material-based art, as the definition of Minimalism explains, because the work is structured out of many elements. The outcome is rather ephemeral, even spiritual and in my eyes he deals with the subject matter of space. I see his work as intuitive. His artwork is deprived of narrative and representation. In this respect Judd's work fits, it is not an illusion of space or landscape, but reflects a sense of the space or landscape.

Fig. 63: Donald Judd, *100 Aluminium Boxes*, installaed in Marfa, Texas, photographed 2010

[80] Donald Judd, *Some aspects of colour and red and black in particular, Donald Judd Colorist*, ed. Elger. Dietmer (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 1993), p. 79.
[81] Roberta Smith, 2000 9th June, Art in Review; Donald Judd /Dia center of the arts *The New York Times*, accessed March 30, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/09/arts/art-in-review-donald-judd.html?src=pm
[82] Roberta Smith, 9th June 2000 Art in Review; Donald Judd /Dia center of the arts *The New York Times,* accessed March 30, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/09/arts/art-in-review-donald-judd.html?src=pm



In 1964 Judd wrote a manifesto titled *Specific Objects*.[83] In this essay, Judd defined a starting point for a new territory for American art, and simultaneous rejected residual inherited European artistic values – these values being illusion and represented space. This challenged the classical European ideals of representational sculpture and initiated a totally new way of thinking about art. The works that Judd had fabricated inhabited a space that could not be comfortably classified as either painting or sculpture. He succeeded in refusing to call them sculpture, pointing out that they were not sculpted but made by small fabricators using industrial processes. He said that 'methods should not matter as long as the results create art,'[84] a ground breaking concept in the accepted creation process. He defines space as something in-between things. This in-between is substantial in his art, together with the colour and material.[85] Whereas Judd terms traditional sculpture 'a rock with complications,'[86] new art deals with space. For him, the focus of traditional painting on a flat surface is not compatible with a developed interest in colour, as depiction of objects in their space is concerned with a simulation of reality.[87]

It is this simulation in painting that I strive to work against. As mentioned above I see the Minimalist, material based approach in art (formalism) as a tool to be used. In my work I concentrate on the materiality of the work, its dimension outside the picture plane, the space in which my work is situated, the pigments with which I paint, shapes and also on possibilities to develop the 'object painting'. This is what I cannot ignore since encountering Judd's work. He founded a new level of questioning in every dimension of art – how to constantly include more elements in the work. Judd broke down inherited traditions, which do not necessarily fit into his time. The interest in the in-between objects and how to use space in art I could define through investigations into Judd's oeuvre.

I constantly question which materials I use to make a certain work, what my possibilities are and how I can find a clear result. One example is my installation of painted concrete objects in a forest setting. Whilst I will speak more about the form of these objects later in this thesis I mention these now to give an example for my search for further perspectives and for painted forms in space.

[83] Donald Judd, 'Specific Objects' (1965), reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900-1990* (Oxford and Cambridge: ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 1992), pp. 809-813. Also: 'Introduction', in *Donald Judd - Colorist*, (Cologne: ed. Dietmar Elger, Hatje Cantz, 2000), p. 17. Also: Donald Judd, 1993, *Some aspects of colour in general and red and black in particular* (Ostfildern-Ruit Elger, ed. Dietmar Elger, Hatje Cantz, 2000), pp. 79-116.
[84] Wikipedia, Donald Judd, early work, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Judd
[85] Donald Judd, *Some aspects of colour and red and black in particular, Donald Judd - Colorist*, ed. Elger. Dietmer, op. cit., p. 84.
[86] Ibid., p. 81.
[87] Ibid., p 82.

Fig. 64: *Bars, Strelka and Anita, 2013,* egg tempera and oil on concrete, 165 x 45 cm diameter, *3 Haeuser Kunst Pfad*, Eifel, Germany

I also investigated the work of contemporary Swiss-French artist Felice Varini (*1952) who since 1978 has used a technique he calls 'painting in space'[88]. Geometric forms are applied to walls, floor and ceiling of interior and exterior architecture. Large sticky tapes are used in his practice to draw, for example, five large circles onto cityscapes. From one particular viewpoint the onlooker can see the precise circles on the buildings. If the observer moves away from this viewpoint only fragments of the circles can be seen. To transform my drafts into the three-dimensional space I use, as mentioned in Chapter 1, this method of one viewpoint. Varini uses a projector, whilst I use my eyesight and a laser, to continue lines above corners and the curves of the architecture. The result is an optical flattening of space, seen from this viewpoint. I developed this technique and use reverse perspective through which I can deform the perception of the space. The colour compositions Varini applies to the architecture transcribe the volumes of the buildings. In my paintings I transcribe the interior architecture. The result of both methods is a visual flattening of the environment.

Varini stops at the formal aspects of his painting. The term social formalism is used in the context of Varini's work because geometric forms might be able to represent social structures.[89] I doubt this claim. Geometry can be symbolic and representative of concepts. The lightness and reduced vitality of his comprehensive painting in space does leave room for further content. Complete in itself Varini's painting is formalism beyond materials. His approach to the architecture is as if 'he would read a poem from Rimbaud,

[88] Donna Schons, 'Auf dem Dach der Leuchtenden Stadt,' *Monopol Magazin*, July 8, 2016, accessed May 14, 2017, https://www.monopol-magazin.de/am-hoechsten-punkt-der-leuchtenden-stadt
[89] Kunsthalle Osnabrück, 'Felice Varini: Vier Blaue Kreise - Marktplatz Osnabrück,' Press text, accessed May 15, 2017, http://kunsthalle.osnabrueck.de/usstellungen/ktuell.html - c11939



or if he would hear a song from Pink Floyd'[90] – a statement I would have not guessed. The titles of the paintings do not refer to a concept and mostly describe geometry. The paintings are reduced to a few colours and the final work is precise geometry in a static space. In the end the painting creates its own dialogue with the architecture and forms appear which the artist did not plan. The reason for this is that unexpected distortion occurs when the onlooker moves away from the perspective envisioned by the artist when the work was constructed. Varini calls this occurrence 'productive anarchy'.

In similar ways the architectural geometry in my work is overwritten but this is achieved through colour. I don't stop until I find the dynamic of my draft in the painted space. The idea is imposed into the architecture so that the overpowering physical experience of the space matches the small preceding draft. The diversion is clear between our works but the method of flattening the space through colour-forms is on par.

The French photographer George Rousse's (born in 1942) work is related to Varini's concerning the use of one viewpoint and overwriting architecture. Rousse's work encompasses photography, drawing, painting, sculpture and architecture, whist the essential material is the interior of deserted buildings and occasionally the exterior of these buildings. The aim of his work is not to experience this space but his photograph. In his work he reacts to the space and gives it a new identity. While they evoke the memory of a place and its poetic metamorphosis, his photographs deal with mankind's problematic relationship to the time in industrialized society, and the traces he leaves behind on the environment. Forgotten, neglected, in ruins or slated for destruction, the sites selected for his installations act as a metaphor for time as it hurtles toward death. By transforming these sites into works of art, Rousse offers them a new fleeting reality. When he takes photographs, he stops time, fixing an image in which traces of the past intermingle with his recent artistic actions – an image of hope and energy, an image devoid of nostalgia. His photographs masterfully bring together painting, architecture and drawing and, in the end, they carve out a new space in which the artist's fictive world becomes visible.

Whilst Varini's work could be seen as a visual game, Rousse's work combines formal methodology and complex concepts about places and contemporary times. Rousse defines every element of his work: location, history, painting in the space, the photo and the perspective he uses to take the photo. In contrast to my Spatial Paintings, the location and its history is the deciding part in his work and the reason for the resulting photograph. Varini, Rousse and I flatten three-dimensional space optically. This is a stylistic device that we share, but we have different aims. Optically flattening space allows me to compose it in a similar way to how I compose my paintings on canvas and paper. Rousse and Virini's works are a simulation in which confusion between the real and the image is generated. Varini's work stays in the formalist realm whilst Rousse adds content to the artwork and resulting image. The outcome in all of our works is that our art manifests the interplay between picture and space.

[90] Donna Schons, 'Auf dem Dach der Leuchtenden Stadt,' *Monopol Magazin*, July 8, 2016, accessed May 14, 2017, http://www.monopol-magazin.de/am-hoechsten-punkt-der-leuchtenden-stadt

A painter I admire who subtly swings between the two- and three-dimensional in painting, but plans the works two-dimensionally – like myself – is the American Elizabeth Murray (1940–2007).[91] Her shaped canvasses are collaged and expand into space. The playful paintings seem like a mixture between biomorphic abstraction and elements from comic drawings – abstract and at the same time figural. The contrasting forms she uses – for example hard corners and round volumes that interact – she refers to as being metaphorical. In an interview with *art21* she describes her work process as 'looking for a resolution'[92] and that she shapes the painting support out of wood. Murray points out that the negative spaces coming from the wall behind the collaged painting play an important role and add more contrast to the painting. The material is like a canvas but in various forms, which she then composes, attaches and paints onto. Her resulting works are funny and serious, humorous and tragic. This is the notion she is aiming for, because she perceives as such.

I write about Murray due to our works relating in many ways: our semi-abstract language, use of negative shapes, the shaped canvasses and especially the resulting three-dimensional paintings, which are planned flat. Whilst using different content, Murray's subject matter in my opinion is life itself; both of our works melt content and form using both narrative and abstraction.[93]

Ultimately, my research into the historical meaning of perspective has defined my painting process. As such, I now focus on distorting space by using paint. It has led me to the conclusion that the potential for Spatial Painting has significant possibilities. The next chapter of this thesis will explore the means through which I further refined my investigations into contemporary perspectives and what this has meant for my art practice.

Fig. 65: Elizabeth Murray, MOMA, New York City, photographed 2018

[91] *"Bop" and the Process of Painting – Elizabeth Murray*, Art in the Twenty-First Century, Season 2 episode "Humour", 2003, accessed August 9, 2018, https://art21.org/read/elizabeth-murray-bop-and-the-process-of-painting/

[92] *Ibid.*

[93] There are many other contemporary artists whose works explore extended painting – those include Hrafnhildur Arnadottir aka Shoplifter, Yayoi Kusama, Judy Pfaff and Mark Titmarsh. Whilst I see Titmarsh as working in an exclusively formalist tradition the other artists work with formalism, extending painting but at the same time transmitting subject matters. A 'not only formalist' approach, the combination of formal thinking with communicating content is where I locate my work.



## CHAPTER THREE: MUTATIVE PERSPECTIVE AS MY TOOL

> … the representation of a square on a line, or of a volume on a plane or a line, really does communicate [some] points, but it is incapable of communicating the form of the thing represented as a whole, as an object whose structure is internally defined. The content of space is transmitted. but not its organisation. In order to represent a given space with all of the points that comprise its content, figuratively speaking one must either grind it into the finest of powders and then, having carefully stirred it, sprinkle it over the depicted surface so that no trace of its initial organisation remains.
>
> Pavel Florensky, Reverse Perspective [94]

This passage by Florensky points out that central perspective is a method for depicting space analytically. However, it does not convey its atmospheric essence. If the essence of the visual information is fully comprehended, the artist can bring meaning into the painting. I describe in this chapter my own techniques and novel methods for understanding and picturing space.

The term *Site-mutative* captures my concept in art: it describes a process of undergoing change, being in transition and taking on a new form, a new sense of space. I will explore in this chapter how mutative perspective responds to, and most importantly, investigates our time. I describe my exploration of distortion, the infiltrated perspective and my use of negative shapes in painting, and the notion of dissolving – aspects on which I focus. Further I speak about my discovery of making and painting on oval shaped canvasses and how oval canvasses concern my use of perspective. I speak about the relation of my work to other contemporary artists who work with the idea of fragmentation, which in my opinion is a prelude to the concept of dissolving. A short section is devoted to the contemporary philosophers Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio, who have influenced my thinking about our contemporary times.

Fig. 66 and 67: *the shadow of things go further than one can see with eyes* and *testing the future*, 2015, watercolour and pencils on paper, each 38 x 24 cm

[94] Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis* (New York: Crestwood, 1996). German translation: *Urbild und Grenzerlebnis im revolutionären Russland* (Stuttgart: Verlag Urachhaus, Johannes M. Mayer, 1990), pp. 25-26.

***Distorted Perspective and Site-mutative Painting***

Distortion can happen in form of an electrical signal or sound wave. This can take place in music, especially since the 2000s.[95] I use this term to describe the distorted view and understanding caused by the digital, a fast and variable information flow of our time. The analogue world is the reality I live in. The digital can alter and distort information, imagery and our whole reality in a fraction of time – or fully delete it. Jean Baudrillard writes about the confusion between what is 'real', hyper real and an apparent appearance[96]. The appearance is the reality he claims; but what happens when the appearances are detached from the world, as they are now in the digital age?

It is this sense of distortion I integrate in my Spatial Paintings through the use of semi-reflective aluminium shapes. The murky reflective aluminium shapes interrupt the painted surface, show optical depth and at the same time reflect dubious visions. I am not looking for a clear reflection, but for this distorted view that the aluminium is generating. If I would use a mirror that directly reflects part of the painting it would not create the look I aim for.

Fig. 68: *blender*, detail

In Chapter 1, I discussed the painting *blender*. In this work I had used aluminium pigments in large areas on the floor with the aim of reflecting the painting on the wall and to extend the painting optically into the ground.

Other than the aluminium sheets the pigment shows irregular brush strokes that break the light when hitting the pigment. The result is a muddled look that does not allow for a contrast between the murky reflection and the deep field, like unwrinkled flat sheet aluminium does. My desired result was not achieved because the silver aluminium

[95] Oxford Dictionary, accessed February 8, 2017, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/distortion
[96] Jean Baudrillard, *Warum ist nicht schon alles verschwunden?* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2007), translated by Sedlaczek Markus. English version: Jean Baudrillard, *Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?* (Chicago: Seagull Books, 2009).



pigment did not reflect strongly enough, nor did the pigment optically separate clearly from other pigments. It was clear that I had to exchange pigment with sheet material and instead of painting I would use cut out forms in the future. I found hard aluminium with a thickness of 0.1 mm the best fit for my work: I can still form it like painted shapes but with scissors instead of a brush, and it does not crinkle easily as the soft or thinner version.

Fig. 69: *Murphy and other mutants*, detail, 2013

In the Spatial Painting *Murphy and other mutants* (2013) I collaged over a period of 6 weeks various shapes of aluminium on to the painted wall and an oval painting on paper. First results were tinsel like and my painting resembled a Christmas tree. Then I developed precise forms, which offered tension for the Spatial Painting and also added distortion to the work. Continuing from this discovery I created several Spatial Paintings with aluminium and this material became irreplaceable.

Fig. 70: *cloud*, 2014, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 300 x 1000 x 300 cm, *Mural Projects*, Volta 10, Basel

The Spatial Painting *cloud*, which I realized in Basel in 2014, was made with colour pigments and aluminium shapes covering 3 m x 10 m x 3 m. The overall shape of the work captured the silhouette of a small atomic cloud, like to ones caused by explosions of depleted uranium munitions. It was constructed of aluminium with the painted composition emerging through the material. The reflection of the aluminium was reduced because it reflected itself and only occasionally the painted colours.

In my next Spatial Painting I would need to plan precisely each reflection. The aluminium applied in my paintings addresses the unknown outcome of radioactive and environmental pollution and it captures the ambiguity of our time.

The negative shapes of *cloud* were white and merged into the silvery aluminium making the work bright and aggressive. The Milori blue forms built a contrast and separated the silver and white areas, as did the yellow and pink fluorescent colours. I extended the dark floor with black ink up the wall as if the shape of the cloud could pull up the ground whilst tilting it to the right side. I had placed one canvas into this Spatial Painting, which depicted an invented mutant[97] (Fig. 150, p. 146) floating in an absurd abstract landscape without horizon lines and any central perspective.

From one viewpoint this Spatial Painting became flat and showed the irregular cloud-form. I wanted to alter the logical context between floor and wall. It was not site-specific but *site-mutative*.

[97] The *invented mutants,* is a series of clay objects I made in 2012. I use these forms often as motifs for my paintings.



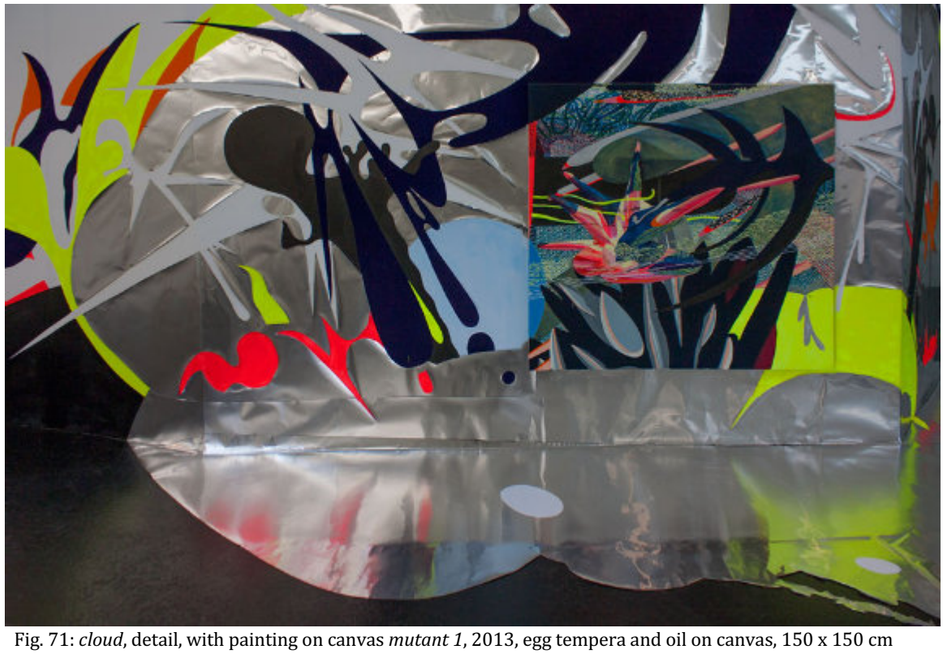

Fig. 71: *cloud*, detail, with painting on canvas *mutant 1*, 2013, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

Fig. 72: *inquisition,* detail, 2016, ink, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas

My next step was to use aluminium in large areas on the floor so that the colours of the wall would be reflected and distorted, expanding and 'opening up' the floor. In the painting *carousel* (2014, Fig. 46, p. 49) I reached this step. The painting is nearly 6 meters deep but because of using reverse perspective the space optically shrinks to appear as a flat surface. I call this optical flattening of the three-dimensional space and the elimination of all central perspective: anti-perspective. The mutated perspective was the next step: a flattened space and the distortion of forms. Using Aluminium on paintings on canvas I realized that both materials do not merge easy. The sheet aluminium has the ability to cut the soft canvas and to break off. In later works I experimented with leaf aluminium, a cheaper substitute of leaf silver. I will write in Chapter 4 about the first positive results of using leaf aluminium on canvas.

In the painting *inquisition* (2016) I resolved some issues regarding the capacities of using aluminium. I painted eighteen drafts carefully placing the aluminium in the composition. My aim was to find positions for the aluminium sheets that would reflect the colour of the painting and as well create the highest sense of distortion. Between the floor and wall elements of the aluminium a strong explosive tension was formed. Nearly the whole colourful wall painting reflected onto the floor creating a wired confusion of close elements and the distance inside the light grey shiny material. I connected the floor and wall sections through aluminium shapes, which travelled up the whole wall to underneath the ceiling, making sharp arrows, which is what I wanted to achieve with this material.

Fig. 73: *inquisition*, 2016, ink, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 290 x 800 x 310 cm, Galerie Dirk Halverscheid, Munich



Fig. 74: *inquisition*, detail

The room exists in my work to carry the painting, but it has no influence on the work's concept. I had the idea to call my process Site-manipulative, but this term does not fit for several reasons. Manipulation is creating illusions. Instead, I follow Florensky's belief that art has the ability to create something new. My aim is not to manipulate the space and create an optical illusion, but my painting is *site-mutative,* which captures my concept in art: it describes something undergoing change, being in a transition, leading to a new sense of space.

### *Oviform Paintings*

I came to question the shape of the canvases that I use. Reflecting on the visual appearance of my Spatial Paintings, I realized a formal contradiction between the biomorphic abstraction of the painted shapes and the rigid traditional form of rectangular canvasses. The overall dynamic of my paintings is biomorphic, so why use rectangular canvases? It is important to hang canvases into the wall-floor-ceiling paintings to add detailed and refined forms and content, so I had to find an answer. Whilst I aim for formal contradictions in the paintings on canvas, the formal discrepancy between paintings on canvasses and on walls would become problematic. My latest research initiated the construction of shaped stretcher bars for paintings on canvas, with the aim to merge them with the three-dimensional Spatial Paintings on walls.

Fig. 75 and 76: *another gift 1* and *another gift 2*, 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 56 x 40 cm and 52 x 38 cm

Fig. 77: *future told me she has a head ache*, 2017, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 270 x 350 x 500 cm, Art Omi International Artists Residency, Ghent, New York



Fig. 78: *future told me she has a head ache*, detail: three oviform paintings on canvas

When exploring convincing biomorphic forms for new canvases I chose an oval shape with one end being narrower than the other. I chose a form that contains spatial qualities and it needed to be simple because the painting I create on this surface is highly complex. A crazy shaped canvas would lead to the collapse of my complex compositions. The oval shape of this new series of paintings can distort to a circle when seen sideways from an angle. When seen frontally the paintings will reveal their irregular oval shapes. I can use the reverse perspective of these canvasses as well: the larger end will always seem to come towards the observer whilst the narrower end will seem further away. I decided to call these shaped canvasses *oviform*. These shapes are half-symmetrical and only possible to be mirrored via one axis.

My first series of oviforms are flat, like my rectangular canvasses, in 3 different sizes but with the same proportions. The next shape I will use for canvas paintings will be similar oviforms but longer. In the future, I will develop more shapes for canvasses like including oblongs, pyriforms or pisiforms, cassini oval shapes and maybe vesica piscis forms. This latest series of paintings reached my aspiration to make the shape of canvasses spatial and to include three-dimensional distortion through changing viewpoints. Now this result is achieved because the shapes of the oviforms are directly extracted from the large-scale paintings on walls.

Fig. 79: *involution*, detail: *silent chain 1*, 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on oviform canvas

Fig. 80: *involution*, detail: *silent chain 1*, 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on oviform canvas



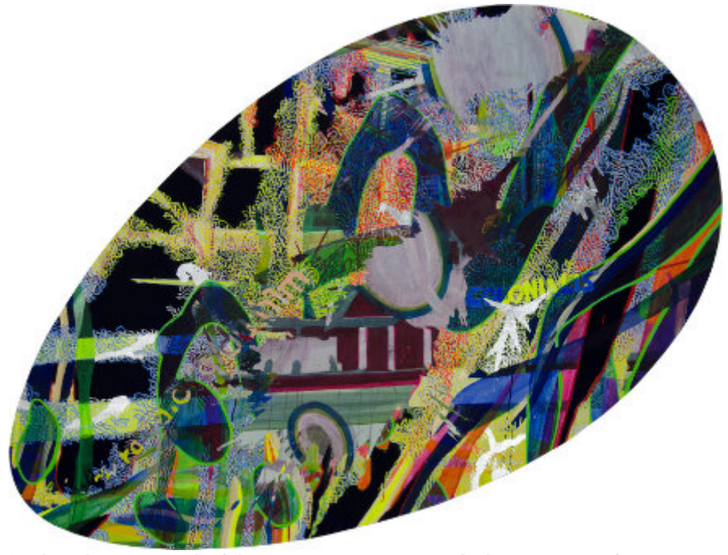

Fig. 81: *silent chain 1*, 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 200 x 120 cm

Technically I first considered using a different material than canvas and wooden stretcher bars and used materials that could be cut and shaped easily like plastic or paper. The outcome of these investigations was that for painting, canvas stretched on wooden bars is the ideal material: the stretcher itself is long lasting; paint sticks well to the canvas surface and the flexibility makes the painting robust and lightweight. The stretched canvas as an object can be arranged in all locations: hanging, standing and laying on the ground. Therefore it will stay my preferred material on which to paint. I can use the oviforms like puzzle parts for the Spatial Paintings.[98] For constructing the stretchers. a digital file had been defined to conserve the form, which can be shrunk or enlarged. The oviform shapes for the stretchers have been cut out of 4 mm multiplex wood. For stretching canvas onto these stretchers the staples had to be set closer to each other to prevent buckles on the stretched canvas.

### *Infiltrated Perspective and Negative Shapes*

In this subchapter I write about my investigations into how to paint the subject matter of fragility – specifically of substances that have been invisibly deteriorated by radiation. Negative shapes carry a crucial role in visually tackling this content. Negative shapes are areas that work actively in the composition but are left unpainted. I discovered that the vacuum of a negative space in a painting could be seen as anti-linear perspective, an

[98] One other artist has used the oviform shape before: Lucio Fontana's canvasses called *Fine di Dio* (1963) are exactly the shape of my new series I call oviform paintings. As in his paintings my association is not the eggs shape, but a traditional canvas with round edges and reverse perspective being part of the form of the canvas, not just painted reverse perspective. I will again mention Lucio Fontana in the subchapter *Infiltrated Perspective*.

area that is part of the composition of the painting but characterized by absence. I use negative shapes in two ways: as a reductive process creating text out of negative shapes and through pouring paraffin splashes. In the Spatial Paintings on walls I clearly define the blank areas before starting painting. This is how I rendered the invisibility of radioactivity in my Spatial Paintings: through areas of negative shapes infiltrating my composition.

Fig. 82: *silent*, 2017, PVC silver foil and egg tempera on wall and floor, 370 x 550 x 550 cm, Wollongong Art Gallery, NSW

I have used negative shapes earlier but for different purposes. In my works between 2000 and 2008, I left gaps between multiple canvasses, which together became one painting. The resulting construction of canvasses that had gaps 2 cm between them formed grids. These paintings were often 'gridded' with gaps. In my recent works I use negative forms not as grids; instead, I adapt them to the content of my work. They take on biomorphic shapes and play the same role in the painting as the contours that I apply with paint or aluminium.  The negative spaces are not 'place holders' for what I don't know – as in the previous grid series – they now represent something invisible, like radioactivity. I will speak about radioactive contamination as my subject matter in Chapter 4.



Fig. 83: *silent*, detail

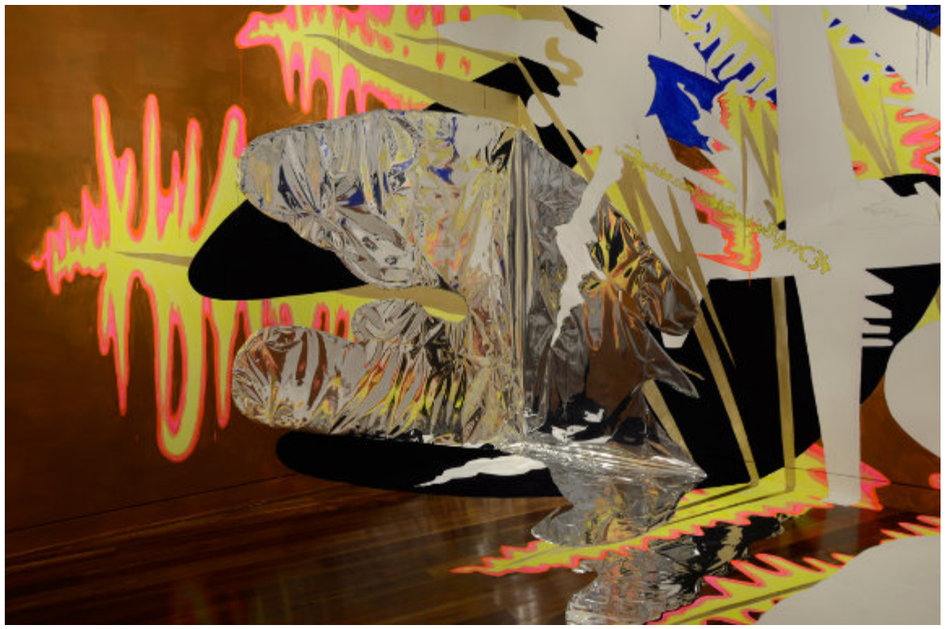

Fig. 84: *silent*, detail

I became aware of negative shapes through one of the first modern painters who adapted them: Paul Cezanne. In his landscape paintings, portraits and still lives, areas on the canvas are not painted. These were sections that Cezanne could not fill in. No form or colour was convincing enough to be painted, so these areas stayed vacant.[99]. Cezanne painted what he could see and experience of the landscape. His stylistic approaches regarding how to paint were analyzed by the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who is primarily known for his association with phenomenology and existentialism. In his 1945 essay titled 'Cézanne's Doubt', Merleau-Ponty discusses how Cézanne gave up classic artistic elements such as pictorial arrangements, single view perspectives and the outlines that enclosed colour in an attempt to get a 'lived perspective' – capturing all the complexities that an eye observes. He wanted to sense the objects he was painting, rather than think about them.

Ultimately, he wanted to get to the point where sight was also touch. Often he would take hours to put down a single stroke because each stroke needed to contain 'the air, the light, the object, the composition, the character, the outline, and the style'. A still life might have taken Cézanne one hundred working sessions while a portrait took him around one hundred and fifty sessions. Cézanne believed that while he was painting, he was capturing a moment in time that once passed, could not come back. The atmosphere surrounding what he was painting was part of the sensational reality he was painting. Cézanne claimed: 'Art is a personal apperception, which I embody in sensations and which I ask the understanding to organize into a painting.'[100]

For my own work, Cezanne was as important as reading Florenskij's theory about naturalism and central perspective. Cezanne is one practical answer to Florensky's expectation of painting: to represent an idea, situation or the pure moment as being sublime like a vision, or as immediate, like Cezanne's observations of Mont Sainte-Victoire. The characteristic of Cezanne's painting style has aspects of importance for my work, namely, taking apart the logical understanding of space and fragmenting it, the focus on the atmosphere and the use of negative shapes, rather than the obvious visual structure.

[99] Hans-Dieter Sonntag, conversation with the author. Munich 1993.
[100] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Cezanne's Doubt', at http://www.powersofobservation.com/2011/01/cezannes-doubt.html accessed February 2017.



Fig. 85: *carousel*, detail

Negative shapes serve as my metaphor for infiltration. Radiation's invisible electromagnetic waves have no tangible smell or substance, in spite of their force. To get a picture of this usually harmless but often invasive power I imagined how it relates to me as a human being. It is a neutral and silent energy with unpredictable and often devastating outcomes. I found a visual parallel through composing unpainted areas into my paintings like a body that is randomly traversed by radiation. I conclude here that my infiltrated and fragmented spaces, dispersed with negative shapes, effectively distort and disrupt expected perspective, creating a new visual experience or reality.

Fig. 86: *dog*, 2015, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

I resolved some of my ideas about negative spaces in the Spatial Painting *carousel* (2014), whilst at a residency at the ISCP in New York City. The negative unpainted area in this Spatial Painting spans the whole work diagonally. The basic form of this painting shifted to the right side as if the space would capsize. The negative shapes pervade the painting, which captures my concept of infiltration. *carousel* is constructed out of four 3-meter tall canvases. Three are assembled together (with a 120 degree corner), whilst the fourth stands separately. The floor and parts of the walls are covered with aluminium shapes. The floor is semi reflective and shows only one dark axis of the painting drilling optically into the ground.

Fig. 87: *involution*, 2018, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 260 x 400 x 800 cm, *site-mutative painting*, Yuill Crolwey Gallery, Sydney

Fig. 88: *involution*, 2018, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 260 x 400 x 800 cm, *site-mutative painting*, Yuill Crolwey Gallery, Sydney



There have been other artists who have made me aware about the concept of unpainted areas – the negative shapes in art. As such, the following paragraphs elaborate on how the artists Lucio Fontana, Sam Francis, Donald Judd and Milovan Destil Markovic have used negative shapes, and how researching their work has altered my own painting process.

Fig. 89: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Fragments of a Painting*, 1982, Student Culture Center, Belgrade, Yugoslavia

Sam Francis, influenced by Zen Buddhism, realized large paintings with a void of unpainted canvas over the whole surface up to the edges.[101] With a brush, 'painted painting' took place only on the edges of the work, creating a painting that addressed the void: the absent painting. Seeing his painting in 2016 in Munich in the Brandhorst Museum struck me for its intense focus on the emptiness on the canvas. I recognized the presence of these untouched areas on the canvas and it became my desire to achieve a similar impact, but not to become the primary aim, as with his formalist paintings. In my paintings the emptiness should become part of the narrative, but not the whole.

In 1963 Lucio Fontana continued his series of oval oil paintings, *Fine di Dio* (The end of God). The paintings are produced by slicing or stabbed holes into the canvas. The hole in the canvas reminds the onlooker that the painting has real space behind it. This is the concept of *concetto spaciale* (spatial concept) and this series made him develop the oval shaped canvasses.[102] Fontana's association for choosing this form might have been a spiritual one: the egg shape Fontana used can be associated with the origin of life.

[101] Sam Francis viewed in Brondhorst Museum in Munich, September 2016.
[102] Thomas M. Messer, *Lucio Fontana Retrosprektive* (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle, and Wien: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 1996), p. 26 and pp. 97-103; see also: Germano Celant, Lucio Fontana - Ambienti Spaziali: Architecture, Art, Environments (Luzanne: Skira, 2012)

Fontana's approach to negative shapes was radical: he seemingly destroys the painting by cutting into it. The result was that the painting acknowledged space in itself through its formal qualities. My work – on the contrary – stays on the surface. I decided not to cut holes into my canvasses because I aim to achieve an appearance of the absence through a homogenous surface.

As discussed earlier, Donald Judd was also concerned with notions of space. His works addressed what can't be seen – a space or void – and what lies in-between the elements we see. Through placing constellations as borders he points out the immaterial. The edges carry colour and the negative space becomes the active part in the work of art; simply air encircled by industrial materials in assigned locations. The untouched areas generate calm space because they are shaped but not marked by the artist and, therefore, leave room for contemplation through their emptiness. I observed that unpainted fields show an atmosphere of authenticity. Sam Francis followed a strict informal art concept and Judd aimed to encircle the fascinating dimension of space in his objects.

Fig. 90: Franz Ackermann, 2016, Mexico-Non Stop from here, Mounted paper, photos, oil, acrylics, mixed media, 150 x 170 cm

A contemporary artist using the idea of deconstruction and fragmentation of space and perspective in painting is Franz Ackermann. In his *Mental Maps Series*, which he has been painting since the 1990s, he fragments cityscapes creating a new picture. His work is expanded painting but not only using a formalist approach: it has narrative content. The perspective is pulled apart and in the flatness of the resulting painting depth and space open up in multiple angels. The cityscape is mixed up as if being ripped apart, or as suggested in the title:  like in the memory of a human mind. The work is not a mimetic reproduction of the territory but, instead, a synthesis of the physical and mental world. The vertiginous agglomerations of vibrant colours confront the viewer with a collapsed perspective of pictorial, geographical and architectural space.[103]

[103] Franz Ackermann, Walking South, Faena Art Center, Buenos Aires: 2013, accessed February 2018 and January 2019 http://www.faena.com/faena-art-center/es/exhibitions/franz-ackermann/



Franz Ackermann paints beyond the canvas and extends his work onto the wall. He builds new environments in exhibition spaces, assembled with collage and mixed media. The titles of his paintings suggest the subject matter. For example, in the painting *Cowardly Assault* (1999), one can see, side-by-side, an abstracted computer keyboard and the hole caused by the impact of a grenade. Common sense suggests that the artist was thinking about drones and how soldiers from 'peaceful' far-away countries kill through digital technology. In his paintings he tries to avoid traces of the human hand and paints meticulous hard-edge forms in many layers.

Theoreticians accepted this painting process in 1990's Berlin.[104] Painting was supposed to be dead and the artist's gesture a distracting redundant force. To prove the virtuosity of the artist and the conscious decision of this painting method, Ackermann added in each painting one free gesture that was placed within the composition.[105] Looking closely at his series of *Helicopter Paintings* made me aware about the possibilities of a homogenous balance between content and form with painted fragmented references to the world. I saw his work process as an option for me to adapt for my own work. However, I oppose his analytical hard-edge paintings style and miss the intuitive qualities. In my own work I aim for the intuitive to be the primary reference point, with the content being discovered later.

Also mentioned previously is Milovan Destil Markovic who creates painted objects, paintings, performance, total environments and painted installations with holes, reflections and negative shapes. Destil Markovic's first series is called *New Space* (from the early 1980s), meaning a new perspective. These works contained holes. Canvasses and works on paper had been cut with various shapes. For Destil Markovic, this process of working with unpainted fields allowed him to address absence – a space that cannot be defined. His research began with reverse perspective and focused on the materiality of the work. Instead of building up paint, he took it away and created voids.[106] Shortly after he developed the *New Space* series, he began making the works *Fragments of Painting: A Monument* – a radical step towards painting as a total environment. Looking for a similar use of space and using negative shapes led me to make my 2014 Spatial Painting *omen*. However, unlike Destil Markovic, I don't rip apart the paintings on canvas and paper; I paint directly on the wall, floor and ceiling.

[104] Interview with Franz Ackermann in his studio in March 2001, Berlin.
[105] In conversation with the artist, whilst being studio assistant of Franz Ackermann in Berlin, May 2000. Ackermann painted the gestural areas of his work himself whilst he had assistants to paint the endurance work, the hard-edged areas. The gestural areas had to be unique and from the artist's hand.
[106] Interview with Destil Markovic, 12. November 2016, Berlin.

Fig. 91: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Prototype Sarajavo*, Performance *Mother Tongue*,1989, YUDOK, Skenderija, Sarajevo, Yugoslavia

I use negative shapes to alter, distort and exchange perspective in the wall-floor-ceiling paintings. I create negative shapes using two main approaches: one for working on canvas and the other for working on walls. I cover areas of blank or white primed canvas with paraffin wax, or I pour or throw paraffin wax whilst enacting the painting process. Depending on the painting's subject, I can make aggressive splashes, or I control the pour, aiming for specific compositions. I can write text though pouring and I can estimate where the negative shapes should be, though I cannot predict this exactly. When the wax is solid I continue painting. When the painting seems complete – sometimes many months later – I take away the brittle paraffin layer and the painting underneath is revealed. I use palette knives and a heat gun for removing the wax. In this way, the colours and forms of the earlier painted composition surface again. Like a palimpsest, the negative shapes open up the painting's past.



Fig. 92: *black and white*, 2015, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 145 x 145 cm

The process of removal can take some of the priming away and destructive holes can show, but I try to avoid large cavities. I consciously use the physical reality of the painting by breaking the aesthetic homogenous forms. This is for me a metaphor for my theme: the invisible destructive infiltration of radioactive contamination. Focusing on this subject matter has pushed my painting technique into new directions. Techniques are following my concepts. The theme of the painting determines how I will paint and construct the picture.

When using wax as the first layer on the white canvas, the negative shape can be used as a calming white and splashy space in the painting.  The biomorphic negative shapes, if on the white surface, or on the first layers of colour, have the quality of intertwining the painted areas with each other. The colour of negative unpainted shapes of the wall paintings stays white – the exact untouched colour of white on the wall. If the floor, or ceiling part of the space is brown, for example, I mix exactly this brown, so I can extend the unpainted floor areas onto the wall and/or ceiling. In the same way I can extend the white negative shapes of the wall onto the floor though continuing the forms with white paint.

***Dissolving Space***

While reversed perspective is a crucial tool to cause confusion and distortion in my works, an aim of my research has been to find a way to create a painted space that generates a feeling that the space is dissolving. Dissolving is an extreme infiltration. I believe that if a material is fully infiltrated by another substance it will dissolve. How can I capture the act of dissolving through painting upon walls and canvas? I investigated ways to establish compositions and painting techniques that demonstrate my concept of dissolving and deterioration.

Fig. 93: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Prototype New York,* 1991, MOMA PS1, New York City

In the Spatial Painting *Murphy meets other mutants* (2013, Fig. 58, p.61) I fragmented my materials – an oval shaped painting on paper, bits of cut aluminium and the wall, floor and ceiling painting. The painting on paper shows further fragmentation through overlapping forms that are reminiscent of figural elements – negative shapes that are like vacuous holes and collaged aluminium parts. This work had been a start to compose fragmentation though materials and painted forms. However, I still did not have the feeling that something was slipping through my fingers – evaporation, liquidity or something dissolving. I wanted the Spatial Painting not only to dissolve an image but to fragment the space as well.

Looking at the paintings of Impressionist Claude Monet gave me some inspiration and context – in particular the painting of his pond with water lilies realised between 1906 and his death in 1926. These paintings have a special treatment of space. The depth of the water in Monet's work is purely described through colour and lines. He aimed to paint the unifying atmosphere that lay between him and his subject. The size of the paintings turn them into an environment. 'The further I go,' he wrote, 'the better I see



that it takes a great deal of work to succeed in rendering what I want to render: 'instantaneity,' above all the same light spread over everything, and I'm more than ever disgusted at things that come easily, at the first attempt.'[107] Monet's work was radical during its time and left behind the dense laws of naturalistic representation and central perspective.

Representing a pond in Giverny, these paintings begin to dissolve the knowledge of space, transforming the painting into an independent idea and expression. Central perspective dissolves similarly in other Impressionist works, for example in George Seurat's pointillist paintings. I can here return to Paul Cezanne's late landscapes as well, in which I can observe a flattening of space. The landscape loses its depicted meaning and turns into a glimmering, breathing space, existing in its own right.

Another approach to dissolving the depicted landscape has been exercised by avant-garde artists in the early twentieth century. Throughout the 1910s, European avant-gardes – the Futurists in particular – had been obsessed with technological progress, speed and motion. The leader and founder of Italian futurist movement, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, published the Futurist Manifest, in *Le Figaro* on 20th February 1909.[108] Fernand Leger explained in his text of 1913 that the new reality is created by industrialization and is concerned with motion. Thus, motion needed to be part of the paintings in this period of modernity. For Leger, representation was seen as necessary, because painting is a visual process, a reflection of the external world, rather than psychological conditions of the inner world.[109] Perhaps if Leger was painting today he would also be searching for the 'new' forms of perspective that were part of the current time.

I am interested in referring again to Milovan Destil Markovic at this stage. Earlier, when speaking about negative shapes, I mentioned the installation *Fragments of Painting: Monument* (1981). This painting installation gives the clear impression of fragmentation and spatial ambiguity. The artist assembled throughout the entire gallery space various painting shapes, shiny aluminium forms and a freely painted black line showing empty shapes. This work reached over walls and the ceiling, spanning the entire space. In some areas, parts of the painting seemed to cluster whilst moving dynamically in the gallery. Not only are the painting's fragments composed through the space they also seem to float, like being under water.

The art historian Bojana Pejic wrote in the accompanying catalog: 'We feel as if we were in a medieval monument, covered with frescoes, being worn out by time and history.'[110] Destil Markovic's work started in the late 1970s with works in performance as well as post-analytical painting. He examined possibilities of painting in relation to forms and his own creative aims. In the early 1980s he arrived at this new and radical approach to

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[107] National Gallery of Art, 'Claude Monet The Series Painting,' accessed February 17, 2017, http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/features/slideshows/claude-monet.html
[108] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism 1909', reprinted in Umbro Apollonio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp. 19-24.
[109] Fernand Leger, *The Documents oft 20th Century Art, Functions of Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973) pp 11-12.
[110] Bojana Pejić, 'Breaking of the painting and...' in *Destil Markovic, Fragments of Painting: Monument*, Belgrade: Galerija SKC, Belgrade, 1982.

painting that was entering and altering space. A time-based aspect of his paintings can be recognized in his process of showing a series of three exhibitions with the same works in different stages. The idea climaxed in the last exhibition mentioned above. This lent ambivalence to the meaning of a new image on the wall and a painting over a painting.[111]

Jovan Despotovic marked a new understanding of art in the former Yugoslavia: 'The space is understood not only as a place where one works/exhibits, but also as a means and material of work.'[112] In later works form the 1990's his focus is on spatiality, reverse perspective and combining narrative images of photos, paintings or text to large-scale installations. The materials he used were chosen after their indicative essence: gold leaf represented light; tear and coal was for him the opposite of gold, and a basic substance. In stone coal only one molecule is missing to make it a crystal. It is very common and so close to the beauty of crystals. The mirror is used to imply reverse perspective in a more complex way; aluminum and foil for the same reason, to reflect and to instigate reversing the perspective. [113]

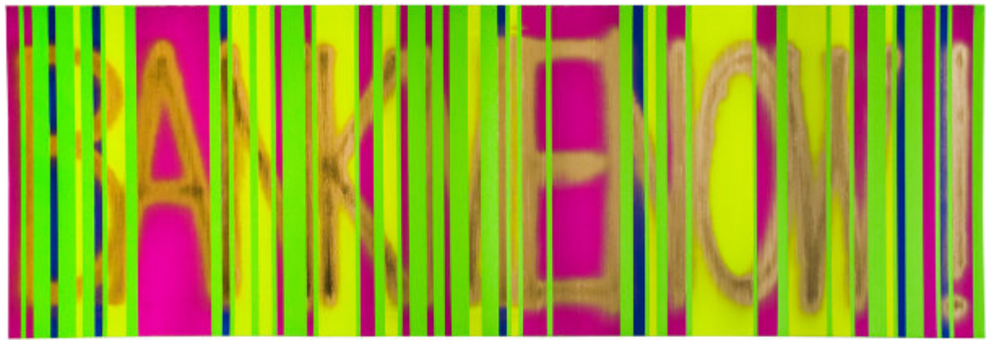

Fig. 94: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Bank Me Now!,* 2016, enamel, pigments and MDM binder on canvas, 85 x 250 cm

[111] Jovan Despotovic,, 'Destil Markovic and the "New Image" of the Eighties,' in *Milovan Destil Markovic*, (Rosenheim: Kunstverein and Cacak: Galerija Nadezda Petrovic, 2008) p. 48.
[112] Ibid. p. 50.
[113] Interview with Milovan Destil Markovic, Berlin November 2016.



Fig. 95: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Gate of Harmony*, 1986, *Aperto '86*, 42nd Venice Biennial

The gaps in all his works – or one could call them the negative shapes – stand for real-space-element. The concepts for each series take a long time to develop, sometimes years and a series of paintings can change to a multi-dimensional and multi-material entity.[114] What all these series have in common is a clear narrative concept and a spatiality, which is initiating a new perspective in art that is located between reflection, reverse perspective and distortion. The influence that this work has had on my own artistic practice is clear: I made my use of aluminium shapes consciously through artistic exchange with Destil Markovic and conversations with art historian Johannes Honeck in 2013.

[114] Interview with Milovan Destil Markovic, Berlin, November 2016

### *Some Aspects of 'Post-Conceptual Abstraction'*

Since the 1980s, we have been living in an age of 'post-conceptual painting' – an era that British art historian Peter Osborn calls 'post-conceptual abstraction.[115] Painting today can use all possible forms, symbols or naturalism and is set in a 'total freedom'. Total freedom is created through the overload of visual information brought about by digital media, the film industry, photography and other reproduction techniques.

A contemporary artist that I investigated is the techno generation artist Michel Majerus, who died very young in 2002 at the age of 35. His work relates to the paintings of Franz Ackermann and the art of Destil Markovic, because it is based on figural narratives but aims to create new forms of painting. He influenced techno music and marked the beginning of the digital age. Techno is a form of music that samples and reloads pieces of sound; in a similar manner, Majerus fragmented and assembled paintings, logos and images of his surrounding in installations to make something new.

Guenther Holler-Schuster writes in his essay 'From here we can go anywhere. Michel Majerus and the extension of painting': 'The picture, monitor and window are all extracts from different levels of reality. To escape this dilemma, you need to declare the whole environment, the whole room as the picture.'[116] The new view of painting as a medium with endless spatial possibilities leads to the rethinking of perspectives.[117] The location becomes an active part of the work. In irrational and incomprehensible ways Majerus combines text, comic characters, wooden structure, wall paintings and paintings on canvas. Looking at his work, the subject is readily perceived from slogans, the motifs or the gestures. He 'mixes' historic styles with specific phrases and methods. Holler-Schuster continues:

> Painting, one of the oldest of the truly classic media, seemed to him the ideal instrument for his work. For him despite many apocalyptic statements to the contrary, painting was by no means dead, nor did he wish it any harm. In fact, he saw it as a heterogeneous terrain that allowed activities far beyond canvas or white walls.[118]

Majerus seems to have set out to prove that painting could not have come to an end. More than almost any other artist, he kept a finger on the pulse of his time – particularly the late 1980s and the following decade.[119] Majreus is one of the few artists who breaks the borders of painting into a new physical 'freestyle'.

Majerus seems to have assembled with lightness and humour essential marks of our time, which he chose, maybe intuitively or consciously out of uncountable forms surrounding us. The resulting works can take any form: a traditional canvas painting, or

[115] Peter Osborn, "Modernism, Abstraction, and the Return to Painting," in *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics*, eds. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborn (London: ICA, 1991), pp. 59-79.
[116] Guenther Holler-Schuster, *Michel Majerus, Installations 1992-2002*, eds. Peter Pakesch, Gijs van Tuyl, Robert Fleck, Veit Goerner, Marie-Claude Beaud, (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung König, 2005), p. 167.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Michel Majerus, in *Installations 1992-2002*, Eds. Peter Pakesch, Gijs van Tuyl, Robert Fleck, Veit Goerner, Marie-Claude Beaud (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Koenig 2005), p.166.
[119] Ibid., page 167.



they can extend over whole spaces and buildings, whilst never losing their core sense. This leads to the general question of what is more real: what we see, or the knowledge of its construction? Since the digital age, a shift has occurred in perception. Our time will be defined by the ephemerality of the digital experience.

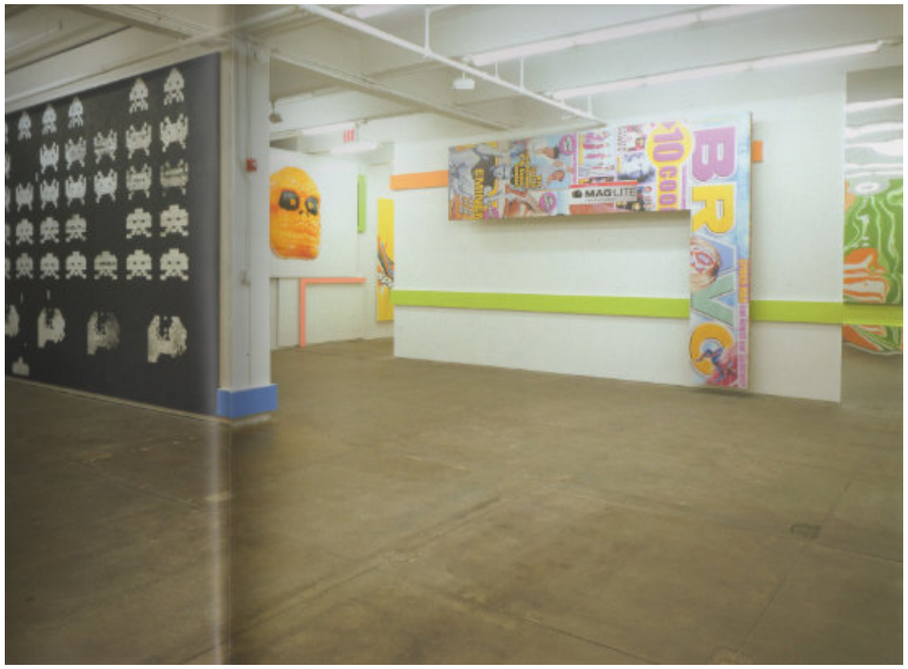


Fig. 96: Michel Majerus, *Leuchtland*, 2002, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York City

### *Hyperspace and Today's Digitalized Perspective*

Reality spans into the fourth dimension because at one moment we can be in many places at the same time – through being connected digitally. Conversely time and space have become relative in the 'flat' digital sphere. The physical experiencing of space, distance and touch is withdrawn and happens increasingly in the mind and on the screen. What is recorded digitally can vanish in a fraction of a second and memory is dissolved in an overload of simultaneous information. Parallel to this 'multi dimensional screen reality' is nature: plants, animals, humans, growth, decay, light and darkness, moisture, soil, and how we as humans relate to our environment – politics, psychological and philosophical understanding, and technological infinity. This complex, multi-layered nature drives my use of perspective in painting. I am demonstrating in two and three-dimensional works my understanding of our time through transforming perception.

Philosopher Jean Baudrillard describes in his book *The Illusion of the End* how humans have lost all references because of the accelerated speed of life. Baudrillard's ideas underpin my own concepts. He states that historical, political and cultural facts possess a kinetic element, which is thrown from its own space into a 'hyperspace'. Meaning is

lost in his opinion because if once sucked into the electronic media it will never return to its original form. The world now exists out of simulation. Dissemination and circulation is leading to facts becoming atomic, nuclear, and pursues a trajectory into the void: 'In order to be disseminated to infinity, it has to be fragmented like a particle.'[120] The human memory is replaced by the luminous, electronic memory of computers. Baudrillard wonders if human history is evoluting or involuting. This apocalyptic view addresses the shift that had happened in the last 40 years and the rise of the digital perspective. After the fragmentation of Postmodernity, we are now in a period of Hypermodernity. I see it as a deterioration and dissolving of continuous thought, and an infiltration of knowledge through the growing relativity of information streams.

Baudrillard proposes that in the 1980s history started reversing.  We are faced now with a paradoxical process of reversal, not even the end of history: a reversive effect of modernity, which, having reached its virtual development is disintegrating, into its simple elements in a catastrophic process of recurrence and turbulence.[121] Baudrillard names complex reasons for the reversal of history. After a long linear progress of evolution, the speed and multifaceted electronic world is pushing humanity slowly backwards again. Humans invented their future own obsolescence. Baurillard's theory has been essential for my research. If I find an image for Baudrillard's words, I see it as a deteriorated space with reverse perspective, close to destruction.

Another important writer feeding my art practice is Paul Virilio who coined the term 'toposcopical disaster' for what modernity, a catastrophic epoch in his eyes, has led to. Today's perspective would be teletopology: the views into a building under telesurveillance. The monitoring of others, a conglomerate of individual cells observed from a video control unit. Whilst Jean Baudrillard gives a great value to appearance because of the ephemeral nature of the digital, Virilio speaks about trans-appearance, the appearance in flux.[122] Virilio describes how Gothic stained glass windows in cathedrals, which for him capture the idea of the painting as a window, seemed 'less an opening on the sky than an opening on the light of the beyond up above'. Trans-appearance is here produced by electromagnetism and teleobjective illuminism and 'does no longer open on anything but the here below'.[123] For Virilio, typically European paintings are landscapes seen from a window of a train, dominated by central perspective and the outlook is on the horizon line.

An artist who invented a new fragmented perspective for Virilio was Jackson Pollock. Pollock's paintings were made whilst lying horizontal on the floor and therefore show a birds-eye view, looking from above, observing the surface. The view is of aerial zenith creating an abstract world of aeroscopy.[124] Pollock radicalized abstract art in American, breaking with European traditions. He envisioned a perspective applicable to the endless vastness of the land: 'The Sur-visualism of abstraction took over – in the United States, at least – from the Sur-realism of the old continent, as a prelude to the incontinent Televisualism of a world buckled in on itself, in this real-time perspective of

[120] Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion oft the End*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 2.
[121] Ibid., p. 11.
[122] Paul Virilio, *Art as Far as the Eye Can See, (*Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), pp. 21-25.
[123] Ibid., pp. 24-25.
[124] Paul Virilio, *Art as Far as the Eye Can See,* op.cit., p. 36.



ubiquity that gives the real-space perspective of the Quattrocentro its stereoscopic relief'.[125] Virilio describes an evolution of perspective in art predicting a psychotic future for humans in today's telepology.

Florensky, Panofsky and Baudrillard mirror a particular perspective arising out of the psychology of a specific time. Virilio quotes Apollinaire's prophecy and writes, 'I, the horizon, will fight for victory for I am the invisible that cannot disappear. I am the ocean wave. Open the sluice gates so I can rush in and overrun everything![126] For those of us who live in the twenty-first century, Apollinaire's prophecy came to pass a long time ago. Since the wave of electromagnetic fields flooded the earth with audio-visuality, not only has the skyline been locked down in the rectangle of the screen – of all the screens – but the spectator has now morphed into a tele-viewer who stretches out or, rather, lies down in front of it.'[127] Virilio's perspective of our time matches my sensual experience when I work with particular contemporary subject matters in painting, like environmental contaminations.

Fig. 97: *countdown*, 2016, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 46 x 58 cm

To conclude, I realize that the intuitive-abstract experience of the space where my painting is situated is a method of communicating my desired content, like Virilio and Baudrillard are writing and coining terms that match today's atmosphere. I use transformable three-dimensionality as another medium in Spacial Painting in order to represent the atmosphere and characteristics of radiation, distortion, deterioration, infiltration and dissolving.  Each of my works begins with facts that I "need to billboard" and communicate. Without these themes, I would not begin to paint. The idea needs the material, just as the material needs the idea: both feed and guide each other. For me, painting is visual communication that has the ability of immediate sensual impact. Mutative perspective is my answer to invisible conditions of our time that involve radioactive and environmental contamination and vanishing matter in the digital age.

[125] Paul Virilio, *Art as Far as the Eye Can See,* op.cit., p. 37.
[126] Guillaume Apollinaire, *Tendre comme le souvenir (*Paris: Gallimard, 2005).
[127] Paul Virilio, *Art as Far as the Eye Can See,* op.cit., p. 36.

Fig. 98: *akimbo*, 2015, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm



## CHAPTER FOUR: RADIATIONSCAPES

> What we have done and are doing to our environment, what the environment in turn does to us, how we naturalize what we do to each other, and how these 'doings' are enacted in the media of representation we call 'landscape' …
>
> W. J. T. Mitchell, [128]


Fig. 99 and 100: *another gift* and *in God's name*, 2016, egg tempera and oil on canvas, each 300 x 120 cm

[128] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Introduction," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 2.

Fig. 101 and 102: *9 out of 10* and *seventy years*, 2016, egg tempera and oil on canvas, each 300 x 120 cm

The title of this final chapter, *Radiationscapes*, draws on the title of my exhibition held in 2014. [129] I define how I approach the natural environment in my painting practice and how I deal with my prime subject matter: invisible contaminations. I am trying to identify the questions, which have been mentioned by W.J.T. Mitchell in the quote above. In my case, this is a question about nuclear contamination caused by the usage of depleted uranium. I present here a short overview of some Modernist artists who have followed the 'naturalist impulse' as it has been described in their landscape paintings produced in the past century.

[129] The title of the chapter is derived from the title of my exhibition *radiation scapes* held in 2014 at Krohne Art Collection in Duisburg.



Robert Rosenblum states that abstract art was born out of landscape and his examples include Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. [130] The works in this chapter are grouped under the title *Radiationscapes*. I look back to the works produced in the 1950s, when both European and American artists explicitly or obliquely had been thematising and visualising the effects of the Atomic Age, pointing to dangers of nuclear radiation. These works relate to my own current explorations of similar subjects. At the end of this chapter, I write about the role of the emotional or rather 'affective tone' in my painting.

Throughout the twentieth century, Modern art, as David Bachelor suggests, 'has exploited the device of abstracting from a naturalistic source (through editing, schematization, reduction, distortion, substitution, etc.) to the point where that source is largely unrecognizable, and unrecoverable without the aid of some clues or a key.'[131] As is known, for many artists working at the beginning of the twentieth century, representing natural scenery was the very first step towards abstraction.[132]

When I have started working on my Spatial Paintings in which I used biomorphic forms I was not fully aware that I was dealing with landscape, until the art historian Bojana Pejić, based in Berlin, remarked about my exhibition *radiation scape* (2014):

> In *Spatial Painting*, Claudia Chaseling is motivated by her sincere desire to paint; in placing the paint on the canvas or the wall, she appears to be well aware of historical extensions occurring in the pictorial field, such as the collage. She is also conscious of post-Duchampian strategies and the legacy of conceptual art. At the same time, she counters the habitual (and late modernist) misconception about abstract painting, generally considered to be socially irrelevant or "mute." Both her pictures and pieces set in the architectonical frame unfold a variety of non-iconic shapes pointing towards the precarious condition of nature or referring to organic phenomena (such as faunal and vegetal kingdoms), which she frequently evokes in the titles of her works. Due to this relationship to the natural, most, if not all, of her abstract paintings could be read as *landscapes*. [133]

In the Western tradition, painters, poets and indeed landscapers have been 're-creating' landscape for many centuries.[134] American theorist W.J.T. Mitchell, whose reflections on landscape I used as motto for this chapter, proposed to change the term 'landscape' from a noun to a verb: *to landscape*. In his 'Theses on Landscape,' he announces:

> 1. Landscape is not a genre of art but a medium; 2. Landscape is a medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other. […] 4. Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both signifier and the signified, both a frame and what frame

[130] Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition – From Friedrich to Rothko* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp.195-218
[131] David Batchelor, "Abstraction, Modernism, Representation," in *Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics, Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics,* eds. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1991), p. 72.
[132] See Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition – From Friedrich to Rothko* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973)
[133] Bojana Pejić, "The Day Before Tomorrow," in *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting*, ed. Benedikt Stegmayer (Berlin: Verlag für zeitgenössische Kunst, 2016), p. 9.
[134] See James A. W. Heffernan, *The Re-creation of Landscape* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1984)

contains, both a real place and its simulation [...]. 5. Landscape is a medium found in all cultures.[135]

This last remark seems vital since I have personally experienced how the visual rendering of natural surroundings, which the Australian Aboriginal community had been producing (about which I have written in Chapter 1) differs from the 'landscaping' we encounter by Western artists. In order to make my Spatial Painting I always start with nature as a 'real place': I start with observation.

Fig. 103: *Radiationscape*, 2018, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 360 x 1000 x 250 cm Art in Buildings 55 5th Avenue space (Union Square), New York City

Fig. 104: *Radiationscape draft*, 2018, watercolour and pencils on paper, 42 x 59 cm

[135] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power*, op. cit., p.5.



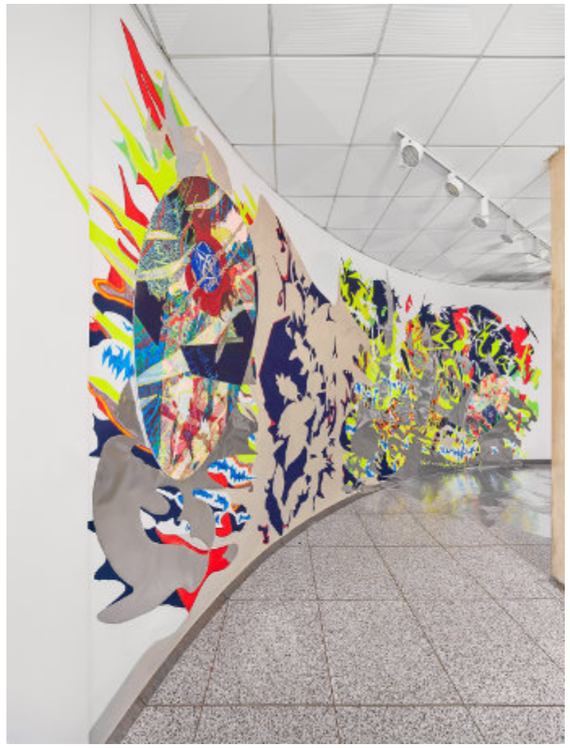

Fig. 105: *Radiationscape*, 2018, left side view

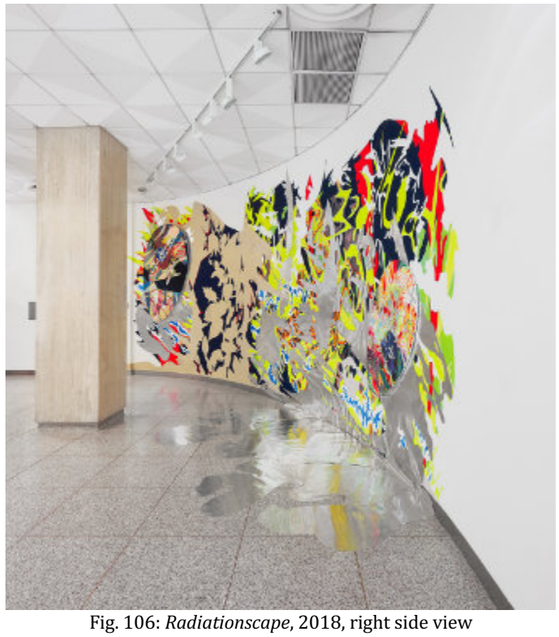

Fig. 106: *Radiationscape*, 2018, right side view

***Naturalist Impulse and Looking at Rainbows***

I strongly believe that the observation of natural occurrences helps us understand a work of art – namely, the painting. For me, the rainbow presents a dialogue between the two and three-dimensional. Throughout history, artists, philosophers and scientists have tried to describe the shimmering, luminous qualities of this phenomenon. Virgil referred to a thousand colours of the rainbow.[136] Matthias Gruenewald's bow in the painting *Stuppach Madonna* (1514–19) returned to a two-colour version.[137] Later in the eighteenth century, Sir Joshua Reynolds stated that accidents of light should not be endorsed in landscape painting. William Blake commented in 1809 that he was on the side of *accidents of light*.[138] Painters and poets divided into Newtonian and anti-Newtonian after Isaac Newton discovered his theory of colour in the 1660s. In the 1920s, Paul Klee taught his students at the Bauhaus that the rainbow had ceased to have any compelling symbolic or theoretical power.[139] These positions testify, in my opinion, to the strong belief in the (scientific) analysis of natural phenomena and a theoretical perception of space generally.

The rainbow is an image not an object and cannot display any central perspective, no matter where the viewer stands. The rainbow seen in the landscape appears like a vertical, flat picture. Therefore, the rules of linear perspective that are applicable to objects do not apply to the rainbow, a distinction that many artists have either overlooked or simply rejected.[140] A rainbow is always unique. When the observer moves the rainbow moves as well. When the observer tries to come closer to the rainbow it backs off, if you move away it follows and if you move sideways the rainbow moves sideways too. John Constable researched and painted rainbows intensely and developed a precise knowledge of the physical laws and visual appearances that a rainbow can have. The rich variety in form and colour of rainbows is not fully understood, even today.[141]

[136] Raymond L. Lee, Alistair B. Frazer, *The Rainbow Bridge, Rainbows in Art, Myth and Science* (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 2001) pp. 50-51.
[137] Ibid., p. 94. his own observations had clashed with Aristotle's rainbow theory so he retreated to the traditional 6th century version of St Gregory the Great's painting the *Vienna Genesis*
[138] Ibid., p. 106.
[139] Ibid., p. 115.
[140] Raymond L. Lee, Alistair B. Frazer, *The Rainbow Bridge, Rainbows in Art, Myth and Science* (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 2001) pp. 50-51.
[141] John E. Thornes, *John Constable's Skies: A fusion of Art and Science* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1999) p. 48.



Fig. 107: *Coding the Earth - The Darker the Night the Brighter the Stars*, 2018,
collaboration with Milovan Destil Markovic,
polycarbonate, pigments, MDM binder, leaf aluminium, concrete, wood and solar lights,
300 cm x 500 cm x 300 cm, Lorne Biennale, Victoria

Constable painted the rainbow as he wished, from a particular view, or with the sun directly above the earth. The painting *Salisbury Cathedral* from the Meadows (1831) shows a perspective onto the rainbow that could have not been seen in reality.[142] In an article from 2000, Chris Mobray criticizes Constable for not being professional and analytical enough with the clouds and skies he painted.[143] This statement demonstrates to me how the analytical approach was, and even today is favoured over "reality" in a work of art, and how strong the belief in the narrow system of central perspective is. The whole landscape, in my opinion, could also be seen with the parameters of the rainbow.

Here I come back to Jean Baudrillard's statement that appearance is the reality. If we understand appearance as reality, central perspective becomes out-dated. And this is how I understand my Spatial Paintings. The Spatial Painting I realize in space can be compared with the rainbow. The Spatial Painting is layered flat above the three-dimensional space, like the rainbow sits optically flat in the landscape. To see a rainbow, I do not need an understanding of central perspective and an analysis of the dimensions of the landscape in which it sits. I apply *Mutative Perspective* to all my paintings. It is a methodology to change perspective and to reform it in a particular way. In this process, the space becomes my tool with which to work: I distort its geometry and logic and make it follow my subject matter, without tearing down the walls. As discussed, colour can affect perception whilst transmitting meaning in an unmistakable way. The subject

[142] Ibid., p.83
[143] Chris Mowbray, 'Constable: Nice skies, shame about the rainbows,' *The Independent,* accessed 9. February, 2017,http://www.independent.co.uk/news/constable-nice-skies-shame-about-the-rainbows-1118809.html

matter I deal with in the works I call *Radiationscapes* (which are both two- and three-dimensional paintings) are not representing the views of landscape and natural occurrences, but are representative of radioactive contaminated landscapes.

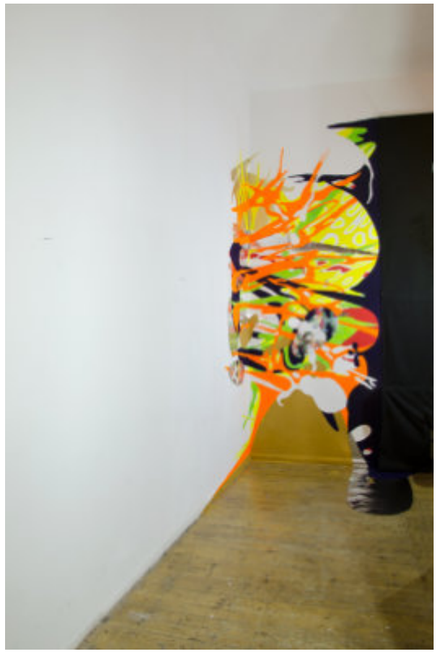

Fig. 108 and 109: *yesterday is tomorrow*, 2018, aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 500 x 250 x 200 cm, *Station Paradox*, Momentum Berlin

***Biomorphic Abstraction and the 'Atomic Sublime'***

The forms and structures I use in my painting language are influenced by nature. One of the artists I can relate to regarding my biomorphic abstraction and especially the anti-linear perspective I apply, is one of the first pure abstract American painters: Georgia O'Keeffe. She said: 'I had to create an equivalent for what I felt about what I was looking at - not copy it.'[144] After her education in painting realism, she shifted her style drastically through the influence of the painter Arthur Wesley Dow. Still originating in nature, landscapes or cityscapes, her paintings took on a life of their own: colour and form became the focus of her works, leading to highly sensual paintings. Focusing on O'Keeffe's abstraction, we notice that the space on the canvas is flattened and depth is ignited as a result of colour and composition. O'Keeffe rejects linear perspective. My paintings could be recognized as belonging to 'biomorphic abstraction,' they avoid linear perspective and oppose the gridding of space. Space is created inside the canvas, out of colour.

[144] Brainy Quote, *Georgia O'Keeffe Quotes*, accessed 3. February 2018, https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/georgia_okeeffe



How did I get to find my forms and how do I choose priorities in abstract painting language? From the beginning nature has fascinated me for its imprints of time and movement left in rocks, or which can be observed in clouds, sand and water. The flaring of air in the heat and the transparent space, between me and a mountain on the horizon, for example, have been my main concern. This led me to drawing and painting lines in nature and later became the underlying vocabulary of my painted work.

My understanding of space had been formed by years of observing natural forms and trying to understand them through drawing and painting. My current work relies on my knowledge of underlying structures in nature. These underlying terms can be also described as fractal geometry.[145] Johannes Honeck has written about my work, stating that I paint a whirlwind of strange visions and the artist '…points to the contradiction of cosmos and chaos. As is the theogony of the Greek poet Hesiod, here painting forms new compositions out of disorder. Thus an amorphous, cosmic system arises out of complex fragments: painted structures that are reminiscent of patterns formed by light reflexes and waves on watery surface and sculptures in the forms of fabulous creatures.'[146]

During the research for my thesis, I investigated the history of biomorphic abstraction and its later development in the Modernist visual arts of the 1950s. The earliest use of the term *biomorphic abstraction* was by Alfred H. Barr in 1936.[147] He defined it as curvilinear rather than rectilinear, decorative rather then structural and romantic rather than classical in its exaltation of mystical, the spontaneous and the irrational. Barr analyzed that biomorphic shapes are: 'uncannily familiar; people recognize them…. Though they might have never seen them before.'[148] Barr names the biomorphic world 'mystical, the spontaneous and the irrational'.[149]

An example for first biomorphic art is the abstract paintings of Wassily Kandinsky. Kandinsky was interested in the spiritual and musical aspects of abstract art. He combined biomorphic forms with geometric lines and shapes in his earliest abstract paintings. In Kandinsky's landscapes, made in the early stage of the Machine Age, landscape is re-created as reliant not on human but on mysterious powers; in Georgia O'Keeffe's vistas of 'primeval' nature, the natural is represented as if untouched by human agency, 'unspoiled' by urbanization.

After the Second World War, in the 1950s, artists had been confronted with the fears of the Atomic Age. It was to be felt in the abstract 'explosions' of Jackson Pollock, who at

[145] Oxford Dictionary, *Fractal Geometry*, A curve or geometrical figure, each part of which has the same statistical character as the whole. They are useful in modelling structures (such as snowflakes) in which similar patterns recur at progressively smaller scales, and in describing partly random or chaotic phenomena such as crystal growth and galaxy formation, accessed February 4, 2018. The mathematical discovery by Benoit Mandelbrot, *Fractal Geometry of Nature* of 1982, deals with the seemingly chaotic natural sequences, which are surprisingly organized after repeating cosmic rules
[146] Johannes Honeck, *Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting* (Berlin: ed. Benedikt Stegmayer, Verlag für zeitgenössische Kunst und Theorie, 2016) p. 146.
[147] See Alfred H. Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 1936, accessed February 4, 2018, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2748. Barr described it in the catalogue of the exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* held at MOMA
[148] Phillip Baric, *The Role Of Biomorphic Shapes In Abstract Art,* accessed February 4, 2018, http://www.ideelart.com/module/csblog/post/290-1-biomorphism.html
[149] ibid.

the time stated something that I find relevant for my practice and the model on which I base my work. He said:

> My opinion is that new needs new techniques. And the modern artists have found new ways and new means of making their statements. It seems to me that the modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture. Each age finds it's own technique. [150]

In 1950s America, Barnet Newman relayed his philosophy on the 'ethics of the Earth.' In Europe, abstract paintings had been mapping 'terrains of anxiety'. showing mushroom clouds – take, for example, the paintings by Wols and Jean Dubuffet. In addition, Italian artist Enrico Baj imaged 'nuclear cities'. The views of unpopulated deserts (nuclear test sites) surfacing in the photographs of that time, were all responses to the scares induced by the 'Bomb.'[151] Moreover, in popular culture, the celluloid fantasies evoked in the science-fiction movies of the 1950s — the golden age of the genre — featuring incinerated lands and monstrous mutants unleashed by radioactive fallout, presented indirect expression of anxiety (even paranoia) about the prospects of total nuclear war. If I situated the *Radiationscapes* in a tradition of Western Modernist art, this would be the 1950s when fear of atomic catastrophe had been expressed by scientists and visual artists.

I offer several examples of picturing radioactivity. Historically the first images of atomic explosions were highly censored before they had been published, and showed diffuse grainy images of this new sensation. In his valuable essay 'The Atomic Sublime,' Peter B. Hales describes the condition of the 1950s. The focus of these images had been on the visual and not the ethical. *Newsweek,* for example, described the image of the atomic bomb that hit Nagasaki in 1954 in the following terms: 'the atoms of Nagasaki rise 50,000 feet high'. For the Alamogordo test, done one week later, was deemed that 'its light equalled that of many suns; its smoke plume rose nearly eight miles.' *Life* devoted much of its 20th August, 1945 issue to the atomic explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 'white smoke leaped on a mushroom cloud; a huge ball of fiery yellow…. A pillar of swirling particles.'[152] The emphasis was on natural imagery.

The atomic bomb became a man-made marvel of nature, extinguishing all responsibilities for the effects of the explosions. The published photos of the atomic explosions showed the mushroom clouds without scalar references, floating in an undefined atmospheric region. The strategy of the media outlets brought the atomic explosion into line with important Modernist visions of science and warfare. This made

[150] Jackson Pollock, in *Jackson Pollock: Interviews, Articles, and Reviews*, edited by Pepe Karmel. (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Harry N. Abrams) p. 22
[151] Jane Pavitt, "The Bomb in the Brain," in *Cold War Modern – Design 1945-1970*, eds. David Crowley and Jane Pavitt (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2008) pp. 101-119.
[152] Peter B. Hales, *The Atomic Sublime*, p. 9, accessed July 19, 2017, see: https://journals.ku.edu/amerstud/article/view/2890/2849/



the American public see the atomic bomb as a continuation of modern warfare, rather than a violation of its norms.[153]

The technique of media outlets was a complete repression of the horrors of these events, whilst aestheticizing the event in the tone of the nineteenth century's connoisseurs of the sublime. The mystic embedding of the atomic bomb into the grandeur of nature, as the manifestation of God's will have been the result of the dominant mass cultures presentation of the atomic bomb. Peter Hales also speaks at length about a Holocaust when describing the atomic explosions. This shows the span between different perspectives: the Modernist one and the pacifist critical one. The alteration of events can be observed till today the beginning of the twenty-first century – nothing has changed.

I am mentioning here Peter B. Hales essay because of his intriguing description how aesthetics can alter meaning and can be more powerful than the initial information linked to the depicted event. Furthermore, this essay demonstrates the capacity and function of visual imagery. Aesthetics can be directed to attract attention and to transmit a notion, a sensual experience and the 'meat' of a subject. The atomic explosions have been beautified. In my work I research the reverse methodology: to paint menacing and alarming damage, which warns and supports the awareness about radiation's dreadful consequences.

Fig. 110: *sea of lies*, 2018, aluminium, egg tempera on wall and floor, 300 x 850 x 550 cm, *mutative painting*, Kunstverein Duisburg

[153] Peter B. Hales, *The Atomic Sublime*, p. 11.

Fig. 111: *sea of lies*, 2018, left side view

Fig. 112: *sea of lies*, 2018, right side view

***Political Content in Radiationscapes***

The documentary *Deadly Dust,* by Frieder Wagner about Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegwart H. Guenther,[154] made radioactive contamination a main research subject for me. The use of depleted uranium warheads is currently one of the worst radioactive pollutions on earth. Several countries are still using these weapons and their toxicity is denied.[155]. Since watching this documentary the abuse of radioactive weapons became a center point of my interest about the contemporary environment we live in and with today. I decided to use the subject matter of radioactive contamination through depleted uranium munitions in my work because it is an unspoken hidden war crime that will contaminate countries for billions of years. As an artist I am not interested in covering news like a journalist. However, I am making work that is meant to be public. My interest is in nature and painting, and I am painting nature that has been transformed through radioactive contamination.

In 2014, my exhibition *radiation scapes* included works that intended to depict the invisible impacts produced by radiation. These works draw attention to the meaning of landscape art, as Erwin Straus significantly writes: 'Landscape painting does not depict what we see, i.e., what we notice when looking at a place, but – the paradox is unavoidable – it makes visible invisible, although it be something far removed. Great landscapes all have a visionary character. Such vision is of the invisible becoming visible.'[156] In my first series of *radiation scapes* I altered my painting language through thinking about the invisible. I introduced unpainted shapes into my painting and I began working with a reductive method. Through white, unpainted negative shapes I achieved a strong notion of what I call infiltration and this has been discussed in Chapter 3.

A few contemporary artists deal with the subject matter of radioactive contamination. An artist whose works I investigated is Bogomir Doringer,[157] who was raised in former Yugoslavia. Doringer's art installation *hospitality* is based on interviews with civilians and soldiers who had been exposed to deplete uranium dust and also interviews of relatives of people who have died of depleted uranium poisoning. The documentary artwork is a 5-channel installation combined with sculptural epoxy blocks that serve as projection screens. This installation is deeply touching as a result of the detailed descriptions of the victims.

Similarly to my graphic novel *Murphy the mutant* Doringer's installation communicates this tragic unspoken war crime. Doringer's approach is to present the information directly and his sculptural composition is arranged to support the time based nature of his work. My approach focuses on an abstract dynamic that draws the observer into the work and makes the information accessible at second glance.

Furthermore, I want to point out the exhibition *Hot Spots: Radioactivity and the Landscape* by the American curators Jennie Lamendorf and Joan Linder – held at the UB Art Galleries, University of Buffalo (2018).[158] Both curators came through their contact with radioactive contaminations in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Buffalo, New York, and selected artists who address this issue in photography and digital media (Robert del Tredici, Abbey Hepner, Ludovico Centis, Jeremy Bolen, Edward Burtynsky, Adele Henderson, Abbey Hepner, Amie Siegel, Will Wilson, Claudia X. Valdes), video/film (art collective Don't Follow the Wind, Isao Hashimoto, Cynthia Madansky, Angelika Brudniak), installation, sculpture (Elizabeth Demaray, Naomi Bebo), drawing/painting (Michael Brill, Safdar Abidi, Nina Elder) and participative art (Erich Berger, Mari Keto).

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[154] *Der Arzt und die verstrahlten Kinder von Basra,* by Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegfried Horst Günther, accessed between 2005 – July 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERmabAyg4X0 or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwrFRqZKqUw last accessed September 6, 2019, *Deadly Dust* follows step by step the research of Mr. Guenther who devoted himself to proving the damages depleted uranium weapons cause if detonated or even just touched by soldiers.
[155] Wikileaks, March 2, 2019, https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09KUWAIT180_a.html

[156] Erwin Straus quoted in Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, territory, art*, op cit, p. 79. Original: Erwin Straus, The Primary World of the Senses: A Vindication of Sensory Experience (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1963).
[157] Bogomir Doringer, *Hospitality*, Bogomir Doringer Info, accessed November 2015 and December 2018, http://bogomirdoringer.info/hospitality
[158] Exhibitions, *Hot Spots: Radioactivity and the Landscape*, UB Art Galleries, September 2018, accessed October 2018, https://ubartgalleries.buffalo.edu/exhibitions/hot-spots-radioactivity-and-the-landscape/

A key message of the exhibition was that the United States has no solution for radioactive waste management. One work of particular interest to me is *Beaded Mask* by Naomi Bebo. The mask is highly decorated and seduces the onlooker. The work looks into the future and imagines a time when it will only be possible to breath through gas masks. The decoration on the mask refers to Native American culture. The major tests sites for nuclear weapons in the United States are in Nevada and New Mexico – areas that have been populated by Native American people. The aesthetic attraction of the mask can be referred to the colourful aesthetic of my paintings.

Michael Brill & Safdar Abidi, who in the 1990s imagined a landscape that makes the danger of invisible radioactive contamination visible, are also of relevance here. The drawings are illustrative but the abstraction suggests aggression and danger. The forms, for example, are hard-edged and pointy. The human in the landscape is drawn at a small scale. In my work, I use similar abstraction to show danger and an aggressive force. Lamensdorf and Linder give an insight to various artistic approaches that try to render the invisible visible, which as I've described, is my aspiration.

Fig. 113: eX de Medici, *The theory of everything,* 2005,
watercolour and metallic paint on Arches, 114 x 176 cm



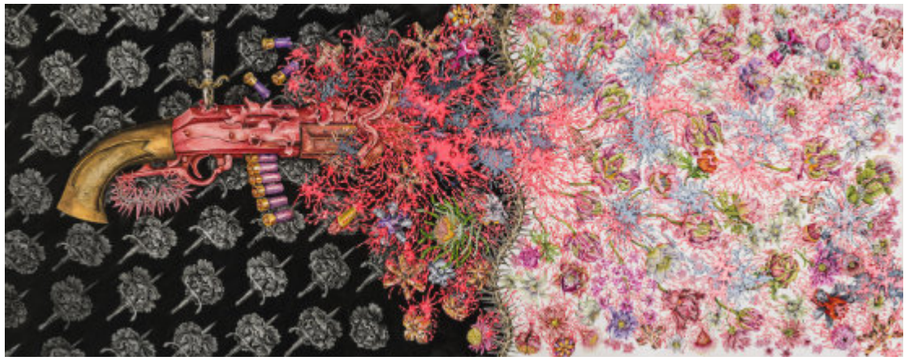

Fig. 114: eX de Medici, *I killed her with my club,* 2017,
watercolour and egg tempera on paper, 114 x 345 cm

The need to suggest clear, understandable meaning in my painting was made evident in a conversation with the artist eX de Medici in Canberra.[159] When de Medici saw a photo of my Spatial Painting, *omen,* she mentioned that the structure of the composition and its aggressiveness, resembled the weird aesthetic, explosiveness and destruction that is distinctive of atomic clouds, but in a totally abstract non-representational language. The atomic clouds are nearly symmetrical but my painted forms are not. She took a book from the shelf in her studio with photos of atomic clouds, from various test sites, wars and other catastrophes between 1945 and 1962[160]. I looked at her book: seeing these gigantic clouds, photographed over a period of 17 years, connected the aesthetic propaganda of governments to visual forms in my paintings. The shapes of the clouds took on pattern-like forms, akin to the sensation when you are looking through a kaleidoscope. All of these atomic clouds seemed to me like the clear appearance of fractals. For me a universal structure seems to lie beneath all forms, including the shapes of atomic clouds, which have the highest and most destructive source of energy.[161]

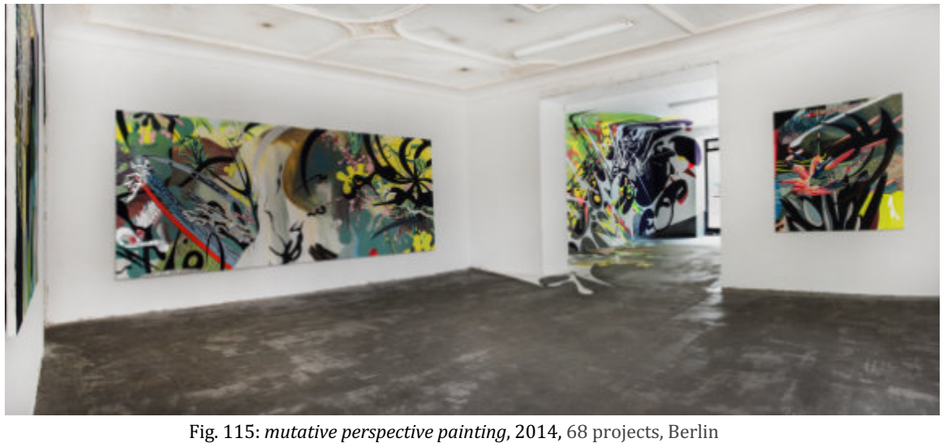

Fig. 115: *mutative perspective painting*, 2014, 68 projects, Berlin

[159] eX de Medici, conversation with the author, Canberra, June 2014.
[160] See Michael Light, *100 suns: 1945-1962* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).
[161] Edward Sipmsons, Conversation with the author, Canberra, July 24, 2015.

Whilst exhibiting *omen* in Berlin in the exhibition *mutative perspective painting* (2014), I observed that visitors were randomly enthusiastic about the Spatial Painting because of its high dynamic, size and three dimensionality – while perceiving it as an informal, non objective painting. Watching how my work was understood made me aware that inside the painting I need to point directly to the subject matter of the work. I defined my next aim: to investigate ways of communicating clear meaning in abstraction. After discussing my work with eX de Medici, I planned to include conscious narrative elements with the aim of transmitting a very clear visual message – even in my large-scale Spatial Paintings. I wanted to develop a practice of combining explosive expressionist abstraction with symbol-like elements, maybe even with comic characters or places that look futuristic.

***Narrative in Spatial Paintings***

As an artist I carefully select the information I want to use in my work. The art historian and curator Jennie Lamensdorf has described my process in a clear and useful way, which I will relay here:

> The ovoid paintings feature references to landscapes and aerial maps overlaid with fragments of texts and url codes, which hint at the work's content without giving away its secrets. Chaseling's appealing bright colors and shiny surfaces function as a Trojan Horse to deploy serious content: for years, Chaseling has been researching and making work about the invisible destructive forces of radioactive contamination, primarily as it results from the US and NATO's use of depleted uranium munitions for over two decades in the Balkans, Persian Gulf, and Afghanistan.[162]

I try to avoid very detailed, or figurative representation because it blocks the full presence of colour, composition and the dynamic of the painting. A strong feeling or reaction in the beholder might be evoked, but the cause cannot be pinned down. The affect of the painting is uncontrollable. I looked for a solution that guides the mind so that after looking and experiencing the painting, the viewer comes back to the subject matter and the cause of the painting.

For my work I need a clear understanding of the space, atmosphere, objects and the combination of several of those elements that I want to paint. Imagining the space is a more complicated process than absorbing actual space. If necessary, I draw by observing a photograph (if I can't visit this place) until it becomes live and active in my intuition and imagination. My starting point is to use forms in painting which result from nature. Then I dismantle the set the structure of my paintings; I try to find the form that will sensually embody my idea.

[162] Jennie Lamendorf, *Radiationscape*, Time Equities, Art in Buildings, September 2018, see https://teiartinbuildings.com/exhibitions/claudia_chaseling/110



Fig. 116: *silent chain 2,* 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 200 x 120 cm

Fig. 117: *end of story - we use it,* 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 150 x 100 cm

Fig. 118: *a sense of....*, 2017, pencils and paint markers on postcard, 10 x 15 cm

The use of text in my work is linked with my abstract painting language. In small concentrated sketches I try to find abstract shapes that encompass meaning and induce clear emotions. Having explored Spatial Painting and the use of voids, I then turned to include abstract language in painting. I realised that an abstract 'squiggle', a freely invented form, can carry a specific emotion. The first step I took in exploring the force and precision of abstract language was a series of over painted postcards and photos



with a text added. Some of these small paintings seem to speak about the personal, something poetic and as well about politics. Viewing these series later I have realized that the abstract informal doodle with matt lithographic pens and glossy paint markers encompass a definite connection to the text I wrote with the image.

I look for photos that complement my ideas and often choose ones with natural scenes – such as water and sky. Recently I painted a series of over painted small postcards dealing with the subject of radioactive contamination and the way in which certain governments have tried to deceive the public. I have continued with this method if over-painting postcards to further my vocabulary of abstract forms and dynamics. Instead of describing a particular concept, these small paintings 'doodle' intuitively, like they were monitoring thoughts. It is like untangling a cliché found in the postcard – the monuments and signifiers of a city, and bringing forward what counts for me at the moment of executing these small paintings. Many thoughts and ideas discovered in these small works grow into visual elements that I paint later in larger scale.

Fig. 119 and Fig: 120: *all quiet here* and *targets*, 2015, watercolour and pencil on paper, each 24 x 38 cm

***Inserting Text in the Pictorial Field***

I looked for a method to connect powerful abstraction with precise content. Firstly, I developed forms that seemed abstract, but when looking longer could be decoded. The next step was adding text or verbal supplements to my work. In 2015, I began experimenting with adding the titles of the work into the paintings and later painting web links that connected to specific web pages about my subject matter. My investigation between text and abstraction has led me to resolve the complex structure of the works, between spatial ambiguity and narrative.

This big shift happened through a conversation with the artist Destil Markovic in 2015: I realized that the problem of my work being perceived as formalist painting could be annulled if I began using text in painting. I spent August and September 2015 drafting watercolours and including text into the painting. To include text into the homogenous atmosphere of the painting seemed challenging. I always perceived the surface of the painting as space and text had nothing to do with this concept. However, to make my subject matter as clear as possible, I added text inside the composition of my painting similarly to how I began adding decodable forms.


Fig. 121: *seventy years*, 2015, watercolour and pencil on paper, 24 x 38 cm

I explored text in small watercolours depicting mutated frogs and fish. 2015 was the year of the anniversary of the atomic bomb attacks on Japan in 1945. I painted two more watercolours to commemorate the misery of these war attacks. I was surprised at how easily the text merged into the painting and how much sense this made. Following this realization I adapted this technique upon larger paintings on canvas. To embed the text I decided to write it with floor peel – the substance I have used to cover floors – to be able to remove the painted areas after the exhibition. The structure of the text automatically becomes abstracted and 'structureless' so there is no rupture between painting and writing. When I see the painting as completed, I remove the paraffin layer and also the floor-peel text layer. The results were satisfying because with one element added to my paintings I managed to leap away from formalism and, at the same time, place all of the focus onto my subject. Taken from my graphic novels, I added speech bubbles into the paintings. The speech bubbles seem like another abstract form, but one that gives space and attention to words.

Fig. 122: *sea of lies*, detail



Fig. 123: *9 out of 10*, detail, 2016

***Rendering the Silent Genocide Visible***

'Silent Genocide' is a phrase used by communities struck by radioactive contamination caused by detonations of depleted uranium munitions.[163] The uranium for these weapons originates in the waste material of nuclear reactors, depleted uranium munitions are weapons of mass destruction and their use is a war crime.[164]

Learning about this reality and war crimes has touched me over several years. While doing my research, it was as if I had been 'walking' through written information, conversations, and images of places, embedding my imaginings of radioactive pollution and the invisible infiltration surrounding us. I aim for a sense of deterioration, one colour piercing and crossing with another, more and more, until the layers capture depth and dynamism. If I paint a colour-field-shape and place it near the areas of high density, both react together to create a high level of tension. It seems like the opposites need each other and that only by brining these contrasting characteristics together can both techniques express their full power.

I painted *black and white (lies)* in 2015. In this 145 x 145 cm painting I layered an image of Darth Vader's space ship above a costal landscape with deserted bunkers.[165] I used these motifs to indulge myself in the subject of war and manipulation, the space ship being the symbol of the dark force as it is featured in the Hollywood movies. I painted layer above layer in this painting to erase the comic-like figurative content again, which was too literal. Instead, I focused on notions like aggression and a chaotic entangled environment deleting all parameters for orientation. To embed a reference to the content of this painting I wrote the text 'black and white lies' on the canvas. To prevent a poster-like effect I used the rubbery liquid floor-peel for the text. After removing this rubbery text, a negative space was left for the letters. I searched for a long time, layer

[163]These are places like southern Iraq, Kosovo, southern Serbia, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Syria and many more which had been experiencing wars since 1990.
See Einar Schlereth, Jürgen Kuhlmann, Sigrid Lauke, Brigitte Queck, *Das best gehütete [sic] Geheimnis der US/NATO: DU-Waffen (The Best Kept Secret of the US/NATO: DU Weapons)*, http://muetter-gegen-den-krieg-berlin.de/DU-Waffen_Das_best_gehuetetste_Geheimnis_der_US_NATO.htm, last accessed: November 2015, and Grigory Milenin, *Yugoslav Bombings 15 Years Later: U.S.-NATO Aggression In Europe*, https://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2014/03/24/yugoslav-bombings-15-years-later-u-s-nato-agression-in-europe/, last accessed December 2015.
See International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons, *Users – Research into the murky world of arms industry exports and the proliferation of DU weapons around the world,* http://www.bandepleteduranium.org/en/users and *The Weaponisation and Commercialisation of Depleted Uranium*, http://www.wandsworth-stopwar.org.uk/du/weaponcomm.htm, last accessed September 2015.
See The Center for Media & Democracy, *Depleted Uranium,* http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Depleted_Uranium: "DU is currently used by the industry in the manufacture of armour piercing munitions and anti-tank projectiles. […] At least 17 countries are thought to have weapon systems containing DU in their arsenals. These include: UK, US, France, Russia, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Kuwait, Pakistan, Thailand, China, India and Taiwan. Many of them were sold DU ammunition by the US while others, including France, Russia, Pakistan and India are thought to have developed it independently.", last accessed: February 2016. In addition to the regular use of depleted uranium munitions, the USA is expanding the deployment of atomic weapons throughout the EU.

[164] See Robert James Parsons, *America's big dirty secret,* Le Monde diplomatique, English edition, March 2002, http://mondediplo.com/2002/03/03uranium, last accessed: February 2016.

[165] I used a Star Wars drawing book. The images of costal bunkers I took from drawings and photographs I made at Point Nepean on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria.



above layer, for the forms that would capture for me a deteriorating force. In this process the painting nearly became covered with holes, and in some spots the canvas became so thin that the light shone through. In other parts the colour is thick.

The painting *Hadzici,* also completed in 2015 (Fig. 16, p. 27), shows a similar radical aggressiveness. The painting seems to have been destroyed, over-painted and reformed. The last layer above the chaotic colour combinations are sharp aluminium shapes. I aimed for a sense of tearing apart, infiltration and 'heavy impact'. Subtly in this painting you can read the words 'silent genocide'. The title is the name of a town in Bosnia Herzegovina that had been bombed with depleted uranium munitions in 1995. Following this NATO intervention a large percentage of the population died of cancer.[166]

Fig. 124: *involution*, 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 140 x 140 cm

***The Function of Aluminium in Site-mutative Painting***

As already described, another technical aspect resulting from working with the subject matter of radioactive contamination is my use of aluminium in painting. I investigate the process and my reasons in the section *Distorted Perspective and Site-mutative Painting* in Chapter 3. Here, I will describe the last development in my practice that has used leaf-aluminium.

I decided to use leaf aluminium on canvas paintings instead of 0,1 mm thick sheet aluminium. The sheet material is difficult to form and can cut the canvas. I watched Milovan Destil Markovic working with gold leaf, producing a smooth shiny surface. Destil Markovic uses leaf gold to capture light and as a conceptual gesture in his painting

[166] Global Voices, *Bosnians say NATO Bombs Brought Angel of Death,* February 21, 2005, accessed by the author May 20, 2017, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/bosnians-say-nato-bombs-brought-angel-death

and installations. In early works he covered railway sleepers with gold leaf. The result was an installation of contradictions, the light on the dark rugged wood. In his recent paintings, he applies leaf gold, which is added like paint onto the canvas. Similarly to his concept in the early works, gold represents the spirit and light – or alternatively, wealth and capitalism.

Fig. 125: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Inquisition,* 2018,
gold leaf, pigments and MDM binder on canvas, 250 x 450 cm

My first experiments with silver leaf went out of control; the silver became randomly stuck to the canvas. I persisted until the work was back on track with my original idea. I imagined I could write my texts with leaf silver or leaf aluminium. Two problems occurred: on my oily and dry surface the glue dried unevenly, so the leaf material stuck irregularly and also became caught on wet paint. The second problem was to get the fine, light and ephemeral leaf material to sit flat upon the surface of the work. It resembled, in some areas, aluminium foil rather than a sleek planned intervention. With time, I managed to master the method for attaching the metal leaf smoothly.

To apply the leaf aluminium evenly and to press it down in a way that it would not show too many crinkles, I exchanged my oil glue to acrylic glue. The oil glue did not dry on my variable surfaces. Acrylic glue is an evenly drying compound, which can be applied to different surface. The text I aimed to write with leaf aluminium is now more visible. To give the text full clarity I decided to surround the silver writing with a pen.

In my latest oviform painting, I used the leaf material to add forms like crosses and stars. This gave a surprising result: on the painting the bright gestures add highlights but are at the same time embedded into the whole painting.



Fig. 126: *past is past and always present*, 2017,
leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 150 x 100 cm

Fig. 127: *due to the heat 1*, 2017,
leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 150 x 100 cm


Fig. 128: *future told me she has a headache,* 2017,
aluminium leaf, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform, oviform 150 x 100 cm

I am now able to write with leaf aluminium, and add invented and rudimental forms. Aluminium is, for me, a material that distorts what is reflected. It represents ambiguity, something that can't be defined entirely and leaves me without full understanding. I would describe aluminium as slippery. This is why I used aluminium to symbolize the unpredictability and ambiguity of radioactive contamination – as a symbol of our unpredictable time today.

For my last series of paintings created for my PhD I will also use gold leaf.[167] The work will be titled *mutopia.* The gold leaf will show an ambiguous reflection similar to silver leaf but my project asks for a new approach to materiality. Gold leaf will stand for the sublime and the ideal in contrast to the murkiness of the diffused reflection. Formally, the use of gold will push my aesthetics in painting to an extreme enabling my paintings to contain the highest tension between colours. Applying real gold leaf in my compositions on canvas paintings will define this series – *mutopia*.

[167] purchasing gold leaf has been made possible through the Graduate Harris & Hobbs Materials Award



***Capsules: From Canvas to the Object***

The last step of my PhD has been to revisit objects I had made out of concrete in round-cylindrical forms – used as painting supports. I call this series *capsules*. Their thematic concern is with the animals sent by scientists into outer space between 1959 and 1974. As such, I name the capsule-like forms after animal astronauts.[168] I am fascinated by the image of an animal, which is caught in a rocket and sent to outer space as it relates to me metaphorically: a person born into this existence, not knowing where it came from or where it is heading. The painted area in my installation stands for the known whereas; what is outside the composition implies the unknown.

Like humans, we are all similar in form but different and individual. With this series of capsules I am after a sense of uncertainty, fear and 'being in motion'. The pod-like, ovoidal forms with pointy ends have the size and volume of a large dog or a small pony. I chose to use concrete in the work as for me it references our contemporary times. It is the most common product out of which our surrounding cities are constructed and it was also the prominent material of my neighbourhood growing up as child in the Olympic City of Munich. In spite of their cold materiality, the concrete objects have a warm vibe because of the animal-body shape that I create.

The concrete capsules stand in close dialogue with my new paintings on oviform canvasses. The capsules are painted volumes and their environment is the landscape or a Spatial Painting. These works bridge flat canvas and convex painted volume. Within the space is a concave painted volume, which links the paintings on the canvas and walls. I built protrusions and spikes on the surface of the form. These were covered with smooth concrete. Irregular protrusions evoke the idea that a form might grow from their surface – a lump or a wing. The object is in the process of mutation. In these last months of my research the circle is closing. Finally I have been able to establish an additional dialogue of biomorphic forms; not only between wall, floor, ceiling and canvas but also between canvasses, walls and capsules.

[168] The Cold War period, particularly during Khrushchev 's thaw in the USSR, brought about (and occasionally even fulfilled) the fantasy about 'conquering the Cosmos,' even if Laika, the dog sent into the outer space in 1957, did not come back to the earth. In contrast her doggy successors, Belka and Strelka, luckily did.

Fig. 129: *Gladys,* 2018, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on concrete, 130 x 40 cm diameter
in the background *Esmeralda* and *Albert 2*

Fig. 130: Coding the Earth - The Darker the Night the Brighter the Stars, 2018,
collaboration with Milovan Destil Markovic,
polycarbonate, pigments, MDM binder, leaf aluminium, concrete, wood and solar lights,
300 cm x 500 cm x 300 cm, Lorne Biennale, Victoria



***The 'Affective Tone' of Spatial Painting***

Moving away from my viewpoint, the geometrical space gains power again and my composition shows all the sharp angles that I need to paint to make the space appear flat. Some of the dynamic remains: one can read text elements clearly and colour composition functions on a different level, but the flatness has vanished – just like a rainbow you see driving on the highway. It moves with you for a short while, suddenly it has diminished or has fully disappeared. It never conforms to the way we have learned to read perspectival space.

The art historian and writer Susan Best distinguishes the term 'affect' in art and it's importance. Partially confirming the description of affect through philosopher Edward Casey, she writes that the affective dimension of a work of art accounts for the cohesiveness of expression and the continuity between subject and object. For Casey, affect is the felt dimension of art. Feeling, Best says, is spontaneous and obscure at once. Therefore the affective dimension might be felt promptly, but the meaning becomes coherent later.[169] She also states that the affect of a work of art is subjective. When the response of the viewer matches the tone of the work, a communication or transmission of affect takes place. When the tone of the work and recipient are varying. She speaks of affectless art.

As a way of concluding this chapter I would like to write precisely about the role of the affective moment, which is so crucial for understanding and reception of my work. Best's analysis of the real-time presence of art is essential because I see my work in its abstraction as being present through affective qualities. I transform in my work narrative content and conditions, which I record in drawings, sketches, photos and notes into abstract painting language. Nothing of the content can be seen at first. I even try to erase every aspect of figuration so that the forms cannot be 'read' too quickly. Often I start painting my subject in naïve ways: for example, I draw mutants, landscapes, planes and explosions. In my opinion being too descriptive blocks the abstract language in it's pure affect. Painted figures, eyes, animals or planes are perceived by my logic first. In the painting process I over-paint or erase descriptive elements and merge these forms into less representational lines and shapes.

[169] Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling, Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde* (London and New York: L.B.Tauris, 2011), pp. 6-7.

Fig. 131: *inquisition*, detail, 2016

In this 'not any more representational form of painting' I can create energy and tensions that capture the content of my desired subject matter and its emotional information. In the Spatial Painting *inquisition* the clearest form is of a warplane carrying bombs and a NATO star. I embedded the plane using a neon yellow background; even this element is one of the largest shapes in the work. Looking at the painting I can see the plane only later when the overall work already had its say – and affect. The NATO star is similarly inserted on the canvas. More figurative, this shape it is reduced and also stays as a symbol in the background. It is absorbed into the abstract power.

Best points out three reasons for the neglect of feeling in art since late Modern art. One she calls a 'methodological blind spot', a semiological/ post-structuralist approach to art and the neglect of considering the communicative function of feeling. A second problem is the separation of art history from aesthetics, leading to traditional aesthetic concerns. Her third point is the aesthetic ideal exemplified by Minimalism and Conceptualism with its intention to express no feeling.[170]

[170] Ibid., pp 6-7.



Fig. 132: *devolution (it's really not rocket science)*, 2017,
aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 110 x 110 cm

I see no reason for the desire to avoid feeling in art, only because feeling cannot be 'normed'. As an artist, I am unable to give a prognosis about how the public will react to my work and how it will be understood. It is impossible to make art devoid of human association – this is its essence. Best makes a particular distinction, describing the work of male artists during the 1960s–70s as aiming for an anti-aesthetic combative expression towards impersonality, whilst female artists were transforming expression to become an aspect of art that can be encountered by the beholder, but often not verbally communicated.[171]

I was wondering if there is an opposition between ideas and affect. An idea can be unconscious whilst the affect is always a reaction and therefore not unconscious. Best cites Sigmund Freud who pointed out that 'ideas are cathexes – basically memory traces – whilst affects and emotions correspond to processes of discharge, the final manifestation of which are perceived as feelings. The unconscious is supposed to be characterized by an absence of contradictions.[172] Freud sees affects as being conscious. The affect in art is an immediate inventory, and depending on the observer the reaction in form of emotions and thoughts will follow.

Best continues with Ignacio Matte-Blanco's statement that list the similarities between feeling and the unconscious – both are supposed to be the opposite of thinking and are indivisible. Matte-Blanco argues that 'feeling is highly saturated with the indivisible mode and that, consequently, any clear division between emotion and the unconscious is impossible to make.'[173] He contends that we can describe what we are thinking or

[171] Ibid., p. 138.
[172] Sigmund Freud, *The Unconscious, On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984) p. 181, or: Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling, Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde*, cit., pp. 87-88.
[173] Ignacio Matte-Blanco, *Thinking, Feeling* (London, UK and New York: Routledge, 1988) p. 54, or: Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling, Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde*, op. cit., p. 88.

perceiving with precision, whereas descriptions of our feelings are always hazy.[174] I disagree with this rather narrow statement about emotions and it demonstrates the training and preferences of this psychoanalyst and psychiatrist. Emotions are in my opinion not in opposition to thinking and the emotions of an affect can be guided by knowledge of visual language. The caused affect heightens the alertness and works on a deeper level.

There is a counterbalance in my painting between affect and thought. It begins with my need to paint to intuitively comprehend what surrounds me. Then the thought and concept drives the abstract painting language and is visible within the dynamic of forms and colours. Therefore the presence of the abstract dynamic transmits to the beholder the notion of the intended concept. I am seeking to transmit in my work this affective tone.

Fig. 133: *streaming both ways,* 2019, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 160 x 210 cm

[174] Ignacio Matte-Blanco, *Thinking, Feeling* (London, New York: Routledge, 1988) p. 91, or: Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling, Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde* (London and New York: L.B.Tauris, 2011) p. 88.



## CONCLUSION

My dissertation has been a five-year long journey during which I have been able to evolve both my praxis as a painter and my theoretical approach to this practice. Through this dual process – based on both the very act of painting and on theoretic considerations – I made several key findings, which became central to my current practice of Spatial Painting, Mutative Perspective and Site-mutative Painting.

Fig. 134: *Radiationscape*, detail, 2018

As I've discussed in this thesis, Spatial Painting applies various spatial systems, whilst avoiding central perspective in painting. Part of the composition of a Spatial Painting is the architectural geometry of the location in which the painting is situated. If the Spatial Painting is comprised of a canvas (rectangular or amorphous in shape) it is the canvas and the Spatial Painting that supersedes the parameters of the architectural location.

Mutative Perspective determines spatial understanding in relation to my work's subject matter. In these pieces I paint figurative elements that are in the process of mutation, reflecting my subject matter, which is the impact of radioactive contamination. Simultaneously, I incorporate the geometry of the architecture into a composition, which acts by distorting the space as if it were in the process of dissolving. I also apply this methodology to my paintings on canvas, but working within an expanded architectural space taught me to meaningfully focus on the notion of mutation and distortion, with which my practice is primarily concerned. Site-mutative Painting is the adjunct practice, which aims to shift the atmosphere of a space so that the viewer's embodied sensual experience is the conveyor of meaning.

In the beginning of my PhD I concentrated entirely on the formal aspects of painting and how I might extend this medium. My first research proposal focussed solely on

demonstrating that paintings can transcend the physical reality of the painting support, whether it is flat or three-dimensional. Indeed, I concentrated on how painting, if extended onto walls, floors and ceilings could create a new sensation that could be perceived immediately, without the rational knowledge of an interior space. I wanted to highlight that the experience of viewing my painting, whether it was two- or three-dimensionally composed, should have a stronger presence than the logical material construction of the work. The appearance of the painting creates a new reality beyond structure, and therefore with painting I could make space resonate anew with the viewer.

Focusing solely on the formal aspects of my paintings is restrictive. Too soon the paintings become repetitive aesthetic objects without conceptual depth. As such, my research has been concerned with questions regarding narrative, one that reflects my interest in and concern for contamination resulting from depleted uranium munitions. It is my perspective of the world – my specific outlook – that enables me to comment, to think and to imagine. This is the driving force of art: to communicate ideas using colour and form, so that formalism and abstract painting are fused with narrative. As such, I always begin a painting with a socio-political subject in mind.

Fig. 135: *due to the heat 2,* 2019, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 170 x 250 cm

My research proceeded by addressing this crucial point of narrative, asking the question: can a dynamic abstract painting transmit a clear and exacting message? The narrative component and the language of abstract extended painting are the two pillars that support my practice. Through the development of my research, I too advanced my practice of painting in a three-dimensional space to investigate how abstraction in painting can transmit subject matters that often exist beyond specific spaces.



Through posing my research questions, I found that the subject matter of my paintings and their spatiality could be inextricably interlinked. As such, it became my approach and methodology to focus equally on form and content. The subject matter guides my discovery of new forms for paintings, and indeed, the inclusion of the third dimension as the 'support' for my paintings.

It is the abstract language used in my paintings that transmits a major part of the meaning. To bring content and form into affective dialogue in a painting is akin to balancing on a tightrope between two skyscrapers – until, that is, the painter finds a system for solidly connecting both.

I believe that it is essential for contemporary art today – *my* contemporary art –to adopt a formalist approach to making the material 'speak' by addressing a social narrative. One unique characteristic of our time is how quickly we can access information via the web. Using our minds, we can be in any place on Earth just by looking into the digital realm. This impacts my work as an artist: I believe that it is my artistic responsibility to take a position as a means of filtering through a mass of available information, also helping to guide through misleading content that is often quoted by the media regarding radioactive contamination. Even if visual art cannot easily change the troublesome conditions that we inhabit today, communication is still key, and can at least raise awareness.

In the Spatial Paintings I aim to fuse my particular subject matter with the formal aspect of the work, and thus, to let the materiality of the work speak. The forms and materials need to generate their own presence. If the painterly quality of my materials did not hold this importance for me, one could use a different medium, for example language or film. Nonetheless, my work seeks to go beyond the formal aspects of paint and its materiality.

Concerning the content of my painting I am striving for clarity. I push the medium to create the highest presence and tension in relation to the content. To describe my interlocking process Louisa Elderton writes in her essay *Outdated System*: ' Spatial Paintings transfer the emotions of this subject into space – the notion of fear or loss of balance, where you're not sure which way is up and which is down, where the top or bottom lie.' [175]

Throughout my research I have created 18 Spatial Paintings, which take over walls, spaces and environments, as well as 46 paintings on canvas and innumerable works on paper. Together, these detail key discoveries and turning points in my practice. For the spatial painting *blender*, 2013 (discussed in depth in Chapter 1 of this thesis, Fig.12, p.25) I combined a narrative from the graphic novel *Murphy the mutant* with a large-scale wall-floor-ceiling painting, aiming to communicate today's radioactive contamination through military use of depleted uranium munitions – a war crime, which is an issue that is discussed too little. This first experiment opened a whole new horizon for my work; it pushed my practice of extending the borders of a painting beyond the conventional rectangular canvas.

[175] Louisa Elderton, *Outdates System* (Wollongong: Wollongong Art Gallery, 2017) p. 4.

My investigations into the perspectives used in pre-Renaissance Byzantine frescoes allowed me to question central perspective and delve into a search for a painting style that reflects the meaning I intended to communicate. The reverse perspective used in icons transmits a timeless moment that creates a transcendental atmosphere. For me, Florensky's writing supported my exploration into how perspective can be used in painting to implicate and include the observer. Ultimately, it is my subject matter that defines the type of atmosphere that I want to create for the viewer.

Though trail and error, I discovered that using central perspective produces an atmosphere that is not of interest to me in terms of my practice. As such, I experimented with reverse, or inverse, and parallel perspectives, which I used on walls and canvasses. Moreover, I diverged from using central perspective and developed my own, which became a tool to change the experience and atmosphere of a location.

In the Spatial Painting *mutating tomatoes* (2013, Fig. 21, p. 32) I successfully 'flattened' the space with an explosive two-dimensional composition overriding the three-dimensional interior. The space optically distorts. As such, this became my approach for all paintings. My process involves me sketching out the composition using small watercolour paintings, which I then transfer into the exhibition space as large wall panting or, indeed, onto canvas.

Fig. 136: *mutating tomatoes*, 2013, left side view

Some paintings on canvas strongly implement reverse perspective, for example *mutant 2* and *deer* (both 2014, Fig. 10, p. 22 and Fig. 37, p.40), *black and white* (2015, Fig. 92, p.91), *9 out of 10, in God's name, another gift, seventy years, cloud* and *Buechel* (all 2016, Fig. 99-102, p. 101-102 and Fig. 61-62, p. 64-65). I continuously trained myself and envisioned how to complicate the surface of the painting through forging new perspectival dynamics. The painting *black swan* (2017, Fig. 18, p. 29) is my attempt to bridge painting on walls with paintings on canvas; I use reverse perspective to reach the desired dynamic.

In Spatial Paintings such as *omen* (2013, Fig. 14, p. 26), I investigated the possibilities of negative shapes and empty voids and found that the former could be used as a visual metaphor for radiation-emitting substances. I aimed for a notion of what I term 'infiltration' – something that is invisible and yet detrimentally mutates objects and creatures. The technique of using unpainted biomorphic shapes in my paintings allowed me to formulate what could be read as infiltration and deterioration.

With my paintings, I wanted to visualise and actively depict the uncertainty and danger of invisible radiation. I needed to find a material that was adequate to create a distorted image, and yet would not necessarily undermine the formalist tradition of painting. The use of sheet aluminium in my work enhances the feeling that the space is distorting. The Spatial Painting *inquisition* (2016, Fig. 73, p. 76) demonstrated the various capabilities of this material. Aluminium distorts forms in ambiguous ways, and placing the sheets to reflect colour distorts the space further. To enable the aluminium to homogeneously melt with the canvases painted composition, I added leaf aluminium to my pallet. Through this research, I defined and enhanced the Mutative Perspective and Site-mutative Paintings.

During this process, I realized that Site-mutative Painting actively changes the space in which my work is painted, and inevitably integrates it into the work. The Mutated Perspective alters the experience of the surrounding and, as such, impacts the viewer. The colours and high energy of the Spatial Paintings can be perceived as beautiful, but at a later moment the painting will reveal its disturbing content. To avoid my paintings being read as simple formal experiments or visual entertainment, I felt that I needed to solve the question of how to ensure that my paintings communicated my concerns about invisible radioactive contamination.[176] As such, in ongoing watercolour paintings I formulated compositions that are defined by distortion, ambiguity, imbalance and deterioration. The up-scaled painting in the actual space subsequently leads to a notion and feeling of instability. *Inquisition* (2016) was my first Spatial Painting to essentially activate the walls optically, whilst *devolution* (2017, Fig. 1, p. 5) seems to actively tear the space apart.

My solution to the problem of transmitting a clear message was to add narrative to the biomorphic abstract paintings in form of text. In 2015, I began including within the paintings short texts, commentaries and web links that led to information about my subject matter. My paintings initially have an emotional affect. In Chapter 4 I discussed Susan Best's analyses of emotional qualities in art, their consequences and value, and how such 'affectiveness' is important for my abstract painting. The texts that I insert into the paintings lead to additional precise information, which resonates beyond immediate affect. People have the option to follow this information. In this way, facts get dispersed both emotionally and intellectually.

[176] David Neuman and Bo Nilsson, Preface of *Painting – the extended field* (Stockholm, Sweden, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall and Rooseum – Center for Contemporary Art, 1993)

Fig. 137: *devolution*, detail, 2017

The Spatial Painting *devolution* (2017) completed my research regarding Mutative Perspective and Site-mutative Painting. I undertook extra investigation regarding the shapes of my canvasses. I developed oval shaped painting supports. In Chapter 3, I elaborate about this unusual shape as a painting support, how I came to this particular form, my decision for which material to use, what it achieves for the painting and the great results when integrated into my Spatial Paintings.

The oviform canvasses are narrower at one end, so the shape itself is spatial and contains reverse perspective – the larger end will always optically come towards the observer. The oviforms nearly melt into the overall composition of the work. The Spatial Painting *future told me she has a headache* (2017, Fig. 128, p. 126), *involution* and *Radiation scape,* (both 2018, Fig. 87, p. 86 and Fig. 103, p. 104), include oviform canvasses within the wall-floor paintings. As the onlooker moves around the space, the oviform paintings grow from round to oval and fuse like a dense layer of paint into the painted environment.

The Spatial Painting *sea of lies* (2018, Fig. 110, p. 111), amplifies the use of reverse perspective through a continuous unpainted shape in the middle of the painting. Parallel to the text parts, which here are cut into the aluminium as negative letters, the painted shapes can be decoded. The visuals that unfold over time and carry meaning: the central shape, for example, resembles the cloud of a depleted uranium nuclear explosion; the texts relate to and explain the forms.

My final presentation to conclude my PhD is the Spatial Painting *mutopia* ('Mu' from 'Mutation' and 'topia' from 'Utopia', Fig. 144, p. 143). Formally, all elements are combined: text, oviform canvasses, painted capsules, aluminium and negative shapes. As an index for the ideal, the unknown and the grotesque, I add leaf gold to my material list for the first time. Thematically, this work deals with imaginary notions of how



radioactive contaminated regions on Earth could evolve in the future. Such work could be related to utopian subject matters, but here I refer back to the term 'post-nature' that was discussed in Chapter 1. Fredric Jameson writes:

> ….the privileged class of First World society (and the consumers of postmodernisms) run the risk of forgetting their memory – historically as well as existential – in a "new" space from which older forms of place have disappeared…. . Memory now, as Ballard suggests, becomes memory of the future (and of a dystopian breakdown future at that); nostalgia now attaches to the present itself, as a lost object and experience…[177]

Jameson's idea is that utopia is not relating to the future anymore and is, rather, a term of the past. The 'new space' – as he calls today's environment – has rendered utopian as antiquated. If I imagine the future, I look for hope and absurd unexpected outcomes that could result from the 'mutating utopia', as expressed in my story *Murphy the mutant*.

Fig. 138*: humanitarian intervention*, 2019, leaf aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm

Louisa Elderton's writing about my work conflates landscape and painting and, at the same time, the figural and abstract forms in my paintings:

> Envisage yourself walking with me; visualize these shades spreading, becoming larger and braver. Petals turn into nonconcrete forms, once recognizable but now something altogether different. An abandoned airplane's oviform body is discernable in the distance. We're walking in space, but everything around us is flat form and pure pigment, a figurative world blown up into the abstract. [178]

This quote describes precisely the interaction between the world I see and the one I imagine. The landscapes I paint could be easily recognized as *post-nature* – a natural condition that is mutated and altered by nuclear contamination. With my painting I came to distort and dissolve ideas of landscapes that are interspersed by negative shapes and abstract forms.

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[177] Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Utopia' in *Utopia Post Utopia: Configurations of Nature and Culture in Recent Sculplture and Photography* (Boston: The Institute of Contempoarary Art, and Camebridge: The MIT Press, 1988), p. 14.
[178] Louisa Elderton, *Outdates System* (Wollongong: Wollongong Art Gallery, 2017), p. 3.

I summarize: my aims have been to merge two and three-dimensional painting to generate a total environment, extending my work into a whole space, overwriting the existing parameters of architecture to bestow new meaning. My parallel aim has been to make the content of my work clearly transmittable, and to have the subject matter guide my abstract painting language to a point where the formal aspects encapsulate the meaning visually — of invisible radiation that mutates forms and spreads through space. I outline that in my art I deal with the contents that the use of depleted uranium munitions is a war crime. This war crime has been happening since the first Gulf war in 1990 and it is proved that these munitions cause irreversible radioactive pollution. The use of these armaments leads to severe deformations, cancer, and death and continues to do so a long time after the war. The radioactive particles have a half-life of 4.5 billion years. When ingested or inhaled these particles change DNA, and in this way remain to affect populations for generations. Affected communities call the use of depleted uranium munitions a silent genocide. Whilst the general motivation in my painting is driven by environmental observation I see it as necessary to continue working with the subject concerning the abuse of depleted uranium munitions till this radioactive weapon is prohibited worldwide.

My key discovery as the result of my PhD research has been the development of Spatial Painting, the Mutated Perspective and Site-mutative Painting. These enabled me to paint 'infiltration', distortion, deterioration and the sense of something dissolving – things that suggest for me nuclear contamination, which I deem to be a sign of our time. To paint these notions, I used the materials sheet aluminium, leaf aluminium and gold, as well as various pigments for my work. I also changed the form of my canvasses to include oviforms.

Ultimately, I am now able to paint and communicate a narrative about the abuse of depleted uranium munitions. My style merges direct communication with emotional affect. This project has led me to develop a complex painting language, one with a form that communicates visually by distorting architectural space. I am able to alter the space by combining colour and aluminium, and in this way, I create forms that shift the viewer's perspective, resulting in a particular affect that gives meaning to my environment.

Fig. 139: *mutopia 1*, 2019, gold leaf, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 80 x 95 cm and 80 x 80 cm
Fig. 140: *mutopia 2*, 2019, gold leaf, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 80 x 95 cm and 80 x 80 cm



Fig. 141: exhibition view *mutative painting*, 2018, Kunstverein Duisburg

Fig. 142: exhibition view *mutative painting*, 2018, Kunstverein Duisburg

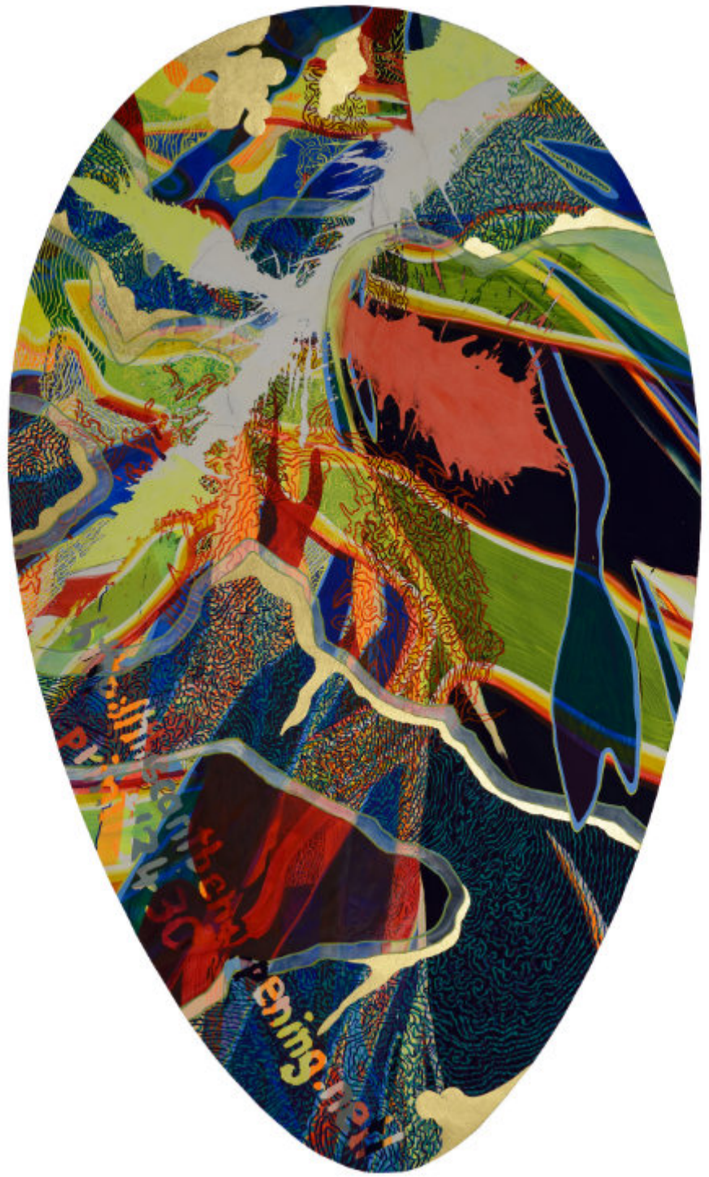

Fig. 143: *threshold*, 2019, gold leaf, egg tempera and oil on canvas, oviform 250 x 150 cm



Fig. 144: *mutopia 1*, 2019, gold leaf, PVC aluminium, MDM binder and egg tempera on wall and floor, 600 x 900 x 600 cm, SOAD Gallery ANU, Canberra, Australia

Fig. 145: *mutopia 1*, detail

Fig. 146: *mutopia 2*, 2019, gold leaf, aluminium, pigments and MDM binder on wall and ceiling, 330 x 1180 x 330 cm, Art in Buildings, 310 W. space, Milwaukee, USA

Fig. 147: *mutopia 2*, detail



Fig. 148: *mutopia 2*, detail

Fig. 149: Exhibition view *3 Haeuser Kunst Pfad 2019*, Daun, Eifel, Germany
Right side: Milovan Destil Markovic, *Lipstick and Lapislazuli Aureole*
Left side: Claudia Chaseling, *threshold*

Fig. 150: *orange mutant*, 2012, water colour, pencils, egg tempera and oil on paper and wood
*invented mutants*: clay. 300 x 280 x 250 cm



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***Research Outcomes***

**Solo Exhibitions**

2019 *mutopia 3*, Museum Galerije Nadezda Petrovic, Cacak, Serbia
*mutopia 2*, Art in Buildings 310 W., Milwaukee, USA
2018 *mutative painting*, Kunstverein Duisburg, Germany
*Radiationscape*, Art in Buildings, Times Equities 55 5th Avenue Space, New York City, USA
*site-mutative painting*, Yuill Crowley Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2017 *site-mutative painting*, Magic Beans Gallery, Berlin, Germany
silent, Wollongong Art Gallery, NSW, Australia
2016 *Spatial Painting*, Galerie Dirk Halverscheid, Munich, Germany
*silent*, Museum Kahnweilerhaus, Rockenhausen, Germany
2015 *the mutants*, Art Helix Gallery, New York City, New York, USA
2014 *mutative perspective paintings*, 68 Projectspace, Berlin, Germany
*cloud*, mural projects, Volta10, Basel, Switzerland
*radiation scapes*, Krohne Art Collection, Duisburg, Germany

**Group Exhibitions**

2019 *(w)rapture*, Yuill Crowley Gallery, Sydney
*3 Haeuser Kunst Pfad*, Dhaun/Eifel, Germany
*Bonum Et Malum*, Kleinervonwiese, Berlin, Germany
*Killer Abstract Women*, Karl-Oskar Gallery, Berlin Germany
*mutopia 1*, SOAD Gallery ANU, Canberra, Australia
2018 *Station Paradox*, Momentum Worldwide, Kunstquatier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany
*Landfall*, Lorne Biennial, Victoria, Australia (with Milovan Destil Markovic)
*Fuer Immer Blau*, Krohne Art Collection, Kunstverein Duisburg and Villa Waldsteige, Duisburg, Germany
2017 *Experimental Berlin*, Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York City, USA
*Kuenstler der Galerie*, Dirk Halverscheid Galerie, Munich, Germany
*Hyperactive*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Australia
*We All Love Art*, Schlachthaus fresh&fine Art, Berlin, Germany
Yuill, Crowley Gallery, Sydney
2016 *3 Haeuser Kunst Pfad*, Dhaun/Eifel, Germany
*Power Flower*, Magic Beans Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Salon Zuercher, Molly Krom Gallery, Paris, France
*Making the Future*, David & Schweizer Contemporary, New York City, USA
2015 *life or something like it*, Molly Krom Gallery, New York City, New York, USA
*Streiflichter/50th Anniversary*, Kunstverein Celle, Germany
*A Rose is a Rose is a Rose is a Rose*, Woelk 6, Berlin, Germany
*all about Eve*, Kunstraum Bethanien, Berlin, Germany
2014 *conjunction*, Greenhouse, Berlin, Germany
*ISCP Open Studios*, Int. Studio & Curatorial Program, New York City, USA
2013 *X-Border Biennial*, Valo Museum, Rovaniemi, Finland

*Summer Haze*, Molly Krom Gallery, New York City, New York, USA
*Of Land and Local*, BCA Center, Burlington, Vermont, USA
*Colour Sharks*, The Wand, Berlin, Germany
*3 Haeuser Kunst Pfad*, Dhaun/Eifel, Germany

**Academic and Public Presentations**

2018 Public Talk and workshop at the University of Cologne, Painting Department
2016 Head of painting summer academy, Bundesakademie für kulturelle Bildung, Wolfenbuettel, Germany
2015/2014 Seminar teacher, Bundesakademie fuer kulturelle Bildung, Wolfenbuettel, Germany
2014 Public Talk, International Studio & Curatorial Program, New York City, USA

**Publications**

**2019**
Kunst Sammlung Krohne, Daniel Koch (ed.), ISBN 978-3-00-062605-0
**2018**
*New Establishments,* Louisa Elderton, Elephant Magazine (online), London UK
**2017**
*silent*, Wollongong Art Gallery, NSW, Australia
*Kuenstler - Interview Claudia Chaseling*, Andreas Kramer (ed.), Deeds Art Berlin, September-November, p. 104, 105.
*Experimental Berlin*, Richard Taittinger (ed.), Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York, USA
*Art Omi 2017 Artists,* Omi International Artists Residency, New York, USA
*HYPERactive*, David Broker, Alexander Boynes, (ed.), Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra, Australia
*Claudia Chaseling - The person behind the grand-scale spatial paintings*, Vanessa Souli, Art Dependence Magazine, 13 October, Belgium
https://www.artdependence.com/articles/claudia-chaseling-the-artist-behind-the-grand-scale-spatial-paintings
*Lichtgestalten,* Goodwin in collaboration mit Magic Beans Gallery, Goodwin Procter LLP, Frankfurt, Deutschland
**2016**
*Claudia Chaseling – Spatial Painting*, Benedikt Stegmayer (ed.), Verlag fuer zeitgenoessische Kunst und Theorie Berlin, ISBN: 978-3-944295-17-6
**2015**
*Verwandlungen, Bilder von der Natur*, Anke Zeisler kunst projekte e.V., Berlin, Germany, ISBN 3-937155-14-7
*Streiflichter - 50 Jahre Kunstverein Celle*, Kunstverein Celle e.V., Celle, Germany
**2014**
*Art Collection Krohne Christmas Card 2014,* Krohne Messtechnik GmbH, Duisburg, Germany
*radiation scapes - Claudia Chaseling,* Kunst Sammlung Krohne, Duisburg, Germany
*Volta 10*, Kavi Gupta, Friedrich Look, Uli Voges (eds.), Basel, Switzerland
*X-border Art Biennial 2013*, first edition 2014, Dan Lestander, Christina Sikström (eds.), Norbottens, Sweden, ISBN 978-91-637-4933-9
**2013**
*X-border Art Biennial, Lulea – Rovaniemi – Severomorsk,* Magazine, Dan Lestander, Christina Sikström (eds.), Norbottens, Sweden



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**2019**
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Sean Ryan, *Downtown building owner brings German mural artist to Milwaukee's 310W,* BIZ Journals Milwaukee, USA, 9 August
**2018**
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*Claudia Chaseling "Radiationscape",* New York Art Beat,
http://www.nyartbeat.com/event/2018/C472
Vesna Milosavljevic, *Pomeranje granica ocekivanog*, SEEcult, Belgrade, Serbia, 27 January, http://www.seecult.org/vest/pomeranje-granica-ocekivanog
Boris Milikovic, Daniela Puresevic, *Kulturni centar*, TV RTS, Belgrade, Serbia, 13 June, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AC_5gj2hlfw (min. 36:50)
*Ausstellung Mutative Painting von Kuenstlerin Claudia Chaseling*, Studio 47, Duisburg, Germany, 12 October, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDP0wofabbc
Olaf Reifegerste*, Claudia Chaseling zeigt Malerei der besonderen Art, Rheinische Post, Duisburg,* Germany, 13 October, and
https://rponline.de/nrw/staedte/duisburg/duisburg-ausstellung-von-claudia-chaseling-beim-kunstverein_aid-33639461
Wirbelnde Installation, WAZ, Kultur und Freizeit, Duisburg, Germany, 13 October
Peter Haynes, *top five Canberra art exhibitions for 2017*, The Canberra Times, 4 January
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Vesna Milosavljevic, *Barkodiranje Zemlje*, SEEcult, Belgrade, Serbia, 31 March, http://www.seecult.org/vest/barkodiranje-zemlje
Cameron Best, *Virtual iceberg off Victorias coast features in sculpture festival*, ABC News, Melbourne, 17 March, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-17/lorne-sculpture-biennale-virtual-iceberg/9558696
Biljana Ristic, *The darker the night the brighter the stars*, SBS Radio, Melbourne, 15 March, https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/node/1426151?language=de
Adrian Plitzco, *Strand, Sonne und Kunst – made in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz,* SBS Radio, Melbourne, 21 March,
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*Lorne Sculpture Biennial – major works and new commissions from 41 artists*, Art Almanac, Sydney, 28 February

*Lorne Sculpture Biennale returns for 2018*, Green Magazine, Victoria, Australia, https://greenmagazine.com.au/lorne-sculpture-biennale-returns-2018/
*Claudia Chaseling,* The Planner, Visual Arts, Sydney Morning Herald, 27-28 January, p. 14
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Experimental Berlin, Wall Street International Magazine, New York, 25 September https://wsimag.com/art/30705-experimental-berlin
Peter Haynes, *HYPERactive*, Various Artists, Canberra Contemporary Art Space Gorman Arts Centre, Canberra Times, 17 August
Julianne Cordray, *Studio Visit with Claudia Chaseling*, Bpigs, Berlin, 5 July, http://bpigs.com/diaries/interviews/studio-visit-with-claudia-chaseling
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*Vernissage in der Magic Beans Gallery*, Kathrin Michulla, Karl Hartwig, Berliner Zeitung, Berlin, 28 August
*2018 Lorne Sculpture Biennale Finalists*, Art Almanac, Sydney, 24 April

**2016**

Vesna Milosavljevic, *Prostorne slike kontaminacije*, SEEcult, Belgrade, Serbia, 8 September, http://www.seecult.org/vest/prostorne-slike-kontaminacije
Egon Busch, *Claudia Chaseling – Malerie und Installation,* Wochenblatt Beilage, Rockenhausen, Germany, 2 November, p.2,
Hannah Schraven, *Berliner Kunstgriff*, gallerytalk.net Berlin, 14 June http://www.gallerytalk.net/berliner-kunstgriff-14-06-20-06-16/
Irmgard Berner, *Die mystische Vision des Alain Ginsberg*, Kulturkalender Berliner Zeitung, Berlin, 18 June, p. 1

**2015**

Brainard Carey, "Interviews from Yale University Radio WYBCX" *Interviews on Yale University Radio WYBCX: Claudia Chaseling*, 22 December, New Haven, Connecticut, USA, http://museumofnonvisibleart.com/interviews/claudia-chaseling/
Etty Yaniv, *Life or Something Like It at Molly Krom*, Arte Fuse, New York, 27 November
D. Anika, *Molly Krom showing group exhibition Life or Something Like It with Six Artists,* Widewalls, Switzerland, 9 November
Brian Edmonds*, Current exhibition: Life or something like it @ Molly Krom Gallery.* NYC, The Curating Contemporary, New York, 15 November
*Streiflichter in der Gotischen Halle*, Celler Presse, Celle, Germany, 1 March
*Art for streets*, NYC Urban Art, New York, February 2015
Frauke Adesiyan, *Verwandlungen in der Marienkirche*, Märkische Oder Zeitung, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, 22 April

**2014**

Brittany Natale, *International Artists are Making Noise in Bushwick: A Closer Look at ISCP Fall Open Studios*, Bushwick Daily, Arts and Culture, New York, 17 November
David Cohen, *ISCP Open Studios*, artcritical.com, 6 November, New York
*Four German Artists Showing Their Works at ISCP Fall Open Studios*, German Mission in the United States, The German Consulate General Recommends, New York
*iscp Salon: Claudia Chaseling and Yuri Yim*, Asiart Archive in America, New York
*salon: claudia chaseling and yuri yim*, Art Wise Blog, New York, 8 December
*salon: claudia chaseling and yuri yim*, Art in Brooklyn, New York, December
*Salon: Claudia Chaseling and Yuri Yim*, Arthaps, New York, December
*Visual Arts*, australiacouncil.gov.au, Sydney, Australia
Ron Cerabona, *2015 Arts ACT Project Funding*, The Canberra Times, 25 September
*Volta10 retains its mark at Markthalle*, artdaily.org, Basel, Switzerland, 18 June, p. 7

**2013**

Erkundung und Spiel bis 16 June, Der Oderlandspiegel, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, 11-12 May, p. 4
Friday Mickel, *Chase away the dog days*, Exberliner Issue #118 July/August, Berlin, 23 July
Vesna Milosavljevic, *Izmedju strukture i haosa*, SEEcult, Belgrade, Serbia, 10 September, http://www.seecult.org/vest/izmedu-strukture-i-haosa
Armi Auvinen, Kolmen maan biennaali vailla rajoja, Lapin Kansa, Rovaniemi, Finland,18 June, p. 8
Holger Pötzsch, *Claudia Chaseling artist interview, X-Border Biennial*, Rovanimi, Finland, June 2013, published in Art Across Borders: Dislocating Artistic and Curatorial Practices in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, Journal of Borderlands Studies, 27 April 2015, pp. 111-125
Panu Johansson and Pilvi Keto-LeBlanc, X-Border Biennial 2013: Claudia Chaseling, Rovaniemi, Finland, 13 September, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmNKX79hjgs
*Künstlerische Energien*, Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung, Teltow-Fläming, Germany, 3 September, p. 13