

A User's Guide for Painters and Cyclists: Very Abstract Painting and Serious Cycling

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Prologue



Andrew Graves (left to right) *Plunge, Fade, End, Mirror and Up*. Oil on gesso panels 2010. Installation shot Dusseldorf/Cologne curated Galerie Caren Jones at Temporary Gallery, Cologne 2010.

The Tour de France comes with me into the studio every July and dictates the rhythm of my work for twenty-one days. In April it is *holy week* when the Spring Classics take place over the cobbles of Belgium and Northern Europe. In May it's the Giro d'Italia, which is perhaps the most exciting and engaging of the Grand Tours. A Grand Tour is a formal journey played out in stages, each stage has its own narrative and place within the wider story of the race. At the beginning of the Grand Tour is the prologue it is a non-stage, like a boxer's weigh-in

giving an indication of a rider's form. Individually each rider sprints a short stage and lays down their time, it's *the race of truth* and gives the position of the riders for the start of the race proper; nothing is decided here but a psychological marker is laid down that will flavour and dictate the race over the next three weeks. It is not possible to win a Grand Tour without the support of a team; each team has a nominated lead rider. The team's job is to look after, feed and carry, wherever possible, their protected rider. The domestiques sacrifice their personal ambition to the team and its leader.¹

¹A domestique is a road bicycle racer who works for the benefit of his team and leader. In French, domestique translates as servant.

Abstract



Andrew Graves (left to right) *Greens and Blues*, *Dark Street*, *Flowers and Jersey*. Oil on gesso panels 2014/15. Paintings for *Simply Painting* (29 August – 10 October 2015), Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Kenneth Dingwall, Andrew Graves, John Golding, Jane Harris, Yvonne Hindle, Vanessa Jackson, Rosa Lee and Jon Thompson.

This practice led research investigates the relationship between cycling and abstract painting. It is a written commentary presented alongside my artwork that gives voice to my studio practice. The history of abstraction and cycling are explored to discuss the myths and nuances of painterly practice, cycling and the studio. The text is an assemblage or collage, put together to represent the modality of interests in the studio and an exploration of key motivations that have driven my practice during this research. There are chronological and

parallel developments in the history of Modernist painting and the history of cycling, I will use these to illuminate my relationship to painting and explore the mechanics of the studio. The fact that cycling and painting are both caught up in their own histories is evidenced and also how at certain moments these histories have intertwined and overlapped, such as, in the work of Marcel Duchamp and Alfred Jarry.

I have produced a text that is intended to reflect the complexities and impossibilities of explaining an intuitive, visually driven studio practice. It seeks to examine and present key relationships within my painting and the studio in order to extend my knowledge and the vocabulary of my making. The writing touches on the not always immediately apparent connection between my work and those things that populate the studio, I am interested here in the coincidences, references and happenstance that enable and nourish my work in the studio. I discuss first hand meetings between myself and other artists, how work is sustained through studio visits and discussion. I investigate the placement and logic of references and how they function. I am interested in how past historical works enable, inform and develop artwork, these precedents are explored here to gain insight into practice.

I consider the role of abstraction in my practice, what it means and how the idea of non-figurative painting is negotiated by myself and others. The history of painting and the work of other artists leave a trace in my studio, a catalogue of references, which allow me to navigate my paintings and give them context. This is in no way a definitive history of abstraction but an attempt to map a personal dialogue, implied by the paintings and

suggested by theoretical writings and the curatorial landscape of contemporary painting in London. The reflection on paintings' past is to be focused on the early and mid-twentieth century traditions of abstraction and its persistence in the post-conceptual art landscape of contemporary artistic practice and current painting. I do envisage this as an attempt to address the specific and historical problems of painting, in particular the contested and shifting position of abstraction. I decided to research abstract painting because it is the domain in which my own practice situates itself, but it also allows me to direct my historical study towards a particular period of painting and pick up on a current dialogue on the reach of modernist practice and the contemporary place of abstraction.

In order to do this I will use the somewhat disparate voices that are the key texts that have informed and become my influences in the studio. The texts of Jean Luc Nancy, Ludwig Wittgenstein's and Roland Barthes have been a constant presence throughout this research and have provided a framework for this writing. The relevance, pertinence and necessity of these writings have not always been immediately apparent, their relationship to the vocabulary of a painting sometimes oblique. I have appropriated the Wittgenstein's text *Zettel*, a post-humously published series of numbered fragments and quoted them here to enable me to respond to them and use Wittgenstein's language of visual depiction (to explore philosophical thought) to give a structure to my reflections on painting.

Jean Luc Nancy's writing has allowed me to place texts together that are both attracting and repelling, pleasing and repulsing, hoping to find a traction between them and to draw out

invisible, previously untraced lines between what concerns my practice and my writing. I take from Nancy the idea of presence in terms of painting and how might this be considered, that text and painting both present something, have presence. Nancy is instructional for shedding light on my thinking about text and image, to assist the discussion, to develop the relationship, to signal ideas about painting and writing. The text explores image, the image therefore captures the text. In this research I consider moments of cyclings past, in order to explore the way in which cycling might describe ways of being. A way of describing movement and existing, of going beyond or outside of oneself, exceeding. So cycling, as discussed here, is often the negotiation of a climb, the ascent, the rise, moments where the essence of the race is found; altitude, height, the peak. Nancy speaks of the intimately mingled relationship between form and intensity, that intensity animates form. And so to interpret, to understand and to position my thinking about painting, cycling has been useful and insightful.

In Hubert Damisch's discussion on the tradition of Chinese painting there is the opportunity to think outside of a Western Tradition about how to animate the field of a painting. Considered here is the idea of painting made up of limits, paths and journeys. The order in which the development of an image might be traced, how a brush might journey through a work. The flesh and bone of a work are discussed through a meditation and reflection on the relationship of brush to ink. In Chinese painting the pictorial field and its orientation are, says Damisch, given priority over delineation. But this kind of delineation is not set up to

separate or isolate the fields of the painting but to open up a relationship of opposites and allow a dialectical relationship to occur across the painting.

A pivotal part of this research, is the reading of *Zettel* by Ludwig Wittgenstein, which allowed me to respond to my practice as a thread of connected but unrelated ideas. A discussion on how a text might explore and reflect the content in my work but also the continuity or discontinuity of approaches in my thinking about painting. Visually specific and descriptive *Zettel* connected to my paintings with its open and abstract propositions. The question of intention, connectivity and meaning are brought up by these writings and help to establish a pattern for a series of responses to my own painting and reflections on practice. The quotes I use are part of a posthumously published, fragmented collection, open-ended, they are descriptions of ideas that conjure visual pictures and enable me to respond with a collection of ideas on practice. The writings were found clipped together, somewhat ordered and boxed. Are they random? What interested me about this is that they ask questions about arrangement, for my work and this writing. And so, this allows me to touch on the openness of my practice and the question of refinement and resolution that the painting presents.

I discuss how Modernist painterly abstraction and in particular how the writing of this period sought to resist depiction and mimicry. Placement is suggested by my reading and revealed in the arrangement of these writings and how they are placed or collaged together. The possibility of leaving something unsaid is explored here and considered alongside the impossibility of description when discussing painterly abstraction. The associations or

representations about practice are oblique, lateral and sometimes silent. I have sought an open interpretation to these writings, suggested by my practice. The relationship between the text and painting affirm a language that is an attempt at equivalence, seeking to engage the impossibility of writing about painting, within the text. I have used cycling and the race to reveal and suggest something outside of the more formal and painterly signs of the works, the references chosen are fluid and revealing, suggestive of other dimensions and movement in space. For example, an Alpine stage of the Tour de France allows me to move beyond a formal description of painterly practice and describe movement in three and four dimensions, time and space in the world where the relationship of viewer to practice takes place.

I have for some time balanced cycle training and racing with my studio practice and the two disciplines have become woven together. Cycling clubs usually take their name from the town or suburb where they were formed, the Finsbury Park Cycling Club was founded in the nineteenth century and is known as “The Park” to its members - I joined the club in 1999. As a cyclist and painter both activities are autobiographical, they are a record of my time and activity they leaving patterns and traces that are both diaristic and instructional. In many senses both activities require balance and practice and are maintained through spatial awareness, timing, and reflection, they are also, for me, habits that are often remarkable for their consistency. And so to illuminate what happens in the studio, to describe the stance of my painting, to explore the contested position and the challenge of painting I have used cycling as a narrative device. I have sought within these two disciplines certain fixed points in their development, a development that is episodic, tumultuous, and limited in duration.

In Roland Barthes essay *The Tour de France as Epic* he describes the poetic nature of the Tour through the production of a *Racer's Lexicon* and the *Tours* Homer like myths.

The gradients are *wicked*, reduced to difficult or deadly percentages, and the relays - each of which has the unity of a chapter in a novel (we are given, in effect, an epic duration, an additive sequence of absolute crisis and not the dialectical progression of a single conflict, as in tragic duration) - the relays are above all physical characters, successive enemies, individualized by that combination of morphology and morality which defines an epic Nature. The relay is *hairy, sticky, burnt-out, bristling*, etc., all adjectives which belong to an essential order of qualification and seek to indicate that the racer is at grips not with some natural difficulty but with a veritable theme of existence, a substantial theme in which he engages, by a single impulse, his perception and his judgement.²

Like a grand tour this writing is a series of stages, some are flat and long, others traverse the mountains, some are cobbled, whilst others are concentrated in and circle the city. It is a training diary and a formula for the studio, it documents my attempts to elicit the most from tired limbs. How do we *begin* and train? How do I pick up the brush and paint? What is present and with me in my practice and has touched me over the period of this research?

² Barthes, Roland. *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*. Berkely. University of California Press, 1997). p. 81.

The negotiation of a gradient and terrain, the creation of a route, the practice of an uncharted but at the same time familiar journey. These parameters, limits and boundaries enable practice to settle within a framework. The limits of time, physical limits, the reach that defines and dictates the scale of my movement. The lactate acid (see below) that accumulates in the muscles and burns. My progress in training is tracked by a GPS and measured by Functional Threshold Power (FTP) - my body's ability to process lactate as I attempt to extend the point at which speed and progress can be sustained.³

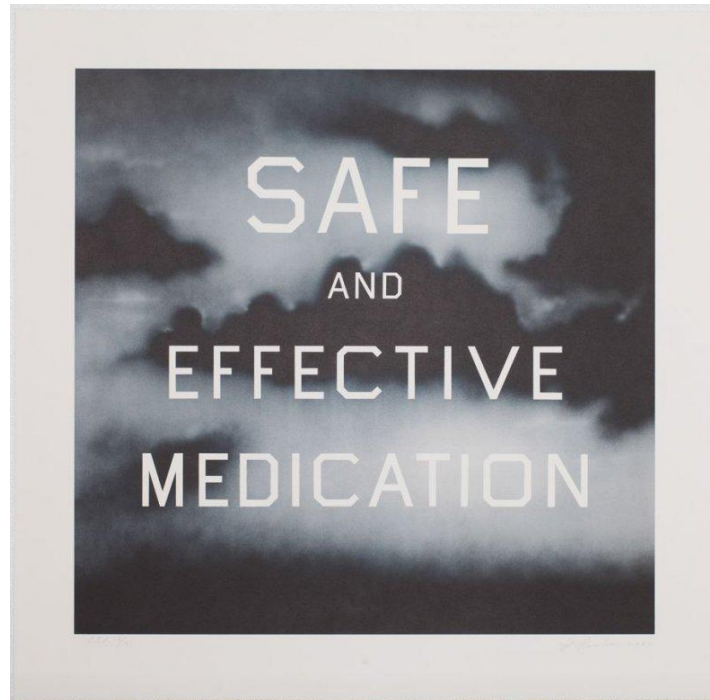
The development of painting and paintings are somewhat glacial, as change is seldom dynamic, the nature of the medium and materials will not allow for sudden shifts. So development needs careful planning and a series of timed efforts. In cycling changes can only be compounded with the correct recovery and nutrition, progress in painting is only made with the correct period of reflection. The work is periodic, studio time is similar to training, it is formulaic and a search for the atypical moment that steps out and goes beyond the attempt to paint what is pictorially effective and genuinely surprises. Both painting and cycling can be seen as marginal, outdated technologies, they are the practice of a minority, but they are both activities which periodically gain some traction and threaten to crossover to the mainstream.

³ Functional Threshold Power (FTP) is the maximum average power that you can hold for one continuous hour. Lactate is produced by the anaerobic system. The anaerobic system uses glucose as its fuel. When glucose is broken down by the anaerobic system it is essentially split in half releasing very quick energy in the process. It creates lactate and hydrogen ions. So lactate is the product of using glucose for energy.

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Chapter One



Ed Ruscha *Safe and Effective Medication* Oil on Canvas 1989. In the Collection of Lance Armstrong.

In this chapter I will identify and distil a number of ideas about painting. I will frame these concerns through an investigation and relationship with contemporary painterly practice in London, but also through the context of my own practice. I want to use cycling's history to dictate the cadence of the essay, exploring the relationship with painting and using art historical reference, personal anecdotes and cycling to weave a narrative that reflects on my practice. I will articulate ideas that can crystallize around the theme of abstraction and take account of painterly practice within the wider framework of current conceptual art. I also intended this narrative to be evocative of the wider concerns of my practice and place my

painting in the context of my own interests, especially those things that seem to run parallel to my own work. To reflect on how time is spent both inside and outside the studio, the temporal space of my work and its relationship to others practice. My aim is to situate the more formal art historical narrative in a wider world. It's a formal written document that supports and outlines the practice, but is also open to a wider terrain outside that of the studio.

It would seem a timely moment to look at abstract painting, as a number of recent exhibitions focus their curatorial concerns around the idea of abstraction.⁴ A recent discussion at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) London titled, "New Abstract Painting" described how abstraction was driving a surge of innovation in the field of painting. The talk's theme was Bob Nickas' book "Painting Abstraction" which seeks to be a survey of new directions in Abstract Painting. Nickas led a discussion on contemporary painting with a panel of London based artists; Varda Caivano, Katy Moran and Peter Peri, all seeking to establish the nature of abstract painting and its relevance today.

⁴ Exhibitions such as; Beware Wet Paint at ICA Galleries, London. 2014., The Indiscipline of Painting at Tate St. Ives 2012, The Minimal Gesture at Timothy Taylor Gallery 2012, Abstract Abstract at Foxy Productions, NY 2009, Cave Painting curated by Bob Nickas, New York, 2009, Very Abstract and Hyper Figurative at Thomas Dane curated by Jens Hoffman, 2007. The Artists Dining Room curated by Emma Dexter and Juliet Bingham at Tate Modern 2007. What If It's All True? What Then? At Andrew Mummery Gallery 2010

A couple of recent exhibitions take as their focus the current position of painting *Forever Now* at Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York and the ICA's recent show *Beware Wet Paint*. The themes touched on in these shows are very current: in the case of the ICA, paintings position in a wider (usually performative) artistic practice and MoMA's focus on the atemporal which seems to reference the discussion on so called *Zombie Formalism*.⁵ *Zombie Formalism* or *Zombie Abstraction* sometimes comically, and sometimes critically, engages with the idea that painting's corpse has been re-animated in some way and that the corpse fashioned from a previous historical modernist painterly style reworks or re-animates painting's past in current practice. The aesthetics of Clement Greenberg and Minimalist painting, once discarded are brought to life and often a mechanised process given precedent such as dipping, staining and screen printing.⁶ The name *Zombie Abstraction* has been used most frequently in reference to a complaint or criticism that this renewed interest in painting is simply market driven and with stories of works achieving spectacular success at auction but based on absurdly little substance. Jerry Saltz makes this criticism within his article *Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much Abstraction Look the Same?* his criticism becomes more generalised as he goes on to critique the casual or provisional position of much recent painting.⁷

⁵ A term coined by **Walter Robinson: *Zombie Formalism***.

⁶ **Clement Greenberg** was an influential visual art critic closely associated with American Modern art of the mid-20th century. In particular, he is best remembered for his promotion of the abstract expressionist movement and was among the first published critics to praise the work of painter Jackson Pollock.

⁷ **Jerry Saltz** is an American art critic. Since 2006, he has been senior art critic and columnist for *New York* magazine. Formerly the senior art critic for *The Village Voice*. <http://www.vulture.com/2014/06/why-new-abstract-paintings-look-the-same.html>

The theme of the ICA show investigated the role of painting in a wider (usually performative) artistic practice. The title *Beware Wet Paint* was a comical reference to a quote from Marcel Duchamp, remembered by the British painter Richard Hamilton and delivered with particular emphasis on the *Beware*.⁸ The exhibition was an interesting overview of the place of current painterly practice but small in scale and reach including only one work from each artist. The younger artists, the exhibition's focus, were shown alongside a Christopher Wool painting hung as a precursor for their concerns and acting as a satellite for the other works. The artists were diverse in approach and the works shared little aesthetically. The Christopher Wool painting was large scale and had a customary series of sweeping gestural abstract marks, as if something had been wiped away, or an image had been obliterated and the remnant of its erased presence left as the final work. The gestural nature of the marks in the Wool painting reference an earlier generation of Abstract Expressionist painters, for example, de Kooning and Franz Kline. The historical references to Abstract Expressionism are embraced in this work through scale and gesture but also carefully distanced by the indirect process employed to make the work. Wool's paintings reference sources that his historical counterparts would have distanced, they use digital photographic techniques and refer directly to the street (urban graffiti) and to the documentary photographer Weegee.⁹

⁸ *The exhibition title comes from Richard Hamilton's account of Marcel Duchamp repeating the words slowly with blood-curdling emphasis placed on the word 'beware', underlining the disruptive nature of this supposedly traditional form.*

⁹ Weegee was the pseudonym of Arthur Fellig, a photographer and photojournalist, known for his stark black and white street photography of crime scenes in 1940's New York.

Wool combines both these references to earlier photography alongside an often digitally corrupted reference. They use this ambiguity of approach to question the process of their making, some of these works and images appear to be printed and are painted, some appear to be painted and are printed. Often the printed gestural marks of an earlier work are used to re-animate a more recent canvas.

In *Beware Wet Paint* the historical position of painting is approached with a mixture of wariness, openness and humour. The prominence given to the artists wider artistic practice beyond painting is key to the theme of the exhibition and seeks to give context and meaning for the painting. The curatorial proposal is that these paintings position themselves within a wider artistic practice to allow an approach to painting that is more open and conceptual driven than it is painterly and that these works, wary of paintings history, engage a wider social dialogue to elude and sidestep the art historical weight of paintings past.



Untitled (History painting) 2014, 2 parts: Acrylic, inkjet print and gold leaf on denim, paper and canvas; and gold leaf on denim. Installation view, Beware Wet Paint, ICA, London, 2014

For example, Korakrit Arunanonchai's *Untitled (History painting) 2014* is a work that was initially shown with the video *Painting with history in a room filled with men with funny names 2013*. The film meanders through a collage of images of his native Thailand, such as, ceremonial architecture, Buddhist rituals cut with performances of denim clad cigarette smoking performers that include the artist and his twin brother, they journey through streets in the back of a pick-up truck, wander through the grounds of temples, body painting and dancing. It's personal bibliography woven into a narrative that engages the importation

and appropriation of Western culture in his native Thailand and his own place as a painter in a wider Modernist tradition.

In *Painting as Model* Yves-Alain Bois explores the historical lineage of the death of painting. In the chapter *Painting: The Task of Mourning* he reflects on the idea that abstract painting's whole history has indeed been a longing for its own death, and that this vexed question of demise leads to the question, *is abstract painting still possible?*¹⁰ The atmosphere of closure in his text, written at the time of the drawing to a close of the millennium gives his subject, that of demise or mourning, a poignancy. The context of the writing and the pivotal time emphasised by its subject of closure of demise. The writing is a review of the narrative of *the end of* that has been the modernist project.

Indeed, the whole enterprise of modernism, especially of abstract painting, which can be taken as its emblem, could not have functioned without an apocalyptic myth. Freed from all extrinsic conventions, abstract painting was meant to bring forth the pure parousia of its own essence, to tell the final truth and thereby terminate its course.¹¹

Bois suggests it is the project sought by the first generation of abstract painters, such as Malevich, whose idea that painting was *done for long ago* is determined by the wider

¹⁰ **Yve-Alain Bois** (born April 16, 1952) is a professor of Art History at the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Bois has written books and articles on artists of European Modernism. He is an editor of the journal *October*.

¹¹ Bois, *Yve-Alain Painting as Model*. (London, The MIT Press, 1990) p.230

historical crisis of industrialisation.¹² Bois discusses how this feeling of the end of painting, is historically determined by this risk, the beginnings of photography and the rise of commodity fetishism. The discussion of the impact of the rise of industrialization and the appearance of photography on painting was initiated in the writings of Walter Benjamin, mass production of the image (photography) would be seen as the end of painting and the response painting sought was to emphasise its uniqueness and place emphasis on touch, texture and gesture.¹³ Charles Baudelaire proposed history as a relay race, a baton that each generation would pass on and that each individual art would gradually develop towards its essence. Walter Benjamin, as Bois points out, outlined *the function of the threat of industrialisation in Baudelaire's work*. Duchamp's appropriation of the industrially made (ready-made) as an art object, was of course a negation of painting in his own practice but he also asserted that the tube of paint was a readymade emphasising the mechanical nature of painting. The ready-made not only highlighted the unique position that the art object held as a special kind of commodity, but opened the way to a series of experiments, that engaged and revealed the mechanisms of the art market. This negation of painting and cynicism that the market can engender is described by Bois

Both the Peau d'Ours sale and Duchamp's invention of the readymade had the potential to spawn a kind of cynical conservatism: if the new was doomed to its transformation into gold by the market, and the work of art was by its very nature an

¹² Ibid. p.230

¹³ Benjamin, Walter. Hannah Arendt. Ed. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Illuminations. (London: Fontana, 1968) pp. 214–218

absolute fetish, then it might seem that the avant-garde's ideology of resistance was obsolete.¹⁴



Andrew Graves *The Lounge*. Oil on gesso panel 2012. Installation shot *Spool*. Andrew Graves, Neil Rummig and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.

Professor Jon Thompson taught me at Middlesex University. I have come to know him well; he was at the end of his teaching career when we met and we spoke often about painting. He was based in Belgium and brought a particular perspective to painting that seemed both relevant and timely to my practice. At this time there was a resurgence of interest in painting and a particular interest in the work of the Belgian painter Luc Tuymans's - though difficult to imagine now his work often dominated discussion on painting, to the point

¹⁴ Bois, Yve-Alain. *Painting as Model*. (London, The MIT Press, 1990), p.239

where an issue of Artforum magazine was given over to his influence on contemporary painting¹⁵. Jon Thompson's comical personal anecdotes about artistic practice in Brussels and a longer view on what it meant to be a painter, describing his own personal re-negotiation and return to painting, countered this more trend driven view.

Tuymans influence much like the influence of *Zombie Formalism* and *Provisional painting* was treated with scepticism but was also seen as a welcome re-engagement with painting from practitioners.



Luc Tuymans **DDR 1990** Oil on canvas. Diptych 420x330mm

Some of these ideas are set out in an article Thompson published at this time, the essay intended for publication and edited by the Belgian art critic Luc Lambrechts explores the Tuymans's phenomenon on Belgian painting. The essay appeared alongside an exhibition on Belgian art at the then Centre d'Art Santa Monica in Barcelona examines the effect of Tuymans's painting and the renewed interest in painting of that period, the late 1990's early 2000's. Tuymans's was a hugely significant figure of this period with a national pavilion at the

¹⁵ Artforum International *Tuymans Effect*. November 2004 pp. 120-130

2001 Venice Biennale, major works in the 2002 Documenta and a retrospective at Tate Modern, London and K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen, Dusseldorf.



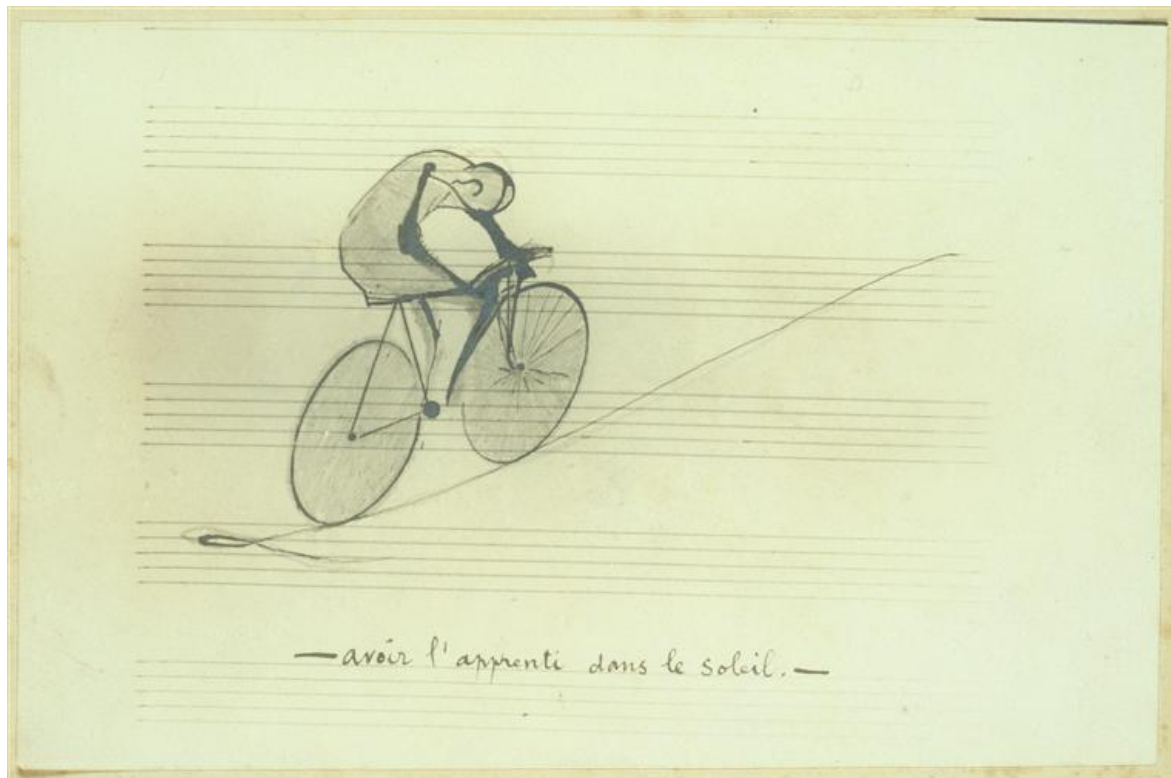
Luc Tuymans *The Nape* 1987 Oil on canvas 600 x 400 mm Collection Provincial Museum of Modern Art, Ostend.

The writing is extrapolated from a conversation that had begun in a Brussels bar, the article is in parts bemoaning of the then contemporary state of Belgian art but is also comic and

insightful. In person Thompson recounted an anecdote that described Tuyman's paintings as a direct result of economic necessity (the paintings support made of high quality linen was relatively cheap in Belgium) and artists quality paint expensive. And so this explained the relatively restricted chromatic palette and heavily turpentine thinned paint. The essay is Thompson's personal reflection on painterly practice and the idea of a revival of painting and the state of Belgian and Dutch painting in the late 1990's is viewed through the revival of painting in the 1970's and 1980's. The premise that there had been in the late 1990's a renewal or as Thompson puts it a revival of interest in painting is explored through an understanding of the economic forces at play on the artists discussed. The tone is mischievous and painting is referred to as a decaying craft tradition that has become increasingly fragmented and idiosyncratic. But perhaps the more contentious claim in the essay is the suggestion that Luc Tuyman's painting is necessarily reactionary in character. But, to counter this Thompson explores the necessity and the merits of a reactionary approach to painting, the work Giorgio de Chirico, Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud are used as exemplars of an idiosyncratic practice. The tone of the essay whilst careful to support Tuyman's practice is one of a critique of how his painting has been mimicked and the prevalence of copyist in art schools and academies in Belgium.

The essay is also a thoughtful and well-founded discussion on the global economic forces that were concurrently and increasingly in play on art practice at the time. Thompson observes that during the post-Cold War period that market forces have become more impactful on the form and pattern of practice, and that this economic influence has tended

to see a drift towards a more conservative art practice amongst artists. The dual effect of this economic influence and painterly conservatism had, Thompson suggests, left Belgian and Dutch art and artist in a poorer state.



Marcel Duchamp *Having the Apprentice in the Sun* 1914. Pencil on manuscript paper.

A drawing by Marcel Duchamp *Having the Apprentice In the Sun*, was the pivotal image for a talk by Jon Thompson that discussed the composite parts of Duchamp's drawing; the idea of the ultimate abstraction being the manuscript paper and its potential for a boundless auditory space, the upward and downward cadences of sound; the movement of the pen to describe the climb, a sustained acceleration, or rising pitch; the cyclist – a solitary time-

trailing figure racing upwards for the hill climb.¹⁶ The ambiguous inscription is thought to have alchemical as well as erotic references.¹⁷ In his notes for the lecture Thompson makes the connection between Alfred Jarry's text *Our Lord Jesus Christ Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race*. The bicycle is presented as the perfect vehicle for the transportation of heavenly bodies, the bicycle a symbol for the pneumatic morphology of spiritual beings.¹⁸

The bicycle frame in use today is of relatively recent invention. It appeared around 1890. Previous to that time the body of the machine was constructed of two tubes soldered together at right angles. It was generally called the right angle or cross bicycle. Jesus, after his puncture, climbed the slope on foot, carrying on his shoulder the bike frame, or, if you will, the cross.¹⁹

¹⁶ Published as a series of lecture notes Akerman, Jeremy. and Daly, Eileen. eds. *The Collected Writings of Jon Thompson*. (London, Routledge, 2011), pp. 252-299.

¹⁷ The apprentice to a sorcerer

¹⁸ Akerman, Jeremy. and Daly, Eileen., eds. *The Collected Writings of Jon Thompson*. (London, Routledge, 2011). p.250

¹⁹ Jarry, Alfred *The Passion Considered as An Uphill Bicycle Race* (London, Atlas Press, 2001). p. 120



Andrew Graves *Plunge, Fade, End* Oil on gesso panel 2010. Installation shot Dusseldorf/Cologne curated Galerie Caren Jones at Temporary Gallery, Cologne 2010.

I began to exhibit with Galerie Kusseneers in Antwerp, Belgium in 2005. I had spent time in Belgium previously, and had been there in the spring to watch the Tour of Flanders, a one-day Classic held in April and had also ridden the amateur version of the race myself. There were a number of factors that seemed timely about working with a Belgian gallery. There is an affinity of cycling and painting in Northern Europe, for example, the James Ensor collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp and other Belgian painters such as Leon Spilliaert and Raoul de Keyser impacted heavily on my experience and practice at that time and since. In 2007 the owner of *Etixx-Quick-Step* a Belgian professional cycling team, who always showed well in the Spring Classics and whose key rider was the sprint star Tom

Boonen (and more recently Mark Cavendish), purchased four of my paintings for his foundation and this seemed to underline this connection. ²⁰

The Flat Stages



Andrew Graves *Flowers* 2014 Oil and Tempera on gesso panel 400 x 350mm. Photo. Andrew Graves

²⁰ British Sprint Champion, He won the road race at the 2011 UCI Road World Championships, becoming the second British rider to do so after Tom Simpson. Other notable wins include the 2009 Milan San Remo classic and the points classification in both the 2010 Vuelta a España and the 2011 Tour de France. In 2012, he became the first person to win the final Champs-Élysées stage in the Tour de France in four consecutive years.

When riding on the wheel, you must measure your effort and keep pace just off the wheel in front of you. There is a rhythm you need to keep and a distance apart, you feel the distance needed and get as close as you dare, enough to draft but not too close.²¹

In the studio I construct birch plywood panels and layer gesso plaster made from rabbit skin glue, I test out and measure the pigment, whiting and glue (ingredients for the gesso). It's a delicate balance, too much titanium and the plaster will blister, too little and it's too dull. I check it by eye, watching to see how it feels as the plaster flows and falls from the brush. The rhythm of preparation slows the task of painting, you must wait on the plaster, be patient and avoid the temptation to agitate, stir or work too quickly. I ask myself when does the painting start? There are often flaws in my plaster, I use a rudimentary amount of skill to keep an economy to the preparation and the craft to a minimum. I want to call into question the competency of the preparation and reveal my hand. To make glue from rabbit skin requires a prolonged soak, preferably overnight, so I have to plan and measure my time between layers of plaster. The recipe has been adapted to suit the surface I need to create and the panels or canvas on which I have chosen to work. I have taken recipes from books, discussions with friends and then refined, adapted and experimented to produce the required surfaces and finishes.

²¹ Draft in cycling is to take pace behind another rider, to slipstream



Neil Rimming **Manoeuvres-3**, 2012 acrylic, relief ink on canvas (foreground) and Andrew Graves **Lounge, Jersey and Anyone**. Oil on gesso panel 2014. Installation shot *Spool*. Andrew Graves, Neil Rimming and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.

On the bike I use as little effort as possible - riding is always about conserving, holding, waiting, choosing. You have a finite resource and limited energy. Keeping your cadence fluid, untroubled and easy is important; never countering any hard-won momentum and maintaining maximum speed.²² And so cycling and painting have a natural given pace, the journey has a narrative trajectory – a beginning, a middle and an end. The escape is a plot device, a delicate matter of tactical judgement, timing and psychology.

²² In cycling, cadence is the number of revolutions of the crank per minute and is the rate and rhythm which a cyclist pedals

In the studio strategies are developed to allow for the paint to go off, pacing and timing are important, layering decisions, waiting and choosing. A painting takes on varnishes of colour over time, the cadence, the weight of a mark build the form and the pitch of a colour.

Paintings are dictated to by the time of their making both in a historical sense and a sense of time passed.

You keep your wheel slightly to the left or slightly to the right depending on the wind, you feel, see and taste the wind around the rider in front of you. You must share the pace, you pull through and take your turn on the front of the group, the pace is significantly harder as you come through from behind and the wind takes you by surprise and you have to tuck down, move onto the handlebar drops and push out a tempo that keeps the rhythm and does not disrupt those behind - for the purposes of momentum the group must act as one. As you feel your effort subside you push through and give just a little more, and then glance behind for someone to come through, if it doesn't happen you look back again, flick your elbow, meaning come through, *please* come through. There is a certain perspective within the group, a dynamic that the bunch follows and the pleasure of finding a rhythm within its enclosure. There is speed and slowness within the group. And you remember that every pull in the wind that you can avoid here, gets you one more meter up the road later on.

For the racing cyclist the key objective is to slip the bunch, to mount an attack and ride away from the main group. Sometimes this will be in company, making temporary allies of other racers; sometimes it will be solo. To attack, though, you

must be confident that you can ride faster than the bunch. So, to shake off the peloton, you must be confident in your ability to ride through the pain and sustain the escape.²³

My journey to the studio is not so long and I usually ride. I climb the short climb up Stamford Hill and drop down through the terraces to Springfield Park and take the towpath along the canal. I know the route too well, there's usually a tail wind and the familiarity allows me to forget the work I am doing on the bike and focus on where I am going, what I need to do. It is rarely possible to complete a painting in one visit so I have to maintain a relationship to the studio, visit regularly and complete the stages necessary to finish the painting. There is an archaic and terminal feel to the process of preparing the boards but the results are surfaces that already have the memory of my practice and the life of the studio imbedded in them. This is the preparation best suited for painting with tempera - the surface can be polished and has an alabaster quality. The most seductive and contradictory thing about this surface is the quality of the reflected light that it radiates, it's magic is that it also appears to suck in light. When you paint on the gesso with oil paint, there is a bleed into the surface and the paint impregnates the surface, a method quite unlike working on canvas.

²³ Seaton, Mat. *The Escape Artist* (London, Fourth Estate, 2003). p.6



Andrew Graves *The Red Hat* 2014. 800 x 600 mm Oil and wax on gesso panel (with artists frame). Collection of the artist.

Fernando Escartin (2005) is a painting I made for a solo show at Galerie Kusseneers, the image is from a slide of a formal garden and the painting is reminiscent of a landscape.

Escartin was born in the Pyrenees and is a pure climber who won a stage and came third overall in the 1999 Tour de France, ascending through the trees riding a postal blue (US Postal) Gios bike he never looked comfortable. At the height of an era of chemical, medical and drug assisted climbing Escartin struggled and appeared to ride on sheer will power

alone²⁴. Viridian green is dragged awkwardly across the surface of the painting and glimpsed through the veil of green are red under painted shapes. It might seem to the viewer that these shapes are figures moving upward through a disturbed tilting ground, perhaps a rider ascending the mountain. The *Red Hat 2014* (above) is one of a handful of paintings that I have made since and reworks the strategies of that painting, a testing of my practice in relation to this earlier work.

I ride out through the lanes around Hertfordshire and Essex, both journeys of about an hour out from Stamford Hill. It's easier when you are with someone else as you can share the pace and the time passes more quickly, it also lessens the anxiety of a mechanical problem, there's someone else to help. When I am alone I ride a variable but initially fixed route, experiencing a familiarity within these rides which allows me to feel my fitness, my pace and the endorphins rise as the journey unfolds. I choose my routes with care to match my chosen effort. The routes coming out of the city are prescribed and I learnt them from cycling friends and because of this I often meet other riders along the way, we will fall into a shared pace, chat and pull each other along. The best times are when someone stronger comes past you, you can feel their strength as they come through and you up your effort and sprint for their wheel, catching it and hanging on, hoping to hold the wheel. The rider can check their pace and you up yours and you sit in, make yourself small and get carried along at their speed, not yours. If you come through and share pace it's called "through and

²⁴ Escartin's *Kelme* professional cycling team had a rigorous and organised doping programme in place for all of its riders at this time. Source: Operation Puerto – Spanish doping inquiry.

off". If you are with a stronger rider you hold back from coming through, let them do the work, judge your effort and help only when necessary; you contribute, but not too much, just enough to keep you at the limit of your effort but not too much to expire, bonk or blow up²⁵. It's always best to ride with someone stronger than you if you want to improve your fitness, especially on the climbs where the largest training gains can be made.



Andrew Graves. *Speak* 2012. 400 x 350mm Oil on gesso panel. Private Collection

²⁵ *Bonk* or *blow up* both cycling terms for loss of stored muscle glycogen which means you have a sudden loss of power and are unable to continue riding.

Regents Park has an inner and outer circuit, perimeter roads that have become training routes for cyclists and at any time of the day there are always people training. It's close to my house and when I don't have time to leave the City for the lanes I can ride around the park and pick up a group that are at my pace and sit in with them taking a draft, or push on or drift backwards and find another group, or drift backwards. In the studio there is a kind of historical manoeuvring allowing me to rework formalist and stylistic concerns of modernist practice.

One element of my research was a proposal for a group exhibition that I was to organise and curate. The idea for the show had developed through a number of on-going and regular studio visits and discussion with Phillip Allen. The exhibition was to be a group show of London painters that would initially be shown at Kusseneers Gallery, Belgium, and travel to other venues. Allen and I embarked upon a series of studio visits for the proposed show and the artists who were to be included in the exhibition helped me form a snapshot of painterly studio practice in London. We visited the studios of Stuart Cumberland, Geraint Evans, Paul Housley, Alastair Mackinvern, Christopher Orr and Katie Pratt amongst others. These artists may or may not be described as abstract painters (some of the artists we visited conformed to the formalist tradition of abstraction), their practices are divergent but there did seem to be within all of them, a painterly sensibility that could be traced back to Modernist painterly concerns and an abstract tradition in its widest sense.



Andrew Graves. *Wonder* 2013. 800 x 600 mm. Oil on gesso panel. Collection of the artist.

It was during this discussion and reflection on these visits that began to formalise a research project and inform some of my early investigation into abstract painting as it persisted in the studios of these artists. The discussion was itself an ongoing dialogue that had developed over a number of years of reciprocal studio visits. The research was therefore always a studio-centred and practice-led enquiry for meaning or potential in the practice of

both artists with whom I had an affinity through my work or with whom I shared a conversation. As the project has unfolded so the artist-led dialogue has evolved and changed. I wanted to investigate the themes that persisted and articulate the necessity of discourse and its relevance to the more internalised and often solitary activity of the painter.

A number of the artists I have chosen to include in this research are my peers and a number of key shows from the 1980's influenced our practice and development. There are significant shifts in painting that can be mapped through the concerns of this decade. The *contested* position of painting, at that time, informs the position these artists perceive painting to be in today. The early 1980's were an important time for painting and still exert a historical pull on contemporary practice. It was a time when the position of painting led Douglas Crimp to publish his much cited work, "The end of painting", in October magazine.²⁶ Crimp's argument is important both in terms of how it challenged painting but also went on to articulate a theoretical position that questioned the continued viability of painting. Simultaneously with Crimp's analysis, however, some artists began to reconsider painting as a vehicle for critique from within, specifically through strategies of appropriation, as the artist and critic Thomas Lawson wrote in his text, "Last Exit: Painting" (also from 1981).²⁷ In London in 1981 the Royal Academy presented, 'A New Spirit in Painting', a large show of

²⁶ Douglas Crimp, (1981). *The end of Painting*. October No. 16, pp. 69-86. This was not the only time that painting was to be described as *lacking* or as *pure idiocy*, as Crimp put it, Donald Judd in the 60's had described it as an *antique model* and Soviet artists had seen easel painting as anti-socialist.

²⁷ Lawson, Thomas. *Last Exit Painting*, (Artforum, 1981).

International artists that broadly focused on expressive, large figurative painting. It shared some concerns and had a relationship to Marcia Tuckers show of “Bad Painting”.²⁸

The Tour de France victory in 1989 was the closest in history. The race was won by Greg Le Mond who is now the only American to have won the Tour.²⁹ His victory was achieved on the final stage time trial, the ‘race of truth’, and used tri-bars a new technology to gain the edge on his rival and two time champion, the Frenchman Laurent Fignon.³⁰ The victory was all the more remarkable because he was coming back from a near fatal shooting accident. Fignon was initially spared the pain of a defeat that was to haunt him ever after. Having crossed the line in Paris, breathless after a 24.5km individual time trial from Versailles to Paris, he repeatedly inquired: ‘Well? Well?’ But no one was brave enough to reply. LeMond, brilliantly effective in time trials, had managed to complete the ride 58 seconds faster than his rival – quicker by two seconds per kilometre. Though LeMond had been expected to make up some time, no one – least of all Fignon – had thought he could make up so much.

The condition of Western abstract art twenty years ago was dominated by an idea of ‘ironic appropriation’ and Peter Halley is perhaps the most prevalent example of this used by the Art historian Yve-Alain Bois in examining how painters adopted the ‘simulacra’ and simulation theories of Jean Baudrillard. In the 1980’s painters such as Peter Halley, Jonathon

²⁸ However, this “New Spirit in Painting” seemed to revel in a new conservatism with its 38 male artists. ‘Bad Painting. *New Museum Digital Archive*, New Museum. Web. 23 February 2014. http://archive.newmuseum.org/index.php/Detail/Occurrence/Show/occurrence_id/5.

²⁹ Lance Armstrong’s unprecedented seven Tour wins have been struck from the record for doping infringements

³⁰ Handlebar extensions that allow the rider to adopt a more aerodynamic position

Lasker, Phillip Taaffe and Sherrie Levine took on the model of Modernist practice in order to highlight, reflect on and play out the idea of painting as an historical end game. They used stylistic appropriations and historical reference as quotes in their work. The critique was that painting seemingly had nowhere to go, or that all positions had been taken and that practice could only repeat and quote itself. It would seem the works of these artists are more in keeping with an American tradition of painting contrasted with a contemporary European abstraction artists such as Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke and Martin Kippenberger maintained a more equivocal approach, using painting within the context of a wider and more open practice that used painting to question our reading of images, representation and the real. The emphasis in this debate was on photography, reproduction and the art historical archive and could be said to emphasise the reception of practice over its production. This approach to practice would seem to have been taken up and explored further by contemporary painters such as Marlene Dumas, Wilhelm Sasnal, Luc Tuymans a more fluid approach to painting that moved freely between abstraction and depiction and seemed to dismantle the boundaries of painting and open up their work to a wider image pool.



Andrew Graves. **Red Curve** 2014. 800 x 600 mm Oil on gesso panel. Collection of the artist.



Andrew Graves, *Jersey and Wonder* 2014 Oil on gesso panel. Installation shot *Spool*. Andrew Graves, Neil Rimming and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.

In 1922 post-revolutionary Russia had a contrasting effect on abstraction and rather than the engagement and experiment with the market, the 'feeling of the end' was reclaimed by Rodchenko and El Lissitsky to advocate a revolutionary aesthetic and a 'New Russian Art'.³¹ The feeling of the end of painting is illustrated in Bois writing through the work of Duchamp, Rodchenko and Mondrian whom he tasks with working through of the final truth, the end of the end of painting, an apocalyptic myth worked through in three different but exacting models.

³¹ Bois, Yve-Alain. *Painting as Model*. (London, The MIT Press, 1990), p. 230

Tom Krabbe's fictional novel *The Rider* describes the experience of a Dutch rider in a mythical French road race. The novel begins with the rider watching a fellow competitor selecting the appropriate gearing for the race; the rider has made his choice relying on his local knowledge of the terrain and familiarity with those participating.³² The description follows the solitary endeavour of the rider coupled with an internal monologue that describes teammates, the clandestine temporary alliances within the race, opponents and the camber of the unfolding road. Traversing through the mountains the race recounts the channels of history that the rider travels both in his own mind and in cycling's history. As with painting the activity of cycling throughout this century has been one of mourning or loss, as current riders invoke another era and the myths of the sports inception.

The Mountain Stage

In 1978 at the Dauphiné, the young up and coming Bernard Hinault flew out of a curve and into a ravine. The incident was caught live on French TV and the assumption that Hinault was out of the race vanished when he clambered up and was given another bike. He became a star, in no more that a few seconds he had become a *vedette* and went on to be one of only five men who has won all three grand tours. The Critérium du Dauphiné is an annual cycling road race run over eight stages in the Dauphiné region in France during the first half of June and an important race in the lead-up to the Tour de France. The Dauphiné is a mountainous area, so the winners are often climbing specialists. Famous climbs from the Tour de France – like the Mont Ventoux, l'Alpe d'Huez, the Col du Galibier or Col de la Chartreuse – often appear in the Dauphiné Libéré and so the race acts as a dress rehearsal

³² Krabbe, Tom. *The Rider*. Tr. Garrett. S. (London, Bloomsbury, 2002).

for the race proper in July. All cyclists who have won the Tour de France five or more times have also won the Dauphiné Libéré.

The Monuments³³



Andrew Graves, *Vitamin* 2009, Oil on gesso panel. 550 x 440 mm

In 2009 I was selected for the Jerwood Contemporary Painters exhibition as part of a collection of 26 emerging artists – a group show at the Jerwood Space in London, which travelled nationally. The selected artists represented an overview of contemporary painting in London thereby situating my own practice within the context of artists with whom I felt

³³ The Five Monuments of Cycling are generally considered to be the oldest and most-prestigious one-day races on the calendar. Milan – San Remo (Italy) Tour of Flanders (Belgium) Paris–Roubaix (France) – the "Queen of the Classics" or l'Enfer du Nord ("Hell of the North") Liège–Bastogne–Liège (Belgium) – late April. La Doyenne, the oldest Classic, Giro di Lombardia

an affinity and thus identifying the concerns of my research. Artists such as; Eleana Egan, Emma Puntis, Phoebe Unwin, Gabriel Hartley and Oliver Perkins. The painting that I had selected for the show was *Vitamin*, which came from a series of works that I had made that appropriated a David Bomberg painting 'Ju-Jitsu', a work I had previously encountered at Tate Britain. David Bomberg's painting *Ju Jitsu* is an attempt to create a new visual language to express his perceptions of the modern industrial city. He wrote:

The new life should find its expression in a new art, which has been stimulated by new perceptions. I want to translate the life of a great city, its motion, its machinery, into an art that shall not be photographic, but expressive.³⁴

This work was part of a radical series of paintings based on simplified figure drawings. Bomberg superimposed a grid to break up the composition into geometric sections. These were painted different colours, partially obscuring the original subject. Bomberg's career was played out in reverse: from a radical international and avant-garde position in the lead up to the First World War, the work shifts to a more disregarded and expressionistic phase after the war. I have an archive of slide images in the studio and I often use these as a starting point for paintings. Initially it was in an attempt to inform, undermine, instruct and corrupt the content of my painting that I collated this archive clustered around a series of loose themes; geometric hard edge abstraction, high renaissance portraiture, formal gardens. The slides were source material brought to the studio as found images rather than a meaningful or curated selection of paintings. Despite this, a slow and evolving relationship

³⁴ Bomberg David., www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bomberg-ju-jitsu-t00585

developed between these images and my work and I became engaged, indebted and committed to these images and works. 'Vitamin' exemplifies the progress of my work to this point. It is a monochrome oil painting on panel. The subject is a grey figure that floats over an off-white ground, the figure's scale is ambiguous but suggests a few interpretations, a collapsed or dismantled box, an architectural model, a building, but it also suggests and engages with the speed or slowness of its making, provisional attempts at structure, and a reflection on colour theory. It is a structural drawing in many senses. The figure is predominantly grey but there is a bleed of violet that picks up on the wash of green ground - the colour reveal as the viewer draws closer is central to the meaning of the painting. Appropriation or an attempt to reproduce an image, often with gesture, is a familiar consideration in my practice. *Vitamin* is partly a distillation of the source image which when reconstituted becomes a vehicle for the work. The source image however is not evident, and the work makes no obvious reference back to its origin.



Andrew Graves *Dark Street* 2014 Oil and wax on canvas 800x600mm

In March 2010 I was selected to be in the exhibition 'Between the Possible and the Real', a group show that included Andrew Bick, Ben Ravenscroft and Jon Thompson, at Galerie Kusseneers, Antwerp Belgium. The show displayed identifiably abstract painters based in

the Britain but who had a connection to the Antwerp gallery. I contributed a series of small abstract paintings that had previously been exhibited in a three-person show in London.



Andrew Graves, *Eddy* 2006, Oil on gesso panel 400 x 450 mm. Artist collection

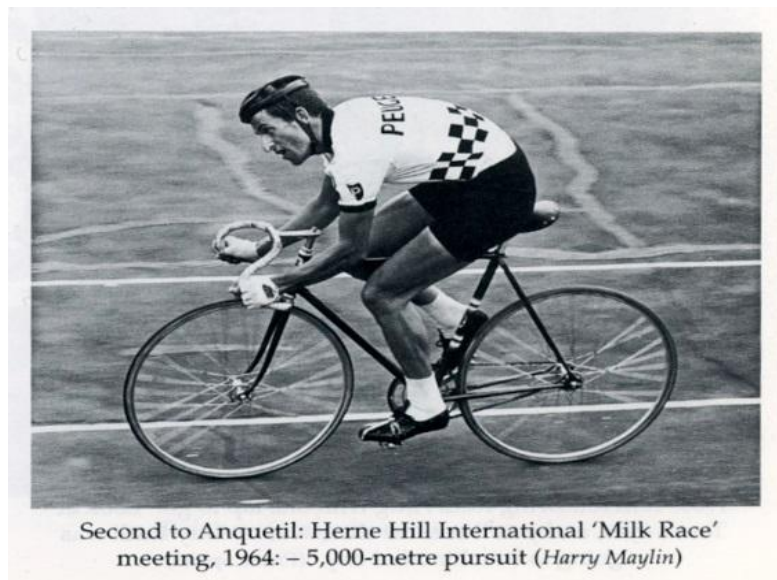
The Roual de Keyser retrospective at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 2004 was for me a key or pivotal visual experience for many reasons. De Keyser's work was known, although not much seen in London and his influence on the work of Luc Tuyman's had been well documented. I wrote about the paintings at the time because they had such a presence in my studio. In De Keyser's painting there is a sustained, intensely contemplative reflection on

practice and a focus on the presence of the artist. The work is situated on the edge of figuration, often challenging what a painting might be, they often appeared to be painted at speed, dashed off and temporal - speed and slowness simultaneously.

The climb is over. Or is it? I'm not sure any more. The road is moving away from the gorge now, into the highlands. Occasionally there's a view out over clear fields, past bushy little trees. We all shift, almost at the same moment.

It's colder here³⁵

De Keyser's paintings are doubtful they hesitate. The artist seemingly interested just in the experience of painting, what it means to be in a space with a painting and the journey or life of the work. My memory of the show is of a large oversized painting that sat at the entrance to the exhibition and was a partly painted abstraction that quoted the markings of a football pitch (De Keyser had been a sports journalist).



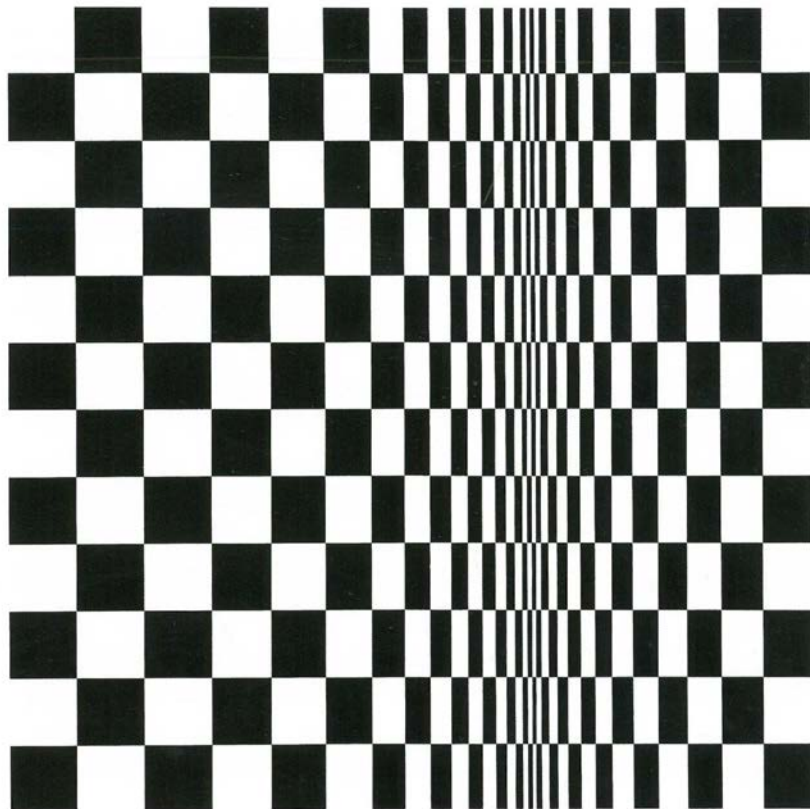
Tom Simpson, second to Anquetil. Herne Hill 1964. photo. Harry Maplin.

³⁵ Tom Krabbe *The Rider*. Tr. Garrett, S. (London, Bloomsbury, 2002).p. 145

In addition, there are historically specific British perspectives on abstraction that I wish to consider, including David Bomberg's Vorticism, and Bridget Riley's take on abstract painting and the dialogue with American and European traditions. In 2011 Bridget Riley's exhibition at the National Gallery explored her relationship to the collection and positioned key pieces within the context of the museum. Sam Rabin taught Bridget Riley and she speaks fondly of how much she learnt in the life room about the structural language of a drawing and the organising and placing of the figure on a flat surface. She emphasised that works made in the life room were in no way about verisimilitude but were diagrams, demonstration drawings that instructed on how to place abstract forms within a composition, attempts to build up a pictorial organisation. She describes how this obsession with drawing and tone created problems for her when using colour. Riley has produced some remarkably faithful studies and copies of paintings by Seurat that illustrate this analysis and her attempts to overcome her perceived problems with colour. These paintings evidence a mental process that is sympathetic rather than paraphrasing the original work. These works seem to have a deep engagement with work of the past, and Riley says that if you can copy with the right attitude you will see like you have never seen before.

Shortly before the Whitechapel Raoul De Keyser show in 2004, the Serpentine gallery held an exhibition of some of the best known Bridget Riley works, the radical black and white geometric pieces from the early sixties. In my mind there is a clear, if not immediately apparent link between the work of De Keyser and Riley because of these two shows and

their practices seem to distil the concerns of my own painting at this time. The engagement and syntheses of the work of De Keyser and Riley in my own practice is perhaps to do with where the focus of these paintings seem to rest. Both artists seem to have an intent sense of ponderment or meditation in their work that could only have come about through an intense reflection on the structure of their own and others painting. The sensibility of quiet reflection that inhabits both De Keyser and Riley is coupled with a human scale and pitch. The early Riley works are made with emulsion paint on nailed down board that counters the graphic authority that they have in print.



Bridget Riley *Movement in Squares* 1961 Tempera on hardboard, 1230 x1210 mm collection Arts Council England

Tom Simpson's Peugeot-BP team black and white chequered jersey was contemporaneous with the black and white grid paintings of Bridget Riley. In 1967 Simpson, the most successful British cyclist of his generation, died of heat exhaustion on the slopes of Mont Ventoux. He pleaded to be put back on his bike but finally was overcome by exhaustion, and was dead before being airlifted off the mountain. A shrine to Simpson on Ventoux collects mementoes from riders crossing the summit. I made a painting in 2006 titled *Eddy* based on the Peugeot-BT jersey, it was a chequered grid, that operated both as a drawing of a simple precarious structure that emerged from the base of the picture, and an exercise in colour management. The grid is painted in cadmium orange and there is a formal and gradual shift from opaque to transparent glaze as the colour ascends the painting. I am reminded of this discussion on the use of the grid in Rosalind Krauss essay.

Unlike perspective, the grid does not map the space of a room or a landscape or a group of figures onto the surface of a painting. Indeed, if it maps anything, it maps the surface of the painting itself. It is a transfer in which nothing changes place. The physical qualities of the surface, we could say, are mapped onto the aesthetic dimensions of the same surface. And those two planes—the physical and the aesthetic—are demonstrated to be the same plane: coextensive, and, through the abscissas and ordinates of the grid, coordinate. Considered in this way, the bottom line of the grid is a naked and determined materialism.³⁶

³⁶ Rosalind Krauss *October*. Vol. 9 (Summer. 1979) London: The MIT Press. p. 55.

A discussion between artists including Wade Guyton and Frances Stark at Frieze Art Fair in 2010, led by Jan Werwoert, reflected on the extent of the rupture that conceptual art has inflicted on painting. Exploring the idea of conceptual art practice and contrasting this with the painter's studio, the discussion reflected on how the painter enjoyed the space and the continuity afforded by the studio and how this was less evident in conceptual and performative art. There was also the question that if painting practice, perhaps because of its marginalisation, now offered a more speculative area for artistic production, then how might one renegotiate the once heroic idea of the painter, the heroic gesture and how we could understand and attempt to shift from a rigid normative model of painting to a more ethical approach. Werwoert asked how do we live in the company of ideas and involve other people. Guyton is an interesting figure, as his work seems to faithfully continue the tradition of American Abstract painting. The paintings are usually monochrome, minimal, canvasses that often divide centrally (as does a Barnett Newman) and play black off black (as does some early Frank Stella). Guyton's paintings act ostensibly, in the field of painting but are not painted. Guyton describes his process of working as coming out of conceptual practice and developing a relationship to technology and materials. His early works are from photographs, small scale and derived from looking at the pages of books on Modernist Architecture and the found images are presented with blacked out sections. Later paintings are made using a large format printer. There is evidence in these paintings of the struggle to feed the canvas through the printer, the scanned image corrupted by both these physical problems and digital ones such as too much information in the Photoshop file that causes

the ink to run. Guyton talks of acting against his misgivings and against the tradition in which he situates his practice, he ends up producing large format paintings although the means of their production makes them less like pictures on the wall. The canvas has to be folded so there is a centre axis and this produces an image divided by a spine or zip in the centre of the painting. Guyton described the struggle of making a mark in painting and the physical struggle with the machine that produces his work, there is energy in the work and this seems to be a liberating struggle. In Guyton's work the tradition of American painting is seemingly acted out through the more conceptual tradition of European painting, the work in this way bridges American painting and European painting.

There have also been a number of texts, articles and exhibitions that have proposed a different perspective on mid-century Modernist painting and questioned a "New York-centric" view of abstraction. *As painting: Division and Displacement* at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio in 2001 took this approach and focused on developments in French painting since the mid-1960's. The exhibition explored the widening parameters of painting and artists overlooked in the dominant Anglo-American art historical narratives, but also work that could be said to be not strictly painting.

If Clement Greenberg also plays a pivotal role in the earlier receptions and misreceptions of French art, both his most faithful followers and his most vehement critics have shared a refusal to acknowledge French painting from the late sixties on...One should also point to the ways in which French painting of the period was ignored here because its often militant politics were considered unacceptable or naive – or note the predominantly collective practices it inspired (from the

demonstrations of Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni in the late Sixties to the Supports/Surfaces or JaNaPa exhibitions in the early seventies)2 found no easy commercial reception.³⁷

Whilst the exhibition brought attention to overlooked European abstraction, it failed in some ways to position new abstract painting in a more contemporary and increasingly globalised world where artists have a more fluid relationship to geography. It did however support and enforce the idea that the character of contemporary abstraction was enhanced and renewed by the idea that painting had become contradictory or materially perverse and problematic.

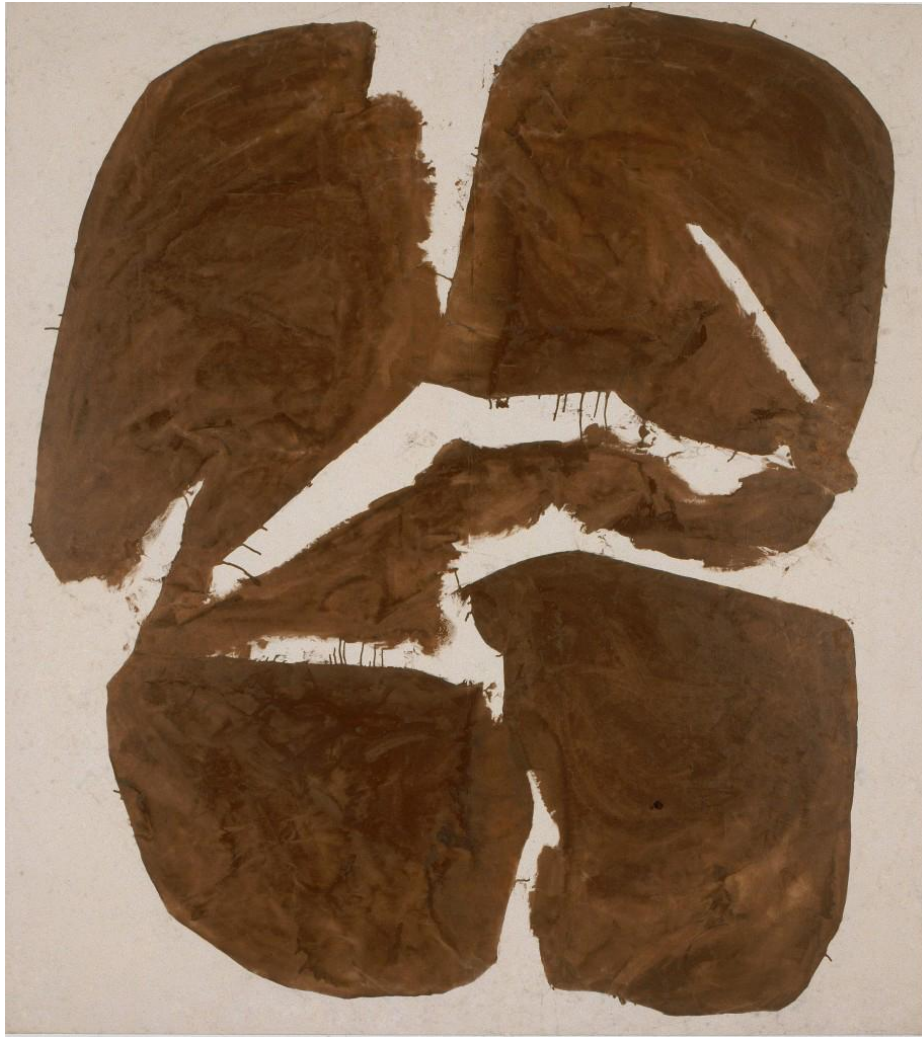
³⁷ Armstrong, P., Lisbon, L., and Melville, S., eds. (2001). *As Painting: Division and Displacement*. London: The MIT Press. p.32



BMPT (Daniel Buren, Oliver Mosset, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni), invitation to manifestation, Salon de la Jeune Peinture, January 3, 1967.

Michel Parmentier made folded paintings banded at irregular intervals, his process exposed active parts of the canvas that were countered by untouched concealed bands, the process allowing a reveal of grids and stripes. His approach to painting is reserved, slight, and transparent, he combined untouched surfaces and slight mark making. During his difficult

and complex career, he sporadically ceased production, refused to work and these gaps in production mirror what are decisive moments of inactivity in the paintings themselves. Parmentier's emphasis on the literary space of painting was informed by the writings of Maurice Blanchot. The surface folds and turns away from its author and allows a space apart for the painter. In the cessation of the work there is a questioning, and in Parmentier's explanation, a denouncement of the given limits of his work. His approach implies an ethical and questioning approach to painting and he maintained this position when in 1967 he collaborated with Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, and Nicole Toroni. The group were responsible in 1967, for four 'manifestations' - a collaborative or shared platform against gestural, expressive painting of the time and a curatorial critical position towards painting.



Simon Hantai. Meun 1968. Oil on canvas 2055 x 1865 mm. Private collection.

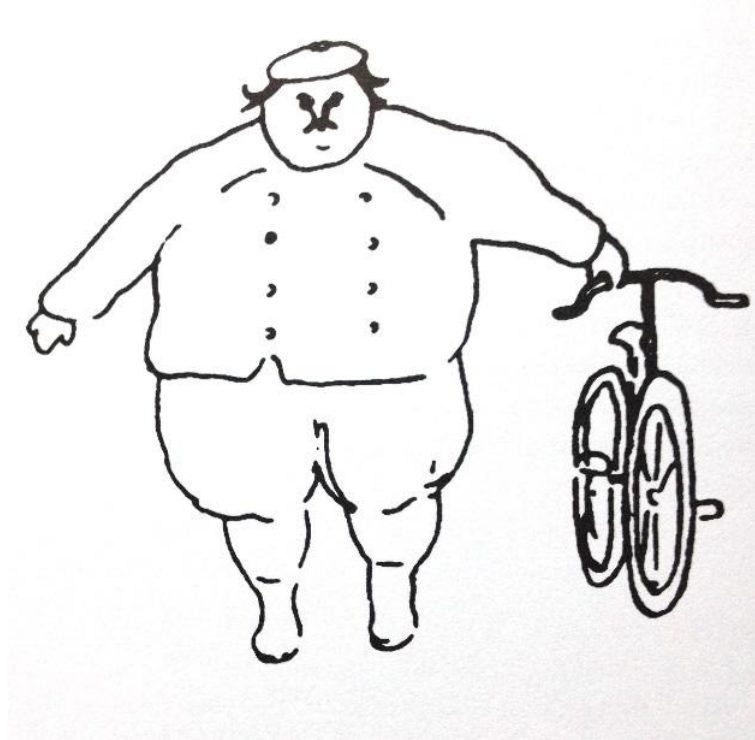
It was Parmentier who was responsible for the breaking apart of the tension that held this group together when he refused to contribute to a proposal for the group to author each other's work. It was an attempt to further depersonalise their paintings, but Parmentier was careful to make a distinction between the deliberate strategies of removal or distance that he adopted in his work and the making of a depersonalised painting. Daniel Buren is the best known and certainly the most identifiable of the group whose work, over several years, has remained essentially unchanged. His stripes are applied to various surfaces, but these

stripes then become mobile and take various positions within the gallery and external environments. The starting point for Buren was a commercially made, vertically striped fabric found in a Parisian flea market in 1965. The work is often categorised as 'institutional critique', his means are in effect the ready-made, in that he makes a particular thing; he performs gestures, repositioning his stripes within a place or institution. Buren refers explicitly to his works as visual placements but sees his practice as painting and as such sites his references in the tradition of Paul Cezanne and the contemporary French painter, Simon Hantai. The signature stripe holds together a series of works, but also his core commitment to the impersonality of painting. This impersonality makes no reference to the maker's hand or person, no sign of the author's signature. It's conceptual, it has a signature, and is ready-made, although these are claims that Buren himself seeks to distance the work from. The work is effective at pointing out the museum to the viewer so that the experience of the gallery is in some ways given us anew, representing an awareness of the gallery space and also an awareness of ourselves as we experience the gallery. Whether this is something that we didn't or didn't previously have, it is however, a familiar strategy that we are aware of in Minimalist practice, where the presence of the viewer is made explicit in the relationship between self, work and institution.

In Buren's work we are, therefore, more aware than before of ourselves as we apprehend the object or artwork. What does his work amount to? It seems as if it would not be too hard to talk about non composition, seriality, grace or intuition, as the work does little other than qualify itself as painting. The point is that it is primarily a painting, a support covered in

paint. It is therefore important to see the movement in his career as a positioning of himself in relationship to painting. He is free in principle to move through a continual work of revision, to rework a previous text to describe his work as a visual tool in some way making explicit his relationship to architecture.

Chapter Two



Caricature of Alfred Jarry by Clare Demolder, 1904

His Heart Was Neither on the Right Nor on the Left

A race between a high-speed locomotive and a bicycle team, whose only fuel would be perpetual motion food of Ten Thousand Miles, on a track laid alongside the great express.

Five men are lying horizontally and strapped into an extended tandem to take on the express train. The bike is a racing model, has no handlebars and extraordinarily thin tyres, fifteen millimetres. Facemasks double as dust repellents and an aerodynamic aid, with aluminium rods joining the ten legs of the cyclists together. The race begins with the bicycle

tandem being towed by an aerodynamic bullet car from which the bicycle drafts and gets up to a provisional speed of 120 kilometres per hour. The bullet car, acting much like a derny in a track race with a revolving drum on its flank, engages the tandem's front wheel much like a gear³⁸. The car cuts an airless space allowing the bicycle to be paced, at least through the hours of the first night, with fraudulent ease.



Derny paced bicycle on the Velodrome, Ghent, Belgium.

³⁸ A derny is a motorised bicycle used for motor-paced cycling events such as during six day and Keirin racing and motor-paced road races

Ted Oxborrow, Jewey Jacobs, George Webb, Sammy White and Bill Gilbey known to the team as Corporal Gilbey. The team spend the five days of the race consuming the small, colourless bitter cubes of Perpetual Motion Food, taken five at a time.

Day 1. The locomotive and bicycle keep pace with each other, the train moves like a large benevolent animal alongside the tandem, its drive shaft is oscillating like a beating heart, and the cyclists are afforded glimpses of the occupants of the carriages. The track is smooth which enables them to flow river-like through the opening stages of the race. William Elson the inventor of the Perpetual Motion Food is aboard the train in the hope of seeing his team win. At the end of the first day a cry comes up from behind that there's something following us!

Day 2. The bullet shaped car is turned loose and the job of pacing taken up by a revolving trumpet-shaped flying machine that sucks the bicycle into its funnel and pulls it along; the speed reaches a predicted and predetermined, for this stage of the race, 250 kilometres an hour. The train and bicycle retain their position alongside each other. Daybreak and the locomotive has taken on a thick scarlet covering of mushroom like blooms, as the girl lowers her window the flowers travel alongside at the same speed as the machines, until they fall back through the carriage window and startle Miss Elson, as the day progresses the blooms recede to be renewed the following evening.

Day 3. Jewey Jacobs is in trouble, it's a serious incident and one which could put the team's schedule in doubt and cost them the race. Ted is able to turn around just enough within the constraint of his harness to notice Jewey's ankle play has ceased and moreover there is a

peculiar odour. It has a cadaverous stench of incomprehensible and rapid decomposition.

The team are seizing up; simultaneously the locomotive begins to pull slightly ahead, the impact more mental than physical but still weakens the limbs.



Andrew Graves *Fig and Sleeping* 2014 Oil, wax and tempera on canvas. Installation shot *Spool*. Andrew Graves, Neil Rummig and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.

***Jewey Jacobs is dead! Dead! Dead!*³⁹**

But Jewey Jacobs is under contract to race and being a practical team they overcome the rigor mortis with the help of friendly insults and after some education, Jewey Jacobs begins to pedal until he has reached beyond his living self to his death sprint and the team resume their place alongside the locomotive.

***Hip, hip, hurrah for Jewey Jacobs!*⁴⁰**

³⁹ Jarry, Alfred. Tr. Wright, Barbara *The Supermale* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1970). p. 54.

⁴⁰ Jarry, Alfred. Tr. Wright, Barbara *The Supermale* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1970). p. 56

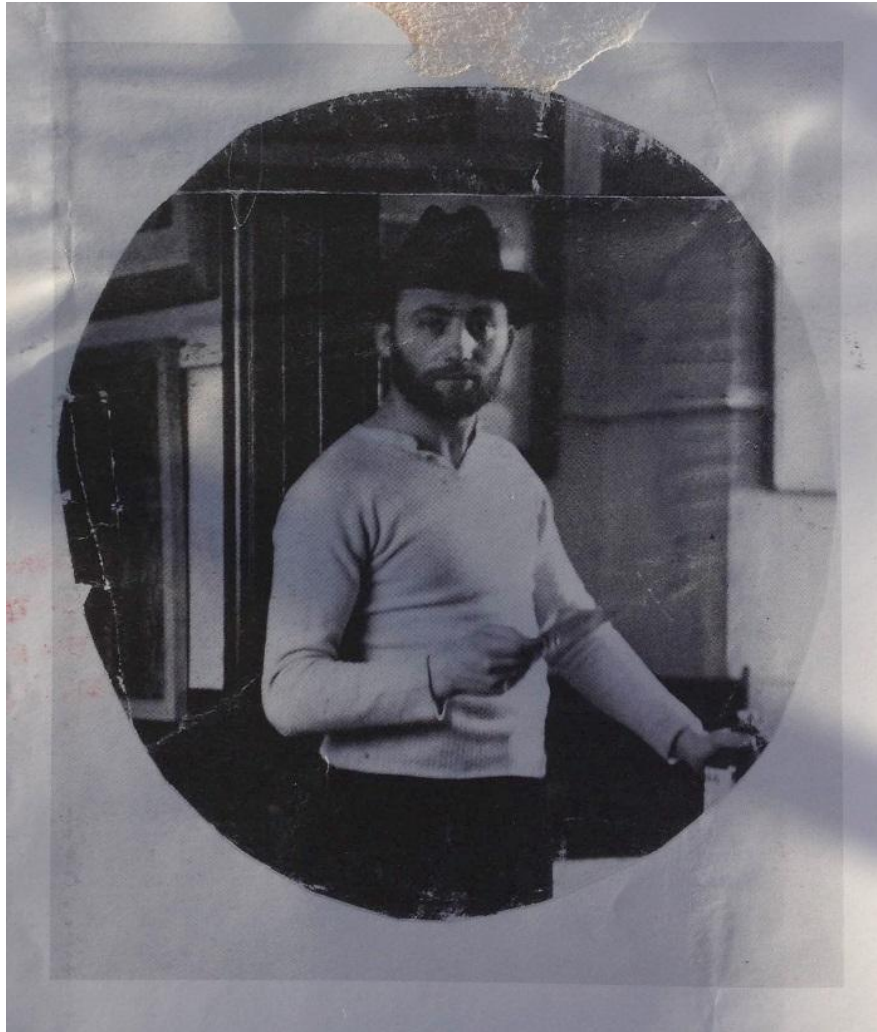
Day 4 The speedometer reaches its highest point of 300 kilometres per hour. The vision of someone following the team returns, a hunch-backed human pedalling with the same cadence. As the teams speed reaches new heights they rise in a glide above the train, as they return to the ground the front tyre bursts, and they are instructed to 'vultures glide' again. The turning point is a great tower through which the race will pass for its return leg. As the fourth day closes it is realised that the final day at present speed will see the end of the Ten Thousand Mile race.

Someone is following us

Day 5 The speedometer has gone up in flames and yet glued to the wheel and in the shadow of our team someone, by a curious contortion, mimics the shadow of the five man tandem and at an opportune moment, as the flame from the lamp on the tandem extinguishes the shadow moves fifty yards ahead.

The shadow was creaking like an old weather-cock!

The comic silhouette bicycle morphs from straight framed balloon tyred cycle with worn bearings that must have been heavy, to a never before seen racing model, with a wide range of gears and microscopic tyres. In the final moments of the race the locomotive expires under its ultimate fuel, which was a too admirable alcohol for the train, and the cycling team win the race arriving at the finish line so promptly there is no-one there to greet them. No-one has been able to tell us what became of the fantastic racer.



photograph of David Bomberg in his studio c.1914

The Mud Bath Period

In many ways David Bomberg's 1913 painting 'Ju Jitsu' is a model for this writing, which brings together a chain of elements. The idea of receding perspectives of history and geography evident in Bomberg's image and the ability to conflate elements and overlay ideas acting as a template for the structure of this writing. 'Ju Jitsu's' ability to endure has been a presence throughout my practice and writing, revealing itself over time to engage different meanings and to metamorphose through its different elements. These

periodization's and shifts seem to encompass a compositional principle that relies on a chain of elements, and are embodied in the nature of its dynamic structure, allowing me to develop a series of potential forms and models.

Displacement is indicated by the title 'Ju Jitsu' a Japanese martial art for close combat designed to defeat an armed and armoured opponent. This martial art transplanted to an East End gymnasium and observed by Bomberg gives us the title. The image is taken from the idea of an abstracted athlete, and is part of a period of works that were based on the Modern City and inspired by various locations around the East End of London that he knew well.

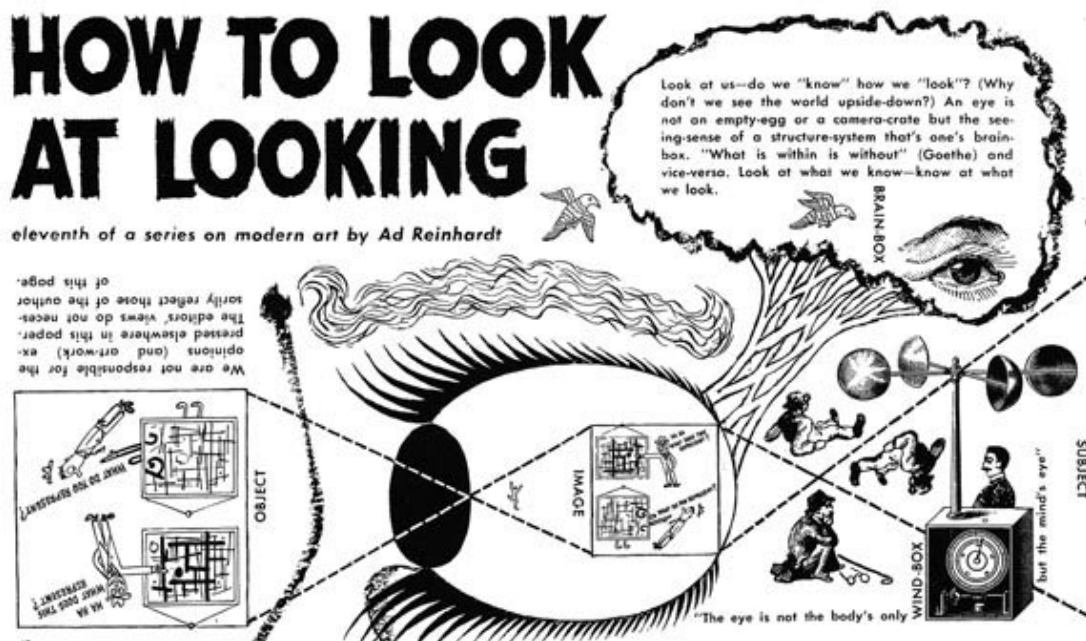
The image depicts the stylised movements of these athletes that move staccato-like through the image. Overlaying these abstracted figures is a chequerboard that disrupts and fractures the picture plane and further distorts the figures. The forms are determined and implied using low colour and high contrast. The painting contrives to encompass both tradition and a dynamism that was current at this time in the work of the Wyndham Lewis' Vorticists and the Italian Futurists, also Modernisms concern with the square.



Andrew Graves *Blues and Greens* 2014 Oil and pigment on gesso panel 700 x 800 mm.

The elements of the picture vie with each other for precedence but ultimately the image is read as a conflation of these things without prominence given to any element. An abstracted coloured chequerboard pattern that on further viewing suggests movement and

form disrupted by the athletes who struggle and strive to journey through the centre of the painting. The forms deliver narrative through their own fragmentation, delivered in the fabric and pattern of the composition, the distribution and mental journey of these giving us evidence of a chronology of forms, both before, during and after the paintings production.



Ad Reinhardt cartoon

Ad Reinhardt had a strict idea of what art was and was not, he combined his illustrational work, which operates as sharp institutional critique, with and alongside his painterly practice. He had an understanding of many dimensions of art that he himself did not practice, and he had a complicated and wide appreciation of the potential of practice that is evidenced in his own ability to work across mediums.

It is interesting that Ad Reinhardt's Black Paintings were seen as one of the terminators of painterly practice, but he described himself as simply making the last paintings that anybody

could make. His work has at times been used against painting, but his critically sharp reflections on practice do not support this. Rather than a terminus, Ad Reinhardt seemed to do what he did in the service of painting and painterly practice and was well aware that painting would continue. His sophisticated and detailed art cartoons provided a lot of information and are didactic in their ability to teach a general audience art ideas and a certain kind of abstraction.

Would you say that the body is the image, whereas the text is the soul? Certainly not, if you are suggesting that the image is on one side and the text on the other – which is what happens in what is normally called “illustration.” This is an impoverished dualism, like every dualism. But, in truth, every image and every text is potentially, and respectively, text and image for itself. This potential is actualized in the gaze or in the reading. I read a text and here is an image, or indeed, here is yet more text! In looking at the image, I always textualize it in some way, and in reading the text, I image it. These actualizations are innumerable: no text has its proper image, no image its proper text.⁴¹

⁴¹ Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Ground of the Image* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2006). p69.



Andrew Graves *Jersey* 2013, Oil on gesso panel 700 x 800 mm.

On the collection

This is an account of practice, the attempt to make concrete in writing what goes on in the studio; an attempt to describe the space of the studio and the stance of the paintings, their presence, and the limits of these paintings.

Jean Luc Nancy writes of an idea of *presence* in relation to poetry, but not poetry as a literary genre but poetry as a description of writing that stretches writing to its breaking point of *what makes writing; that is, what simultaneously inscribes and exscribes it.*

Speaking without being able to, these are works that rely on presence; they have a given language and engage the mechanics of making. Writing on the painting, this is a postponed reflection on my practice. I have been in the studio; in front of the work and thinking I can't begin. As if those that require a description had a voice and spoke, if all painting were an attempt at positioning a voice, controlling a dialogue to give voice and to explain the difficulty of the delay. There is comedy, a sardonic gap, timing and pace, the interval and the knot that resists the need to adequately explain what happens in the studio. Every painter knows the story that takes us from Namuth's film of Pollock playing the cowboy, tossing away his cigarette to begin a painterly dance, through to Paul McCarthy, the painterly clown, his hand stuck in an oversized jar of mayonnaise calling forlornly *De Kooning! De Kooning!* To build up a whole, a catalogue and co-ordination of themes that document that there is a given, learnt, needed working studio time.

On entering

On entering I am re-visiting and connected to what I last made and what I am making. I carry a pattern of an idea, where I am, the stage and what I am hoping for. I am trying to make everything today by holding off from judgement, suspend and wait. I look and avoid looking. I am always hopeful and delay a glimpse or glance. I *am* going to be able to see these things, as a viewer might, there will be an objective glance that will reveal an entrance and give an answer.



Andrew Graves. *Sleeping* 2013. Oil, wax and pigment on canvas.

And routine

And routine, making to prepare for what comes next. Coming into the studio. What I bring with me is the time lapse, how long since I last visited. Time in the studio is metered and runs at different pace. I am here and it's not what I had remembered, there is a different schedule suggested by the work. The plan is to do with stages, preparatory stages that

include - making, something between making and creating, creating, acceptances and rejections. *Presence as to-be-here, or-to-be-there, as a come-to-here, or there.*⁴²

I want to discuss what is in the studio at the moment. One of the works acts as a fulcrum, the format for the work that keeps the others in balance. It is a portrait. It behaves something like a door, the length in proportion to the width feels stretched, and the balance of the composition is therefore accentuated, scroll like - it reads downwards. The verticality of the viewpoint as if looking down and from above. From being a projection of the viewer looking outward toward an image, this image is imagined parallel to the vertical of the upright body, *the view now slides forward to declare the field of vision itself as vertical.*⁴³ The plane of the picture is brought forward. This format has a practiced familiarity and its shape the memory of previous compositions, formats, designs and placements.

209. This shape that I see – I want to say – is not simply a shape; it is one of the shapes I know; it is a shape marked out in advance. It is one of those shapes of which I already had a pattern in me; and only because it corresponds to such a pattern is it this familiar shape. (I as it were carry a catalogue of such shapes around with me, and the objects portrayed in it *are* the familiar ones.)⁴⁴

The shapes always emphasise a relationship in that they seek out the edge and squeeze themselves in, having been pushed towards and forwards into space, with the brush and the viscosity that allows the brush to describe and mark the surface - material evident in a thin

⁴² Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Ground of the Image* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2006).

⁴³ Krauss, R. Bachelors p. 143

⁴⁴ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 35.

layering of glazed opacity helps to explain and give the shape a form. These shapes are dependent on colour for their form and are laid out with a line practiced and erased, replaced and re-drawn until the space for the form can then be painted. Sometimes this drawing comes from a projected light source whose ambience seems to infect the surface evenly and gives immediacy to the image.



Andrew Graves. *The Palace* 2012. Oil and pencil on gesso panel 450 x 300 mm.

The shape is a balloon that can be manipulated and whose form is dependent on its ability to inflate, there is a point at which this balloon has enough air and feels full, sated and comfortable with itself, or it's uncomfortable and it just about keeps afloat, hangs suspended and is drawn to escaping out of the frame. The form takes as long as it takes and

needs to be caught at the right moment. The shape has the potential to make different form, is made to a regular mix or recipe, which is constant and known (to painters). If I catch the shape too early and it's edible but still plastic it will not yield, let it go too long and it becomes too compliant, can't hold its own and appears flat. It's a complex carbohydrate and what isn't used today is stored in the body as glycogen and remains as a pattern that can be used tomorrow.

Tour de France 2005 - Stage 10 (July 12th)



Alejandro Valverde and Lance Armstrong. Grenoble - Courchevel (177.5 km) the first of the mountain stages through the French Alps.

We are inside nine kilometres to go and this is an Alpine stage. Lance Armstrong, Ivan Basso, Francisco Mancebo, Alejandro Valverde, Michael Rasmussen are a small group of contenders for this year's Tour de France and have all dedicated themselves to an overall win. It is Alejandro Valverde's first Tour de France, he is in a small group fifty-three seconds

ahead of Jan Ullrich and ten minutes up on the yellow jersey, it is a spectacular achievement for a rider in his first tour. In this group are the riders who will contest the overall title of this year's Tour. Michael Rasmussen will prove himself, he is wearing the Polka Dot jersey, and is a magical climber.⁴⁵ The group are all working well together.

5 km left. Lance Armstrong sitting on, letting other guys do the work. Mancebo and Valverde living up to the spirit of Miguel Indurain, the five-time champ who rode for this team under the Banesto sponsorship. Now Lance is back to the front, and Jean Marie LeBlanc is motioning in the car following for the cameraman to move it... the pace is up again. Lance is turning through the barriers in the town, Rasmussen glued to his wheel. You know, Valverde is a fierce sprinter, and will be hard to beat if it comes down to that. So much damage on this climb, it's hard to sort out who is where. Landis is over 1' down, but he's in front of Ullrich. Leipheimer seems to be riding well too, though he's no longer with the Armstrong group.⁴⁶

Fifty three seconds down, the team Telekom tandem of Jan Ullrich being paced by teammate Andreas Kloden, Jan Ullrich is a big engine and pushes a large gear and he takes time in this Tour to find his form. Mancebo and Basso have gone from the lead group. Armstrong has made a move and they are dropped, it is to be his last Tour. Valverde is on him and Rasmussen tries a sprint; with seven hundred metres to go, it's too far out for a realistic opportunity to win. Valverde is the best sprinter in the group and the others watch him, but

⁴⁵ Michael Rasmussen a Danish cyclist was a revelation in this Tour he weighed 60kg and was rumoured to be obsessive to the point of counting grains of rice and removing stickers from his bike in an obsessive desire to lose weight in the mountains

⁴⁶<http://www.dailypeloton.com/displayarticle.asp?pk=8286>

with just metres to go Armstrong races clear, a devastating sprint that only Valverde can match, Valverde is hurting but manages to hold the wheel of Armstrong and comes around him at the end. And so Armstrong takes the yellow jersey and Valverde wins the stage. After finishing a similar climb in 2003 Armstrong had bragged he was only riding at 80%. Armstrong is already looking like the winner of this year's tour after taking the yellow jersey on this stage.

Jan Ullrich, Armstrong's main rival finishes the stage 2 minutes 15 seconds down

Armstrong says in the post-race interview 'it's not a terribly steep climb but difficult to make time tomorrow's stage will be different.'⁴⁷

⁴⁷ <http://www.dailypeloton.com/displayarticle.asp?pk=8286>

210. carrying this pattern around with me is only a cursory explanation of the impression or idea of what the work might contain. This work made as easily as if it had been practised. It gives a cursory take on what has been made and allows an outcome.⁴⁸

The pattern once came from a fabric, photographed in a magazine; it was a cursory choice and projected in my studio. The pattern helps to make a rhythm, repeat, reaffirming the mark and allowing for a narrative to begin.

The dialogue that is practiced and kept in a plastic bag, it's transported between places and between ideas, it's what this work might mean or might not mean, whose opacity partially conceals its contents. These forms should be seen as an end in themselves, they are here and contain their meaning, their content. But they are also vehicles of transportation to other things, places or times. The work can visit these places through references, pattern, choice and historical reverberations.

211. carrying a catalogue of shapes one is in danger of creating a myth of symbolism, creating a myth of mental processes. Instead of simply saying what anyone knows and must admit.⁴⁹

These paintings are symbols, a figure and a character, they play a role and are adept at delivering a line. The joke they tell is one of timings and mis-timings. 'What are you?' asks a painting from a room on the wall of a cartoon by Ad Reinhardt. This joke is a drawing, the

⁴⁸ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 36.

⁴⁹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 37.

cartoon is of its time but wilfully a part of a practice. My joke is half digested, the punch-line partial comedy, praise for something forgotten and re-remembered. Myths. Paintings.



Andrew Graves, *Untitled* 2014, Oil, wax and pigment on canvas.

2005 Tour de France - Stage 11 (July 13th): Courchevel - Briançon (173 km)

The stage starts with the descent of the Courchevel, where the race ended yesterday. There are three big Alpine climbs to ride today, up the Col de la Madeleine (25.4 km at 6.1%), the Col du Télégraphe (12km at 6.7%), and the Col du Galibier (17.5 km at 6.9%). On the final climb, Santiago Botero riding for team Phonak and a former King of the Mountains in the Tour de France, a punchy powerful climber, is chasing Alexander Vinokourov, they are over two minutes ahead as they come over the final climb of the day, they have been influential in the day's break-away.

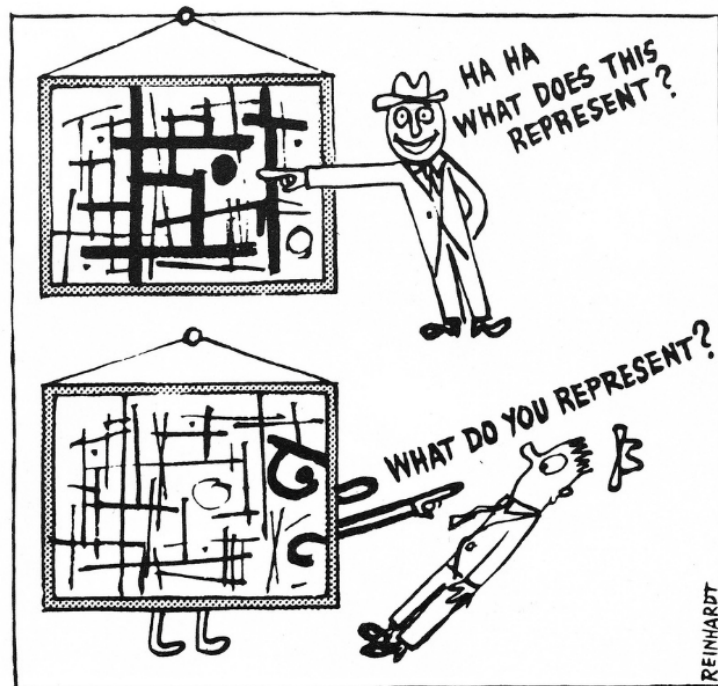
It is a thirty kilometre ascent to the finish. Vinokourov is over the Galibier first and Botero is chasing the Kazakh rider, Botero will make contact with Vinokourov on the descent. In the valley Botero and Vinokourov come together and work together to maintain the gap to the finish. These crowds are insane! So many people, parting at the last moment to let the lone leader churn past.

Vino crests the climb, but Botero is only 45" back... he could catch him. Rasmussen has now attacked from the pack... he's likely chasing mountain points.

No response to the Rasmussen attack. Discovery is just continuing to set the tempo, knowing they can catch him on the descent. So okay, I don't see Horner in the group...Moreau is poised on Armstrong's shoulder, ready to pounce for some KOM points.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ <http://bikeraceinfo.com/tdf/tdf2005.html>

Today Lance Armstrong is with Ivan Basso on the final climb, Basso is being paced by his teammate Bobby Julich. The Danish fans are out for Rasmussen who has taken off from the Armstrong group over the Galibier, he has 20 seconds and is looking for mountain points rather than a winning break. Vinokourov gets the stage but Armstrong is brought in by four teammates whom have controlled the race all day, pacing the Peloton and dictating the pace.



Ad Reinhardt *Ha What Does This Represent?*

Reinhardt's cartoon attributes the painting on the wall a personage, a living exchange, as if we were talking to another. The humour in the illustration is the paintings presumption of speech and the tone of that exchange: of course I can speak back and not only that but I can exclaim and question you! The comment is on the exchange that we have with a painting and the modes and the contexts by which they might be addressed. The structure of address through which the question is posed is the clue to understanding its significance. The question assumes there is another before us that we do not understand and whom we do not know. In Judith Butler's 'Giving an Account of Oneself', she discusses the action that

this speech act performs in a social exchange.⁵¹ If we attribute to a painting the attributes of a social exchange we may go some way to animate our relationship to it and to understand the metaphors we use to discuss the work. In Butler's text the question of who becomes one of engagement and altruism as the question addresses and acknowledges that there is someone unknown, or unknowable in the other. The question then draws us into an ethical relation whereby we are engaged in an empathetic discourse in order to begin to understand what is unknown.

212. Does introspection tell me whether these works can tell me anything or not and is this a genuine case of seeing, or one of interpretation after all?⁵²

I spend time waiting, much of what I do is doing, but there is also the waiting, contemplating. Construction and building, constructing a support, is always the same but not a static design, it traces the nuances of time and is always responding to the others⁵³. The leanness of the support, its relationship to the wall and how it will hang; with what and where does it hang? Each time these questions are approached uniquely, there is a need to foster and feel that the place and emphasis are in sympathy with how the work can be read and consumed. Its diet and how calorific is its intake, the image consumes, offset this against its ability to exercise us, how far we walk, where and how we run. The images that are passed by as we traverse the city; the building, the face, the rubbish bin, and the car. The work has a connection to the wall and its place along the wall to its neighbour connects

⁵¹ Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2005)

⁵² Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 38.

⁵³ Damisch, Hubert. Tr. Lloyd, Janet. *A Theory of Cloud: Toward a History of Painting* (California, Stanford Press, 2002)

me to the architecture of this room but more importantly the interior and the inside of the building.



Andrew Graves. *Trendrine* 2014. Oil and watercolour on gesso panel.

The shape that I see is a box, flat packed, it's structural and can be looked into, it has a use value, can be used for storage of ideas and places. But it bleeds and this form drops, it appears sturdy but it is a temporary stage. A projection of 'Ju-jitsu' gave me the form that now slides away and is replaced, returned to, and repeated. The form solidifies and is in motion.

213. Don't I see the figure now like this, now another way, even when I do not react verbally or otherwise?

But "now like this" "now another way" are words, and what right have I to use them here? Can I shew my right to you or to myself? (Unless by a further reaction.)⁵⁴

But, don't I know this shape as a building, a blueprint, a shadow. It's an immense form that looms and now seen another way as something organic and creeping that has the potential to shift, adapt and grow. A concrete building I can brush against and touch - I can taste this form - it's dry and bitter. And now another way it has texture, is salty and repeats on me like a hot dog.

214. Experience of the real size. We see a picture showing a chair shape; we are told it represents a construction the size of a house. Now we see it differently.⁵⁵

It represents a body, a torso and a belly, the colour is a skin and a plane pulled taught across the surface. The real size is seven hundred millimetres by five hundred millimetres. It's a wave of colour dragged across the surface and spilling out to the edges of the frame where it eddies, pools and returns. The movement of the paint suggests this form is amorphous and shape shifting. The scale is mine and it fits me, but gives out to a potentially larger scale and places me in a landscape, beside a building in the shadows.

215. Imagine someone watching the sun and suddenly having the *feeling* that it is not the sun that moves – but we that move past it. Now he wants to say he has seen

⁵⁴ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 38.

⁵⁵ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 38.

a new state of motion that we are in, imagine him showing by gestures which movement he means, and that is not the sun's movement. – We should here be dealing with two different applications of the word "movement".⁵⁶



Andrew Graves. *Untitled*. Oil on canvas with walnut frame. Studio shot June 2013.

It's static but has movement, a journey to get here, a journey through here and a journey to be had beyond this shape. Its speed is evident and both considered and cursory, pulled

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 38.

across and stretched before shifting pace, direction and recoiling. It's sits within the surface, the surface has already been navigated through reconnaissance and prepared and this swipe has intention, pattern and marks a presence. I am here.

216. We see, not change of aspect, but change of interpretation.⁵⁷

I keep looking and reflecting. I am avoiding introspection, incubation is the enemy here, it is what it is, will become something else, it will morph and change. I can change how I interpret it, the aspect is moveable - it's a wall, or a door, or a cloth, its character is serious, stern, comic and calm. But it never moves, its presence shifts and the proximity with which it engages me also, I am here and now here. In the meantime, I am waiting, looking across to another set of circumstances, conventions, colours and another surface that links to something else.

I don't wanna walk around with you/ I don't wanna walk around with you/ I don't wanna walk around with you/ So why you wanna walk around with me?⁵⁸

217. You see it conformably, not to an interpretation, but to an act of interpreting.⁵⁹

If you see it like this then you have to consider where that comes from and how. The act of seeing into the work and of the understanding of how it might have been made. The time or duration of its making, how and what was applied first. Which element has precedence, came first, came last, is on top of, or is behind. The edge and boundary between colours and

⁵⁷ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 38.

⁵⁸ Ramones. *I don't wanna walk around with you*

⁵⁹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 38.

surfaces, here crisp and metered, here expressive and fast, relationships between edges and forms. The time given, a cursory mark that's left to stand underperforming as a presence or edge - we interpret its expression.

218. I interpret words; yes- but do I also interpret looks? Do I interpret a facial expression as threatening or kind? - That *may* happen.⁶⁰

A grimace and a look with enthusiasm at a colour that reverberates and tentatively seeks out its edge, a fragile shape that has some doubt about what it needs to be and where it might end. Those who have seen these shapes acknowledge they are stereotypes and that they are being relayed through a generalised matrix of other paintings and projections, there is of course no real image, no original to which any of them is actually referring.

We now have access to the 'unnoticed life of inanimate objects': unnoticed but not contingently unnoticed. Since Chardin's art is 'the expression of what it was closest to him in his life', it is (Proust concedes) 'our life that it makes contact with'.⁶¹

It is noticed and makes contact but remains below legibility and contingent on what is known. The stillness of the brushstroke to describe something that may or may not be, a pleasure in domesticity (in the still-life) and the pleasure in the nearer and more distant views of the painted surface. The distance of where this painting comes from, and the closeness and noticed proximity of its making. The way in which these surfaces might bring us up against remembered sensations - smell, taste and hearing.

⁶⁰ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 198

⁶¹ Wollheim, Richard. *Painting as an Art*, (London, Thames & Hudson, 1987) p.99

We need an art which is, of itself, valid: an art unsullied by our ideas. The construction of voluminous; changing shapes from a moving, malleable substance. Arranged in space, they integrate moving images in a synchronised form.⁶²

Heart zone analysis; moderate, endurance, tempo, threshold, anaerobic. Three minutes twenty four seconds in the anaerobic phase in a ride up Mott Street in the rain and the substance I am depleting is moveable, malleable and will not reach the edge. I am at the edge of this form now and its vine black and creeps across a surface losing its intensity. The plane consists abstractly, but really, in relations of speed and slowness between unformed elements and in compositions. These are never complete, these never come together or reach completion, but rather reach a point of consistencies or consolidations.

⁶² Danchev, Alan. *100 Artists' Manifestos*, (London, Penguin, 2011) p.309.

2000 Tour de France Stage 12 Carpentras – Mont Ventoux 149 km.



Lance Armstrong and Marco Pantani on Mont Ventoux. 12 Carpentras – Mont Ventoux 149 km. Tour de France 2000.

In the 2000 Tour de France on Mount Ventoux. A mountain that is legendary for cycling fans and where in 1967 the British Cyclist Tom Simpson died of heat exhaustion, there is a monument two kilometres from the summit. The day's stage will be an epic battle, described as the hardest stage of the tour, the summit is lunar, an oxygen less barren world that is both eerie and magnificent. The climb is monotonous, relentless and the stage was an epic battle between Germany's Jan Ullrich, Lance Armstrong and Marco Pantani. It's like the moon - no grass grows there, the day before there were snow flurries in the air, and just thirty meters of visibility. The overall standings place Lance Armstrong in the yellow jersey; Jan Ullrich is second overall and four minutes fourteen seconds down.

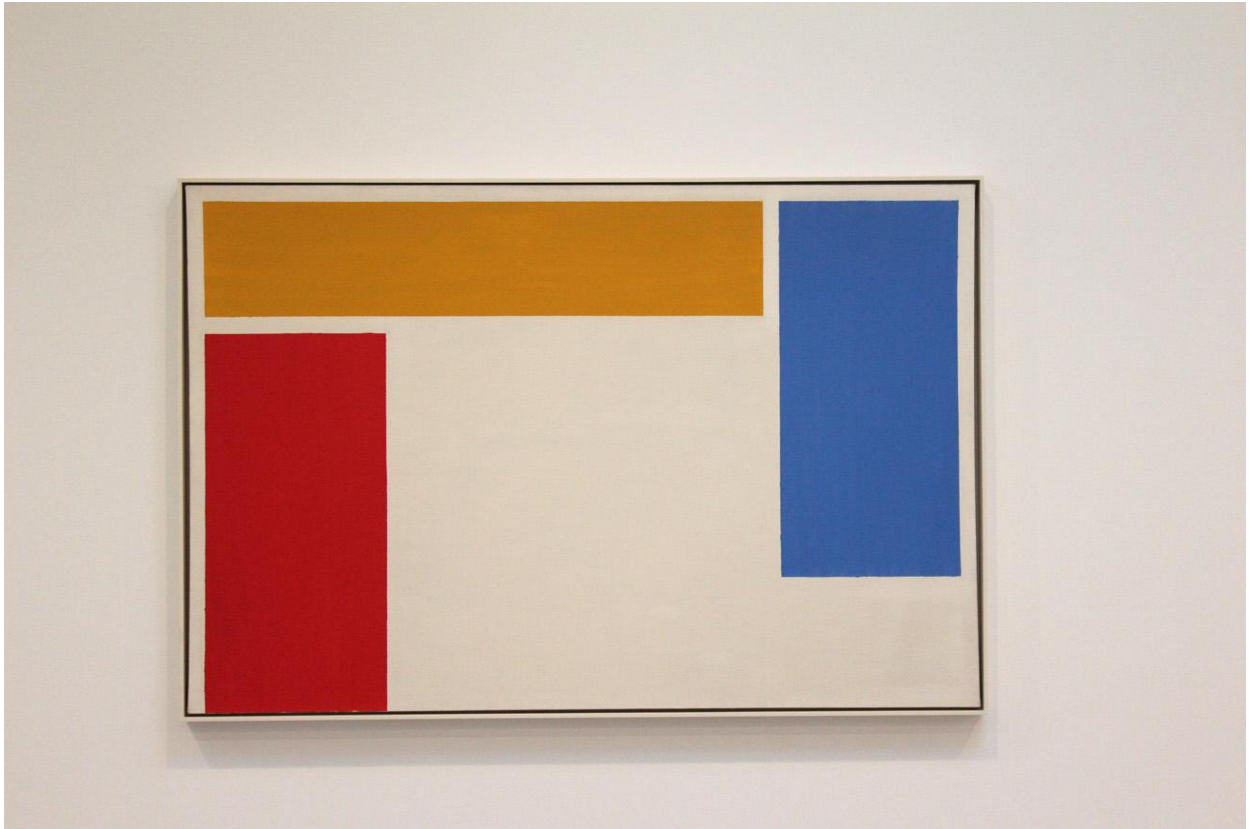
That day Banesto, the Spanish team, worked hard for Joseba Beloki on the lower slopes of the race. Jan Ullrich looked very strong and Armstrong was assured and wearing yellow. Armstrong's team, US Postal, took over the pulling as they approached the climb proper.

Tyler Hamilton and Kevin Livingstone for US Postal kept up a blistering pace and there was still fifteen kilometres of climbing to go with a 10% gradient. The pirate, Marco Pantani, began to suffer under the pace of Livingstone. As the group moved out of the trees at Chalet Renard they moved onto the lunar landscape of the Ventoux and, on this day, freezing temperatures.

Santiago Botero and Roberto Heras are Kelme riders and teammates. Lance Armstrong, Richard Virenque, Santiago Botero, Roberto Heras, Jan Ullrich, Joseba Beloki and Marco Pantani chasing down these six riders in the lead group and with 6 km to go and the French rider Virenque trying to break away.

Marco Pantani rode within himself. As the pace got too much for him he got dropped but maintained his own pace and was able to make the juncture in his fight back to the leaders with 6km to go. Pantani then sat for a few pedal strokes and made an immediate attack, Heras went with him (the teammate of Beloki holding 3rd place in the tour) but Marco attacks again and yet again they come back together. The Kelme riders struggle and his third attack is successful, he makes a break, it's an unusually cold day, and the Columbian rider Botera tries to catch him. Armstrong leaves a moment and then goes himself soon after and catches Botero and finally bridges up to Pantani. As Armstrong passes he indicates to Pantani to jump on his wheel. Too windy to place the race markers we fail to see the 100-metre marker but at it Pantani eases past Armstrong and Beloki takes third place Ullrich takes fourth.

Armstrong says "Ventoux's not a good climb for me and I am not sure we are good friends, I was worried about the Ventoux always nice to win but not important this day."



Tony Smith. *Untitled* 1964. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

In an interview in the late 1960's the American artist Tony Smith⁶³ described a journey in the 1950's that had a specific impact on his artistic direction and linked directly to the later travels that Robert Smithson would make. The events impact was such that it made him turn from architecture to sculpture. Also significant was the place that gave Smith this insight, it took place on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike that famously was the site for Smithson's own reflection on his practice. This is perhaps not surprising for artists for whom the beat generation had had such an impact and who saw their own travels along this road as epiphanic.

⁶³ Jones, Caroline A. *Machine in the Studio* (London, Chicago Press, 1996).

The paintings of Tony Smith contrast with his sculptures. The sculptures have a direct relationship to architecture, both through their placement and the form they take. The forms are constructed, built, using industrial material, are building scale, sit outside like architecture and have modular form. The sculptures geometric, serial forms. They sit in the landscape, we can pass through and around them, and they make relationship to people and to the organic.



Tony Smith. *Untitled*. Oil on canvas 1957.

More recently, at the Timothy Taylor gallery, I see his paintings again. I come across them at Frieze Art Fair, London, every year and they are surprisingly current as if they had been painted recently. It seems this way partly because they reach out from a period relevant to

painting now, but also they are always vivid. The works have a clear relationship to colour field painting and Abstract Expressionism, although they are modest and controlled, they use colour and form playfully, can be organic and loopy, or reductive and hard-edged.

Joe Friel and Robert Smithson

Robert Smithson made a complex claim for a 'post-studio art', the ambition was a hope for a final triumph over art's cultural confinement in the gallery. Smithson describes this as an expansion and a release of the artist's activity into other places and realms. These realms extended into language and covered vast tracts of land and attempted to span the reaches of geological time. The work of the past was overburdened, he said, and Smithson imagined his post-studio art led off into a tractless future. Smithson articulates this desire to escape the studio and to therefore question the idea of the studio as an inviolate sanctuary. There was a growing critique amongst artists of the studio and a more open approach to authorship at this time and the development of an art not dependent upon the studio or even the object. In his writing Smithson describes a road trip that he took with Donald Judd and here the picture he paints is quite telling.

The terrain is flat and loaded with 'middle income' housing developments with names like Royal Garden Estates, Rolling Knolls Farm, Valley View Acres, Split-level Manor, Babbling Brook Ranch-Estates, Colonial Vista Homes-on and on they go, forming tiny boxlike arrangements. Most of the houses are painted white, but many are painted petal pink, frosted mint, buttercup, fudge, rose beige, antique green, Cape Cod brown, lilac, and so on. The highways crisscross through the towns and

become man-made geological networks of concrete. In fact, the entire landscape has a mineral presence. From the shiny chrome diners to glass windows of shopping centers, a sense of the crystalline prevails.

When we finished at the quarry, we went to Bond's Ice Cream Bar and had some AWFUL AWFULS- "awful big - and awful good... it's the drink you eat with a spoon."

We talked about the little crystal cavities we had found, and looked at The Field Book of Common Rocks and Minerals by Frederic Brewster Loomis, I noticed ice is a crystal: "Ice, H₂O, water, specific gravity-.92, colorless to white, luster adamantine, transparent on thin edges. Beneath the surface hexagonal crystals grow downward into the water, parallel to each other, making a fibrous structure, which is very apparent when ice is 'rotten'"⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Text excerpted from ROBERT SMITHSON: THE COLLECTED WRITINGS, 2nd Edition, edited by Jack Flam, The University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California; University of California Press, LTD. London, England; 1996. Originally published: The Writings of Robert Smithson, edited by Nancy Holt, New York, New York University Press, 1979 ISBN # 0-520-20385-2

The 2014 Tour de France Stage 1, Leeds to Harrogate: Saturday 5th July 2014



Mark Cavendish crashes out of the Tour de France, Harrogate 2014.

Tour de France - summer 2014. The *Grand Depart* in Yorkshire on roads that I have ridden with friends. The year we travelled up to the Peaks district, stayed in Derby and then continued up to Leeds to ride in the Dales, we covered and sought out the climbs and worked together on long descents. We all raced at this time.

The morning of Stage One we set out to ride the tour route through Otley, there is the excitement of the first stage and a knowledge that the stage is flat, not a day of drama for the overall classification of the race. The expected narrative of this stage, the reason for its design, is to propel Mark Cavendish to a win in the final sprint in his mothers, Adele's hometown, Harrogate. The time has come to turn a corner and follow a different path and so

when the Peloton rolls out it is to deliver Cavendish to the line. But Cavendish hasn't got the legs he had and his explosive top speed as a sprinter (only maintain for a few seasons) has waned. He needs his team to place him, take him and discharge him meters from the line, when the blind dart forward through a melee will bring him victorious to the line.

Cavendish should never have ever won a sprint, his numbers were never right, on paper he doesn't put out the kind of power needed at this level of the sport.⁶⁵ However, his height allows him an aerodynamic advantage and his tenacity means he is able to present a smaller frontal area to the oncoming wind and cheat the science and travel faster than his larger competitors. Stage One and five hours of a full-on chase of an escape group who were never anything but a carrot for the sprinters team to chase, and Cavendish is laid out across the tarmac with his diaphragm heaving, beating, and his collarbone broken. He had tried to fly through a hole in the Peloton that wasn't there and made contact with Simon Gerrans' wheel before falling shoulder and head first to the road. The season is over - months of preparation from the nine riders who are there to carry him to the line and his own work is over.

⁶⁵ Measurement of power to weight ratios that are used to select riders

Sound Aerobic Endurance

It is no longer possible to write anything whatsoever on the subject of the book: if the issue must indeed be “the question of the book,” to borrow an expression from one of the texts that form the horizon of this impossibility.⁶⁶

If it is no longer possible to write anything on the subject of the painting, if the question must indeed be the question of the painting and from the horizon of this impossibility these paintings are made. A wish to advance painting, to invent anything can only spring from ignorance, from naiveté.

Something definitive has been accomplished, with respect to this question, by a group, a network, or whatever we wish to call it, of texts that cannot be avoided text bearing the names...⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Birth to Presence*, (California, Stanford University Press, 1993).p. 320.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 320.

Cadence. We are lined out and this is the moment of arrival in the journey, why we are here and the test we have anticipated for this ride. We have one focus as the road gradually puts our legs to the test, the effort has to be full but measured, there is a testing of a boundary of a zone, a physical peak that needs reaching and moving towards, sitting on and reaching in, but not too far that you can't come back. It's perfectly cylindrical, this effort like a ball bearing moving along its path, you tilt the board towards its goal and the momentum gently increases and with each pedal stroke we glide with an internal rhythm that is wound up as the incline increases.

During the making, what goes around in the painter's mind is a monolithic ball bearing, so smooth, so uniform, that you can't even see it spin. It's almost perfect lack of surface structure ensures that it strikes nothing that might end up in the white circulation of thought. In my mind this shape sounds funny, *brrr-ink*; in my mind the shape is not disfigured, does not need support or correction. It's come from a moment when consciousness is small and the further into the journey, the smaller it gets. Every thought that arises is ultimately true. Every unexpected question from this work is known, or has been known and momentarily forgotten. A half-submerged song appears, or a remembered single line of a conversation is enough to fill your thoughts. ⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Krabbe, Tim. *The Rider* p.34

328. In philosophy it is significant that such-and-such a sentence makes no sense; but also that it sounds funny.⁶⁹

So Jarry's bicycle race is an unmanageable 10,000 miles, but described by him as a good round figure. Duchamp's bicycle wheel is an assisted ready-made, a composite of three parts. The stool carries the inverted forks of a touring bicycle, elevates and isolates and is both a stand-in plinth and an elevating device, the forks, with the stem inserted into the seat at the point where there is usually a hole for the fingers used to carry the stool. The front wheel is non-g geared and is free to travel forwards and backwards. Mercieu, Jarry's anti-hero, is the Super male – who is persuaded to test 'perpetual-motion food', an invention of the scientist Elsen. The perpetual motion food's effect is to turn him into a sexual gymnast.

In his essay *The Tour de France as Epic* Roland Barthes lays out an elegant history of the race citing the poetry of the names of its riders to exemplify the tumultuous epic that is the Tour. He points to the mixture of servility, admiration and awe with which the rider's names are recounted and uttered. He says, the Tour regularly practices an energetics of Spirits and the strength that of these racers are held in two important aspects form: which is the quality of the muscles, acuity of intelligence, and force of character and the jump the ability to electrify and erratically propel oneself forward with god-like abilities beyond the ordinary.

⁶⁹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Zettel*, Second Edition, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981). p. 59.

Planning your race season is called periodization. The concept is familiar and has been used in sport science since the 1960's and is still used by all elite athletes. Periodization involves manipulating and balancing training volume and intensity to produce high levels of fitness at times in the season when you have important races. The first intensity issue has to do with the specific demands of the goal event. How intense – in other words, how hard – will it be? Some events require you to put out a steady but relatively low intensity for a long time. In contrast, the forty five minute criterium race fluctuates between extremely high and low intensities. In fact, your training should be focused on building the engine – your muscles. Contrary to what athletes who use heart rate monitors believe, muscle is where nearly all fitness changes take place. Focusing only on the rate at which blood is pumped to the muscles is not the most effective way to train.

The perceptive model

A talk chaired by Jan Warwoert at Frieze bringing together the painters, Wade Guyton and Francis Stark, seemed to frame itself around the questions that are the beginning of Yve Alain Bois' discussion on the work of Hubert Damisch. It is also the key thinking behind the positioning of painting in curator Daniel Sturgis' exhibition, 'The Indiscipline of Painting' that sought to frame the current concerns of the painter, but also to negotiate a history of painting and the depth and problems of that history.

In Yve Alain Bois' book of essays on painting, 'Painting as Model', he attempts to ascertain the current stance taken when talking about Abstraction, how the argument has developed

and he pinpoints the key theoretical positions and writing on abstraction. Writing on Damisch in *Painting as Model* he discusses an idea for which Sartre became the eponym, an idea that sees abstract painting as the starting point for an imagining. Damisch is careful to lead us away from the idea of the image within abstract painting, to rid ourselves of it as a concept. He seeks, instead, a historically determined framework that can lead us to an understanding of the how one can engage in a fresh inquiry in the face of each new work. And so, he proposes a historically nuanced discussion that can locate the work and its operations to its precursors in order to come to an understanding of an artwork. He enquires into the stance of the painter and what is the mode of thought at stake in the painting; the question of theory and can painting be thought of as a theoretical practice?

There is a relevant text from Damisch in his 'Theory of Cloud': he writes on the brush stroke in relationship to the historical evolution of Chinese painting, discussing a debate that is contested between, on the one hand, an orthodoxy that adheres to the strictest linearity to describe the world and on the other, a transgressive and traditional form of Chinese painting with no constraints, that utilises accidental, incidental forms to which more considered marks are added to describe a landscape. It would seem a relevant piece of writing to this research and my own practice. The brush is receptive whilst the ink is concerned with invention, put simply the ink metamorphoses into a form for which the brush is the skeleton. In this regard the painting is not a matter of imitation but rather it is open and receptive, the forms or figures are given life like an animating breath. Although this breath represents truth, not in a spiritual sense but in the same regard as the figure or material of the painting. In my own work the paint is used to make forms, structure is given

by the brush and the painting's form remains open and receptive in order to challenge and test the material and keep meaning open.

'Those who draw clouds and those who blow them.'⁷⁰



Andrew Graves *Jersey* 2015 Oil and wax on gesso board 700x500mm

Damisch speaks of the importance of the ink rather than the brush to make form, the task of the brush to render the living depth of things. Strokes, wrinkles, are utilised to describe a different aspects and to stand in as line, colour, and form. The formal elements; line, tone, composition and form that we would see in Western painting - the brushstroke in Chinese

⁷⁰ Damisch, Hubert. Translated by Lloyd, Janet. *A Theory of Cloud: Towards a History of Painting*, (U.S, Stanford, 2002).

painting does all of these. In traditional Chinese painting the brush does this, not by outlining form, but using its own material and particular means to create structure and texture. Damisch describes how brush and ink become flesh and bone.⁷¹ It is the ink that is used to make forms expand and describe the textural structure of their form and the brush that gives this form its skeleton and framework. The brush expresses a particular language depending on its material and make, it therefore has its own inherent structure and texture. The relationship between the ink and the brush are not simple or linear. A number of principles for Chinese aesthetics were set out by Xie He in the late-fifth-century in his *Guhua pinlu* and describe the synthesis with which the ink and the brush combine.

There are four principles that are set out that include the brushes role to determine the skeletal structure of the painting, how the forms and representation of objects are determined, harmony and the use of colour. The account given by Damisch describes the position and precedence of the ink over the brush suggesting the brush has a hierarchy over the ink, as the ink is easier to have than the brush, the role of the ink in pictorial production preparing the way for the description of form. It is the brush that metamorphoses the ink into a painting. It is therefore the brush that is seen as open or receptive whilst the ink concerns itself with transformation.

The relationship and dialectic is one of hospitality, in which the ink and the brush take on the roles of guest and host, and beyond that the relationship between painting and the universe. The ink is assigned the function of water and is assimilated into the movement of

⁷¹ Damisch, Hubert. Translated by Lloyd, Janet. *A Theory of Cloud: Towards a History of Painting*, (U.S, Stanford, 2002).

the painting. In this painting there is not the idea of copying or rendering external appearance, there is the attempt to allow the animating breath of the figure to be revealed and escape as a truth. The breath must be of the same essence as the object depicted. The figure must constitute the fundamental element of the Unique Brush Stroke and the idea is that this element or figure is drawn out of chaos.⁷²

Yin is a shadow and could therefore be too easily assimilated as the idea of the ancient fable of the birth of painting (the tracing of the shadow onto the cave wall), Plato's cave. This analogy is not useful when discussing these painting's, as they do not seek to render objects. When a Chinese painter draws the shadow of a bamboo that falls upon a window screen, he does not do so in order to fix its outline, but because that device, which acts both as a mark and as a substratum, produces the equivalent of a painting, in which, through abstraction or rather abbreviation, the principle of things is made manifest.⁷³

⁷² Damisch, Hubert. Translated by Lloyd, Janet. *A Theory of Cloud: Towards a History of Painting*, (U.S, Stanford, 2002).

⁷³ Damisch, Hubert. Translated by Lloyd, Janet. *A Theory of Cloud: Towards a History of Painting*, (U.S, Stanford, 2002). p. 214

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Appendix – Paintings

A list of selected exhibitions undertaken during research period (with photographic documentation) 2009 - 2016

2016 Middlesex Phd presentation – Hendon Campus



Source 2016 Oil on panel 800 x 650 mm



Difference 2016 Oil on panel 800 x 650 mm



Drive 2016 Oil on panel 800 x 650 mm

2015//16

Simply Painting Andrew Graves, Vanessa Jackson, Jon Thompson, Rosa Lee.
Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland. (IMAG) travelling to Peacock Visual
Arts, Aberdeen.



Paintings exhibited at Simply Painting (left to right) **Greens and Blues**, **Dark Street**, **Flowers and Jersey** 2014-15 Oil on gesso panels

Installation shots *Simply Painting*



Installation shot from Simply Painting Andrew Graves. Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland. (IMAG) Image: *Jersey* and *Flowers* 2015 700 x 650 mm Oil on gesso panels.



Installation shot from Simply Painting Andrew Graves. Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland. (IMAG) Image: *Dark Street and Greens* and *Blues* 2015 700 x 650 mm Oil on gesso panels.

2014

Spool Andrew Graves, Neil Ruming and Marco Palmeiri Ana Cristea Gallery, New York



Jersey and Wonder 2014 Oil on gesso panel. Installation shot *Spool*. Andrew Graves, Neil Ruming and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.



Lounge, Jersey and Wonder 2014 Oil on gesso panel. Installation shot **Spool**. Andrew Graves, Neil Rummung and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.



Lounge 2012 Oil on gesso panel. Installation shot **Spool**. Andrew Graves, Neil Rummung and Marco Palmieri at Ana Cristea Gallery, New York. 2014.

2013 **Summer Show** Phillip Allen Kiera Bennett Simon Bill Juan Bolivar Claudia Böse
Andrew Graves Lion and Lamb Gallery, London

2012 **The Curator's Egg, Altera Pars** Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London

The Perfect Nude curated by Phillip Allen and Dan Coombs. Wimbledon Space
(touring to Phoenix Gallery, Exeter)



Installation shot - *The Curator's Egg, Altera Pars* Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London.

2012

Andrew Graves Studio 1.1 Gallery, London



Andrew Graves, *Anyone* 2012, Oil on gesso panel with artist's walnut frame. 1400 x 1150 mm

2011

Memory of a Hope Andrew Graves, Angus Braithwaite, Anthony Shapland, Antoine L'Heureux, Bedwyr Williams, Clare Kenny, Dan Ford, Doug Jones, Eleanor Moreton
Ceri Hand Gallery, Liverpool

Mind's Matters Leigh Clarke, Andrew Graves, Bob & Roberta Smith, Marilou van Lierop and Wim Wauman. Gallery Kusseneers Antwerp, Belgium

Fade Away Transition Gallery, London (touring to Gallery North, Newcastle)



Room 2010 Oil on panel 600 x 460 mm



Tomorrow 2011 Oil on canvas 600 x 500 mm

2010

Standing on the Shoulder of Giants Andrew Graves, Curtis Mann, Bob and Roberta Smith, Wim Wauman The Temporary Gallery, Cologne, curated by Caren Jones

Between the Possible and the Real - 4 British Abstract Painters

Jon Thompson, Ben Ravenscroft, Andrew Graves, Andrew Bick. Galerie Kusseneers, Antwerp, Belgium





Andrew Graves (left to right) *Plunge, Fade, End, Mirror and Up*. Oil on gesso panels 2010. Installation shot Dusseldorf/Cologne curated Galerie Caren Jones at Temporary Gallery, Cologne 2010.



2009

Jerwood Contemporary Painters Prize, Jerwood Space, London (touring to PSL, Leeds, Norwich Gallery, Norwich and New Pitville Gallery, Cheltenham)



Vitamin 2009 Oil on gesso panel 550 x 400 mm.