



Image 1 Shannon Forrester, Studio documentation, palette

The Reparative Turn in Painting Monstrous Interventions in Art and Identity Studies

By Shannon Forrester

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Art Research-Painting degree at Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom

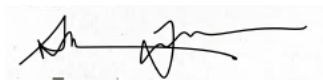
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└ DECLARATION ┘

This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Art Research – Painting at the Royal College of Art. I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Forrester', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Shannon Forrester

12 April 2022

‘Wicked problems’ in socio-political, climate, and economic spheres are on the rise, creating complex threats to survival. Additionally, despite the many human rights gains achieved during recent decades, identity-based inequality and injustice persists disenfranchising some, while granting benefits to others, thus generating an escalating need for repair. This practice-led thesis researches through painting, discourse between painters, and study of painting to discover how narrative, visual, affective, empowering, and transmutative approaches in these practices become reparative by subverting or redressing damage caused by identity-based bias as well as engaging in worldbuilding imbued with hopeful futurities. In personal practice and through participatory action research (PAR), this project explores a multitude of reparative painting methods including production of uplift, speculative work exploring imaginative optimistic futures, expression of wounded narratives, transfer of and/or realization of power, monstrous reclamations, beauty or rage, as well as working towards recovery from trauma. It researches how a reparative turn in painting can generate agency through a psychic/visceral reaching towards an exit from dynamics of identity-based exclusions. Painting provides an article as well as an action through which monsterizing processes of cultural production tied to identity are troubled as well as analysed materially, visually, and in encounter.

This thesis takes up Sedgwick’s call to further reparative reading approaches in research, then moves it further along by positioning painting and embodied practices, instead of reading, as the focus of inquiry hereby moving research beyond language, into material, performative, and encounter generated realms. The research offers findings discovered in studio interview fieldwork, personal studio practice, content transmutation, material aliveness, and conceptions of monstrous repair, then ties them together to demonstrate the multitude of ways these diverse modes work as reparative practices. The “Repair” chapter presents a kind of genealogy of reparative theories from psychoanalysis to queer theory. The “Painting from the Other Side” curatorial PAR chapter uses fieldwork-based studio visit interviews to develop case studies of reparative painting in the practices of eight contemporary painters. These examples illuminate how contemporary painting practices move ambitions for repair from hope to theory, into paint, and later the public realm. The “Painting-Colour” chapter offers further analysis of repair in contextual production by diffractively considering the dynamics of colour and culture through each other as well as how perception emerges in ever becoming encounters. Showing that just as deep blue can turn what appeared to be lavender, pink, cultural productions that monsterize some are just as malleable. The knowledge created here offers a new framework detailing how an embodied and diffractive methodological process can be used to create constructive and productive exits as well as generate agency formation with the capacity to provide release from and repair of the damage resulting from dynamics of othering or monsterizing.

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My thanks and gratitude,
Dr. Shannon Forrester, Ph.D.

└┐ INTRODUCTION ┐└



Image 2 Shannon Forrester, *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters (in progress)*, two of eight, oil on canvas, each 3 ft w x 2 ft h, 2022

This thesis undertakes practice-led research through painting, in discourse between painters, and via study of painting, to discover and evidence the ways painting becomes reparative by tracing its potential to subvert or redress damage caused by identity-based bias. It analyses the approaches through which painting, and as will be explained later painting-colour, work to repair damage caused by culture's propagation of identity-based narratives, tropes, and values designed to monsterize, marginalize, or other those who are its targets. This thesis also engages in participatory action research (PAR) within a curatorial and discourse led practice-oriented community context.¹ Additionally the scope of this thesis engaged with experiments in transmutation working to research the ways content is conveyed and made using different mediums as well as what happens when those mediums are used in multiplicity. An example of this from my painting and poetic project *Begin* follows.² The experiments in transmutation trace the ways meaning, narrative, and content traverse painting, poetics, and theory. This

¹ Michael Glassman and Gizem Erdem, "Participatory Action Research and Its Meanings: Vivencia, Praxis, Conscientization," *Adult Education Quarterly* Vol. 64(3) (2014). There are different models of PAR, it could be helpful to specify that the research design used could be considered as in conversation with the version of PAR as proposed by Glassman and Erdem. They frame this version of PAR as a global method in which the participation of the research subjects, among other differentiators, in the research process is central.

² *Infra*, please see chapter three "Painting-Colour" for more on *Begin* 164-5

multifaceted approach can work to redress systems of othering as well as engage in creating art with the potential to engender hope and enact repair across different registers. This can produce results with perhaps more clarity or that are more compelling because their operation, which remains trained to the content of the work, interacts with more than one sensorial experience and mode of sense making.

It can be clarifying to note at the outset, though the focus of this thesis is on painting, a reparative turn is not medium specific, art specific, or genre specific. It is also neither a style or genre of art, such as landscape or minimalist, nor is it a fad or a way of making that finds the potential scope of its visuality delimited in the ways paintings of those classifications might. Instead, its visuality is open, it might be abstract or representational, figurative or landscape oriented. It can help to consider a reparative turn in painting as a type of action or emergence that can exist within encounters between painting, painter, and/or viewer in any combination.

When considered in this nexus, a reparative turn becomes a kind of doing-making-experiencing; or as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues, a reparative turn can be deployed in the service of a kind of reading.³ In the context of a reparative turn in painting, perhaps that turn to repair can also be thought of as a kind of being in a self or other, who is as of yet unknown

³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You," in *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, ed. Michèle Aina Barale, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). In her seminal essay Sedgwick moved to question the monolithic centrality of the paranoid reading approach. Sedgwick argued that a paranoid reading approach was one that engaged in a kind of fervent and paranoid scanning to expose wrongdoing in culture, writing, events, or actions. 123-151. Whereas she asserted the reparative reading approach was marked by, "The desire of a reparative impulse, on the other hand, is additive and accretive. Its fear a realistic one, is that the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nature..." 149.

or unfamiliar, but becoming; their emergence marked by a kind of enhanced agency or somehow mended trauma. Then, the idea of reading within the scope of this thesis should not be understood as singular linguistic “reading”, but as a way of experiencing/-seeing/thinking/understanding/considering/working through via painting; that can occur within painters as well as viewers. This thesis describes reparative painting as a mode of practice that offers the potential to generate agency, address or redress traumas and pain caused by inflictions of othering; while also offering a capacity allowing us to imagine ourselves and the world anew through an approach that utilises repair as a lens of analysis and conceptual position.

The reparative is an action, perhaps a lens for the mind, a reaching desire to repair something and make it better. Critically, the reparative turn examined here implies a movement towards an exit through which issues related to marginalization based on race, gender, and sexuality bias, can find some aspect of repair as well as an implied, and/or clear, agency that allows one (be they artist or viewer) to reach towards something better. For those drawn to reparative work, their ambition can be driven by a hunger often linked to a desire to subvert wrongs, heal pain (psychic, emotional, physical,) exact revenge against and/or express/expose pain related to oppression, generate beauty, empower, peace, joy and/or to experience something with the potential to improve things for themselves and/or others. The reparative is related to the subject’s position and (in the case of this project) their personal psycho emotional as well as socio-political context, desires, hopes, and experiences. It is important to add that what is reparative for one, does not have to be reparative for another, or all others, to function. In other words, the content of its aim and impact cannot be universalized.

This thesis contributes a first comprehensive introduction, analysis, and demonstration of reparative painting practice theory. In its analysis of painting's reparative potential the research illuminates the avenues through which painting practice (in its coexistence as verb, noun, and an event far more complex than the sum of both) can become reparative for the artist as well as the viewer. The scope of reparative work this thesis is focused on includes painting practices that work to mend, redress, or generate agency; as part of an ambition to fight against a diverse constellation of impacts wrought by social injustice dynamics related to misogyny, homophobia, and racism. This thesis will also discuss the ways reparative painting operates as a process impacting the artist themselves, through their creation of the painting(s). Further, the potential for viewers to find some element of repair related to the aforementioned dynamics within their experience viewing a painting will also be addressed here.

This thesis research is focused on reparative practices working against hegemonic systems tied primarily to racism, misogyny, and homophobia; systems that create a multitude of inequities by activating circulation of identity-based currency. These anti-humane systems of othering are endemic, activated through culture in several different ways, against several different population groups. They infect most life spheres including the psychological, emotional, ecological, educational, and economic; eroding agency while propagating trauma. The selection of these three systems should in no way be understood to imply that, for example, systems of othering based on religion, class, caste, etc. are somehow not relevant or are unimportant in relation to reparative painting. Instead, the three systems within the scope of this thesis topic were selected based on the researcher's field and a requirement to

reasonably limit the scope of this research to a subset of specific topics and their relation to discovery of reparative painting.

In the contemporary, crises in socio-political, climate, and economic spheres seem to be on the rise, presenting complex threats to human and nonhuman flourishing. Though these issues seem to be present globally, this thesis limits its focus to painting and theory that in some way intersects primarily with North America, Europe, and in some cases states such as Cyprus and Nigeria (which were former colonies of the United Kingdom). Despite the many human rights gains during recent decades, inequality, racism, misogyny, homophobia, social, and climate injustices persist. These issues are what design theorists Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber describe as “wicked problems”.⁴ These problems have grown more acute because of the global coronavirus pandemic. Rittel and Webber argue that if any improvements to wicked problems are to be achieved it will demand creative working because such complex problems cannot be addressed using standard research approaches. The systems of social injustice this thesis addresses, as well as those proposed as “wicked” by Rittel and Webber, are not only complex, they argue that they are also unique.⁵

This thesis researches a collection of unique wicked problems faced by contemporary painters, explaining the creative working each engaged in to redress, bring about, or generate some type of repair on the painful fallout related to othering systems. This research puts

⁴ Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973). "Wicked problems, in contrast [to tamer ones with clear missions and answers], have neither of these clarifying traits; and they include nearly all public policy issues--whether the question concerns the location of a freeway, the adjustment of a tax rate, the modification of school curricula, or the confrontation of crime."

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⁵ Ibid. 164

forward monsterizing as a mode of othering that works to define groups of people as Other, as less than human, as having negative traits, as being of poor character, shameful, or depraved. The toxicity of these cultural narratives is matched, as well as furthered, by the power they have to influence. Understanding those pivotal qualities of monsterizing's success is critical to the development of any methods that may succeed in eroding the dominance of their systems of bias as well as repairing the damage they cause. Any such a method would at least require powerful influential capabilities. Therefore, painting and its capability for powerful sensorial visual encounter is utilized as the primary method of research in this thesis.

For example the researcher's *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* eight painting series investigates how painting-colour and cultural production can be considered through each other while also demonstrating how the material of painting-colour can work as evidence as well as a generator of perception.⁶ The term painting-colour accounts for the way paint is imbued with colour just as colour is imbued in paint, to a point of mutual inextricability for those with colour vision. It also refers to its ontology as a particle and a wave in encounter, while concurrently considering what this indicates about the dynamics of meaning formation and repair that painting-colour generates.

In "Venus in Two Acts" Saidiya Hartman considers how creative working can engage in repair of wicked problems, specifically the deep traumas and unknowns of the slave trades horrific

⁶ Infra, "Painting-Colour" chapter 3, 117 and Amy Sillman, "On Color," in *Painting Beyond Itself: The Medium in the Post-Medium Condition*, ed. Isabelle Graw and Ewa Lajer-Burchard (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016). "To deal with color as a painter is to render these overarching problems [colour as subject, material, content, object et al] as physical propositions, as sensuous experiences synesthetically merged under the sign of the hand." 105

middle passage. For example, amidst the rampant socio-political traumas and tragedies of racism as well as the ongoing trauma of slavery, Hartman asks "... what does one do in the meantime? What are the stories one tells in dark times? How can a narrative of defeat enable a place for the living or envision an alternative future?"⁷ Practices of painting seeking to repair damages caused by dynamics of monsterizing or othering offer a way of creative working, even in the direst times on the most difficult of content. Painting can envision, propose, and visualise what might be, what could be. In *The Future*, Nick Montfort says the future itself is to be made through future-making. Further and of relevance to issues of othering and monsterizing he states, "It's impossible to look at positive, productive visions of the future without seeing the contexts of despair out of which they arise or into which they sink."⁸ Montfort goes on to argue that it is time to engage in the serious work of *creating* a better future, a critical facet and belief shared with reparative painting practice theory. As painters can find repair in painting possible futurities, Hartman and Montfort reach for it through prose, narratives, and imaginative working; bell hooks says through theorizing, "I found a place where I could imagine possible futures, a place where life could be lived differently... Fundamentally I learned from this experience that theory could be a healing place."⁹ Each of these elements, hopeful futurity, theory, imaginary, and narrative, are often evidenced in reparative painting.

In reference to the capacity of reparative painting to foster departure from the difficulty of what is, to a better future, Michel Foucault's essay "What Is Enlightenment?" has important

⁷ Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 26 (2008). 14

⁸ Nick Montfort, *The Future*, The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2017). 149-150

⁹ bell hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 4, no. 1 (1991). 2

relevance. In it Foucault responds to Immanuel Kant's description of the exit, expanding on it by placing the exit in the context of becoming mature as well as arguing that maturity requires being able to claim the power, the agency, to lead.

Kant indicates right away that the "way out" that characterizes Enlightenment is a process that releases us from the status of "immaturity." And by "immaturity," he means a certain state of our will that makes us accept someone else's authority to lead us in areas where the use of reason is called for¹⁰

Foucault further describes Kant's take on the exit as the moment "...when humanity is going to put its own reason to use, without subjecting itself to any authority..."¹¹ This exit is marked by emergence of agency. The exit in reparative painting can revoke the authority of another (such as culture, government, an institution, a dictator, a bigot, or similar) to reason on one's behalf, while concurrently claiming one's own agency (in the case of the painter or the viewer) to undertake one's own reasoning through painting or encounters with painting.

The following chapters analyse and recount many ways reparative painting creates the chance for an exit from systems of domination. If successful, reparative painting or paintings can allow one access to potential selves and futures beyond the limiting constructs exerted by hegemonic systems of power. Foucault calls for this work of reaching enlightenment to be "...translated into the labour of diverse inquiries."¹² Asserting that it should include practices as well as strategies seeking to achieve liberty. A reparative turn in painting is one way to answer this call. The exit and in the case of this research the reparative turn in painting, allows

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). 34. Also in reference to Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?," *Berlinische Monatschrift*, November 1784.

¹¹ Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?." 37-38

¹² Ibid. 50

us to go beyond, to break through limits set on some by othering systems governed by external reasoning.

The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.¹³

Since the civil rights movements in the US started to gain major traction (March on Washington: 1963; Stonewall riot: 1969; ERA marches: 1972), fields of identity studies in North America have engaged in expansive analysis of hegemonic systems using what Sedgwick describes as a paranoid-based reading approach often focused on exposing methods, actions, and aims of oppression. This research is anchored in part by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal essay "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You" which deftly argues these points in relationship to fields focused on liberatory studies related to women, gender, and queer theory.¹⁴ In the essay Sedgwick argues strongly for the merits of and value in pursuit of reparative reading research approaches in relation to these fields of scholarship.

Sedgwick proposed that a critical reparative-based approach offers promising, productive, and undiscovered potential to generate repair as well as produce movement toward an exit

¹³ Ibid. 50

¹⁴ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." 123-152

from identity-based bias by reaching for pleasure rather than avoiding shame while also assimilating the violence and trauma that permeates these systems.¹⁵ This thesis takes up Sedgwick's call to further research informed by reparative ambitions, then moves it further along by positioning painting and embodied practices, rather than reading, as the focus of inquiry. Moving the field of research beyond language into material, performative, and encounter generated realms.

As Heather Love says about Sedgwick, "So many of us feel compelled to answer Sedgwick's call.." and "Reading her work tends to open unexpected conceptual possibilities, ways of thinking, gestures, and tones."¹⁶ On reparative reading, Love also references Judith Butler's recounting of reading Sedgwick saying that it "has moved her to think otherwise... it has demanded that I think in a way that I did not know that thought could do""¹⁷ This thesis is not claiming that Butler, or Love, were specifically including painting or other practices as the types of expanded new thinking they were referring to. This thesis however does argue that

¹⁵ Ibid., 94-123

¹⁶ Heather Love, "Truth and Consequences: On Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," *Criticism; Detroit* 52, no. 2 (2010). 239 and 235

¹⁷ As seen in Heather Love (fn 15) above in reference to Judith Butler, "Capacity," in *Regarding Sedgwick : Essays on Queer Culture and Critical Theory*, ed. Stephen M Barber and David L. Clark (New York: Routledge, 2002). 109

painting is just that, sites that allow for thinking otherwise, ways to manifest unexpected possibilities, and more.



Image 3 Shannon Forrester, Untitled drawing, pastel on Arches, circa 1986.

As is apparent in the first images of drawings I created in the mid-eighties, monsters and the monstrous narratives they inhabit have long been part of my art. My earliest monster work was drawn with either rough black and white mark making using media such as pencil, charcoal, or ink, or created with brilliant, saturated colours in pastel. These drawings clearly incorporate monsters and monstrous narrative; it will also be explained that the pastel drawings incorporate a reparative turn, which along with the monsters, is central to the focus of this research. The reparative turn in these works might be understood as an act of recovery.

A recovering and caring for someone's skeletal remains which are a kind of disembodied record of the human who died, perhaps they retain some echo of the violence or traumas they suffered in life. The women might be reclaiming them to mourn them, or to love them in the only ways possible after death, through their encounter with remnants of the prior

selves now gone. Perhaps they are practicing care by engaging in recovery as a means of repairing their own traumas from such a loss? If there were perpetrators who caused the deaths, they likely saw these people in all their aliveness. Perhaps they saw their victims as less than human, as monstrous, as other? The black and white drawing might be a monster



Image 4 Shannon Forrester, *Untitled drawing, pastel on Arches, circa 1986*

at last vanquishing their tormenter, or is it monsterizing winning out over the othered? Perhaps the narrative here is not meant to be one figure against another, but instead multiple casualties of some horrible event? Or a single

figure captured at multiple moments in time? The monster is far from binary. Its depth and complexity make it capable of being understood in many ways allowing it to operate on many levels of meaning. To be affective painting need not close down its meaning.¹⁸ Sometimes this openness and multivalence of meaning can be the means through which painting finds its power.

Practices of care and repair are similarly multivalent as well as affective, often found working as prominent forces in visual art. Multivalence is a quality consistently present in this thesis, particularly in relation to meaning in painting and the reparative turn. The incorporation of

¹⁸ For early work on affect Silvan S. Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness : The Complete Edition*, 2 vols. (New York: Springer Pub., 2008). For more recent work Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). and on affect art and feminism Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling : Affect and the Feminine Avant-Garde* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011); "Rethinking Visual Pleasure : Aesthetics and Affect," *Theory and Psychology* 17, no. 4 (2007).

practices of care and repair here demands an innovative approach to artistic research methodology. A methodology capable of enfolding the transdisciplinary nature of this project's investigations in painting, colour, curation, materiality, culture, and interdisciplinary theory, with a research design structured by an ethic of care required in projects of repair.



Image 5 Shannon Forrester, Untitled drawing, graphite and charcoal on paper, circa 1985

Like the drawings discussed earlier, the painting research included here also has a diverse aesthetic approach presenting different visual worlds that non the less share in their inclusion of some reparative element. Of the twelve paintings created by the author that led the research for this dissertation, nine include monsters as central characters, while others reference aspects of monsters or monsterizing. Further, the piece titled *Begin* engages painting about the way patriarchal cultures monsterize women and girls. *Beautiful Monster*,

Begin, *Feather Scales I* and *Feather Scales II* are painted lushly with rich brushstrokes of colour, while the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* paintings are more austere. The *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series is most focused on the colour interaction of the compositions while also including monsterizing as its subject. These are not simply paintings of a monster character, but rather a of the eight monsters in their relative encounter with the colour field surrounding them, how that carries across the series, and what this material relation means to the wider scope of this research, as discussed in “Painting-Colour” chapter 3.¹⁹



Image 6 Shannon Forrester, *Feather Scales I*, oil on canvas, 19.5 in w x 13.5 in h, 2018



Image 7 Shannon Forrester, *Feather Scales I*, oil on canvas, 24 in w x 24 in h, 2018

Halberstam argues that the power of horror, and its monstrous characters, lies in their ability to “transform political struggles into psychological conditions then blur the distinction between the two.”²⁰ When these monstrous figures emerge, their presence conveys an intensity imbued with affective power. Monsters can stand in for the abjectified Other, the

¹⁹ *Infra*, Ch. 3 117

²⁰ Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows : Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995). 18

unexpected hero, the one who is terribly free of the state's controls, and more.²¹ Part of this can be traced to what these beings might stand in for, which, in the case of the monstrous, is often a power-charged symbolic character or narrative. Additionally, the monster can be used to shape the identity-based characters of those who culture seeks to render as not fully human, other, hybrid, or some combination. As detailed above, the scope of research for this project has many facets and while the monstrous is only one, the links that emerged between othering and monsterizing caused it to become increasingly central to the project over time. The power of monsterizing, how it is used to propagate cultures of oppression, as well as how that monstrous power can be used conversely to subvert marginalization through a reparative turn of empowerment are key reasons for the monster's prominence in this submission.



Image 9 Shannon Forrester, *Beautiful Monster* Installation documentation, oil on canvas, 42 in w x 72 in h, 2018

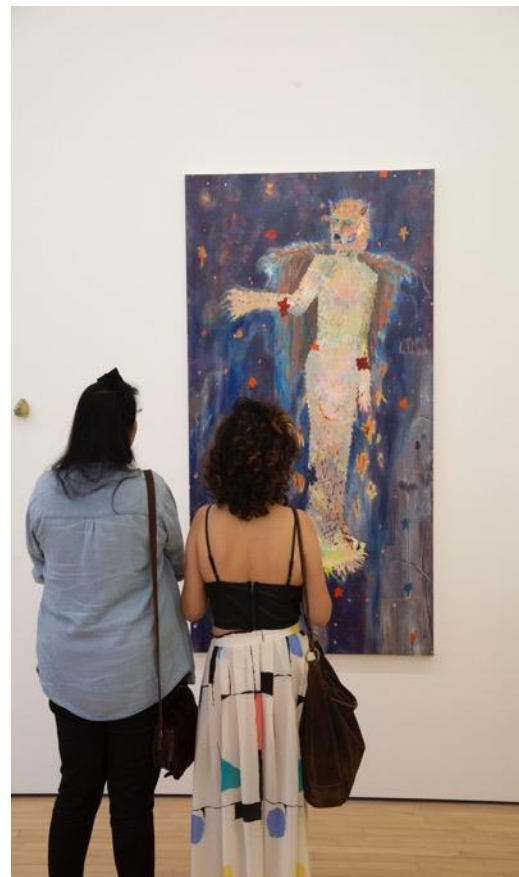


Image 8 Shannon Forrester, *Beautiful Monster* installation documentation, oil on canvas, 42 in w x 72 in h, 2018

²¹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror : An Essay on Abjection*, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). "The abject shatters the wall of repression and its judgements." 14

In "Venus in Two Acts" Saidiya Hartman conveys an unwelcome truth, that freedom is an incomplete project.²² Tragically, there is a clear line connecting historical injustice to the unjust inequitable circumstances of today. These injustices can build upon systems of othering that dehumanize, monsterize, or both. Monstrous othering persists in our time, remaining ubiquitous, while the critical project of freedom and humanness continues in a painfully incomplete state. This research considers ways these projects of freedom and humanness might be moved forward through creative practice engaged in reparative approaches directed at identity productions. It aims to discover how painting can engage in the kinds of invention that hold definitional cultural power, while creating agencies anew.



Image 11 Shannon Forrester, Colour and the Relativity of Monsters #1 and #2 of 8 (in progress) each 3 ft w x 2 ft h, oil on canvas, 2022

As referred to previously, monsterizing exists in many sites beyond realms of fiction and media.²³ For example in the public sphere, monsterizing is often deployed by those invested in projects of othering while it can also serve as a site where these cultural productions take root. One example of how culture deploys monsterizing in favor of some, while causing harm

²² Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts." 4

²³ Supra introduction 10

to others can be found in the homicide trial of Kyle Rittenhouse.²⁴ During jury selection in the fall of 2021 Kenosha County Circuit Judge Bruce Schroeder, who presided over the trial, said that Anthony M. Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum, who Kyle Rittenhouse was charged with murdering, as well as Gaige Grosskreutz who Rittenhouse was charged with shooting, “can potentially be referred to at his trial as “rioters” or “looters,” ... while reiterating his long-held view that attorneys should not use the word “victim.”²⁵ This disturbing regulation of language use by the judge offers but one example of how monsterizing is deployed by those who wield the definitional power to legislate, enforce, and reenforce its validity in the public sphere.

This thesis also includes curatorial and discourse oriented participatory action research (PAR) that involved research participant artists from Royal College of Art’s MA Painting programme.²⁶ The PAR activity also generated an exhibition titled “Painting from the Other Side”.²⁷ PAR was pivotal in creating the case studies included in the “Painting from the Other Side” chapter which work to present the many ways artists engage in reparative painting

²⁴ Complainant and Deputy District Attorney Carli McNeill Angelina Gabriele, “State of Wisconsin Plaintiff Vs. Kyle H. Rittenhouse Defendant,” (Kenosha, Wisconsin USA: State of Wisconsin Circuit Court Kenosha County, 2020). This language protocol creates a way for those who were murdered or gravely injured (because of Rittenhouse shooting them with his automatic rifle), to be referred to as criminals. Criminals are often monsterized in the public sphere while it is commonly understood that victims, unlike rioters or looters, is a term that elicits human connection, empathy, and sorrow. Though Rittenhouse acknowledges shooting these three men, two of them fatally, they cannot be called victims during the murder trial. The trial of Kyle Rittenhouse took place from November 1 to 19, 2021 in Kenosha County Circuit Court, Wisconsin USA. Charges included count 1: first degree reckless homicide, use of a dangerous weapon, count 2: first degree recklessly endangering safety, use of a dangerous weapon, count 3: first degree intentional homicide, use of a dangerous weapon, count 4 attempt first degree intentional homicide, use of a dangerous weapon, count 5 first degree recklessly endangering safety, use of a dangerous weapon, and count 6: possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18. Rittenhouse was found not guilty on all counts.

²⁵ Jenn Selva and Kelly McCleary, “As Trial Approaches, Judge May Allow the Men Kyle Rittenhouse Shot to Be Called ‘Rioters’ or ‘Looters’ -- but ‘Victim’ Isn’t Allowed,” CNN WarnerMedia, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/27/us/kyle-rittenhouse-trial-victim-terminology/index.html>.

²⁶ Erdem, “Participatory Action Research and Its Meanings: Vivencia, Praxis, Conscientization.” There are different models of PAR, it could be helpful to specify that the research design used could be considered as in conversation with the version of PAR as proposed by Glassman and Erdem. They frame this version of PAR as a global method in which the participation of the research subjects, among other differentiators, in the research process is central.

²⁷ *Infra*, Chapter 2 “Painting from the Other Side” 68

practices to subvert aspects of identity-based marginalization and generate agency. In addition to this thesis and the exhibition research output, some of the results generated by the PAR were published in “Painting from the Other Side: Tracing the Reparative Turn in Contemporary Practice” a journal article by the author.²⁸

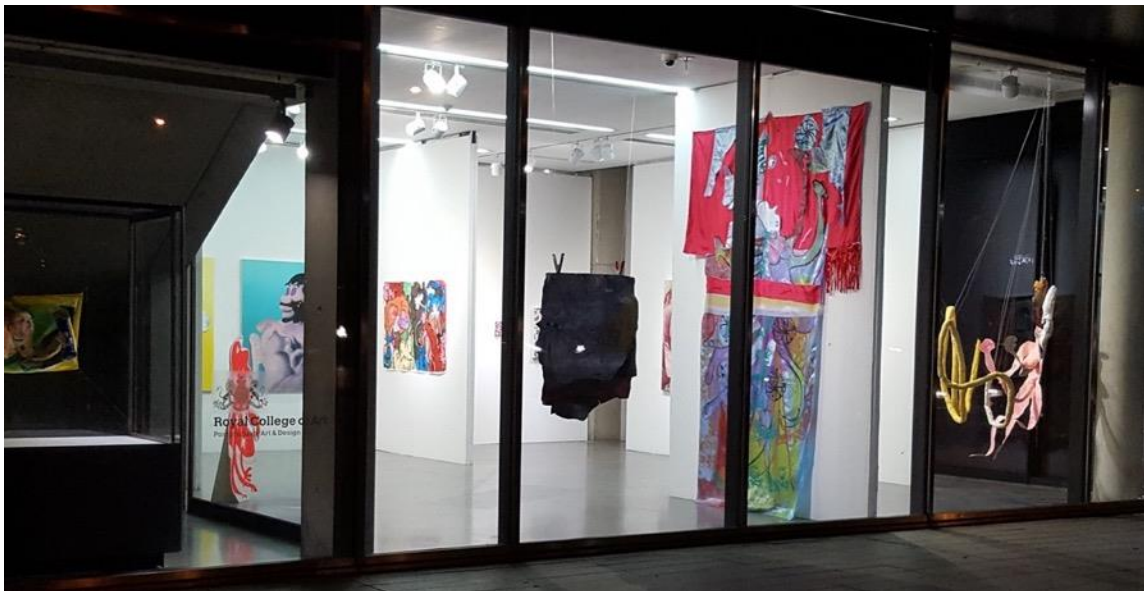


Image 12 Installation View, Painting from the Other Side, Dyson Gallery, London UK, 2-7 April 2019, curated by Shannon Forrester

The PAR case studies traced the ways paintings: reclaim power from the enterprise of colonial, postcolonial, and reconstruction era education in Nigeria, render the abject beautiful, tell the truth about racial as well as gender-based injustice, and much more. Each research participant presented works of beautiful invention embracing a reparative aim and hope at their core seemed made anew in each piece. Each engage with conversations in fields of women's, gender, cultural, and sexuality studies differently. During the PAR process many aspects of the approach, such as its interactivity, equity between researcher and research subjects, or use of a more collaborative research method, proved pivotal to flushing out the

²⁸ Shannon Forrester, "Painting from the Other Side: Tracing the Reparative Turn in Contemporary Practice," *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal* Vol. 5 No. 1 no. Encountering Artistic Research Practices: Analyzing their Critical Social Potentialities (2020).

potential of reparative painting. Perhaps the most important site where this transpired was in the studio encounters with research participant artists.²⁹

The central research questions for this project reference methodology, practice-led reparative research, and ways the material-visual forms of painting can be used to put them into action. They ask how can a diffractive methodology be used in transdisciplinary practice-led research? How will a painting-led approach, grounded in materiality instead of reading, further reparative oriented research? In relation to the centrality of painting-led research, how can colour, aesthetics, form, paint, narrative, and material be mobilized to engender agency and reparative affect?

This painting-led thesis is structured by a diffractive methodology in concert with a reparative aim and position.³⁰ Barad describes diffraction as a phenomena that "... has to do with the way waves combine when they overlap and the apparent bending and spreading out of waves

²⁹ I extend my gratitude to the research participant artists without whom this project in its current form would not have been possible. As mentioned, work by the artists involved in this part of the research is discussed in depth in chapter 2 "Painting from the Other Side". In addition to those case studies, a total of twenty artists applied to the exhibition open call. Therefore, there were many more participant interviews and discussions than the small number of artists whose work I wrote about in depth here. This thanks extends to everyone involved, with extra appreciation for those whose work is profiled in chapter 2 as they generously dedicated extended time to our discussions in their studios. That time, discourse, and collaboration allowed us to discern ways they used reparative action in their painting, which proved crucial in terms of arriving at the findings highlighted in the culmination of this research.

³⁰ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). Mieke Verloo, "Intersectionaliteit En Interferentie : Hoe Politiek En Beleid Ongelijkheid Behouden, Bestrijden En Veranderen (Intersectionality and Interference: How Politics and Policies Keep, Fight, and Change Inequality" (paper presented at the inaugural lecture, Radboud university nijmegen, 2009). As seen in Evelien Geerts and Iris van der Tuin, "From Intersectionality to Interference: Feminist onto-Epistemological Reflections on the Politics of Representation," *Women's Studies International Forum* 41, no. November–December (2013). As translated by Geerts and van der Tuin, Verloo describes interference as "the convergence of waves (light/sound/water), which results in patterns of intensification or higher intensity, while there are also places where the waves cancel each other out or are weakened." 172

when they encounter an obstruction.”³¹ Barad continues theorizing diffraction in much of *Meeting the Universe Halfway* and importantly to this project, proposes that the phenomena of diffraction can be used as a methodology. Diffraction in use as a methodology here can be considered as a mode of thinking with that comes from physics but in this application,

... involves reading insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter.³²

Diffractional consideration and reparative actions shape the methodology of this research. They might be understood as positions of research approach. Perhaps similarities can be drawn to points of view or perspectives insofar as their role in this research is to orchestrate the approach to it. Further, this methodology is cocreated, or made with, its position which is informed by its aim (reparative) and way of thinking (diffractional). It then moves sites of content, material, encounter, and production dynamics into the frame for consideration. Within the scope of this research, practices of painting, discourse, and writing became active sites engaged in considering the ways material aliveness, encounter, art’s potential to create social agency, engage with and are diffracted through, identity studies, colour philosophy,

³¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. 28 Diffraction is defined by Barad as “Diffraction has to do with the way waves combine when they overlap and the apparent bending and spreading out of waves when they encounter an obstruction.” 28 and further of particular relevance to this thesis “One important aspect that I discuss is that diffraction does not fix what is the object and what is the subject in advance, and so, unlike methods of reading one text or set of ideas against another where one set serves as a fixed frame of reference, diffraction involves reading insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter.” 30. and “if the goal is to think the social and the natural together, to take account of how both factors matter (not simply to recognize that they both do matter) , then we need a method for theorizing the relationship between “the natural” and “the social” together without defining one against the other or holding either nature or culture as the fixed referent for understanding the other. What is needed is a diffraction apparatus to study these entanglements.” 30.

³² Ibid. 30

monster theory, and curation. Practices of painting, writing, and curation are at the foreground here, but a type of social justice engaged pedagogy also emerged in the context of the PAR elements of this research. This is because much of the discovery came through the ongoing transdisciplinary encounters, which allowed the research to exist in an ever becoming anew mode that continually developed as the project progressed to submission.

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, there are three chapters included in this thesis. Chapter one "Repair" introduces thinking on repair and reparative approaches as well as how they work in the research methodology of this thesis. The selected theories of repair include "Love, Guilt, and Reparation", Melanie Klein's contribution to child psychology which became foundational to Sedgwick's theory of reparative and paranoid reading practices.³³ As the framing of repair within child psychology is not as relevant to this research in comparison to how Sedgwick used some of its ideas, the chapter quickly moves on from Klein into discussion with more contemporary cultural studies oriented work by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Susan Best. Sedgwick's proposal for the potential of reparative approaches to research addressing systems of bias is of primary significance, specifically "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You".³⁴ The essay calls for pursuit of reparative approaches to cultural studies in part, and importantly, because the reparative position has the power to offer something new and uniquely enhancing in relation to the field's aim to further social justice.

³³ Melanie Klein, "Love, Guilt, and Reparation," in *Love, Guilt, and Reparation, and Other Works, 1921-1945* (United Kingdom: Vintage, 1975; reprint, 1998).

³⁴ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." 94-123

Best's *Reparative Aesthetics* moves these ideas of reparative work specifically into the realm of art.³⁵ Best focuses primarily on photography by Milagros de la Torre, Ann Ferran, Fiona Pardington, and Rosângela Rennó to examine how it might heal collective cultural traumas in conversation with many ideas put forth by Sedgwick.³⁶ Of interest here is Best's suggestion that perhaps the way to consider Sedgwick's arguments on reparative research is not to imagine it as a full departure from the dominant paranoid approaches. Instead, suggesting the reparative reading approach might be inhabited by the paranoid, especially in work engaged in a project of exposure, in this case exposure of mass cultural injustices or violence, where the artworks seek to repair those wrongs. Best conveys that this position blending paranoid and reparative "... would mean remaining attuned to the idea of exposure while tempering this paranoid way of doing things with openness to the ameliorative and the aesthetic."³⁷ The question of how aesthetics and reparative practice engage with each other is also a core focus of *Reparative Aesthetics*. The transformative potential of reparative aesthetics is far reaching yet, as is also argued by Sedgwick about feminism and queer theory, it has not been the predominant method used in politically invested art combating oppression.

In the genealogy of reparative theories, Melanie Klein's *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* presented her psychoanalytic theory on paranoid, murderous, depressive, and reparative dynamics in

³⁵ Susan Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*, 1 ed. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016).

³⁶ Ibid. Milagros de la Torre, "Artist Website," <https://www.milagrosdelatorre.com>. Ann Ferran, "Artist Cv," https://anneferran.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/anne-ferran_cv_december-20181.pdf. The Arts Foundation, "Dr Fiona Pardington's Biography," The Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi, <https://www.thearts.co.nz/artists/dr-fiona-pardington>. Rosângela Rennó, "Tate Artist Profile Page," Tate, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/rosangela-renno-8376>.

³⁷ Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. 32.

children and it remains a foundational work to ideas on repair.³⁸ Aspects of Klein's writing on reparation were a key influence for Sedgwick in "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading" which became a chapter in her book *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*.³⁹ In its migration from British to American context, Sedgwick changed the term 'reparation' to 'reparative' and instead of working the theories through developmental psychology, Sedgwick made an initial proposal as to how one might diffract them through feminist and queer critical reading practices.⁴⁰ Much about Sedgwick's thoughts on the reparative approach were at the early stage of development, or as Olivia Laing describes "At the end of her essay, Sedgwick sketches the bones of an alternative approach".⁴¹ This thesis takes up research from her proposal advocating for the promise of reparative reading practice, then develops it using a transdisciplinary practice-led approach. This thesis continues working with reparative reading practice in feminism and queer theory, while also adding social agency in art theory informed by bell hooks and others. hooks suggests that "...experiencing art can enhance our understanding of what it means to live as free subjects in an unfree world."⁴² The reparative turn can move us closer to being free of the constraints and trauma caused by these hegemonic systems of identity-based bias.

Discerning how these ideas emerge within practice is central to the research questions of this thesis, which made it important to introduce ways the reparative turn is generated through

³⁸ Klein, "Love, Guilt, and Reparation." 306-343

³⁹ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." 123-152

⁴⁰ *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Series Q (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). Of note is that in the European context reparation is commonly used as the term to reference a state, often Germany, paying restitution for war crimes.

⁴¹ Olivia Laing, "Bad Surprises," in *Funny Weather : Art in an Emergency* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020). 115

⁴² bell hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: New Press, 1995). 9

encounter, as well as located and enacted within or through creative practice. This thesis introduces the reparative as an ambition for something better, something that offers a constructive action, a re-making-inventing of an empowered-self narrative, undertakes of a kind of surgery on wounds inflicted by systemic oppression. Joshua Chambers-Letson's ideas on the reparative's capabilities to help us live-with the impact of traumas argue that "Reparation is not about being able to repair oneself into some kind of mythical (and impossible) whole subject,but about finding ways to live and love in relation to the injuries of our pasts and futures."⁴³ He extends this further by shaping reparation as a critical project for our very survival by arguing that reparation should be considered "... a process for transformation (materially, politically, and psychically), as well as a process to achieve survival against ongoing and future violence."⁴⁴ This reparative ambition in the context of a creative imaginary engaged with the many possible new existence(s) repair might produce works to create a hopeful exit from the shadows cast and traumas inflicted by hegemonic othering.⁴⁵

Chapter 2 "Painting from the Other Side" details the PAR practice aspect of this thesis including the curatorial element, how interview encounters with research participant artists drew out each of their novel reparative painting practices. The chapter offers nine case studies on the work of research participant artists selected through an exhibition open call process. The research participant artists are contemporary emerging painters and at the time of the PAR activity, all the research participant artists featured in the case studies included in

⁴³ Joshua Chambers-Letson, "Reparative Feminisms, Repairing Feminism-Reparation, Postcolonial Violence, and Feminism," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, no. Issue 2: Reparations (2007). 173.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 176

⁴⁵ Hegemonic othering is a term used here to indicate the powerful ways those in authority work to other certain people using systems of governmentality, control, power, culture, ideology, economics, education, and similar.

in chapter 2 were enrolled in the MA Painting programme at the RCA in London, UK. They were an international cohort hailing from many different countries including Columbia, Cyprus, Nigeria, United Kingdom, and United States. The artists employ a diverse array of reparative approaches in their painting which address issues of race, gender, and/or queerness. The research participant artists were selected for the way repair emerged in their individual paintings as a means of exit from trauma inflicted by dynamics of otherings dehumanizing impacts.

In this thesis curation integrated PAR engaged in here is to be considered a practice medium as well as a research method.⁴⁶ Maura Reilly's work in social justice curatorial practice is informative to this aspect of the thesis as it offers important related interdisciplinary thinking grounded in reparative approaches to curation.⁴⁷ Reilly cites that one of her key aims is to expose the mechanisms that "ensure some artists are celebrated while others are marginalised."⁴⁸ Curatorial activism also intervenes in the construction of the canon, resists the status quo, and seeks to achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion in fine art curatorial projects.

Chapter 3 "Painting-Colour" positions painting in the realm of colour, or more accurately painting-colour, then demonstrates how qualities imbued in sensorial colour experience production, that emerge during contextual encounter, shares similar traits with cultural

⁴⁶ Alison Green, *When Artists Curate : Contemporary Art and the Exhibition as Medium, Art since the '80s* (London, UK: Reaktion Books, 2018). 245-247

⁴⁷ Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (2018); "What Is Curatorial Activism?," ARTnews2017.

⁴⁸ *Curatorial Activism : Towards an Ethics of Curating* (New York, USA: Thames & Hudson, 2018). 21

production. Building on these common dynamics of production, the chapter then explores how, due to these shared characteristics, painting-colour holds rich potential as a medium to move forward reparative-based cultural work that addresses identity-based dynamics of exclusion. Key works in colour studies informing this chapter include Josef Albers' *Color Interaction* and M. Churimuuta's *Outside Color*.⁴⁹

Color Interaction contributes key methods to the practice-led material elements of this research. Particularly how Albers' close looking in colour interaction between larger and smaller colour fields informed my *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* painting series. While *Outside Color* offered a survey of the controversies surrounding colour ontology, which this thesis argues has many commonalities with identity production. Next, tying together these practices of painting-colour and colour interaction with the aim of this dissertation, approaches to repair damage caused by issues of identity production, the research in the "Painting-Colour" chapter turns towards monster figures in the author's *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series as it looks towards monster theory in an expansion of the scope of cultural analysis investigation covered previously. Weinstock's *Monster Theory Reader* and *Skin Shows* by Halberstam offer key conceptualizations of monstrous production, narratives and meanings of the monster in society, and society's aims for the monster.⁵⁰ "Painting-Colour" also recounts the detailed research process of how the *Colour and the Relativity of*

⁴⁹ Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color*, 50th anniversary edition ed. (New Haven Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013; repr., 4th); M. Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts ; London, England: MIT Press, 2015).

⁵⁰ Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, ed. *The Monster Theory Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020). Contemporary monster theory works to analyse, expose, and research the dynamics of the monster in culture. "What differentiates contemporary monster theory from the theorization of monsters in earlier periods is primarily the position that monstrosity is a socially constructed category reflecting culturally specific anxieties and desires, and often deployed-wittingly or not-to achieve particular socio-political objectives." 25 Halberstam, *Skin Shows : Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*.

Monsters paintings were created to demonstrate the power of the role of painting-colour in contextual production of identity or perception of it as well as its ability to influence perceptions of what seems real. As Chirimuuta explains we perceive the world visually through a combination of interactions between the environment, objects, and the animal perceiving it all so it should be expected that some of the problems in understanding colour are “perceiver-related”.⁵¹ The role of diffractive methodology continues to be important to the research design of this thesis as the findings demand consideration through multiple disparate theories and practices to ascertain the meaning of the results.

Chapter 3 also expands on my personal painting-led practice in transdisciplinary conversation with this project’s research questions. Reparative ambitions, visually embodied in the materiality of paint, driven by the visceral imperative of a desire for what hopeful futures repair might offer. It presents, then furthers, an experience I term painting from the inside. Unlike art history and criticism, research based on painting from the inside is practice-led. Emerging from the ways paintings, through their embodied forms, can transmute meaning, narrative, or repair in visual, material, and conceptual encounter. This method of painting from the inside practice-led research, offers additional insights when compared to analysing paintings by looking at painting from the outside, painting as object. Painting from the inside is the painter’s position. Mining access to painting as a transdisciplinary action, one that evolves through time, in encounter, with paint, memory, the imaginary or the observed, and via practice.

⁵¹ Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*. 6

This thesis is also part of the project of feminist art history which Linda Nochlin started with her essay "Why Have there Been no Great Women Artists".⁵² In the follow up essay Nochlin offers her reflections on where the project was after thirty years of work arguing that there had been progress, yet there was still a significant distance between the circumstances of women artists today and reaching equitable status for artists who are women, sexual minorities, or people of colour. She described the project of feminist art history thirty years on as

... there to make trouble, to call into question, to ruffle feathers in the patriarchal dovecotes. It should not be mistaken for just another variant of or supplement to mainstream art history. At its strongest, a feminist art history is a transgressive and anti-establishment practice meant to call many of the major precepts of the discipline into question.⁵³

Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity by Jose Estéban Muñoz also informed this research.⁵⁴ Specifically of interest here is Muñoz's call to consider hope as a method (as referenced above) and his interest in utopian futurities hopeful points of view as well as what they might create. In *Art on My Mind* hooks brings art into the frame of a hopeful position by offering a compelling, aspirational, proposal on the power of art to engender agency and transform culture. She outlines this position by stating that

⁵² Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," in *Women Artists : The Linda Nochlin Reader*, ed. Maura Reilly (New York, New York: Thames & Hudson, 2015).

⁵³ "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? Thirty Years After." 320

⁵⁴Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*; José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity, Sexual Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

As we critically imagine new ways to think and write about visual art, as we make spaces for dialog across boundaries, we engage a process of cultural transformation that will ultimately create a revolution in vision.⁵⁵

This new vision is surely one of a hopeful future, one where forms of repair to the equity deficits scaring our contemporary culture in the west were successful.

Ideas about the relationship between painting from the inside, reparative painting, and the role of writing in the context of practice-led research are interspersed throughout this thesis. They offer proposals, often positioned with a provisional open approach, to allow for a kind of open consideration on how research-writing-art in practice-led knowledge production might engage. As Borgdorff suggests

... artistic research seeks not so much to make explicit the knowledge that art is said to produce, but rather to provide a specific articulation of the pre-reflective, non-conceptual content of art. It thereby invites 'unfinished thinking'. Hence, it is not formal knowledge that is the subject matter of artistic research, but thinking in, through and with art.⁵⁶

This quality of openness can create room for highly inventive methodology and research as it allows for inventive new approaches, with capacity to exile hard lines outside its framework. This creates a promising context in which to engage with the type of transdisciplinary, embodied, multi practice-led research undertaken here.

⁵⁵ hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*.

⁵⁶ Henk Borgdorff, "The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research," in *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (New York and Abingdon UK: Routledge, 2010). 44

At the start of this research, it seemed the thesis would exist at the intersection of painting, cultural studies, and women's, gender, and sexuality studies. However, because of the work completed during the first year of research, the conceptual framework evolved to include curatorial practice and writing, in concert with the agential material aliveness of new materialism.⁵⁷ This will be discussed in more depth particularly in the "Painting-Colour" chapter. Here, the "radical reappraisal" of the universe's material realm as active, constructive, and agential within new materialism became key concepts informing this thesis.⁵⁸ Of all fields to think through in relation to painting, new materialisms offer a unique contribution due to the significant place material activation has in its ideas. The very matter of painting is an engagement with an activation of elemental raw mineral materials through the action of encounters emerging between many disparate sites. It is through this action of encounter that elements such as zinc, titanium, cadmium, cobalt materials as such have the potential to become reparative, spark agency, aesthetically engage, and more. Samantha Frost and Diana Coole state that "...foregrounding material factors and reconfiguring our very understanding of matter are prerequisites for any plausible account of coexistence and its conditions in the twenty-first century."⁵⁹ Of further significance specifically within the frame of this research, painting in encounter with corporeality and meaning, moves an account of coexistence beyond language.

⁵⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. This is in reference to chapter 4 "Agential Realism: How Material-Discursive Practices Matter" 133-185. Here Barad questions the primacy of language and culture, as well as the exclusivity in terms of how they are granted agency particularly when compared to the matter in and through which we live. Barad offers here a performative account of existence which offers a "... contestation of the excessive power of language to determine what is real." 133.

⁵⁸ Diana H. Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms : Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010). 2-3

⁵⁹ Ibid. 2

By including new materialism in the framework of reparative practices theory proposed here, this thesis also suggests new materialist ideas offer a type of reparative turn within themselves. For example, these texts reach toward a dynamic, responsive, field of being instead of the binary either/or that has been the predominant (in many ways paranoid reading-based) structure informing progressive social liberation-oriented theory (especially queer, feminist, and intersectional theory) for the last few decades. Coole and Frost summarize how critical new materialist scholars consider connections between politics, nature, and its bodies,

For new materialists, no adequate political theory can ignore the importance of bodies in situating empirical actors within a material environment of nature, other bodies, and the socioeconomic structures that dictate where and how they find sustenance, satisfy their desires, or obtain the resources necessary for participating in political life.⁶⁰

These ideas of matter and its mattering, of multiplicity, attempt to describe how the material world, its bodies and environments in assemblage, can be considered in new ways.⁶¹ It is diffracting Sedgwick's proposal for reparative reading practice and social agency art theory through these ideas from physics related to the dynamics of the material of the universe, where the potential impact of new materialism in encounter with reparative painting and practice takes shape. This offers a type of relational-relativity framework that seeks to consider dynamics from the atomic to the socio-political and how the atomic can offer a (new)

⁶⁰ Ibid. 19

⁶¹ Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs* 28, no. 3, *Gender and Science: New Issues* (2003).

material case against paradigms of subjugation, as, for example Barad's position that nature itself is filled with queer imaginings.⁶²

Critical to this research and getting at painting from the inside is Barad's foregrounding of the agency of matter suggesting that

Matter is an imaginative material exploration of non/being, creatively regenerative, an ongoing trans*/formation. Matter is a condensation of dispersed and multiple beings-times, where the future and past are diffracted into now, into each moment.⁶³

It is easy to read much of Barad's work and imagine it is about painting, or more specifically painting from the inside. In *Transmaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings* Barad places the political and cultural dynamics of social liberation, creativity, a call for an imaginative approach to materiality, considerations about time, their complexities and more on a conceptual dance floor together, turns on the music then sets them in motion explaining that,

This is an experimental piece with a political investment in creating new political imaginaries and new understandings of imagining in its materiality. Not imaginaries of some future or elsewhere to arrive at or be achieved as a political goal but, rather, imaginaries with material existences-imaginaries that are attuned to the condensations of past and future condensed into each moment; imaginaries that entail superpositions of many beings and times, multiple im/possibilities that

62 "Transmaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings," GLQ, A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, Queer Inhumanisms 21, no. 2-3 (2015).

63 Ibid. 411

coexist and are iteratively intra-actively reconfigured; imaginaries that are material explorations of the mutual indeterminacies of being and time.⁶⁴

Painting is an artform of material essence, it becomes in encounters, is created by mobilizing particulate elemental materials in fatty suspension. It has the capacity to offer healing, empowerment, expression, rage, and much more. As "... new materialists emphasise the productivity and resilience of matter." this research traces these threads of matter's productive resilience through reparative painting.⁶⁵

The reparative turn in practice also intersects with practices of care and the force of "friendship" as described by Johnny Golding in *Friendship*. In *Friendship* Golding writes that the force of friendship is

... a kind of sticky belonging, a cohesive, raw 'blood poetics' whose very recognise-ability, whose very response-ability, is best expressed at the moment of its strange-cohesive together-apartness of encounter, mired in the senses, multiversal, in its duration and relationality, expressively 'alive' in its being-with/apart.⁶⁶

As the reparative turn works together with feeling, it time-space travels between/across different realms in a type of "strange-cohesive together-apartness of encounter" between artist, participant, intention, idea, and the world(s) they inhabit. Further, *Friendship* brings

⁶⁴ Ibid. 388

⁶⁵ Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms : Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. 6

⁶⁶ Johnny Golding, "Friendship," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Animal Studies*, ed. Lynn Turner and Undine Sellbach (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). 263

the critical importance of what Golding describes as an “economy of encounter”, especially for “those designated as Other”, describing that

... it generates a strangely emboldened, shared knowing, one that can be called a *suspended attunement* (or aliveness) to *otherness*, an aliveness without recourse to old fashioned forms of master/slave power imbalances or splits between ‘self’ and the infamous ‘O’ Other.⁶⁷

These ideas of the ‘aliveness’ in material and the encounter have resonance with Isabelle Graw’s description of the aliveness of painting, and as I will later suggest painting-colour.

Painting, in other words, fosters the illusion that we can grasp what it represents but by the same token it withholds its presence from us. It thus suggests a presence and at the same time confronts us with its absence, an absence that can be representative of its creator who is often projected onto the work.⁶⁸

Here, Graw is also describing a kind of “strange-cohesive together-apartness of encounter” that seems to share similar psychic material with Golding’s “economy of encounter.”⁶⁹ These indeterminate blended shimmers exist beyond the standard conceptions of our world being constructed of binary and fixed paradigms. Instead of binary systems this dynamic of becoming in encounter emerges throughout this research as a dynamic production that is most critical to the workings of meaning construction, perception, and how they can be used in pursuit of the reparative. This dynamic of becoming in encounter is also an important

⁶⁷ Ibid. 263

⁶⁸ Isabelle Graw, *The Love of Painting : Genealogy of a Success Medium* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2018). 51

⁶⁹ Golding, "Friendship." 262-276, 263

aspect of the PAR curatorial research approach that emerged through encounters with research participant artists.

The interdisciplinary field of women's, gender, sexuality studies (WGS) offers a diverse collection of theory to investigate dynamics of identity across the three main identity groups addressed in this research. WGS is often in conversation with theories about social construction, essentialism, and cultural production. Though as argued by Sedgwick, much of the cultural research work done in the field is "paranoid-based", engaged in projects of scanning culture for wrong doings, its primary aims are liberatory.⁷⁰ WGS has an investment in destabilizing oppressive essentialist identity positions constructed to distribute more "life chances" to some rather than others based on classifications of race, gender, sexuality et al.⁷¹

For example in Butler's concept of embodied performativity, her position that gender is not a fixed dynamic with two binary points, but a field of action, inaction, acceptance, and rejection embodied, a production occurring in both the subject and a person they interact with became an important influence on how this research theorises conceptions of identity production.⁷² Butler on gender and sexuality, José Esteban Muñoz on homosexuality, Siobhan

⁷⁰ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." "Sedgwick characterises the main position of WGS research as paranoid, or as described here paranoid based. "Whatever account it may give of its own motivation, paranoia is characterised by placing, in practice, an extraordinary stress on the efficacy of knowledge per se-knowledge in the form of exposure." 138 and "Paranoia, as I have pointed out, represents not only a strong affect theory but a strong *negative* affect theory." 145 and a research practice of "vigilant scanning" 132.

⁷¹ Dean Spade, *Normal Life : Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law* (Brooklyn, NY: South End Press, 2011). 1, 5-6 "This operation of norms is central to producing the idea of the national body as ever- threatened and to justifying the exclusion of certain populations from programs that distribute wealth and life chances (white schools, Social Security benefits, land and housing distribution programs) and the targeting of these same populations for imprisonment and violence (including criminal punishment, immigration enforcement, racist drug laws, sterilization, and medical experimentation)." 5

⁷² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Tenth Anniversary Edition* (London, GBR: Routledge, 1999); *Undoing Gender* (New York ; London: Routledge, 2004); *Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, Routledge Classics (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011).

Somerville on race and homosexuality, Kimberlé Crenshaw on intersectionality and structural oppressions offer an intellectual transformation and interrogation of how identity constructs work in the socio-political realm; as well analyse as the nefarious ways those constructs are used to oppress based on false stereotypes.⁷³ The preceding list of scholars should in no way be construed as an attempt to imply these few theorists are the field of WGS scholarship. Instead, it just seeks to foreground some of the WGS scholars whose work influenced this research.

The practices addressed in this research, the common qualities of the transformative hearts they share, the hunger, care, and hope for what might be, in fact what should be, and the ways in which these qualities fuel many different reparative turns resonate with much of Muñoz's work. Specifically, his ideas about hope, queer utopia, and the punk rock commons. In resonance with how repair is used in the methodology of this thesis, Muñoz uses hope itself as both "a critical affect and a methodology... a backward glance that enacts a future vision".⁷⁴ Of significance here is the recount of an action both aware of what came before yet not consumed by it. One focused on movement toward a hopeful future imbued with the potentiality to make many things anew. There are also similarities between how Muñoz argues that hope is received/considered/valued and how Sedgwick argues reparative methods are considered "sappy", in other words claims they lack the critical gravitas this kind of liberatory work demands.⁷⁵ Muñoz argues that though hope will likely disappoint or falter

⁷³ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (1994). Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989).

⁷⁴ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 4

⁷⁵ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." 150.

eventually, that is not a reason to forsake it.⁷⁶ This is not an attempt to indicate repair will eventually disappoint, though it might, simply to say there are no absolutes or guarantees at some imagined finish line. This in no way invalidates the imperative need to move, to run from where culture is now in its state of unfinished freedom, towards something better built on equity.⁷⁷

Muñoz conceptualises the punk rock commons as a wildness in which innovative, and annihilative, forces are drawn together. A commons that refuses cohesion, while demanding scatteredness as well as critically the “ways in which we find and make sense out of so much senselessness.”⁷⁸ Or, as Jennifer Doyle and Tavia Nyong’o described the way in which Muñoz’s vision for the world emerged in his work as

... electrified by his desire to tip the world toward something joyous in the face of intense opposition to that joy, toward a place that is more just and generous, but also more ferocious... to express the utopian gesture that responds to the awfulness of things as they are. The work of balancing hope against despair...⁷⁹

The research and practices included in the following chapters work to engage this type of balancing between the worst of the contemporary and an ambition to move towards a hopeful future. This thesis is interested in annihilating current cultures of marginalisation while engaging in projects of worldbuilding something better. Like the punk rock commons,

⁷⁶ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 10

⁷⁸ José Esteban Muñoz, "The Wildness of the Punk Rock Commons," in *Wildness*, ed. Jack Halberstam and Tavia Nyong’o (Durham, NC USA: The South Atlantic Quarterly, Duke University Press, 2018). 658

⁷⁹ Jennifer Doyle and Tavia Nyong’o, "José Esteban Muñoz (1967–2013)," *ARTFORUM* 2014.

the turn towards repair in the practices and methods forming this project are forged by a refusal to cohere with the status quo.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Refusal as positioned by Daniel Piper [White] et al., "Indigenous Methodologies in Graduate School : Accountability, Relationships, and Tensions," in *Applying Indigenous Research Methods : Storying with Peoples and Communities*, ed. Sweeney Windchief and Timothy San Pedro (Taylor & Francis Group ProQuest Ebook Central,, 2019). In reference to Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* Vol. 1, no. No. 1 (2012). "Tuck and Yang explain that, "Analytic practices of refusal involve an active resistance to trading in pain and humiliation, and supply a rationale for blocking the settler colonial gaze that wants those stories." 98 (2 in original)

└─ Chapter 1 REPAIR ─┘

├ REPAIR ┤
Dynamic Reparability

A reparative turn is productive, it can reshape our vision of our place in the world, drive us away from what is damaging or damaged while moving toward a constructive action. It might engage in a re-making-inventing of an empowered-self narrative, or in the case of this project, consider how painting can work as a kind of surgical undertaking on wounds inflicted by systemic oppression. In the context of painting's creative imaginary, the reparative can produce a hopeful exit from othering's shadows through work engaged with the many possible new existences repair might produce. It is important to reassert that this kind of exit also requires hope.

Muñoz thinks with Ernest Bloch on hope, specifically Bloch's argument that though utopian feelings and ambitions, produced by an advanced kind of hope, they can and often do disappoint, "They are nonetheless indispensable to the act of imagining transformation".⁸¹ A hopeful exit also requires transformation. Transformation of mindset, place, meaning, understanding, power dynamics, and more. To take this thought a bit further, this then is an exit which does not take one from same to same, but from the culture of now, to a transformed, new, or repaired culture. A hopeful exit, or movement toward an exit, requires travel to a somewhere/something else from a place constructed by what was or what is perceived to be, to places, values, and cultures produced by new thinking, new beliefs.

⁸¹ Ernst Bloch, *Literary Essays*, Meridian (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998). 339-334. As quoted in Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 9

In reparative painting, this hopeful exit can be traced in part to painting from the inside, the active process and engagement in practice. Painting as a making through living the here now in encounter with the then, and what might be, together, made material. As the case studies in chapter 2 "Painting from the Other Side" detail, exits are evident in a multitude of forms and can often share hopefulness. For example, in Osaretin Ugiagbe's painting *1234* which is about memories of being a student in reconstruction era Nigeria, where they were subjected to damaging Euro-Western education that was delivered in part through teacher's lessons written in white chalk on a blackboard. His memory equated white chalk as a tool of domination that wrote the story of Eurocentric superiority in the minds of students. In *1234* his exit was found in claiming the power of the chalk by using it to write out his own culture across the surface of his painting.⁸² This exit offered a transformation from the role of student with minimal power to define culture, to the role of a teacher with the power to determine and shape it. This repairs ongoing injustice of bias in reconstruction era education by removing the perpetrator from power. It also uses a kind of critical-visual fabulation as the painting also refers to prior generations through its abstract portraiture, projecting this new reparatively produced self-empowered voice of education around them.⁸³

It is important to add that a reparative turn in painting is not referent to a painting style or school. Instead, it should be conceived of as a painting approach, a way of seeing, a way of thinking, a position, intention, or empowerment. A hunger for something better with the potential to make cultures anew through painting from the inside as well as from the outside. In this project repair becomes an *action* traced *in* painting as well as through painting in its

⁸² *Infra*, 103

⁸³ Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts." 11. More in depth information on these case studies in reparative painting and others follows in chapter 2 *Infra*, 68

encounters with curating, looking, writing, reading, field work-based discussion, and making.⁸⁴

The reparative turn in art is in part what in the introduction to *Creativity and Resistance in a Hostile World*, Sarita Malik, Churnjeet Mahn, Michael Pierse, and Ben Rogaly call “Resistant Creativity”, something they describe as “...not straightforwardly output driven or ‘art for art’s sake’, but might be better understood as emanating from a sincerity of feeling, gesturing towards change.”⁸⁵ This points to the aspiration of the artist to make art with the potential to effect progress towards an exit to somewhere new in which existences imbued with equity are accessible. Laing argues these practices are “... concerned with resistance and repair.”⁸⁶ bell hooks argues that in order to engage in this project of political struggle seeking to counter hegemonic cultures, to navigate the difficult affects encountered in the fight for what should be, one must transgress and thus one “moves out of one’s place”.⁸⁷ This moving from where we find ourselves, culturally, psychologically, emotionally, imaginatively is where the reparative turn can engage in powerful work. In relation to more paranoid projects of exposure, Laing wrote that “While helpful at explaining the state we’re in, they’re not so

⁸⁴ Infra, Chapter 2 “Painting from the Other Side” 68 This includes artists and research participants: Kate Bickmore, “Artist Website,” <http://katebickmore.com>. Andrea Christodoulides, “Artist Website,” <https://www.andreachristodoulides.com>. Elise Fuller Broadway, “Artist Website,” <https://elisebroadway.com>. Lydia Pettit, “Artist Website,” <https://lydiapettit.com>. Leon Pozniakow, “Artist Instagram Page,” <https://www.instagram.com/leonpozniakow/>. Jhonatan Pulido, “Jhonatan Pulido Artist Website,” <https://jhonatanpulido.co>. Olivia Sterling, “Artist Instagram Page,” <https://www.instagram.com/oliviaster/?hl=en>. Osaretin Ugiagbe, “Artist Website,” <https://www.osaretin.com>.

⁸⁵ Sarita Malik et al., eds., *Creativity and Resistance in a Hostile World* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020). 8

⁸⁶ Olivia Laing, *Funny Weather : Art in an Emergency*, First edition. ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020). 2

⁸⁷ bell hooks, “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness,” *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 36 (1989). 15

useful at envisaging ways out, and the end result of indulging them is often a fatal numbness.”⁸⁸

As was briefly discussed in the introduction, reparative theory can be traced back to some of Melanie Klein’s work in child psychology such as "Love, Guilt, and Reparation".⁸⁹ However as child psychology is not a direct focus of this project, the essay is not a key aspect of this research. Due to the major influence Klein’s work had on Sedgwick’s essay “Paranoid Reading Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You” it is important to recognise the formational role it has in the genealogy of reparative theory as a significant predecessor to Sedgwick’s ideas.⁹⁰ Further reparative theory from both Klein and Sedgwick were influential in Best’s *Reparative Aesthetics* as well as Muñoz’s *Cruising Utopia*.⁹¹ Best applied reparative theory to analysis of aesthetics in contemporary photography that specifically works to addresses “a reparative approach to representation of shameful histories”.⁹²

Muñoz integrates reparative theory in the context of queer theory and cultural studies. He turns toward utopia as a reparative that he attunes “to Eve Sedgwick’s critique of the way in which paranoid reading practices have become so nearly automatic in queer studies...”.⁹³ His book explores queer utopia(s) as hopeful constructions designed to heal the often

⁸⁸ Laing, *Funny Weather : Art in an Emergency*. 4

⁸⁹ Klein, "Love, Guilt, and Reparation." 306-343.

⁹⁰ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." 123-152.

⁹¹ Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. In reference to Klein 3, 7, 11, 28-32, 96, 100, Sedgwick particularly 26-27, 28, 29 Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 12.

⁹² Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. 1.

⁹³ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 12.

traumatized queer persons conception of a beautiful belonging that could be, yet one that does not quite exist in the here, in the now.⁹⁴ Muñoz further ties his theorization of queer utopias to Sedgwick's "reparative hermeneutics" which among other things is a call for us to suspend paranoid reading's demand for research to engage in vigilant scanning dedicated to projects of exposure to ensure evidence of all possible outcomes or situations is known so there will be no surprises.⁹⁵ Reparative hermeneutics, like utopias and artistic research, invites us to consider, or even make (through theory, text, or paint), what is not yet, what could be and how that which we make might be imbued with the potential to repair what is and what was. Sedgwick, Muñoz, and Best became significant influences in creation of the reparative painting practice theory developed in this thesis as they moved reparative theory into spheres of culture and art, which are central to this project.

Joshua Chambers-Letson considers the socio-political potentialities of the reparative, particularly in the case of those who have suffered identity-based injury as well as in the context of queer, feminist, and postcolonial interventions in those arenas.

What other understandings of this concept may we mobilize as a tool for repairing the present and building a future? How, in particular, can reparation be engaged by communities and individuals that have faced social and historical injury and iniquity, and how might this engagement serve as a means for transforming the conditions of possibility? At the very least, how can reparative acts help to reshape

⁹⁴Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*; Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*.

⁹⁵ *Cruising Utopia : The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 12 as quoted from Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." Please see quote on 57 for a more comprehensive explanation of Sedgwick's ideas about reparative hermeneutics.

the lenses through which we read and negotiate the world, and therefore our understanding of our place within it?⁹⁶

The exit leads to a kind of site of the repaired. Chambers-Letson, along with Klein, argue that the site of the repaired is not to be construed as some form of total repair “...but about finding ways to live and love in relation to the injuries of our pasts and futures.”⁹⁷ Halberstam and Nyong’o might refer to this site of the repaired, or what exists after an exit, as “wildness”.⁹⁸ They also refer to wildness as a kind of “surfacing of utopia” and of important note “A poetics of wildness evades terminological definition... [it should be thought of as] The wild mode of thought... a disruptive force... offering critique in a utopian mode.”⁹⁹ Like the reparative turn in painting, wildness is not to be minimized to a flat binary or singular essence, it should not be attempted to rein it into anything so narrow. This thesis argues Muñoz may consider the site of the repaired as a queer utopia, while hooks argued for the role art can play in moving us towards practices of freedom by decolonizing our minds, which also transports the decolonized mind to a site of repair in which an encounter with art can allow the viewer to begin imagining a life of freedom.

...reenvisioning black revolution in such a way that we create collective awareness of the radical place that art occupies within the freedom struggle and of the way in which experiencing art can enhance our understanding of what it means to live as free subjects in an unfree world.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Chambers-Letson, "Reparative Feminisms, Repairing Feminism-Reparation, Postcolonial Violence, and Feminism." 172.

⁹⁷ Supra, See also Foucault’s development of the exit and this thesis’ reflections on it 17-18; *ibid.* 173

⁹⁸ Jack Halberstam and Tavia Nyong’o, eds., *Wildness*, vol. 117:3, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* (Durham, NC USA: Duke University Press, 2018). “Wildness as a concept in these anarchist writings refers not to the colonial fantasy of untouched and unoccupied space but rather to a sensibility, an anticolonial mode of thinking, and a poetics of power. In this context, we can understand the wild as a space rendered uninhabitable by modernity but crammed with interesting life-forms of its own.” 459.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 456-457

¹⁰⁰ hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. 9

In Klein and Sedgwick's work the concept of reparative research/reading is usually placed in relationship to that of a paranoid approach which expects the worst and engages in a kind of vigilant project of exposure to avoid surprise. Sedgwick's argument specifies that the 'sustenance' of reparative dynamics can be found in culture, even when that culture is hostile and discriminatory. While she also references the significant gap in knowledge related to the potential of critical reparative thought in research. Sedgwick argues that this gap is especially pronounced in feminist and queer theory as the paranoid research approach is so synonymous with the field, it has become the default mode of analysis.

Sedgwick describes the reparative reader's point of view as having hope that repair is possible. Here we can think back to Muñoz's arguments discussed above, specifically his theorization of reparative queer utopias and using hope as a method. As referenced above Sedgwick argues that reparative reading is generally viewed by the academy as an approach that lacks rigour and the hard-hitting kind of exposure-of-wrongs-orientation expected of critically engaged cultural analysis. In some respects, perhaps this is influenced by the way repair gets down to a kind of helping. A helping oneself and a helping of others through research that while acknowledging there are wrongs, is focused on, interested in, moves toward repair of those wrongs (no matter how large or small those repairs might be), instead of the more common projects focused on exposing and analysing wrongs.

The reparative turn can be, perhaps ideally is, transformative. To understanding, to pain, to traumatic damage, to depression, to the self and others, to moving hegemonically otheredness closer to belonging and full citizenship. Sedgwick argues for the crucial need to

consider reparative motives in the context of liberatory studies as a methodology with the potential to be more holistic in research approach. Also citing the limitations of the standard paranoid based reading position, well additionally noting that a reparative reading position is a method offering new visions for ways progress can be made on the unfinished project of freedom.

... it is not only important but *possible* to find ways of attending to such reparative motives and personalities. The vocabulary for articulating any reader's reparative motive toward a text or a culture has long been so sappy, aestheticizing, defensive, anti-intellectual, or reactionary that it's no wonder few critics are willing to describe their acquaintance with such motives. **The prohibitive problem, however, has been in the limitations of present theoretical vocabularies rather than in the reparative motive itself. No less acute than a paranoid position, no less realistic, no less attached to a project of survival, and neither less nor more delusional or fantasmatic, the reparative reading position undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks.** What we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture-even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them.¹⁰¹ (emphasis mine)

In *Reparative Aesthetics* Best uses Sedgwick's concept of reparative and paranoid reading practices as a lens to analyse the predominant identity politics position in contemporary art

¹⁰¹ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. 150

describing it as anti-aesthetic and a kind of reveal of the known (i.e. we know poverty commonly causes lack of access to healthy food and education), and a “paranoid reading.”¹⁰²

Anti-aesthetic is an idea crystallized by Hal Foster that James Elkins and Harper Montgomery describe as

The anti-aesthetic has been expanded backward in time, to characterize the reaction of modernism against academic art and against the political situation leading to the First World War: a context in which, as Arthur Danto has noted, beauty became anathema. From that perspective, anti-aesthetic practice has been a *sine qua non* of modernism in its many forms up to the present.¹⁰³

They theorise art that can be understood as anti-aesthetic can be described as not studio based. Instead, it might engage, even exist, directly in socio-political contexts, in other words it is interested in being outside of the for-profit gallery and major museum driven art world as these places are commonly fuelled by dirty money from questionable funders. Funders like the Sacklers for example who brought America, and beyond, the opioid crisis. Or as Rhonda Lieberman described so scathingly in her article “Painting over the Dirty Truth”, major contemporary art institutions assert “... their sanctity, museums gentrify a rogue’s gallery of funders: banksters and hedge fund managers, fossil fuel oligarchs, private-prison and opioid profiteers.”¹⁰⁴ This considered, there is good reason for artists, especially those whose work

¹⁰² Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. 2. Here Best references anti-aesthetic scholarship in “October,” MIT University Press, <https://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/octo>. and James Elkins and Harper Montgomery, eds., *Beyond the Aesthetic and the Anti-Aesthetic*, The Stone Art Theory Institutes (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press host institution School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2013). 1. Also see 167 in the notes section of *Reparative Aesthetics* section for more. Additionally the collection by Hal Foster, ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic : Essays on Postmodern Culture*, 1st ed. (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983). Is recognised as the crystallization of this theory.

¹⁰³ Elkins and Montgomery, *Beyond the Aesthetic and the Anti-Aesthetic*. 2

¹⁰⁴ Rhonda Lieberman, “Painting over the Dirty Truth. The Rich Fund Museums to Launder Their Reputations. Museums Exploit Identity Politics to Distract from the Shady Money Funding Them. In the Art World, It’s All

interrogate these systems, would be interested in practicing art beyond the confines of the traditional carefully constructed hallowed ground of the museum and for profit gallery.

Elkins and Montgomery argue anti-aesthetic art often seeks to disrupt neoliberal capitalist systems as well as interrogate "Politics, society, institutions, power, privilege, and identity are among the concerns of such practices, which do not always even call themselves 'art'."¹⁰⁵ In contrast they categorise aesthetic art as more often studio based. Work using traditional media that might engage in art for art's sake and often does not seek to make such an austere socio-political statement. Instead say Elkins and Montgomery, aesthetic art includes "objects, which hopefully possess one of the many qualities associated with art, from beauty to the sublime."¹⁰⁶

In the examples of contemporary photography, she addresses Best specifically argues something more and something different about reparative aesthetics. She makes the case that the examples she provides are both aesthetic in their visual aspects (sublime, beautiful) while still maintaining qualities theorised as anti-aesthetic, in so far as their engagement with the socio-political content of traumatic history, shame, national trauma, and disgrace. To just make one further point here before moving on, it is clear studio-based art in more traditional media such as painting can work in both aesthetic modes. To put it another way one is not a categorical negation of the other.

Just Business as Usual," The New Republic, <https://newrepublic.com/article/154991/rich-art-museum-donors-exploit-identity-politics-laundry-reputations-philanthropy>.

¹⁰⁵ Elkins and Montgomery, *Beyond the Aesthetic and the Anti-Aesthetic*. 2

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 2

Best further positions reparative aesthetics as something that “holds negative and positive together, seeks pleasure rather than avoidance of shame as a reparative, and has a capacity to assimilate violence.”¹⁰⁷ She also details the powerful complex capabilities of reparative and paranoid dynamics arguing that,

The reparative position is not, then simply about undoing or reversing damage: ambivalence precludes that wholly positive orientation. For Sedgwick, a reparative motive seeks pleasure rather than the avoidance of shame, but it also signals the capacity to assimilate the consequences of destruction and violence. Sedgwick ... explains that paranoid interpretations routinely adopt a posture of suspicion and operate as a kind of ‘exposure’ of traces of oppression or injustice. Crucially, she argues paranoid suspicion is central to critical practice in the humanities and that it is propelled by the desire on the part of theorists and critics to avoid surprise, shame, and humiliation.¹⁰⁸

In “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading” Sedgwick explains how Klein’s psychoanalytic theories inform her paranoid/reparative reading practices and in some ways incorporate depression as well as love. Hanna Segal, a scholar of Klein’s work also makes a similar case which will be attended to a bit later as we will start with the passage from Sedgwick on the complex collection of thoughts and feelings involved in the paranoid position.¹⁰⁹

107 Susan Best, "Reparative Aesthetics Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography." lecture (2017) Griffith University, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrAtMeKIYEU>

108 Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. 3 Reference to Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. 139

109 "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." ; Hanna Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (1988). Depression as a method mitigate anxiety and provide an exit from the relentlessness of the paranoid, as well as in its relationship with guilt, which is often operated as a possible guard against the subjects “more destructive influences”. 75

The greatest interest of Klein's concept lies, it seems to me in her seeing the paranoid position always in the oscillatory context of a very different possible one: the depressive position. For Klein's infant or adult, the paranoid position- understandably marked by hatred, envy, and anxiety-is a position of terrible alertness to the dangers posed by the hateful and envious part-objects that one defensively projects onto, carves out of, and ingests from the world around one. By contrast, the depressive position is an anxiety-mitigating achievement that the infant or adult only sometimes and often only briefly, succeeds in inhabiting: this is the position from which it is possible in turn to use one's own resources to assemble or "repair" the murderous part-objects into something like a whole- though, I would emphasize, *not necessarily like any preexisting whole*. Once assembled to one's own specifications, the more satisfying object is available both to be identified with and to offer one nourishment and comfort in turn. Among Klein's names for the reparative process is love.¹¹⁰

Klein writes that a process of repair in this sense is love, one's engagement in repair is sparked by and because of the love and care for that which they seek to repair. If one did not have that love and care, they would be far less likely to engage in a project of repair. Or to say this another way perhaps more related to this project, if one has no care for or love of the object of hegemonic othering, one will not engage in a care-full reparative process to mitigate the state and circumstance of those who are othered. It could also be noted here as well further

¹¹⁰ Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity. 128

surfaced that this is not a wholly positive orientation as Klein argues love and hate exist in interaction

... consideration has to be given to the part that destructive impulses play in the interaction of hate and love, is it possible to show the ways in which feelings of love and tendencies to reparation develop in connection with aggressive impulses and in spite of them.¹¹¹

In addition to hate and aggression, Klein links the impetus to repair with depression which she writes provides a rare break from the engrossing approach required when attempting to maintain hyper vigilant scanning demanded by the paranoid position. In *Introduction to Melanie Klein*, Hannah Segal explains Klein's description of depression and its relationship to reparative drive clearly, writing that "The pain of mourning experienced in the depressive position, and the reparative drives developed to restore the loved internal and external objects, are the basis of creativity and sublimation."¹¹² Then it is the *desire to repair* pain that exists in the depressive position which links to the reparative.

Beyond cultural and psychological fields, materialism/new materialism is also connected to reparative projects. Scholars including Barad, Coole, Frost, and Golding put forth a vision of a dynamic materially active world in infinite interactive becomings then consider its relationship to the socio-political realm.¹¹³ Infinite interactive becomings can be understood

111 Klein, "Love, Guilt, and Reparation." 306

112 Hanna Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (1988). 75

113 Barad, "Transmaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings."; "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter."; *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms : Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Golding, "Friendship."

here as the ways encounters (interactions) progress and emerge through the world. In terms of repair, they yearn for what might be and the becomings that emerge in an ongoing process. Repair is like memories and hopes ever weaving with possibilities, ever becoming. A patchwork of the world's becomings that Barad describes as "... responding to yearnings for connection, materialized into fields of longing/belonging, of regenerating what never was but might yet have been."¹¹⁴ Materialism, especially as materiality is a key concern of painting, creates room to think about the world in which we live as a field of potential existences and becomings. This offers a way to consider the material that makes up the world we live in and diffract that thinking with ideas of agency generated in part by an ambition to exit from the dire consequences of cultural bias.

The reparative functions in multivalent and multifaceted ways. It is always in a relative encounter with its partner subject(s)/context(s) which, in the case of this research are the artists, narratives, paintings, or viewers. The reparative turn is also a relativity-based dynamic capable of great dexterity, change, and affect defined/produced/experienced by a painting, its creator, or its audience. The reparative turn in painting is not a fixed or flat paradigm but a field with resonance to how Barad describes quantum field theory (QFT) in *Meeting the Universe Halfway* "According to quantum field theory, the vacuum is far from empty; indeed, it's teeming with the full set of possibilities of what may come to be..."¹¹⁵ This site, this thinking of and understanding our world, or the raw canvas, as a place teeming with possibilities, also has resonance to Halberstam and Nyong'o's theorization of wildness as

¹¹⁴ Katherine Hayles, *Unthought : The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017). 407

¹¹⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. 354

described above.¹¹⁶ It demonstrates that though culture might argue identity=x, nature has other ideas in its ever emerging newness's which exists in a dance of becoming in encounter. This thinking with nature offers a form of repair by showing that the limiting constraints culture uses to other based on fixed identity qualities are narratives of human invention.

It is of note that though this research dedicates most of its focus to practices of painting, curation, and methodology, the primacy of reparative function/action can also be seen in other types of human creations. For example, in the engineering and design approach to creating new technologies that act as automated entities (AI), extensions and/or prosthetics of their human(s). These automated entities can be programmed to serve, control, in some cases replace and/or direct humans. Barad addresses this in reference to congressional testimony 1 March 2000 on the ethics of techno scientific practices and AI. Specifically, a quote from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Officer who was testifying is the excerpt of relevance here.

Viewing cells as computational devices will help enable the design of next generation computers that feature self-organization, self-repair, and adaptive characteristics that we see in biological systems.¹¹⁷

It is significant that the NSF only offered three descriptions about what the next generation of quantum computing computational devices would feature, and all those qualities are directly related to the structure of reparative artistic praxis as well as qualities found in biological systems. This is not meant to infer that painting is exactly AI, but it is a type of

¹¹⁶ Supra, 55

¹¹⁷ Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.
384 In reference to National Science Foundation testimony to Congress, 1, March 2000

intelligence. Reparative painting is self-organized, by the artist who creates their concept then puts it into play through a highly interactive relationship with its context as well as the material, form, and colour it involves. Painting is an output of a dynamic assemblage, forged from the inside of the artist, with material, and light, created through action.

These ideas from design and physics, though subjects beyond the scope of this project, offer compelling resonances to socio-political issues in this thesis. Also, of interest to this research, is Barads recounting from the same congressional testimony how quantum entanglement was explained. Specifically it was described as a dynamic of information teleportation, where two particles seem separate and are at a distance, yet when the spin of one particle is altered, the spin of the seemingly unrelated particle also changes.¹¹⁸ This description of quantum entanglement as well as the relationship between the science of the natural world it refers to and the socio-political referenced above speak to the ways in which one entity is changed by another as well as how influence can be exerted through connections which might not be apparent or expected. For this project, these ideas create an opening to consider encounters, influence, and the new entities which may arise. Additionally, the research for the *Painting-Colour* chapter offers a related dynamic with a different assembly of players, colour interaction and culture. In the case of the reparative turn in painting we might consider these occurring in painting from the inside, by viewing painting as an object, through the influence of culture on a painter or a viewer as well as the painters influence on their content.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 385 There is no reference to the name of the scientist testifying.

When one considers these through a lens of hope for the repair of damages caused by othering and departure from its painful now, this openness grants significant cause for optimism that something better, something repaired is possible. There is beauty in the material world offering evidence of this. These texts reach toward a dynamic, responsive, field of being teeming with possibilities instead of the too common conceptions of an either/or binary status quo.

Concepts of matter and its mattering, of multiplicity, of becoming in encounter, describe how the material world, its bodies, cultures, and environments in assemblage, can be considered in new dynamic ways.¹¹⁹ These ideas related to the dynamics of matter and materiality offer a view into a type of ever active encounter-emergence ontology that seeks to account for dynamics from the atomic which are just as relevant to the socio-political and in so doing they show that the atomic can offer a (new) material case against paradigms of subjugation.

¹¹⁹ Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter."; Johnny Golding, "The Courage to Matter," in *Data Loam, Sometimes Hard, Usually Soft. The Future of Knowledge Systems*, ed. Martin Reinhardt Johnny Golding, Mattia Paganelli, Edition Angewandte (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter 2021).

├ Chapter 2 PAINTING FROM THE OTHER SIDE ┤

└─ Painting from the Other Side ─┐
Insurgent and Participatory Action Research



Image 13 Installation view, Painting from the Other Side exhibition, curated by Shannon Forrester 2-7 April 2019

This chapter utilizes a discursive and curatorial participatory action research (PAR) method, in the context of an open call for research participant artists to join a research activity titled *Painting from the Other Side*. The activity was designed to fulfil an important role in this thesis, uncover and analyse examples of reparative painting approaches in personal painting practice as well as in the work of research participant artists selected from the open call. The research conducted through studio visits and interviews was focused on consideration of painting collections submitted by research participant artists, reflections on their practice, as well as ideas for paintings proposed by research participant artists that were sparked by the studio visit sessions. The case studies that follow are a culmination of the months spend engaged in PAR fieldwork related to the *Painting from the Other Side* research project. They offer analysis

of painting approaches undertaken in the practices of research participant artists that are, as expanded on in the following pages, imbued by various reparative ambitions.¹²⁰

When working to uncover reparative painting approaches, it can be productive to begin by considering dynamics of the visual realm. Specifically, how it creates meaning, affect, and content. This is perhaps particularly important when painting is engaged with intense or grim subject matter which is usually multivalent and can be complex across various scales (i.e., emotional, psychological, socio-political). Jennifer Doyle writes about the affective dimensions of difficult content in the preface to *Hold it Against Me*, arguing that artists might “... turn to emotion because this is where ideology does its most devastating work.”¹²¹ Found at the core of this research are practices that pursue a fight against as well as a fight for an exit from the devastation inflicted by toxic ideologies of identity-based bias.

Those ideologies can be delivered through various means. For example, through hegemonic power systems or in social and professional interactions. They might also be deployed through environmental or opportunity and life chance exclusion. As expanded upon in the case studies that follow, emotions resulting from such caustic and damaging ideologies can create a site of devastation within those who are targets of their othering. This thesis illuminates the capacity of art to work with those sites as well as how it can transform them.

¹²⁰ Erdem, "Participatory Action Research and Its Meanings: Vivencia, Praxis, Conscientization." 3 “The genre of participatory action research (PAR) discussed in this article can be seen as emerging through historical and ongoing struggles: the struggle of the oppressed to break free of their oppressors, the struggle of the colonized to escape structures and narrow expectations established by those who colonized them, and the struggle of those made invisible or subordinated by more powerful elements in their society to take control of their life trajectories and social and economic destinies.” 3

¹²¹ Jennifer Doyle, *Hold It against Me : Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham ; London: Duke University Press, 2013). xi.

Further, because art has the potential to enfold emotion and affect in transformative ways, for instance by creating new narratives with capacity to generate redefinition, repair, or redress, it is well placed to fight tides of bias, othering, and the damages they inflict.

The paintings by research participant artists discussed in the following case studies work toward repair using a wide array of different approaches. What was discovered during the research process is that reparative aspirations, approaches to practice, or actions are as individual as the artist of their creation. Specific summary examples of this are offered next. They provide both a substantiation on the nature of the reparative being unique and often individual specific as well as provide a brief introduction to some of the core ways each research participant artist took a reparative turn in their painting practice.

For example, Kate Bickmore's botanical series explores reclaiming as well as re-creating the role of a painter, lesbian sexuality, and the vulva from the devastating narratives assigned to them by patriarchy. Bickmore pursues this through ingeniously rendered paintings of impossibly luscious botanical scenes awash in rich colour sometimes paired with funny titles that can work to clarify the artist's aims. While Jhonatan Pulido contributed a collection of paintings that draw on recollections of his hometown in rural Colombia. During a painting session, the series worked to generate agency for the artist by giving him the realization that important landscape subjects need not be of locations in the industrialized north by painters from the same region; they could be of a remote rural Colombian town painted by an artist local to the region. An additional example of a reparative turn in his work can be found in how the series involved a narrative exposing the power of painting in landscape to counter governmental oppression. Specifically, how public sphere painting generated agency for

rebels in their campaign to refute the governmental killing, disappearing, and terror that they inflicted on the local population.

The work submitted by Lydia Pettit tied her reparative turn to the personally therapeutic effect she experienced through the ways painting allowed her to work through trauma. She also found repair in the feeling of gratification she experienced when imagining other survivors of trauma viewing her paintings and discovering some form of repair through connecting to the content as well as recognizing they are not alone in their suffering. Elise Fuller Broadway's paintings took a reparative turn that emerged from an autobiographical origin. This origin of her work put her experience as an LGBTQ woman from the American southwest at a nexus of race, gender, sexuality, kinship, and mental health. Broadway recounted that these facets of her life put in motion complicated and compounded experiences that were traumatic, othering, and/or erasing. The subject matter of her paintings allowed her to usurp the power of the marginalizing white male majority to define their greatness as well as visualize the deep impact of their bigotry on her.

Leon Pozniakow's paintings offered a reparative contribution in how they worked to assert and celebrate his identity as a gay man by operating as a means to heal the trauma and shame of the closet. The work of Osaretin Ugiagbe found repair by generating agency in multiple ways. These include how his work refuted the materiality of classic European painting and in one of the paintings, by taking control of chalk which was used for generations by English teachers to oppress Nigerians. Whereas in his painting he used that chalk and other materials to craft new self-empowered narratives. Pieces submitted by Andrea Christodoulides sought to use her noir fairy-tale painting to express how damaging the intense combination of family

and career expectations are when it is demanded that young women comply with their tenets. The works turned towards repair in the way they had agency to address as well as refute the damaging dynamics certain expectation can create. The reparative turn in pieces by Olivia Sterling was complex in its multivalent. The paintings offered a kind of record about her journey building agency to refute racist tropes through a process of exposure-conversion which worked to disempower them. Additionally, her choice of materials was purposeful in their contra position against the traditional material trappings that mark the canon of western painting.

Though this research is not specifically in the field of indigenous studies, it has resonance with the research methodology presented in “Insurgent Research” by Adam J. P. Gaudry. The essay offers an action integrated indigenous methodology that embraces alternative modes of dissemination and delineates the researcher’s accountability to research participants. While it also focuses on progress toward liberatory aims that work to produce research of and for indigenous peoples and expressly disavowing Euro-Western extractive research methods.¹²² Further, as is the case with this research, insurgent research promotes “... community-based action that targets the demise of colonial interference within our lives and communities.”¹²³

¹²² Adam Gaudry, “Insurgent Research,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 26, no. 1 (2011). 114 Extractive research methodology is described as a “... model, [where] outsider academics conduct research on Indigenous peoples for the purpose of learning about certain aspects of their lives that they find personally interesting or intriguing or that may serve colonial processes (such as Western models of “healing” that reinforce Indigenous victimhood). In the extraction model, communities rarely participate in the development of research questions or are entitled to determine the validity of research “findings.””

¹²³ Ibid. 114

The curatorial PAR aspect of thesis engages in research that uses discourse, curation, and exhibition as methods.¹²⁴ The community of research referenced here was students of the Royal College of Art (London, UK) between 2018-2019 who responded to the *Painting from the Other Side* open call for research participant artists and an exhibition of the same name.¹²⁵ As the project progressed the research participant artist pool narrowed. Shifting the substantive PAR to hone in more specifically on artist research participants from the Royal College of Art's MA Painting program.

The research for this thesis was designed to uphold not only its journey to address its research questions and establish its authority on the subject of reparative painting, but also to uphold its commitment to the artist research participants and others with whom the difficult subjects discussed here might be unfortunately familiar. This commitment extends to its theorisation of their painting practices, to their stories and telling them here in a way the artist research participants agree with, and to ensuring they are in agreement with their portrayal here. This approach seeks to work in alignment with insurgent research's demands for the researcher to have "Th[e] ultimate accountability to community makes researchers responsible for their actions during the research process and for the final products of their research projects."¹²⁶

Curating as a research medium practice, in the context of PAR, does not have the same primary motivations as curation in long held traditions intrinsic to the seats of institutional art power. Neither does this work focus on the exhibition as the ultimate or major research

¹²⁴ Green, *When Artists Curate : Contemporary Art and the Exhibition as Medium*. A central argument of Green's book is that curation can become a medium when artists engage in curatorial projects.

¹²⁵ Ethics approval was given 24 June 2019.

¹²⁶ Gaudry, "Insurgent Research." 118

output of the *Painting from the Other Side* project. Anton Vidokle controversially described the role of a curator in places such as museums, galleries, or related art historical contexts as being "...intermediaries between producers of art and the power structures of our society."¹²⁷ These sites are places where the curatorial output of an exhibition, and/or any art historical or critical writing, are the key outputs of work. Whereas the research in this includes curation and an exhibition as practice-led methods of research that operate within the context of PAR in the context of studio-based field research, which worked to further refine arguments put forth here regarding the operations, potentialities, and existence of reparative painting.¹²⁸

This is a meaningful divergence from more traditional curatorial approaches. As such, there might be differences between this chapters focuses and those of a project with a curatorial output as its primary focus. Alison Green argues that since the 1990's there has been a shift in which artists are increasingly engaged in curating as a medium, moving the practice away from long held power structures in art governed by institutions, collectors, and curators. Green describes this mode of curating as a creation medium that is

... something akin to writing or speaking, a core activity of being a creative human being. This may be what is most at stake in the most current discussions of curating by artists: the deskilling, deprofessionalizing and democratization of curating for everyday use, and the coincident liberating of creativity from historical definitions of art and the institutions that guard it.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Quote from Anton Vidokle, "Art without Artists?," *e-flux Journal*, no. 16 (2010). Also in reference to the controversy Maria Rus Bojan et al., "Letters to the Editors: Eleven Responses to Anton Vidokle's "Art without Artists?,"" *ibid.*, no. 18, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/18/67472/letters-to-the-editors-eleven-responses-to-anton-vidokle-s-art-without-artists/>. As referenced in Green, *When Artists Curate : Contemporary Art and the Exhibition as Medium*. 14

¹²⁸ *Supra*, Introduction where PAR is discussed 10.

¹²⁹ Green, *When Artists Curate : Contemporary Art and the Exhibition as Medium*. 12

The curatorial PAR research undertaken in this thesis expands on Green's theorization of curation as a medium. *Painting from the Other Side* was not just an exhibition curated by an artist, which as Green argues offers access to a different range of goals and potentialities when compared to traditional curating. Further, this curatorial PAR was developed in a materially-discursive informed context; that is PAR with research participant artists on painting practice as well as with paintings themselves in the milieu of a studio fieldwork context focused on discovering evidence of reparative painting.

To build on this a bit more, it is productive to reclarify that, the exhibition element of this activity was not a central aspect of the PAR curatorial research activity for *Painting from the Other Side*. The exhibition did offer numerous enhancements and enrichments to this research process, but the exhibition that happened for a few days that week in April was not the major value of the PAR curatorial activity. It did offer a venue in which the PAR process could give back to research participant artists by providing a London gallery platform to expose their painting in a public setting. The exhibition also operates within this thesis as an important artistic record of the discursive PAR fieldwork studio visits conducted at the RCA MA Painting studios with research participant artists as well as the work we did collectively to hang and present the paintings in an exhibition context.

As included elsewhere in this thesis, part of the aim of those investigative studio activities was to engage in discursive research. This approach was decided on due to an earlier stage of research design which surfaced a suspicion that a structured PAR activity could create the right environment for development of qualitative findings that would create material suitable

to writing case studies of reparative painting. The research process for *Painting from the Other Side* had multiple stages, each building on the previous phase.

This part of thesis research began in 2018 with a research design stage that involved the Royal College of Art ethics committee review and approval, then publication of an open call for research participant artists. The open call explained the research project scope as well as the exhibition element and that the activity was part of PhD research focused on reparative painting. It asked for submissions of artists statements, a short essay on how the applicant thought their work fit with the topic of repair, in addition to images of up to five paintings applicants thought engaged with reparative content and were created by artist applicants whose identities are in some way outside of the minority power position of the Euro-Western canon of painting. A canon dominated by straight white male artists.

The open call received twenty applications from artists enrolled at the Royal College of Art who hoped to participate. The next research stage was focused on conducting studio visits with each applicant. The initial studio meetings lasted for approximately one hour. After completing the first round of interviews with all open call applicants, a sub-set of research participant artists were selected for inclusion in further activities related to the *Painting from the Other Side* curational project which included the exhibition at Dyson Gallery in London UK from 2-7 April 2019 and related PAR activity.

The first round of studio visits with research participant artists were completed in January 2019. Each visit included time for general discussion regarding the planned overall research process for *Painting from the Other Side*, explanation of the exhibition theme, and discussion

of the applications they submitted to the open call. The concept of reparative painting and how their work might demonstrate a reparative turn produced interesting as well as productive realizations for both the research participant artists and the researcher. During the studio visits, many research participant artists conveyed both their interest in the idea of reparative painting and their confusion about it. Some shared their frustration that, in preparation for their application and later the studio visit, their search for more information about reparative painting provided no answers because there is no available knowledge about reparative painting theory. These discussions pointed to a clear gap in knowledge and scholarship committed to this topic.

For the research participant artists who grasped a sense of what reparative painting might be, without being able to find concrete references for it, there were also some who expressed their position that within the context of the canon of Euro-Western painting, after so many centuries of exclusion, just becoming painters and making paintings was reparative in itself.¹³⁰ For those excluded from art because of their identity, being able to enter previously forbidden spaces, (in this case the space of the painter which in the canon of great Euro-Western painters has persisted as a club primarily for straight, white, Christian men) would surely be

¹³⁰ Bickmore, "Artist Website". Is one example of a research participant artist who mentioned this view. For more insight on the imbalance of inclusion in museums and galleries (particularly in the United States) see Julia Halperin and Charlotte Burns, "Women's Place in the Art World," *ArtNet* (2019), <https://news.artnet.com/womens-place-in-the-art-world/womens-place-art-world-museums-1654714>. The article foregrounds the work of a number of artists impacted by this imbalance as well as offering a glaring review of collection and sales data writing that "Just 11 percent of all acquisitions and 14 percent of exhibitions at 26 prominent American museums over the past decade were of work by female artists. According to a joint investigation by artnet News and In Other Words, a total of 260,470 works of art have entered the museums' permanent collections since 2008. Only 29,247 were by women." This position also is resonant with work by the Guerrilla Girls, an activist feminist art collective who have tracked inclusion of women artists in museums and galleries since the seventies. Guerrilla Girls, "Guerrilla Girls Activist Collective Website," <https://www.guerrillagirls.com/about>. As well as Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?."; "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? Thirty Years After."

one of the first requirements to repair their sense of belonging in the field of painting. In the case of this thesis, its development of reparative painting practice theory, and the case studies, it was the research participant artists who were not just entering the space of painting in spite of the fact that their identities are outside of the standard artist included in the Euro-Western art canon, but those whose work additionally grappled with concepts of reparative painting related to issues of gender, race, and sexuality. Ultimately the final group of research participant artists selected to participate in the full scope of PAR included applicants who did not just have identities outside the canon of Euro-Western painting, but those whose practices additionally engaged in reparative modes in line with the scope of this thesis' focus on issues of misogyny, race, and homophobia.

The collections of work submitted by this sub-set of selected research participant artists in combination with the discursive studio visit meetings became the central material forming the case studies on reparative painting that follow.¹³¹ The selected research participant artists also participated in additional studio meetings which allowed for expansion of the initial interview discussions and allowed for participants to give updates on the progress of any new paintings being created for the *Painting from the Other Side* exhibition. These further studio meetings generally added an additional few hours of research contact time, the total time spent with each participant did vary based on the individual cases. During the studio meetings we discussed their work, ideas of reparative painting, and how those ideas might resonate with their individual practice. Through engaging in these studio visits, each participant began to consider often new examples of the ways their paintings could be reparative. This, in

¹³¹ Supra, The first case study appears on 85.

combination with the findings which uncovered multiple and diverse examples of how each participant's practice incorporated reparative painting, validated the activity. It provided positive results and developed the research material required to create case studies addressing an important research question of this thesis, how are painting practices reparative or driven by a reparative aim.

Maura Reilly recounted MoMA's infamous involvement in propagation of this canon in contemporary art, with a reference to Holland Cotter's *New York Times* article that searingly clarifies this point: "Funnily enough, the Museum of Modern Art has never named the long-running blockbuster show that fills its permanent-collection galleries. So, I'll name it: 'Modern White Guys: The Greatest Art Story Ever Invented.'" ¹³² As Reilly argues the Euro-Western canon's "...discriminatory practices persist today in most mainstream museums, gallery rosters, and auction price differentials." ¹³³ This highlights how far reaching the issues and damages of this canon are. Linda Nochlin's account of the Euro-Western canon of art, specifically the absence of women in it, states that

In the field of art history, the white Western male viewpoint, unconsciously accepted as *the* viewpoint of the art historian, may-and does-prove to be inadequate, not merely on moral and ethical grounds, or because it is elitist, but on purely intellectual ones. ¹³⁴

¹³² As seen referenced in Reilly, *Curatorial Activism : Towards an Ethics of Curating*. 14 quote from Holland Cotter, "At Moma, Women at Play in the Fields of Abstraction," *New York Times*, April 13 2017.

¹³³ Reilly, *Curatorial Activism : Towards an Ethics of Curating*. 217

¹³⁴ Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? Thirty Years After." 45

This thesis argues that this primacy is a ‘minority power position’, a phrase developed within the scope of research for this thesis that works to tell the truth about the white Euro-Western man’s global minority status as well as his power.¹³⁵ It modifies Nochlin’s seminal unravelling of that canon’s claim to validity. Particularly in how it revises the white Euro-Western male position, moving it from a standard production that shapes that population as near-omnipotent, to minority.

Some of the work included in the exhibition, particularly certain paintings by Pozniakow, were inspired by the discursive PAR sessions. While other work was completed by research participant artists independently in advance of the studio visits then analysed during the PAR studio visits. The exhibition provided a venue in which all research participant artists involved could work together to build a space and experience that disseminated as well as celebrated their reparative work. Though the researcher developed a plan for what area of the gallery each artist would use to exhibit their work, during installation any issues or ideas that arose were negotiated amongst the research participant artist group. Installation was the first time all (but one) of the participants were together in the same space.

Though we were a collection of individuals, the ties of reparative practice that bound us together were present. We worked together to hang the exhibition utilizing a common on centre height of fifty-six to fifty-seven inches which created a unified visual cadence allowing pieces to be featured, even in a dense wall hang, without distractions created by fractured or disjointed approaches to installation that detract from the viewing experience. The

¹³⁵ Supra, Hegemony of otheredness in Introduction 11

celebration aspect mentioned above was a reference to the exhibition's private view. The event was surely a celebration of many things. Including that despite how difficult the content to be redressed or repaired might have been for the research participant artists to address, they deeply engaged in thinking, feeling, as well as working with reparative painting throughout the PAR process. The research participant artists generously as well as actively contributed at every stage.

As an experience, walking through the gallery felt electric, an effect that came from many aspects of the exhibited paintings. Some of the factors contributing to that feeling include their vibrant colours of many pieces in the exhibition, the often richly textured surfaces, surprisingly irregular or flowing supports that appeared in numerous pieces; as well as the dramatic animal, plant, and human characters rendered in a myriad of styles that appeared in different works. All these visual elements in the exhibition contributed to generating that electric energy in the show. Viewers commented that the exhibition had a beautiful and engaging collection of colours that was uncommon.

Though the exhibition aspect was a small element of the wholistic scale of this thesis, including the PAR element, it was an important one. This was in part because of how the exhibition contributed to caring for the research participant artists and valued the difficult narratives they boldly addressed. It also had a capacity to build community for those who experienced the damages of othering and a means to foster generation of agency for the research participant artists. In these aspects, the exhibition itself offers another example of reparative practice within an experiential and community-based context. These are

experiences working alone in a studio cannot provide but are benefits a project like this was able to give back to all involved.

The PAR method allowed for unique engagement and interviews with several contemporary painters. These meetings gave the research participant artists an opportunity to encounter ideas of repair and consider how those ideas might apply to their own painting practices. More specifically during these meetings research participant artists engaged in analysis and discovery of the potential ways their painting practices might incorporate a reparative turn that specifically subverts, evades, or exits from dynamics of exclusion linked to homophobia, misogyny, and racism. Discussions considered how systemic cultural agents propagating exclusion deploy inequity to obstruct human flourishing and explored ways those systems are subverted through the research participant artist's diverse approaches to reparative practices in painting. Ultimately these research dialogues were encounters that allowed for development of the case studies that follow which offer further detail on specific contemporary reparative painting approaches. The case studies are arranged into subgroup themes, each presented later in this chapter.

As this thesis offers a first look at reparative painting practice theory, artists who applied to participate in the project were interested in the idea, yet not fully aware of its scope or how it operated. To close this gap during interviews research participant artists were briefed on the reparative painting practice theory being developed here. Once a basis of understanding was achieved, the research participant artists and the researcher worked together to discern how their paintings and process might fit within the theoretical framework. It became clear very early in the research process for this thesis that looking at paintings alone would not be

enough to reliably discern a reparative turn in practice in all cases (perhaps not even in most). Close looking, a keen focus on the artwork at hand, must be combined with artist interviews to discern the fullness of their making process, including its often-hidden contexts, to determine if and how the paintings evidenced reparative practice elements.

The intensive studio visits were pivotal to this thesis' findings because they created an opportunity to delve into questions about the power of painting's reparative dimensions in the context of work by many different artists. As the curatorial PAR approach allowed for the research questions of this thesis to be placed in dialogue with many paintings by other contemporary artists, it extended the scope of research. Testing its ideas beyond the researcher's personal painting practice, while also providing some access to the process of painting from the inside by other artists. An aspiration of this research is to offer reparative painting practice theory as a methodology, an approach to practice, a mode of analysis and consideration, with broad applicability to artists or those working in the arts who also have social justice aims. The case studies below demonstrate the applicability and plasticity of the theory of reparative painting practice in the field of painting as well as creative practices that operate outside of painting.

The studio visits enabled access to the artistic production process and inner thinking of the artist. This recounting of the activity of painting is referred to here as painting from the inside, a recounting of the experience of painting as an experience that evolves over time and is reported by the artists themselves. This investigation of painting from the inside was focused on the creation of paintings research participant artists submitted to the open call. To more reliably discern the existence of a reparative turn in an artist's work, engaged direct discourse

through an encounter between researcher and painter is needed. This is especially true in the case of painting less obvious in its reparative approach, for example in pieces perhaps more abstract or with reduced readable narrative content, or in work with highly specific personal content. The reparative work in these cases might be hard to discern without the opportunity discourse with the painter provides. Jhonatan Pulido's paintings, which are both abstract and highly specific to personal context, offer an example of this.¹³⁶

As mentioned previously, discerning the reparative turn in paintings by other artists using close looking or more standard methods of researching painting from the outside alone is an approach limited in numerous aspects. Perhaps the most significant factor of this limitation is that an artist's thoughts, process, and intentions (their experience of painting, from the inside) are not transparently or entirely elucidated in a finished piece. As Peter Geimer writes "Tuyman's paintings have a meaning that goes beyond the visible and that cannot be deciphered through mere observation."¹³⁷ In short, deeper layers of meaning, ideas, content, and the paths artists took to arrive at the painting are likely inaccessible (partially or completely) to viewers through looking alone. Hidden in the process of painting, specifically painting from the inside, are the building elements that led up to the creation of a finished painting. The path or narrative of its formation can offer a map to the reparative turn as will be discussed in the works included in the following pages.

The power visual interventions and visual elements have to produce culture, is well known. For example, consider the far-reaching power of visually based social and traditional media

¹³⁶ *Infra*, 90

¹³⁷ Peter Geimer, "Painting and Atrocity: The Tuymans Strategy," in *Thinking through Painting Reflexivity and Agency Beyond the Canvas*, ed. Isabelle Graw, et al. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012; reprint, 2014). 20

network platforms, their potential to impact perspectives and cultures in viewers is evident in the stratospheric rise of users alone. Further, add the economics fuelling their growth and the significant reach of their power to produce culture becomes further clarified. It is estimated in 2021 companies spent more than two hundred and eighty billion USD on advertisements in the United States alone with more than 60% of those investments spent on social media platforms.¹³⁸ Clearly the corporate sector knows what visually engaging media can do to sway their target audiences. There are of course many additional examples of how visibility influences culture including museums, history painting, the ways human sight and our ability to access visibility has been a critical tool used to fuel our learning as well as a key ability used to help animal life survive through the ages to cite just a few.¹³⁹

Painting and visibility convey meaning and create encounters differently than text-based language. One example of this difference is that painting is materially engaged. Barad's writing on performativity gets to this matter of the power of text or material to define what is, arguing that "Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real."¹⁴⁰ Partly due to its close biological link to survival (such as how seeing enables us to identify food or danger), visibility offers a physical/material sensorial experience with the potential to generate affective dimensions in different ways than text. An example of this can be found in

¹³⁸ Brad Adgate, "Agencies Agree; 2021 Was a Record Year for Ad Spending, with More Growth Expected in 2022," Forbes Media LLC, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2021/12/08/agencies-agree-2021-was-a-record-year-for-ad-spending-with-more-growth-expected-in-2022>.

¹³⁹ Further examples can be found in the emerging field of Neuroesthetics such as Semir Zeki, "Art and the Brain," *Daedalus* 127, no. 2 (1998). As well in understanding the surprising ways visibility, colour, and biology have worked to support life in Beau Lotto, *Optical Illusions Show How We See*, TEDGlobal (TED, 2009).

¹⁴⁰ Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." 802.

the fact that people and paintings exist materially in shared space and sometimes in a very different scale relationship than that of a person and a book for example. This can result in painting offering a significantly different encounter than an encounter with text-based language which exists as sign-based content (usually) on the flat surface of paper or a screen.

Further differentiating painting is the ways it can work as not just an object but also as a subject or as subject like object/entity.¹⁴¹ In *The Love of Painting* Graw considers this subject like quality of painting partly through the close bond between painters, paintings, and theories on/of painting. Graw writes that the painter and painting are so tightly linked that “theories of painting are also theories of the painter.”¹⁴² This subject like entity-ness in painting is linked to its aliveness and has evolved over time. From the Renaissance when a painting’s aliveness was in its ability to approximate lifeforms, in portraiture or landscape for example, through to the contemporary where aliveness in painting might be found in its suggestions of human beings be they abstract or traceable in painterly mark making.¹⁴³

This dynamic of intellect and/or subjective aliveness in painting is multifaceted as the painting itself is a physical manifestation of the artists creation as well as their immaterial self. Additionally, paintings offer not just a physical presence in their materiality, but also in the colour-figure-ground-compositional elements that exist on the picture plane. Graw adds the additional element of colour to her theory of aliveness in painting, specifically crediting its power to its material identity as nature,

¹⁴¹ Graw, *The Love of Painting : Genealogy of a Success Medium*. 48-58

¹⁴² Ibid. 51

¹⁴³ Ibid. 241

Color seems to me to have been predestined for this task thanks to pigment's inherent relation to nature. Pigments are harvested from nature and thus come with an immanent aspect of life and self-agency. In addition, the corporeality of pigments, their connection to the material world, is apt in creating the impression of life.¹⁴⁴

When a painting is seen, these elements of colour, nature, materiality, seem in motion as they reach toward becoming. Becoming in painting is what emerges in its encounter with the viewer as well as between the painter, their work with the materials, and the content in each piece. This becoming emerges in the painting process inside the painters practice as well as through encounter with material, memory, visibility, and life experience(s). These elements of painting, its subject like qualities, its aliveness, the power of its visibility to generate affective encounters all enrich its potential to function as a reparative and give it the potential to engage in creative future making.

As a result, an encounter with painting has great potential to generate an affective response, feelings or shimmers of them, in viewers and painters alike. In *Visualizing Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde* Best provides a productive description of the relationship between affective dynamics and art saying that "The affective dimension is a feature of both subject and object. Put very simply, this can be phrased as 'when a work of art is moving, I am moved' - affect permeates the aesthetic encounter."¹⁴⁵ Paintings can also be human like due to their incorporation of the brush mark from the painters hand, in the case of oil painting that the medium is made of raw materials from nature, inclusion of figures (representational, abstract, or in between), colour, et al. In essence they become a complex human output imbued with

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 23

¹⁴⁵ Best, *Visualizing Feeling : Affect and the Feminine Avant-Garde*. 8.

matter (of self, of material, of memory, of possibility) and its aliveness. In the framework of this project, the affective dimensions at play in an encounter with painting, especially in terms of its potential to produce agency as a means of an exit from identity-based marginalization, are critical to the genesis of a reparative turn. These works of reparative painting are likely moving, possibly for the artists or possibly viewers. As repair demands change, they are transformative. Additionally, repair demands states or sites are transformed from a broken or damaged (to some degree) version into something new.

Transiting now from aliveness in painting and its affective as well as reparative potential, the focus will shift to consider the artist studio. These sites where paintings are painted have significance in the context of this research. The research participant artists' studios are the site where material painting happens as well as where the interviews conducted within the context of this research occurred. The studio is not a mundane site or a common place, it is where the reparative transformations referenced here occur. The studio should be thought of as a kind of wildness or perhaps wild-er-ness, a site holding far more than the sum of its contents and architecture.¹⁴⁶ A place that engages in "... an anticolonial mode of thinking, and a poetics of power. ... a space rendered uninhabitable by modernity but crammed with interesting life-forms of its own."¹⁴⁷ Reparative painting requires transition from what was/is to what could be. New cultural formations, through new thinking constructed outside the status quo. Muñoz proposed that this wildness is in part a kind of "Punk Rock Commons". He describes this commons as having "annihilative force, that refusal of cohesion and insistence on scatterdness, partiality, and the impossible act of not only living but also striving."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Halberstam and Nyong'o, *Wildness*. 453-463 (context of wildness)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 459

¹⁴⁸ Muñoz, "The Wildness of the Punk Rock Commons." 658

Though the essays by Halberstam, Nyong'o, and Muñoz referenced above were not about art or studios, I argue that these ideas are productive ways to conceive of the uncommon space of the artist's studio and its crucial role in enabling the painter to pursue reparative aims which demand transformative thinking, new cultural productions, as well as redress of traumatic damages, through their work.

The PAR process ultimately uncovered a multitude of reparative painting pursuits this thesis had not previously conceived. Together the PAR findings expose the productive, ever in motion, chameleon-like character of this theory of reparative painting practice. Though the works selected for the exhibition offer many different types of reparative approaches, there were also some commonalities. For example, the content addressed is often deeply personal. Additionally, the artists as well as their subject matter had an ambition to engage in some form of repair on damage inflicted by being rendered Other or disempowered, or there was an ambition to exit from dynamics of bias to achieve some form of repair on its damage. The research participant artists also had a profound relationship with their paintings. Their work was not merely aesthetic. The paintings were not simply conceived as work meant to function as visually appealing objects. This depth of connection between artist and painting was pivotal to fleshing out as well as validating the theory of reparative painting practice presented in this thesis.

Approaches to repair in painting practices of research participant artists include use of aesthetic approaches to subvert socially inflicted identity-based uglying, others transformed the everyday instruments of colonial power by taking them into their own hands to wield them with their own power, some appropriated patriarchy's abjectionification of women's

bodies by disempowering toxic masculinity with grotesque animalized male bodies. Others exposed what they had closeted by celebrating gay sexuality using preciousness and gold leaf as indexes of desire which internalized homophobia had previously forbidden them to express.¹⁴⁹

These examples offer an introductory sense as to the diverse ways one might seek to effect a repair and perhaps a better understanding of why the ideas of Muñoz's "Punk Rock Commons" are so fitting here.¹⁵⁰ These diverse subject matters and points of view do not tightly cohere with a singular narrative, but each strives for a transformation from what is/was to something better. They share an interest in annihilating hegemonic othering, do not claim to be complete solutions but exist along the way to something better, perhaps a something better with utopian resonance. As Sedgwick argues, "The desire of a reparative impulse... is additive and accretive."¹⁵¹ These reparative painting practices add new cultural productions, seek to bestow new powers and agencies, paint new (repaired) narratives and possibilities for self and other.

¹⁴⁹ This thesis is not suggesting that artists discussed in the following case studies represent the full scope of painters engaging in reparative work. Though there was no direct contact with them for the purposes of researching if these following works are reparative, the following examples offer promising reparative potential. *Supermodel* by Kerry James Marshall has reparative potential in how it subverts racist tropes about the Black male body by re-casting it's subject position of supermodel instead indicating extraordinary beauty. Mickalene Thomas' paintings are imbued with affective visual encounter and portraits of subjects with agency resonating with a kind of iconic gravitas that celebrate her queer gaze beholding the beauty of Black women. Many paintings by Hernan Bas also explore his queer gaze on figures in settings exuding lush beauty that also incorporate aspects seeming to echo tragedy. Artemisia Gentileschi's iconic painting titled *Judith Slaying Holofernes* can be seen as a revenge painting, art historians' postulate that this painting could be a type of narrative visualization of how Gentileschi fantasized she would punish her rapist by beheading him. This painting (theoretically) about a turn to violence in response to violence, in which the victim took the power and vanquished her rapist through beheading, is not gentle, or flowery, but it is reparative in its production of a victorious powerful self-agency narrative that included murder of an abuser. On the Gentileschi painting see Jonathan Jones, "More Savage Than Caravaggio: The Woman Who Took Revenge in Oil," *The Guardian*, 5 October 2016 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Muñoz, "The Wildness of the Punk Rock Commons." 653-658

¹⁵¹ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You." 149.

Each of the following reparative painting practice case studies that follow profiles work by a different research participant artist. The case studies are collected into six general themes of resonance to help mark painting either related in some facet or to surface where even these approaches with commonalities might diverge. These collections are not to imply exact sameness. Instead, they intend to connote a kind of connectedness (where more than one artist is included), offer the reader a theme as an entry point, or refer to a resonance of related content or visuality.

—Reparative Turn Through Aesthetics and Beauty—

This section includes research participant artists Kate Bickmore and Jhonatan Pulido. Both submitted paintings that made use of aesthetics and beauty in their specific reparative turn in painting.



Image 14 Kate Bickmore, The Abyss's Bridge, oil paint on canvas, 213 x 152 cm, 2016



Image 15 Kate Bickmore Wet My Lips, oil paint on canvas, 30 x 40 cm, 2018.

Using rich colour and imagery to generate an affective reparative encounter, both artists, while producing politically charged work, found beauty a key method to convey those reparative aims. Aesthetically engaged reparative painting can operate in the way Laing describes Derek Jarman “We looked at him and knew there was another kind of life: wild, riotous, jolly. He opened a door and showed us paradise. He’d planted it himself, ingenious and thrifty.”¹⁵² Liang was referring to Jarman’s garden and personality, however this could just as well describe how Bickmore’s botanical pictures draw us into their wild, riotous, joyful world. Jarman, whose paintings during the period he was battling HIV were brilliantly coloured and as Stuart Morgan suggested seemed to call up a “frenetic party atmosphere” even though he knew he was approaching death, was quoted as saying that “The actual physicality of painting will release the violence in me” in reference to his rage about the way



Image 17 Jhonatan Pulido Rural Republic 3
oil on canvas, 52 cm x 42 cm, 2018



Image 16 Jhonatan Pulido Rural Republic 4
oil on canvas, 52 cm x 42 cm, 2018

it felt to have HIV.¹⁵³ One of the ways repair can be generated in painting is through its ability

¹⁵² Laing, *Funny Weather : Art in an Emergency*. 87

¹⁵³ Derek Jarman, *Ataxia - Aids Is Fun*, 1993. Support: 2515 × 1790 × 36 mm. Tate. This quote is on the Tate website page for Jarman’s painting *Ataxia - Aids Is Fun*. The full quote is as follows: “Discussing these works with the writer Ken Butler in 1993, Jarman remarked, ‘I want to release some of the anger which everyone

to facilitate emotional release or experience either in the painter or in the viewer. In the case of research participant artists, that release to many forms such as release of rage (Olivia Sterling), longing (Leon Pozniakow), shame (Lydia Pettit), joy (Kate Bickmore), disgust (Elise Fuller Broadway).

While the choice to produce socially engaged work that is also aesthetically beautiful might not be the most common approach to political art, that does not mean aesthetic engagement renders it somehow ineffective. Much like Sedgwick's theories about the dominance of the paranoid approach to research in identity studies, it is argued that historically, political art has often used a related anti-aesthetic approach. Like 'reparative reading practice,' beauty is commonly thought of as lacking the kind of hard-hitting qualities required to meaningfully engage with political subject matter of this nature, whereas, more 'paranoid' approaches committed to exposure and critique of wrongs, seem to excel. Expanding on this point Best suggests that artists using aesthetics and beauty to produce socially engaged art

...make a radical break with the dominant anti-aesthetic approaches to political art. The anti-aesthetic tradition privileges critique over aesthetic engagement and rejects the importance of traditional aesthetic concerns such as beauty, feeling, expression and judgement. In contrast, these artists use a range of complex aesthetic strategies to engage audiences with these histories...¹⁵⁴

with HIV feels ... The actual physicality of painting will release the violence in me' (quoted in Whitworth Art Gallery 1994. 12–14)." Morgan Stuart's view on the subject of Jarman's paintings as seen on the Tate website are attributed to Morgan Stuart, "Borrowed Time," in *Derek Jarman : A Portrait* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996).

¹⁵⁴ Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. 2.

Of course, this thesis shares common ground with Best here by arguing that reparative painting can be politically charged, aesthetically engaged, and contain beauty. The two case studies that follow expand on this point.

+Artist Kate Bickmore+¹⁵⁵



Image 18 Kate Bickmore, *The Origin of Her Milky Way*, oil paint on canvas, 200 x 160 cm, 2018

Bickmore submitted five pictures to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side* from her then current series of floral and foliage paintings. The pieces explore ideas of lesbian desire, the female gaze, aesthetics, and asserting her agency in the realm of painting while living in

patriarchy. Her work plays on as well as seeks to subvert the female stereotypes featured in a significant percentage of paintings in the canon (see muses, nudes, objectified women etc.) while drawing the condition of women and nature under hegemonic patriarchy together to elicit thought on how each fare when subjected to such a toxic intrusion.

The botanical paintings feature flowers as central figures surrounded by lush foliage which, together with the painting titles, conjure women, their bodies, and desires. While concurrently troubling how the canon of Euro-Western painting has portrayed and objectified

¹⁵⁵ Kate Bickmore, "Kate Bickmore Artist Website," <http://katebickmore.com>.

women, Bickmore's work also intervenes in the tradition's trope, woman as the flower-object target of male lust/sexuality by usurping that familiar visual language and replacing the common patriarchal lens of heterosexual desire with lesbian desire. In the below quote from Bickmore's open call essay, she expounds these aims.

"Drawing from my experiences as a woman who feels both empowered and constrained by my physicality and sexuality, I paint as a means to better understand the relationship between my body, the canvas, and the environments I occupy... My work aims to reinvent a canonized depiction of women and nature by reacting to the patriarchal constraints imposed upon painting by the male gaze.

I break down and expose the impermanence of the canvas as a physical and social construct created by men by mimicking nature and decay in my painting process. I meticulously build up the surface of the paintings, starting by emulating the washes of rain and soil as if they were left on the ground outside for nature to patiently and sensually consume and engulf. Pulsating with life as they rupture from and break down the canvas in an act of reclamation, these wild plants give me the ability to reassert my presence in a man-made space that has often objectified or denied it." ¹⁵⁶

Bickmore conveys here key aspects of how these works enter the realm of reparative painting in their operations to reclaim, reconsider, repaint, empower, and redefine women's bodies

¹⁵⁶ "Personal Statement Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).

and sexualities through the power of her own agency as a painter creating botanical worlds of her own making.

Bickmore's botanical paintings are visually striking and as referenced in the above quote meticulously painted. The work is developed through a painstaking process, which the artist seems to love working through, of complex gazes and layering. This attention to detail is even (or perhaps importantly) reflected in the smallest blade or dew drop. The visual worlds



Image 19 Kate Bickmore, Climbing Out of Her Sheets, 132 x 152 cm, oil on canvas, 2019.

Bickmore's paintings create exist in a kind of interstices where realism and fantasy intermingle, each asserting itself in different ways. Several factors contribute to this shifting multiplicity found in these visual worlds. For example, the colour array used seems to make robust use of contemporary pigments. These

hues are frequently more intense and brilliant, yet her palette does not completely leave more traditional hues behind either.

Additionally, the form of the flowers and green foliage seem clearly transcribed from nature in terms of their shapes as well as size relationships between plant components, yet when looking at the compositions, a different visual calculus is in action. For example, the outer

petal of the rose in “Climbing out of Her Sheets” reads as proportional to the inner still more tightly entwined, not yet bloomed, part of the flower. Likewise, in “The Origin of Her Milky Way”, the scale of a snapdragon type flower to a rose in full bloom seems accurate to what one might observe in a garden or at a florist. Yet at close to five feet across the rose in “Climbing out of Her Sheets” and blooms painted across “The Origin of Her Milky Way” which spans five feet and three inches, have all definitively left their realistic sepals behind in these paintings where they will always be in full bloom existing in a nearly monumental (for a flower) scale.

Despite the realism used to render the blooms in Bickmore’s paintings, the world in which they exist, the ground, when not fully eclipsed by a nearly monumental bloom, feels somehow fantastical or alien. This is particularly true in “The Origin of Her Milky Way” and “The Abyss’s Bridge”. “The Abyss’s Bridge” is decidedly more abstracted than the other paintings Bickmore submitted, while “The Origin of Her Milky Way” abstracts mainly select sections of the painting’s ground, while stylizing to a nearly graphic level and somewhat abstracting, the small daisy like flowers in the painting’s background.

In the open call application essay Bickmore wrote about her choice to use flowers as stand-ins for women in her life, characters that appear in paintings attuned to a kind of repair that combats how the western canon of painting, and wider cultures surrounding it, relegated women to what she sees as the “border” world of the canvas.

“Within my paintings I employ flowers as motifs for the women in my life, and the relationships I have with them. My gaze as a queer woman is one that empathizes with her, as well as desires her for her beauty. I sympathize with her history of

being the muse, and how she's consistently been abused under the objectifying gaze. We have torn her apart to better understand her anatomy, sexuality, and reproductive functions. We have purchased her, manipulated her, and genetically modified her into our aesthetic "ideal." She has been positioned as the artwork and muse, represented as an image without agency; confined to the home, and stuck within the border of the canvas."¹⁵⁷

"Climbing out of Her Sheets" traces reparative power to its visual position which converges aesthetic beauty, desire, a loving as well as humorous ode to lesbian sexuality, and the vulva (which patriarchy loves to legislate, make invisible, control, render dirty, dominate, and often abuse.)¹⁵⁸ Euro-Western culture teaches women from a young age their bodies are less than male, that they represent a lacking, an absence, that vulvas and vaginas are abject, unclean. Yet, in "Climbing out of Her Sheets", Bickmore offers a lusciously painted rose, an iconic sign of love, then combines that meaning with the culturally abject vulva and lesbian sexuality. The effect of this triadic visual move subverts patriarchy's attempt to disparagingly define women, their bodies, and their sexuality, placing the positioning power to define women's

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ This approach is resonant with Harmony Hammonds work for example in Margo Hobbs Thompson, "'Lesbians Are Not Women': Feminine and Lesbian Sensibilities in Harmony Hammond's Late-1970s Sculpture," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 12 (2008). Hammond engages the vulva in her work while linking it to lesbian issues of desire troubled and complicated by homophobia such as in her exhibition discussed here Michael Busch, "Harmony Hammond: Inappropriate Longings at Alexander Gray Associates," (2018), <https://artefuse.com/2018/05/18/harmony-hammond-inappropriate-longings-at-alexander-gray-associates-125535/>. As well as Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, 1974 - 1979. 576 × 576 in. (1463 × 1463 cm). a large-scale installation including vulva like imagery engaged in a feminist project of honouring accomplishments of 1,038 women. Further Audre Lorde, *Uses of the Erotic : The Erotic as Power*, Out & out Pamphlet (Freedom, California: distributed by The Crossing Press, 1978). A seminal essay in which Lorde argues that the erotic is a source of female power and like all sources of power one oppressors seek to extinguish through abjection, pornography, and other means. "Recognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the same weary drama. For not only do we touch our most profoundly creative source, but we do that which is female and self-affirming in the face of a racist, patriarchal, and anti-erotic society" 7.

bodies instead with a woman, in this case Bickmore, but it could be argued this can also include the viewer. To see such a visceral physical human aspect and vibrant dedication to lesbian sexuality, both of which are so commonly marginalized and monsterized in culture, lovingly revered creates room for a deeply affective as well as reparative impact, especially for those afflicted by misogynistic and homophobic bias.

+Artist Jhonatan Pulido+¹⁵⁹

Pulido submitted five paintings from his “Rural Republic” series to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side*. The idea for the series was sparked by a complex early childhood memory related to and activated by painting, the public sphere, state killing, the forbidden, and the exposed. While this multifaced content became activated in his studio through painting, Pulido had a significant realization. Great painting, its power, its story, doesn’t only exist in the iconic galleries dedicated to the canon of Euro-Western art.¹⁶⁰ Paint, he realized, did important work right there his remote, very rural hometown.

The “Rural Republic” paintings are also inspired by his first childhood memories of paint and the vibrant aesthetic mise-en-scène of the rural area in Colombia where he grew up in the 1990’s and early 2000’s. The landscape of buildings in his hometown was a veritable visual feast of colour in which each building made its own vibrant addition. A seemingly endless

¹⁵⁹ Pulido, "Jhonatan Pulido Artist Website".

¹⁶⁰ Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Andrea Giunta, *Radical Women : Latin American Art, 1960-1985* (Munich, London, New York: DelMonico Books Prestel, 2017). In their introduction they also write about the lack of inclusion of artists from Latin America in contemporary art discourse “The artists whose works are included in *Radical Women* have made extraordinary contributions to the field of contemporary art, but little scholarly attention has been devoted to situating their production within its social, cultural, and political contexts.” 17

array of hues unfurled across a landscape scale area that became a concert of diverse colour-interaction. However, the “Rural Republic” series not only portrays the architecture of colour in his hometown, but it also explores the deeply fraught history of violence that unfolded within the region. A story that through absence, blood, and paint was inscribed in the psyche of the population.



Image 20 Jhonatan Pulido, *Rural Republic*, oil on canvas, 52 x 42 cm, 2018

His hometown was plagued by frequent violence between government agents and the local rebels fighting against them. The murders and bloodshed were very real, but they were also completed in ways that were in some respects hidden. It didn't look like a 'war zone' because much of the fabric of the violent operation was covert. The traumatic reality of that time was in stark contrast to such a

beautiful setting overflowing with complex vibrant colour. Pulido's "Rural Republic" series operates in a way described by Henrik Kaare Nielsen in his article "Discursive Interventions" which explores aesthetics and the political

When art intervenes into politics, it happens via the cultural public sphere, where art by way of its specific formal and thematic tools creates 'odd' new insights and ways of experiencing, and on this basis offers its own, specific space of reflection as a mirror to other discursive fields, including the political.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Henrik Kaare Nielsen, "Discursive Interventions. On the Relationship between the Aesthetic and the Political in Late Modernity," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 35 (2008). 55

One aspect of the turmoil that was not hidden, was the painting, which in some respects unfolded as a war of words and colours. During this time the landscape of his town was activated through paint, used by both the conflict's opposing groups, the rebels and the government agents. The landscape became visually ensnared in the unrest through messages, slogans, and the claims they charged against each other. Government agents calling for compliance, rebels calling for freedom, progressively painting over and erasing each other's



Image 21 Jhonatan Pulido, Portrait of a weapon, oil on canvas, 225 x 188 cm, 2019

last paintings. Their battle unfolded in the public realm through a combination of violence, intimidation, abductions, fear, and paint. In this war, paint became a human agent. A being with a voice, a power, and a call for cultural change that was broadcast out by covering surfaces of the bucolic buildings. While competitively, in other layers or moments in time, it also served as an agent of the oppressive government.

Pulido recounted during interview that the paint was considered so powerful that it struck fear in the population so when the battle message paintings appeared they would be erased quickly, painted over with swatches of new lush solid colour. In "Insurgent Research" Gaudry references an article that appeared in the "Dakota Radical Newspaper" *Án,paó Dúta* which advocates for alternative avenues of protest in the public sphere including painted graffiti as one of its outputs. Gaudry writes that "Every revolutionary movement has its own message

and its own propaganda to speak. Graffiti is only one way to express our struggle.”¹⁶² The activist painting methods Pulido witnessed in Colombia served as this kind of alternative distribution method in the liberatory project engaged in fighting hegemonic government oppression and terror, they were but one of the methods of resistance used during that time.

A reparative turn can be found here in use of paint to materially refute political violence and oppression by physically erasing its voice in the landscape.¹⁶³ The frequent erasing and over painting in his region by rebels or average citizens sought to return the countryside’s beauty, colour, and safety. A vehicle for the rebels’ cause, paint could also repair some aspect of the inequitable power relations between the rebel and government agents, by giving rebels the power of a platform from which they could operate communications about their fight against oppression.

Pulido’s recounted that his realization that great painting happened not just within the hallowed halls of the Euro-Western canon, but also happened right there in rural Colombia, where paint was heroic, visceral, hypnotic, powerful, affective, important, and alive offered a richly complex reparative turn for the artist that validated his own painting. Close looking at Pulido’s abstracted paintings reveals the essence of these childhood encounters with paint, the socio-political, as well as the cultural production of belief. The layering, erasing, repainting, scraping, pastel colour palette all have a major presence in the series. Pulido

¹⁶² unattributed, *Án, paó Dúta* 2009. As referenced in Gaudry, "Insurgent Research." 125

¹⁶³ An additional example of public sphere art supporting political activism against oppression includes paintings that appeared in Tahir Square, Cairo Egypt to support political demonstrations and activism connected to the Arab Spring. Mia Jankowicz, "'Erase and I Will Draw Again': The Struggle Behind Cairo's Revolutionary Graffiti Wall," (2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/mar/23/struggle-cairo-egypt-revolutionary-graffiti>. Insurgent paintings by activists in Tahir Square, Cairo Egypt was also featured in Jehane Noujaim, "Al Midan (the Square)," (Egypt: GathrFilms (2014) (USA) (theatrical), I Wonder Pictures (2014) (Italy) (theatrical), Participant (2013) (USA) (theatrical), 2013).

referenced this important process-based aspect of his practice in his personal statement as part of his application response to the open call,

The surface becomes a diary that condenses different moments and decisions I take in the studio. Mistakes, successes and discoveries – these are all engaged with ... This is a process of construction and deconstruction, of removing material and putting it on, of falling in love with an idea and then watching it change. Painting is not knowing where to go; it is knowing how to wait, how to obey the surface and listen to what is happening there and act accordingly and in conjunction with the event.¹⁶⁴

Rural Republic offers a unique contribution to the canon of reparative painting in the ways it addresses activist aesthetics, social justice, and a critically imperative expansion of the meaning of great painting which moves its borders beyond the historically limited confines of white male master painters from the Euro-Western canon.

—Reparative Turn Through Therapeutic Autobiography—

This theme includes work by research participant artists Lydia Pettit and Elise Fuller Broadway. Both artists locate autobiographical content centrally in their work, shaping those experiences into methods of redress to work out difficult personal circumstances.

+Artist Lydia Pettit+¹⁶⁵

Pettit submitted five autobiographically engaged paintings to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side*. She described the content of the collection as addressing her

¹⁶⁴ Jhonatan Pulido, "Personal Statement Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).

¹⁶⁵ Lydia Pettit, "Lydia Pettit Artist Website," <https://lydiapettit.com>.

... perspective as a woman - a woman who has experienced abuse, a woman in the midst of healing, and a woman whose body does not conform to conventional ideas of beauty. I use painting as a therapeutic tool, and a way to share my life with others who may be coping with the same obstacles. Life post-trauma is complicated- it is full of pitfalls and pain, but also hope and optimism. Nothing happens quickly, but I like to show honest portrayals of the ebb and flow of recovery.¹⁶⁶

The stories about the paintings and her practice as conveyed in her application text made clear how critical painting is for her as a vehicle to reparatively think, imagine, and work through past trauma as well as everyday life as a woman trying to find ways to survive life subjected to a patriarchal social system. Like many examples of strongly compelling reparative painting, Pettit's pictures have multiple possible readings that she thinks, imagines, and works through. "Interruption" includes a dual self-portrait, picturing the artist primarily in transparency, mist, and reflection, the instance of her portrayal in a more flesh like embodiment only occurs in the very small section of her hands engaged in the beginning stage of cleaning her teeth. The painting switches worlds in a mist of bathroom haze between a figure ghost, a figure obscured, and a figure in the process of cleaning herself.

¹⁶⁶ "Personal Statement Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).



Image 22 Lydia Pettit, Interruption, oil and oil pastel on canvas, 140 x 170 cm, 2018

Similarly, to how Bickmore's paintings use a kind of fantastical realism, Pettit's realism in "Interruption" blends very, very, close likeness portraiture with a surrounding that, though still holding on to realism, feels more like a dream. The bathroom perspective is closer to what one would see through a fisheye camera lens. Her self-portrait, though a reflection, is eerily her likeness. While her arms and torso, painted in a way indicating she is (and as a

result we are) seeing them in periphery while looking through her own eyes into the mirror, yet they disquietingly appear at the bottom of the canvas. Much of the way she rendered those parts of her body uses a kind of visual shibboleth that stands out in its different visual approach when compared to the reflected portrait and the painting's architectural space. Their shifting transparency makes special announcement of the ghostly hollowness she feels in life. Though in her reflected self she appears a normal not-ghost human, the periphery of her torso and arms shows the opposite and an interior truth.

She paints herself how she experiences herself, as ghost like. This is evidenced in the reflection where, despite those feelings, her appearance presents without apparent physical disfigurement. This is because instead of appearing physically, the damage and trauma haunting her, appears within her inner life. This is a delicate, difficult, experience to visualize. Yet Pettit does so with great deftness. In the painting's beautiful use of colour to create space

and light as well as expert glazing and portraiture, “Interruption” compels the viewer to work on deciphering its message.

While doing so one senses their own inner life engaging in the process, those eyes looking out of the bathroom mirror are not our own yet, they must be. From here where we stand as viewers a compelling as well as surprising relationship is generated between the absent-presentness of the artist and the viewer that sparks care and empathy. These key emotions and intentions, so linked to repair, can be guardrails needed to move toward healing which is what “Interruption” works on doing for the artist and perhaps for viewers who find themselves locked in an out of body gaze with the painter.

Also loaded in this image are traces of cyclical feelings of shame/hiding, exposure, the need to clean one’s body, and nakedness of truth that the artist struggles with as a survivor of physical and emotional abuse by men. These visceral content focuses are records of memories from affective traumatic encounters with others and they are central to the paintings Pettit submitted to the open call. Her paintings, which are resoundingly figural and predominantly self-portraiture, give Pettit a platform of strength from which she can work through these traumas reaching for her own wellbeing, while also making them visible to other survivors. They provide survivors with a psychic-visual space to work through similar issues, find recognition, validation, or understanding. In these ways her paintings allow other survivors, even if they cannot paint, to benefit from this record of Pettit’s struggles to find ways that enable her to manage the ongoing processing of these traumas. Her paintings have an affective healing dimension for the artist as well as seek to repair feelings of trauma, isolation and shame survivors often suffer. Through the visual language of “Interruption”

Pettit exposes the narrative of a survivor whose path towards recovery is heroic and reparative in its: truth, bravery, and raw confrontation with the damaging affective dimensions of trauma.

+Artist Elise Fuller Broadway+¹⁶⁷

Broadway applied to the open call with three pieces, two sculptural paintings and one two-dimensional painting. Broadway's work navigates autobiography at the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, kinship, and mental health in the context of the American southwest. Broadway experienced difficult kinship relationships growing up as many family members were proud of their supposed ancestral links to Robert E. Lee and the civil war era southern confederacy, they also embraced extremist religious conservatism paired with its requisite homophobia and misogyny. Growing up in this kinship network and the wider social context of the American south created a dynamic of ongoing emotional and psychological turbulence for Broadway. In the personal statement she submitted with her application to the *Painting from the Other Side* open call Broadway poignantly describes the work she was then engaged in as well as its autobiographical elements, including the ways the culture she was raised by impacted her.

Elise's work is autobiographical, focusing on mental health issues borne out of both heritable and environmental circumstances, specifically developmental trauma within the domestic and public landscape of the American South. The works build on a mixture of Texan cultural iconography, dark humour, and deeply

¹⁶⁷ Elise Fuller Broadway, "Elise Fuller Broadway Artist Profile Page," <https://cargocollective.com/elisebroadwayartist/>.

personal, introspective imagery as a self-therapeutic mechanism that shifts between catharsis, self-destruction, and healing.¹⁶⁸



Image 23 Elise Fuller Broadway, *Blow Up*, 140 x 60 x 182 cm (varies by installation), gouache, gesso, and thread (hand-sewn) on cotton dish towels and yellow dusters, armature wire and polyester stuffing, 2018-19

Some of Broadway's paintings become a record of her search for images that she can use to construct an attempt to work through, conceive of, and reveal the truth about the racist, homophobic, and misogynistic values which stain the culture of the American south. Her paintings also capture her work to find and express a narrative that seeks to reveal a truth and somehow heal the complex damages that type of hate inflicts on a young LGBT woman who survived girlhood in its shadow.¹⁶⁹

In *Good Boy* Broadway works at unravelling the stereotype of the strong heroic white southern American man who was glorified as an ideal human by her kinship network and cultural context, as well as a central agent of the rejection and marginalization she faced. The sculptural painting removed his humanity, replacing him with a dog whose anatomy is grotesquely distorted. The bulldog often seems badly inbred, overweight for its size, suffering from joint problems, visibly struggling to breathe or even walk normally. The physically lacking

¹⁶⁸ "Personal Statement Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2018).

¹⁶⁹ Also of relevance here (as well as to paintings by Bickmore) is Harmony Hammond's exhibition which in part worked out hate for dykes and presented lesbian desire. Busch, "Harmony Hammond: Inappropriate Longings at Alexander Gray Associates". Additionally, Harmony Hammond, *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History* (New York: Rizzoli, 2000). Thompson, "'Lesbians Are Not Women': Feminine and Lesbian Sensibilities in Harmony Hammond's Late-1970s Sculpture." The threat of homophobic repercussions is highly relevant here as written by Thompson "A lesbian might choose not to reveal her erotic desires in the art she showed publicly to avoid homophobic, misogynistic interpretations of her work and potentially severe career repercussions." 445

bulldog points to the declining health endemic in her kinship network, while also unravelling the mirage of the heroic white southern man.¹⁷⁰



Image 24 Elise Fuller Broadway, *Good Boy, gauche and mixed media*, 45 x 60 x 20 cm, 2018

The dog emerges from a cut up destroyed landscape, a portrait painted with a hot pink scrotum, ensuring there is no question as to the sex of the animal. It also seems drunk, if not already drunk, it is at least on its way, drinking an XL Bud Light in what seems a familiar and comfortable regular habit. This dog stand-in is a proposal that there is no idyllic strong white

southern “real” American hero-man, demonstrating how that trope is steeped in sickening toxic masculinity. Broadway argues that in actuality, he is inbred, barely mobile, and drunk. The reparative turn in “Good Boy” is found in its ability to expose the fallacy of that toxic white masculinity by laying bare it’s lack. Subverting the stereotype by removing the heroic all powerful position of its persona, replacing it with the truth that it is more like a sick inbred drunk. *Good Boy* is a coup d'état seeking to remove the heroic myth which serves to generate power for the white southern American patriarch. Broadway uses a play from the patriarch’s own playbook by way of establishing the lacking and dysfunction of his body, just as patriarchy has done to women for generations. Through this move she disempowers this falsely heroic character.

¹⁷⁰ From literature but also relevant here in how Spiegelman uses animals (mice, dogs, and cats) to stand in as groups (in this case Jews in Germany, Nazi’s, and the American military) in a socio-political context. Art Spiegelman, *Maus : A Survivor’s Tale* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

—Reparative Turn Through Celebrating What was Closeted—

This section includes research participant artist Leon Pozniakow whose paintings pursue repair through self-acceptance, celebrating gay desire, and coming out of the closet.

+Artist Leon Pozniakow+¹⁷¹

Pozniakow submitted five paintings to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side*. The paintings work as visual erotic longings for the large hairy bearish male body he explores in what he describes as the “gayverse.” A concept Pozniakow works with that encompasses interior thoughts/desires and the exterior social context using figurative as well as materially specific (such as gold leaf) passages. In spite of their erotic yearnings, the paintings retain some dimension of fraught juxtaposition between celebratory desire and echoes of homophobia’s shame, a toxic intervention in thoughts and feelings that plagued him much of his adult life.¹⁷² In his application statement Pozniakow wrote of this dynamic in his work



Image 25 Leon Pozniakow, *The Collector*, watercolour, silver and gold leaf on panel, 15 cm x 20 cm, 2018

saying that the paintings are “drawing inspiration from the sublime and the shadowy, enticing with fetishized representations of male beauty that both honour and disturb the body.”¹⁷³ For context it could be productive to look towards Best again to help further conceptualize the possibility of repair by way of difficult content and the reparative dimension’s drive to assimilate violence in order to achieve it.

¹⁷¹ Leon Pozniakow, “Leon Pozniakow Instagram Page,” <https://www.instagram.com/leonpozniakow/>.

¹⁷² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Updated [ed.]. ed. (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 2008). Siobhan B. Somerville, “Feminism, Queer Theory, and the Racial Closet,” *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts* 52, no. 2 (2010).

¹⁷³ Leon Pozniakow, “Personal Statement Submitted to “Painting from the Other Side” Open Call,” (2019).



Image 26 Leon Pozniakow, *In Absence of the Man I Loved A* and *In Absence of the Man I Loved B*, oil and acrylic on Linen, 2019 (diptych)

The personal statement Pozniakow submitted with his application to the open call began with a quote from Mario Mieli. It clearly set the tone for his application by tuning it to the aim of homoerotic liberation for all Mieli wrote that “The objective of the revolutionary struggle of

homosexuals is not social tolerance for gays but rather the liberation of homoerotic desire in every human being”¹⁷⁴ Further into the statement Pozniakow addressed his paintings while there was also resonance with the Mieli quote.

In my painting I respond to the way our world is, how it is presented to us all by the dominant white cis male power structure. I am driven to present and investigate aspects of love, attraction and sexuality that still now fall under the shadow of taboo concept. By honestly tackling my personal, interior drives and bringing them to the surface I aim to nourish our culture, and within the limits of my power as an artist, to make visible and liberate the riches of homoerotic desire.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Mario Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism Elements of a Homosexual Critique* (London: Pluto Press, 1977). This quote was included at the start of Pozniakow’s personal statement, no page number was given.

¹⁷⁵ Pozniakow, "Personal Statement Submitted to “Painting from the Other Side” Open Call."

His paintings often celebrate the beauty of the Bear and his desire for them.¹⁷⁶ Pozniakow often paints people he interacts with through internet fed screens, sees in cartoons, and/or comics. He began painting these figurative narratives after experiencing censorship at a conservative art institution. Realizing the impact of the painful psychological affects that experience had on him, combined with the pain of being closeted about his sexuality for most of his life, his paintings took a reparative turn towards this new narrative grounded in pride and desire firmly positioned outside of the closet. The paintings open the door on the closet that used to hide him, becoming a platform to make visible what shame tried to erase, Pozniakow recounted that they help free him to be and show his true self.

—Reparative Turn Through Reclamation of Colonial Objects of Power

and Elevation of Everyday Materials—

This section includes research participant artist Osaretin Ugiagbe whose work seeks to repair, expose, and subvert bias in education, engage in decolonising through artwork, and defy exclusivity of material choice in painting expected in Euro-Western contexts.

+Artist Osaretin Ugiagbe¹⁷⁷

Ugiagbe submitted five mixed media collage paintings to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side*. Ugiagbe's paintings work with his experiences growing up in Nigeria, as a foreigner in the United Kingdom, an immigrant in the United States, the importance of everyday

¹⁷⁶ Bear is a term used in the gay community to describe a man with certain qualities, including someone whose body might be larger and with more hair than average. Though George Mazzei asserts "... it's attitude that makes a Bear." Mazzei is credited as the inventor of the term in his article George Mazzei, "Who's Who at the Zoo?," *The Advocate*, 26 July 1979.

¹⁷⁷ Osaretin Ugiagbe, "Osaretin Ugiagbe Artist Website," <https://www.osaretin.com>.

material, and power dynamics of educational settings.¹⁷⁸ Working predominantly in abstraction while still engaging in socio-political sphere of decolonial subject matter, his work finds itself in a compelling position because of its aesthetically engaging abstraction. This combination resonates with Kobena Mercer's position that art working with the often-difficult subjects of African and African diasporas cannot be limited to realism (though realism is a common standard here). This argument also relates to matters of the anti-aesthetic in politically engaged art referenced above. Mercer writes that

... if the task is to unfix and loosen up dichotomous codifications of difference, the terrain within which black artists intervene can no longer be adequately met by an aesthetics of realism or protest which seeks to counteract "misrepresentation," but requires an acknowledgement of the emotional reality of fantasy as the domain of psychic life that is also subject to the demands of the unconscious.¹⁷⁹

Ugiagbe's work seems tuned to these registers of emotional fantasy and a kind of visually deployed fabulation narrative.¹⁸⁰

In the personal statement submitted as part of his application to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side* Ugiagbe conveyed that

¹⁷⁸ Artists also engaging in use of everyday materials to combat racism for example include Betye Saar's "The Liberation of Aunt Jemima" of which Saar says, "The reason I created her was to combat bigotry and racism and today she stills serves as my warrior against those ills of our society." Quoted from Alexxa Gotthardt, "How Betye Saar Transformed Aunt Jemima into a Symbol of Black Power," Artsy, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-betye-saar-transformed-aunt-jemima-symbol-black-power>. Mark Bradford also uses historical events, nontraditional painting material (from reproductions to billboards) to create abstract artworks. For example Mark Bradford, *Pickett's Charge*, 2017. nearly 400 linear feet. Stéphane Aquin and Evelyn Hankins, *Mark Bradford: Pickett's Charge* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018). Further in Jack Whitten and Katy Siegel, *Jack Whitten : Notes from the Woodshed* (Hauser and Wirth, 2018). Whitten reflects on what was lost in the "slave trade" writing in his journal that "MY ART IS A TOOL USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECLAIMING MY LOST CULTURE AND DIRECTING IT INTO THE PRESENT. [regarding his piece] THE MASK COMPLETED JAN 95" 232

¹⁷⁹ Kobena Mercer, "Busy in the Ruins of a Wretched Phantasia." 195-218, 200

¹⁸⁰ Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts." 11

His work seeks to reconcile his lifelong relationship with the urban landscapes, which many of the artifacts in his work appeared to seek inspiration from. With his ongoing interest in portraiture, Ugiagbe's aim is to consistently attack and re-addresses the tradition of portraiture.¹⁸¹

Additionally, during the studio discussions, with keen attention to detail, Ugiagbe also



Image 27 Osaretin Ugiagbe, 1234, metal clamps, multiple layers of paper on paper, oil on rag, charcoal, oil, acrylic ink, print medium, found brown paper bag on paper, 80 x 59 inches.

discussed his methods for and belief in the importance of material choice in his paintings. He indicated they worked as important facets of his subject matter and he also conveyed that living in the UK brought aspects of his life in post-colonial Nigeria to front of mind in different ways than he experienced before. Ugiagbe recounted that in London he found himself suddenly living in the heart of imperial power. It seemed the traces of its nefarious colonial history in Africa had become visible to him there in new ways.

These matters of his life then, as a graduate

student in London UK who was again immersed in the context of an educational institution structured by British culture, it is not surprising these topics emerged in his paintings.

With its narrative grounded in an abstracted family portrait, references to the powerful impact of colonial, postcolonial, and reconstruction era pedagogical approaches by educators

¹⁸¹ Osaretin Ugiagbe, "Personal Statement Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).

with attention to their authority over students as well as their power to define Nigerian history, *1234* stands out as a significant reparative turn in painting. In this painting, Ugiagbe's interest in exploring the power of materially refuting the canon of great Euro-Western painting can be traced in the everyday material he integrated into the work. Seeking to break new ground, forge a new way into painting, standards like oil paint and stretched canvas were discarded. He furthered his pursuit of this new path by exploring the power of materially refuting the canon of great Euro-Western painting by integrating everyday material into his work instead of using traditional oil paint mediums and working on stretched canvas. In effect, these choices sought to bring painting off its pedestal into the real, the everyday.¹⁸² He chose not to work on canvas or hang the paintings using cleanly hidden d-rings and wires. Instead Ugiagbe opted to use the heavy metal clamps commonly found holding together street market stalls to install his paintings, this he said worked to bring his art further into the realm of the everyday. His paintings might consider issues of the former British empire, but because of his material approach, resisted being defined by its rules. He achieves this in his methodological approach, developing the methods, materials, and content for the series in ways that allow him to paint within his own framework, using his own rules. Thinking about how, through practice, he can intervene in the trappings of the canon of traditional Euro-Western painting, his media slants toward ink, liquified charcoal, and more minimal paint applications. Still painting, but also refuting painting through use of drawing-painting approaches. In *1234* specifically he also used white chalk, a reference to the classrooms of his

¹⁸² Arte-Povera and Alighiero Boetti Giovanni Anselmo, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Luciano Fabro, Piero Gilardi, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Marisa Merz, Giulio Paolini, Pino Pascali, Giuseppe Penone, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Emilio Prini, Gilberto Zorio, 1960s-1970s. were also known for their engagement in making artwork of non-traditional materials such as fibre, soil, twigs, and rags that refuted classic painting with the traditional media of paint.

youth where teachers made extensive use of chalkboards to wield postcolonial curriculum which was often not so 'post' after all.

1234 and other pieces from that period make a reparative contribution to painting, not just in its turn to the material everyday world of paper bags as canvases and industrial metal clamps used to hang fine art signifying there is room for everyone in these paintings, but also in his use of white chalk which was wielded by the powerful educators from his childhood. In 1234 the white chalk is now wielded at last by his own hand. His dominion over the chalk is significant, as education shapes minds either to think critically or to follow. In the context of his experience growing up in post-colonial Nigeria, now finding himself in the UK considering what key elements of these cultures need repair, clearly issues of education and its



*Image 28 Osaretin Ugiagbe Family Portrait, 2018
Metal clamps, Charcoal on paper 48 in x 42.5 in*

problematic aspects rose to the forefront. Significantly, 1234 appears in backward flowing white chalk text in the painting. It is drawn in on top of an abstracted intergenerational portrait of his family, which works to put a finer point on his commentary about the many generations affected by the colonial, postcolonial, and reconstruction era education system in Nigeria.

Ugiagbe's work contributes to reparative painting in its materiality and his command of it as a vehicle to express by showing the power of material to perform an alchemic act, transferring power away from and moving the borders of painting's Euro-Western cannon and Euro-

Western education by seeking to move it toward the accessibility of the everyday for everyone. 1234 seems to again return us to bell hooks wisdom about art and her argument that "... the way in which experiencing art can enhance our understanding of what it means to live as free subjects in an unfree world."¹⁸³ Maybe if she wrote about 1234, she too would find it a reparative exit constructed of everyday materials that achieves this by leading us away from the current circumstances we find ourselves in. We should all pay close attention here to Ugiagbe's marks as he holds the white chalk, at last wielding the power of self-agency to offer a lesson of his own making.

—Reparative turn through fantasy, colour, and grim humour—

This section includes Andrea Christodoulides whose work engages in enfolding grim humour with brilliant colour and narrative to develop ways to repair the condition of patriarchy's oppressive expectations for women.

+Artist Andrea Christodoulides+¹⁸⁴

Christodoulides submitted five mixed media pieces, which included painting-sculptures as well as wall paintings, to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side*. The paintings use grim fairy tale humour as a mirror to reflect pressures put on young women to perform, financially

¹⁸³ hooks, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. 9

¹⁸⁴ Christodoulides, "Artist Website".

succeed, and have a family. They also address the toll of intense feelings of expectation that arise from such pressures, especially in the context that these achievements are accomplished within a strict short timeframe. The title of the painting, *Clock is Ticking*, guides us into the subject matter here, after all the clock is ticking. In the collection of work submitted to the open call Christodoulides painting narratives portray a girl, Woman Octopus, Daddy Octopus, and a Caterpillar God (who poops gold coins) as main characters in this collection. Within the painting narratives these characters circulate in the context of a culture built on capitalism, patriarchal control, expectation that young women will marry, have kids, and a successful standard/approved career. During the studio interviews Christodoulides mentioned that her dreams of being an artist-painter were not on the list of approved careers and that was a troubling issue for her.



Image 29 Andrea Christodoulides, *Clock is Ticking*, 200 cm x 320 cm, acrylic, screen-print, 2019.

When she was producing the series, the paintings became a way to cope with these social and family pressures, which the artist was feeling the weight of in an increasingly acute way particularly as completion of her MA Painting degree loomed during that time. She was on the precipice of at last finishing her education, which implied she would soon be entering independent adulthood and was expected to begin an accepted career (not as an artist).



Image 30 Andrea Christodoulides, *Daddy Octopus* (image is of work still in process) estimated size 140 x 100 x 26 cm, 2019.

Adulthood was the time when all these expectations would become due. As part of her application to the open call she provided a brief descriptive essay detailing the paintings she hoped to include in the exhibition. In that essay Christodoulides described her work, its subject matter, and the narratives it explores.

My creatures like us humans, thrive and adapt

in their everyday confrontations irrespective of

whether these are familiar or alien circumstances that befall them. An eight-limbed woman-octopus can multitask and achieve everything she wants quickly and efficiently, allowing her to satisfy the wants and musts of her society whilst leaving her enough time to finish her job early, go out for shopping and do her nails (do octopuses have nails!?). A grumpy caterpillar that poops gold coins whenever someone rubs its tummy can be analogous to the current state of economy where tasks require you to do things you may or may not enjoy for the pure requirement of creating income. Do you want to rub its tummy? Both the octopus-woman and the caterpillar reflect the pressure, stress, and identity crisis

we experience in our 21st century society. Our current generation grows up striving for success in a highly competitive society that focuses mostly on the past rather than the future. Through these characters I am trying to tackle ideas like living in a dysfunctional capitalist society of simultaneous overwork and unemployment and the heavy pressure of one finding their own role in society but also self-worth. I view life like the theatre of the absurd, an incomprehensible state of existence. My characters and vivid imagination are a result of my attempts to reflect, explore and understand the truth about life and existence.¹⁸⁵

The world Christodoulides creates offers wild, absurd, and theatrical narratives. The paintings are literally built on wildly shaped wood cut outs and flowing fabrics which themselves demand freedom in their refusal to hang flat or still on the wall. This could be interpreted as a defiance of the Euro-Western canon's preference for paintings made on tightly stretched geometric canvases and Euro-Western culture's preference for women to live in its boxes. The architectural paradigm of these works is defined by an absence of straight lines and still surfaces, they wave and flutter undulating towards freedom from the common, the expected, the authorised.¹⁸⁶ It seems they found their freedom in part as a result of this flowing architecture, the structure of their very materiality, even before the characters and colours joined them to demonstrate in protest against social pressures demanding conformity in the dream world narratives these paintings inhabit.

¹⁸⁵ "Work Description Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).

¹⁸⁶ Artist Emma Talbot also works on unstructured fabrics. Further, in Adam Benmakhlouf, "Stories Told on Silk: Emma Talbot on Her Dca Exhibition," *The Skinny*. Talbot discusses some of her inspirations coming from "mythological figures, like fairies and knights." Additionally see Emma Talbot, "Artist Website," <http://www.emmatalbot.org.uk>.

The work is painted with brilliant colours which are again counter to their common uses. Instead, these colours are deployed here to portray grim fairy tale narratives with slightly twisted humour and Christodoulides wields these narratives with mastery. The world created by the paintings gives the artist release from the intense pressure she feels because of the social and familial expectations for her to conform as well as from the fire of her I don't want



Image 31 Andrea Christodoulides, Praying Girl, 140 x 80 x 26 cm, screen print mounted on wood, 2019.

to rebellion. They also create a language through which she can communicate confidently which allows her to express these complex tribulations.

Beyond their move to access an exit from the heavy weight of expectations women face because of Euro-Western cultural dynamics through their architectural material, these paintings also engage narrative as an additional layer of content which moves towards injecting absurdity, dark humour, and captivating colour into the matter at hand in support of a kind of truth telling exorcism which seeks to expose the fallacy of these damaging cultural expectations. Christodoulides conveyed during a studio interview that her character Woman Octopus has become an octopus because two hands are simply not enough to achieve the tasks expected of her. She spins her eight arms as the hands of a clock always running out of time always under pressure to perform, always trying to hurry, always knowing, and feeling each tormenting tick of the clock, always already not able to be someone else who is the one she is expected to be, even when she grows six additional arms. Like Woman Octopus, Praying Girl also has grown many extra limbs as she shares in the same project of trying to meet expectation. While Daddy Octopus' extra arms appear perhaps because of his need to assert control in multiple areas while also becoming beholden to the clock, tick, tick, tick tock. Caterpillar God appears not to be a singular entity but an everywhere entity. The Caterpillar God repeats, over and over in these paintings, pooping out pile after pile of gold coins, yet somehow neither the Octopuses nor the Praying Girl seem to notice as the relentless clock and frenzied activity spawned by pressure continues regardless of their investment in trying to manage it all. This is Christodoulides experience of living and growing into independent adulthood in contemporary patriarchy, it is not an easy road but one rife with stress, pressure, and expectation.

—A reparative turn in the courage of truth, exposing the horror of abjection—

This section includes Olivia Sterling whose work engages in a form of repair led by expression of outrage, rejection of traditional media approaches, and her own take on *parrhēsia*.

+Artist Olivia Sterling+¹⁸⁷

Sterling submitted five paintings to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side*. Her proposal for the exhibition was to include new work that at the time of application was still



Image 32 Olivia Sterling, *Lion and Man*, emulsion on panel, 100 cm x 100 cm, 2017

in process and just at the beginning stage of development in her studio. In a rejection of the traditional material trappings of painting's canon, Sterling uses acrylic paint instead of oils and roughly cut paper surfaces that seemed to embrace a provisional character instead of the preciously stretched geometric canvases ubiquitous in fine

art exhibition spaces. This rough approach could also be sensed in the paintings themselves, it was reflected in the direct painting technique, bright colour with minimal mixing, and preservation of much of the white paper surface (which works as context as well as reflection). Sterling also used a sketch like mark making style, which when all considered together, seems to channel a kind of cartoon like

¹⁸⁷ Sterling, "Artist Instagram Page".

visuality. However, these paintings are not depicting narratives from the Sunday morning cartoons of childhood, these pictures are made from the stuff of horror, the vile racist cultural productions of white supremacy. As the work Sterling proposed to include in the exhibition was still in a very early stage the personal statement submitted, which is excerpted below, offered an introduction to the themes informing her work up to that point (which she took in new directions in the work she proseed), Sterling wrote that

... [it is] important to me to explore black and white identities in painting - realising and exploring the power dynamics between the two. Black and white bodies (always) have been subjected to stereotype and belittlement; however, history has hardly glorified the black body in the same vein as the white. This is due to past and present ideologies that consider black bodies to be considered to be less than the white, and this absurdity is what drives my painting. My work fits along this open call's theme as I am aware of how I paint white and black figures in a way that is reminiscent of 18th century caricature. This was a time where different nationalities and races were being pictured in a purposely disparaging way - black and white, and that these images would be shared to the public in books and newspapers. The visual choices the artist's made was a reflection on the view of subject at the time, therefore as I steal their imagery, I am subverting their original intention. I am especially interested in how 18th century (and others) painters would depict black people as savages with the irony of how savage colonisation

and slavery [was]. My painting wishes to dispel the former and highlight the savagery of white people.¹⁸⁸

Her interrogation of racial readings and cultural productions of race (as well as the meanings ascribed to it) through bodily features resonates with Christina Sharpe's argument that "race is read through a calculation of features all the time."¹⁸⁹ Sterling's paintings also brought to mind Foucault's lectures in *The Courage of Truth*.¹⁹⁰ The lectures examine one of the most critical issues in contemporary life, the "practices of truth-telling" through the concept of *parrhēsia*.¹⁹¹ Focused not just on the person engaged in the act of truth telling, Foucault also foregrounds the polyvalent nature of the status/role/position which the person being told the truth might inhabit. In the case of Sterling's paintings, that person is us, the viewer. Foucault suggests the concept of *parrhēsia* is only fully realized when the parrhesiast (in this case Sterling) truly believes they are telling the truth and chooses to tell the truth knowing that by doing so they risk damaging their relationship with the audience due to the potentially difficult subject matter of the truth itself. As such, for the parrhesiast to truly be practicing *parrhēsia*, they must also be enacting courage in order to tell the truth.

As mentioned above, at the time of her application to the open call for *Painting from the Other Side* Sterling was developing a new series of paintings she described in her proposal as water related and offered that the

¹⁸⁸ "Personal Statement Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).

¹⁸⁹ Christina Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies : Making Post-Slavery Subjects*, Perverse Modernities (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). 173.

¹⁹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II, Lectures at the Collège De France 1983-1984* (Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). 1-56

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 1 Foucault defines *parrhēsia* "... as a specific modality of truth-telling." 1. Cf Golding, "Friendship." 269-272

... current body of work is concerned with appropriating imagery that depicts bodies, especially those who are black or white. Currently, I am using the 'Fountain of Youth' as a narrative structure for the paintings, as this format is a catalyst for bodily exchange. I have been experimenting on the conceptual outcome of race-based transformation instead of age-based which is the fountain's original intention. I hope that using this narrative in this way will modernise the story, and therefore will reflect what abnormal transformations are happening in this century. Blackfishing, cultural borrowing and appropriation, code switching, and other transformation white and black bodies are taking part in. As well as utilising the 'washing' metaphor that this composition presents as showing skin that is being purified or dirtied which is aligned with racist rhetoric. I propose in expanding this theme, still using the motif of water, into creating paintings where individuals wash themselves 'clean' or 'dirty' with this extraordinary water.¹⁹²

In "Washing" Sterling is telling the truth on a political level which is in an amalgamated assembly with the interior personal realm. As is apparent in the imagery of her paintings as well as her essays, the narratives depicted in Sterling's work are grotesque, disturbing, and imbued with the abjection of Black bodies. In reference to an essay by Mary Russo, Bettina Papenburg writes about the grotesque as a technology, or method, that inverts "... both social and bodily hierarchies..." this positioning of the grotesque seems to resonate with Sterling's paintings.¹⁹³ The images are not easy to look at in their depictions of Black bodies (sometimes

¹⁹² Olivia Sterling, "Work Description Submitted to "Painting from the Other Side" Open Call," (2019).

¹⁹³ Bettina Papenburg, "Grotesque Sensations: Carnivalising the Sensorium in the Art of Wangechi Mutu," in *Carnal Aesthetics : Transgressive Imagery and Feminist Politics*, ed. Bettina Papenburg and Marta Zarzycka (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013). 159 in reference to Mary Russo, "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory " in

naked or partially clothed) being abusively, wrongly, and involuntarily washed with white liquid by pink skinned pig faced people.



Image 33 Olivia Sterling, *Washing*, 105 cm x 150 cm, Acrylic on paper, 2019.

During the course of PAR, Sterling recounted experiencing instances of white fragility in the culture generally and (possibly) worse during interactions with teachers, colleagues, and viewers.¹⁹⁴ A kind of

troubled concern was expressed by academic staff after seeing the “Washing” painting and learning it would be included in the exhibition. Further evidence of the difficult responses to this subject matter were revealed during a studio interview with Sterling when she recounted a troubling moment during a different studio visit with a member of staff when it was suggested Sterling get into adding a performance element to her practice so her body could be seen for the benefit of the viewers as this would enable them to understand the painting’s context/content more fully as then they would know the artist’s identity.

Writing on the Body : Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory ed. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury, A Gender and Culture Reader (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹⁹⁴Robin J. DiAngelo, "White Fragility," *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3 (2011). DiAngelo defines white fragility as a dynamic in which “White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility” 54

Foucault speaks of *parrhēsia* as an action, a way of being, these paintings become those actions in both the context of their making and the narratives of racist stereotypes they tell the truth about. Like racism, homophobia, and misogyny, these paintings, get under one's soul, they disturb. They are highly affective, inciting fear, rage, disgust, they make one feel the need to look away and disengage due to their difficult content. The reparative turn in these paintings is found in Sterling taking up the agency and courage required to face these horrors of racist tropes and as a parrhesiast tell the truth about these cultural productions knowing the risk of damage that truth might inflict on her relationships with all kinds of viewers yet proceeding anyway.

├ Chapter 3 PAINTING-COLOUR ┤

├ Painting-Colour ┤
and the Relativity of Monsters

To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating... Which is not to say that emergence happens once and for all, as an event or as a process that takes place according to some external measure of space and of time, but rather that time and space, like matter and meaning, come into existence, are iteratively reconfigured through each intra-action...¹⁹⁵

Colour, an aspect of existence with qualities shrouded in mystery as well as contradiction, is a principal quality of and inextricably linked with painting. Colour is always ever becoming and intra-relating in a relative encounter with the animal observing it, the context surrounding it, and the light. While the it of colour, or what colour is, remains a subject of significant debate. This chapter's focus is on the seemingly disparate articles of colour, painting, monsters, and cultural identity production.¹⁹⁶ It will consider the operative similarities between these articles, with particular attention to commonalities in how they spark meaning and/or perception.

¹⁹⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*.ix.

¹⁹⁶ On diffractive methodology please see Introduction Supra, 29-30 and Adam Kleinman, "Karen Barad Intra-Actions," *Mousse Magazine* 34 (2012). In this interview, Karen Barad discusses diffractive methodology saying that "Reading insights through one another is about experimenting with different patterns of relationality, opening things up, turning them over and over again, to see how the patterns shift". 80

In Painting for example, perception of a colour's identity is created in an encounter with the materiality of painting-colour as well as light, surrounding colours, the environment, and biological operations of sight. Similarly, limiting monstrous identity narratives shaped by culture generate our perception of women, sexuality, and race within our encounters.¹⁹⁷ These identity narratives are critical to the distribution of life chances, further they are produced to and invested in positioning certain people outside of the patriarchal minority power position.¹⁹⁸

This chapter will conclude with an examination of transmutation methods which allow for generative relationships between very different research outputs to be considered. More specifically, where content is conceptualized/experienced/produced in dialogue between multiple mediums (for example writing and dance), these different outputs dedicated to the same content can create new knowledge neither could exactly produce individually. Mediums involved in the transmutation experiments here include painting, poetics, and theory. In part, this approach is involved in meaning making as well as reconfiguring meaning allowing it to

¹⁹⁷ The term "Painting-colour" is meant to create thoughts of painting in some way as colour which will be expanded on below and was discussed in Supra, 36-37; Also David Batchelor, *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion, 2000). quotes Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, "Purism," in *Modern Artists on Art : Ten Unabridged Essays*, ed. R. L. Herbert (New Brunswick, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964). "... 'when one says painting, inevitably he says colour'". 48 (67-71 in original)

¹⁹⁸ **Alison M. Jaggar**, "Introduction: The Project of Feminist Methodology," in *Just Methods : An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2014). "Social life is organized by institutions, structures, and practices. Unjust social structures create systematically unequal advantages or disadvantages for the members of different social groups. The structures systematically restrict the life chances of individuals who are assigned to devalued social categories, and render them disproportionately vulnerable to violence, impoverishment, and political marginalization." Viii. Spade, *Normal Life : Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. "... systems that administer life chances through purportedly "neutral" criteria, understanding that those systems are often locations where racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, xenophobic, and transphobic outcomes are produced." 10. and "These interventions provide an entry point into thinking about subjection and control beyond the realm of intentional, individual bias or violence, and instead interrogates empty declarations of "equal opportunity" and "equality" promoted in US law." 15 for example, references to the systems of life chances appear widely in Spade's book.

be accessed in new ways. David Freedberg describes meaning making in art “... ‘as a struggle to make and cancel meaning and re-form it.’”¹⁹⁹ While Christian Viveros-Fauné considers the specific case of painting and meaning making within a material context. Asserting that he sees it as “pigment is pushed around cloth, for instance, to make a picture... [painters also] push pigment around to make meaning...”²⁰⁰ These ideas of cancelling and remaking meaning, as well as doing so materially, speak to a critical aim of reparative painting. To cancel then redress damaging meanings attached to self or others by cultural narratives and beliefs. Reparative painting then pursues a cancelling and reforming of beliefs through its materiality as well as within its practice which exists in encounter between artist, viewer, memory, and speculative possible futures.²⁰¹

With a focus on establishing how painting-colour and culture engage in shaping meaning and/or perception, this chapter continues expanding on the work in prior chapters, yet “Painting-Colour” also arrives somewhere new. It adds to the scope of research by analysing the dynamic, interactive, qualities of painting-colour as well as investigating its ontology as a particle and a wave in encounter; while also considering how it interacts with meaning formation, cultural production, and repair. In terms of the cultural analysis aspect of this

¹⁹⁹ David Freedberg, *The Play of the Unmentionable : An Installation by Joseph Kosuth at the Brooklyn Museum*, 1st ed. (New York: New Press, 1992). 44-45 as seen in Green, *When Artists Curate : Contemporary Art and the Exhibition as Medium*. 219

²⁰⁰ Amanda Poss, "An Interview with Christian Viveros-Fauné," *bay art files*, May 2019.

²⁰¹ Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/D Others," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020). "The purpose of this excursion is to write theory, i.e., to produce a patterned vision of how to move and what to fear in the topography of an impossible but all-too-real present, in order to find an absent, but perhaps possible, other present." and " My diminutive theory's optical features are set to produce not effects of distance but effects of connection, of embodiment, and of responsibility for an imagined elsewhere that we may yet learn to see and build here." 459-460. Haraway's essay is mentioned here as it also addresses approaches to an exit from our present (and its problems) as well as engages in hope for the power of imagined alternate existences which we might use to repair our present. See also Supra, Chapter 1 Repair 49

work, it might be important to recognize that feminism, queer theory, social sciences, and cultural studies have developed extensive theorization of social construction, a term Berger and Luckmann are credited with bringing to the forefront of sociology in 1966.²⁰²

Broadly considered a system through which society creates itself, it is in many ways in opposition to essentialism which claims there are certain qualities determined by nature as givens. This chapter will not focus on these arguments, but they are mentioned here to note their important role in the foundations of identity studies. Theories about entanglement and other new materialist proposals go beyond these long held binary conceptions of essentialism and social construction. Entangled interrelations are ever becoming through encounter across material, social, macro, perceptual, as well as micro, even nano realms. These interrelations, these encounters, create, or are, an opening for a reparative turn with the potential to generate an exit from limiting oppressions inherent in binary socially constructed and/or essentialist ideas. They create this opening for repair because they are imbued with openness, alive and changing not static, which means what is generated/becomes in these interrelations lacks any predetermined fixedness so can be reimagined, remade anew.²⁰³

Jack Halberstam's work on the multifaceted monster is pertinent here, offering that "The monster always represents the disruption of categories, the destruction of boundaries, and

²⁰² Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality; a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

²⁰³ Barad, "Transmaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings." Helpful here in terms of the openness of interrelations in an ever-becoming entanglement is Barad's description of lightning in this essay where it is described as "Branching expressions of prolonged longing, barely visible filamentary gestures, disjointed tentative luminous doodlings — each faint excitation of this desiring field is a contingent and suggestive inkling of the light show yet to come. No continuous path from sky to ground can satisfy its wild imaginings, its insistence on experimenting with different possible ways to connect, playing at all matter of errant wanderings in a virtual exploration of diverse forms of coupling and dis/connected alliance. Against a dark sky it is possible to catch glimmers of the wild energetics of indeterminacies in action." 377

the presence of impurities and so we need monsters and we need to recognize and celebrate our own monstrosities”²⁰⁴ Monsters might be large and terrifying, extraordinary even so much so their monster traits become incompatible with life, or they might be extraordinarily



Image 34 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters, oil on canvas, each painting is approximately 2 Ft. w x 1.5 Ft. h, 2020-2022

powerful, almost divine (a vampire’s ability to heal mortal wounds for example). The plasticity of the monster’s ability to exist across such diametrically opposed categories of identity narratives operates in a way that furthers the monster’s power. The monster’s carefully crafted powerful and plastic dynamics of meaning production are in part how monsterizing is such a powerful tool in culture’s operation to marginalize, villainize, or suppress life chances.

An individual monster figure afloat in different colour fields appears in a series of eight paintings titled *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters*. These paintings are the researcher’s practice-led investigations into the dynamics of colour interactivity. Specifically, how colour interactivity forms perceived hue identity in figure ground encounters and what commonalities that co-creative dynamic might share with culture’s influence to shape

²⁰⁴ Halberstam, *Skin Shows : Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. [now Jack Halberstam] 391

perception of the identity narratives it creates. For this research on repair, an important focus point here is showing how material and cultural forces shape perception of individuals by emerging them in an environment that both surrounds the individual as well as operates to create perception of them. This dynamic of perception forming identity production is key to the reparative in multiple ways. This co-creative dynamic has power to define identity through its capability to determine perception either by influence of a surrounding colour field or influence of an identity-based cultural narrative. Additionally, the dynamic of perception shaping itself is not aligned with any outcome, indicating it could be utilized in projects of repair just as powerfully as it is when deployed by those aiming to degrade or marginalize.

The *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series investigates how colour interaction shapes perception of the monster's colour identity then resolves it differently when the figures in each composition are compared with each other. To achieve this the series presents eight different colour encounters. Each unfolding between one monster colour that repeats in all paintings and eight different negative space colours. Through these paintings, this dynamic of perception shaping in colour is examined by using a unified monster figure (each the same colour, location, and size) in all the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* paintings. Yet, despite all the monster figures in the series being the same colour, when the colour of one monster is compared to the colour of another in the series, they appear different. That the monster figures appear to be different colours is due to colour interaction. The dance of encounters between different colours that through its operation determines a viewer's perception of each colour's identity, particularly where the size of one colour field is substantially larger or smaller than the other.

Consider the power of colour interaction to create identity perception in the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series together with and through identity studies, specifically in terms of how both show each individual, or in the case of the series monster, is impacted and/or created by the culture, or in the case of the series negative space. Think of the figure operating as colour, monster, and individual. The negative space of the painting operating as colour, context, and culture. Simultaneously the artist and viewer become creators, witnesses, and participants. This multifaceted existence of painting-colour in encounter with analysis of identity production/perception enables this project to engage in novel research into dynamics of contextual production and the ways it shows painting can be used in projects of repair due to its power to shape perception in material as well as narrative forms. Contextual production and perception shaping are actions of becoming/making/creating in encounter. They have the power to shape what 'is' (meaning/perception) and show that this contextual power to create perception does not just occur in aspects of culture, but also in material practices of painting. Through this practice-led series, consideration of the materiality of painting-colour in interaction further substantiates the potential of reparative painting by showing its capability to change how the monster is perceived. In one bright orangish-red, in the next a purplish-magenta.



Image 35 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters paintings (in progress), two of eight, each 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022

In *Meeting the Universe Halfway* Barad argued similar points yet through different sites. Such as the need to move beyond separate, fixed, binary constructs (social and natural for example) which are based on predetermined individual existences. Instead, Barad suggested we could think of the nature of being in ways more in line with the structure of the universe as modelled in physics: shifting, relative, co-creative, made of multiplicities and infinite becomings. Barad substantively invalidates the binary argument related to social construction and essentialism while also stressing the critical importance of diffractive methodology, a critical element of the research design of this thesis, by explaining that

... to take account of *how* both factors matter, ... we need a method of theorizing the relationship between “the natural” and “the social” together without defining one against the other or holding either nature or culture as the fixed referent for understanding the other... A diffractive methodology provides a way of attending to entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. 30.

Painting, Senses, Language

Painting-colour is also multivalent in ways that exceed the limits of language, its entangled inter(a)relations of becoming in encounter are ever in flux. The nature of the visual realm is sensorial, imbued with advanced capabilities to convey content, elicit affective response, and communicate in psycho-emotional channels. Colour, perhaps painting's most significant attribute, offers compelling evidence of this beyond-language quality as well as a dynamic sensorial experience which is ever becoming in its entangled encounters. For example, purple can never be conveyed in words.²⁰⁶ To clarify, what is meant by 'purple' here is the sensuous chromatic experience of 'purple' not the circulation of the word 'purple'-a word that operates as a symbol. Or to state this another way, reading the word 'purple' functions to point towards and/or recall a memory of some form(s) of the purple chromatic sensorial experience. It helps here to imagine the full implication of this proposal in the context of someone who has never seen colour. Because for those who cannot see colour, the word 'purple' will help very little in the project of conveying what it is to actually experience purple sensorially. The word 'purple' then only works in so far as it communes with its sensorial, contextually dependent, and critical partner, colour experience.

²⁰⁶ Kassia St Clair, *The Secret Lives of Colour*, Paperback ed. (London: John Murray (Publishers), 2018). For additional thought and history on the problem of conveying colour through language see part 6 "Colourful language. Do words shape the shades we see?" 33-35. St Clair discusses how linguistic references to colour have changed through time as well as based on place (such as the Greeks calling the sea wine-dark. 33. A quote from Lazarus Geiger on his study of colour in ancient languages that appears in Guy Deutscher, *Through the Language Glass: Why the World Looks Different in Other Languages* (London: Arrow, 2010). (42 in original source) is also included. There Geiger recounts findings on the colours referenced in Vedic chants "The sun and reddening of dawn's play of colour, day and night, cloud and lightning, the air and ether... But there is one thing no one would ever learn from those ancient songs... and that is that the sky is blue." 34. For a history of purple, its exclusive past, and its prominent shades (tyrian purple, orchil, magenta, mauve, heliotrope, and violet) see "Purple". 158-173

When one then compares the word 'purple' to a sensorial encounter with 'purple' it is clear they are vastly different. This might seem to make it easy to wonder what painting, colour philosophy, and language-based theory, could offer each other. Examining the limits of language, Barad suggests in "Posthumanist Performativity" that "Language has been given too much power."²⁰⁷ What then does this mean for the relationship between art and language-based theory? Importantly in the context of this project entrenched in material painting as well as theoretical, political, and social contexts, what does it mean for the field of artistic research?

An encounter with language does not transpire through the same sensorial channels as does the experience of navigating the world as a neurotypical person able to utilize a full complement of senses. This begins to address why the word purple will never be able to convey the chromatic experience of an encounter with purple. A departure from the sensorial, we encounter language as symbolic decoding which generates, diffuses, and/or disintegrates/combines ideas while generating meaning. Therefore, much of reading language is a kind of diffractive engagement of mind in an untangling of representations, symbols, meaning, ideas, and relationships through deciphering context, letters, words, and grammar. Unlike other types of knowledge creation (such as learning what too hot is through touch), we do not physically feel the heat of a text, we cannot actually smell the Provincetown Massachusetts landscapes Mary Oliver might write about in her poems, nor can we see the seemingly infinite colours they include. We can neither smell spring rain nor can we taste food while encountering their referents during reading. While reading, we can however try to

²⁰⁷ Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." 51.

remember and/or imagine their traits, affects as well as our memories of encounters with them.

Though both convey meaning, painting and language operate differently. Painting provides a sensorial experience of the mind, while language offers an experience of the mind that though accessed sensorially (through vision, hearing, or touch) lacks the multivalent sensorial complexity imbued in painting and colour's viscosity. Considering painting and language in this way helps move forward thoughts of how these human enterprises might relate as one can have an experience of mind in painting and in language, yet the sensorial experience of mind in either case is not the same. Then viscosity, specifically painting-colour, has the potential to convey meaning as language does, but through its materiality, it also has the potential to go beyond language's limited symbolic representation due to the additional enriching dimensions of its nature as sensorial encounter. Considering painting-colour in its role as a material-discursive site that can enfold human and nonhuman in encounter was referenced by Barad in the following.

What is needed is a robust account of the materialization of all bodies— "human" and "nonhuman"—and the material-discursive practices by which their differential constitutions are marked. This will require an understanding of the nature of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena, an accounting of "nonhuman" as well as "human" forms of agency...²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," in *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacy Alaimo and Susan J. Hekman (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008). 128.

Then the experience of mind delivered by theory and language-based fields can also be found in forms of the inhabited-embodied material existences of painting-colour. Inhabited-embodiment here is meant to indicate a type of living in or occupying of a tangible visible form of an idea, essence, or feeling which can be experienced by painters and/or by viewers. Inhabited-embodiment also has an affective dimension because of its sensorial and living in aspects. These qualities further point towards a kind of aliveness in painting, which could perhaps be attributable to many different aspects of painting but is surely linked to the multivalent sensuous encounter through which it is experienced. Graw describes a type of multivalence in painting as an unsettled dynamic which “... fosters the illusion that we can grasp what it represents but by the same token it withholds its presence from us. It thus suggests a presence and at the same time confronts us with its absence...”²⁰⁹ Inhabited-embodiment indicates this complexity of presence/absence in a kind of assemblage of visibility, material (paint and what is painted), colour, and rich content impossible to convey using only linguistic form. These attributes of painting, within the context of a diffractive research methodology, allow for the complexities of sensorial encounter and diverse language-based theories (identity studies, colour philosophy, and monster theory), the material-discursive, to be considered through each other. It is these elements in combination, the interactive ever-becomings within these sites of experience and encounter, where the reparative can take shape because they refute any fixed claims of inferiority, empowering access to authorship with the potential to craft agency.

Painting-colour

²⁰⁹ Graw, *The Love of Painting : Genealogy of a Success Medium*. 51

The term “Painting-colour” is meant to create thoughts of painting, in some way as colour. If we are to consider what painting is made of in both its visuality and (perhaps) its material, painting can be conceived of as colour combined with content. Paint itself is also pigment and fluid medium. However, though painters use an array of various mediums or other additives to create their work, painting it is predominantly the colour of the pigment for which each hue is selected. Thinking painting-colour has the potential to create a kind of identification crisis sparked by attempting to understand what colour is. A deceptively simple question that it turns out is anything but. Wondering if colour is material and/or immaterial, fixed or ever in wild fluctuation, part of the object in which it is perceived, or in the eye of the beholder are all part of this dynamic. There are numerous philosophical positions conceptualizing colour including theories examining if it even exists, or if it belongs to the senses of observers or to the objects it seems to inhabit. Colour is a unique subject in which both philosophical and scientific research is underway trying to discover what and/or if it is. To summarise, the phenomena of colour as well as debates on if it exists in the subjective/qualitative realm of the perceiver animal’s senses and/or in the objective realm of matter/object which it seems to inhabit remain issues of much controversy.

Questions arise in colour studies asking, “where are colours to be found-out in the world, or only inside the mind?”²¹⁰ In *Outside Color* Chirimuuta details the many unique areas of colour philosophy and science which have contributed to colour studies. Colour studies are marked by strongly opposing claims and complexity due to its unique characteristics. Chirimuuta asks us to consider colour vision as a process in which the colours themselves should be defined

²¹⁰ Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*. 1

as “... properties of an interaction between observers and things.”²¹¹ Though environmental context here is not explicitly stated, it too is a critical aspect of any instance of colour. Here, as in Barad’s arguments on physics and material discursive dynamics, the ontology of colour is also characterized as a co-creative emergence arising from an encounter between context, observers, and things. Chirimuuta believes “... colours are properties of perceptual processes involving particular kinds of spectral stimuli, and spectrally sensitive visual systems” (which are animal relative and perceiver specific).²¹² Chirimuuta proposes two key questions of colour, issues of perceptual colour variance that result from observational context (specific instances of lightness/darkness and/or what the specific colour being observed is next to) and divergence between perceptual appearance and physical reality of colour. These issues of colour, painting-colour, and ontology are of key relevance to this research in so far as the ways they can be diffractively considered in “material-discursive” concert with cultural production, specifically production of monsters and/or monstrous traits.

These aspects of colour philosophy resonate with theories of colour existence and can be read diffractively with reparative theories generated by fields of liberatory studies designed to dismantle cultures of identity-based bias in part by troubling their binary, essentialist conceptions. For example, in instances where colour studies suggests that due to colour fluctuation in perceptual experience, it seems there is no fixed object colour. Chirimuuta attributes this indeterminacy in colour to being an interactive, reactive, fluctuating dynamic phenomenon in which environment, object, and observer are in an ever-shifting colour-in-becoming-in-encounter genesis. Chirimuuta explains the relational inconstancy of colour

²¹¹ Ibid. 17

²¹² Ibid.17-18

within the framework of research by Russell (perceptual variation) and Eddington (manifest and scientific image) which considers a table scenario which reflects on the difference between how substantial the table in a room is when compared to this new scientific table built by new knowledge from physics.²¹³

Russell suggests that though he believes the table is basically all the same colour, where different colours appear, what is occurring (where the table appears to be many different colours or shades) is a record of perceiver specific contextual visual information. For example, where the table is directly lit, it is brighter, even white, where the table is in shadow, it appears darker, even black.²¹⁴ As such, the colours seen in the world are not fixed, but instead change relative to conditions (context of surroundings, amount of light, biology of observer.) As a result, it seems there is no way to determine the colour the table is, or if it even has one. This crisis of identification in some ways implies a lack of access, or perhaps indicates a nonexistence of any fixed colour reality we can perceive or claim to be real. The thought that the world we are surrounded by cannot be accurately seen can be quite disquieting. It might raise a concern that reality is not fully perceivable, that perhaps we cannot access fixed colour existence or determine if the way we perceive the visual world of colour and its objects has anything to do with their material visual nature.

²¹³ Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, (1912) 1980). And Arthur Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, Gifford Lectures (Cambridge Eng.: University press, [1928] 2012). Arthur Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, Gifford Lectures (Cambridge Eng.: University press, [1928] 2012). As discussed in Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*. 6-12

²¹⁴ Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*. As discussed in Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*.

Fascinatingly, as mentioned previously, Judith Butler makes similar arguments about gender as an unfixed performative field of action, describing the operation of gender as a classification done to bodies (such as marking some female and others male) as well as an action performed by them. When considering the arguments above, one can then think of the ways colour works similarly to gender. For example, in the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* paintings shown above in image 35, the monster appears to be both magenta-red and orangish-red. In so far as its role as an identifier, this monster character gets to the nonbinary unfixed ever becoming complexity of existence in gender or other identity categories.

Butler argues that in terms of the “doing” of gender, the body is “... a materiality that bears meaning, if nothing else, and the manner of this bearing is fundamentally dramatic... the body is not merely matter but a continual and incessant materializing of possibilities.”²¹⁵ Butler’s concept of embodied performativity presents gender as a dynamic imbued with indeterminacy with an ever-relative quality, specifically not a fixed binary system. Butler sees establishing gender as a political element an important aim in the project of equity arguing that it is a field of action, inaction, acceptance, and rejection embodied, like colour a non-binary dynamic produced in both the subject and the audience. Writing that “The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated.”²¹⁶ In part, intersectional women’s, gender, and sexuality studies work engages in projects of intellectual transformation that interrogate as well as invalidate the binary systems distributing and

²¹⁵ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40 (1988). 521

²¹⁶ *Gender Trouble : Tenth Anniversary Edition.; Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. 203

withholding power based on identity constructs that are at work in the socio-political realm. This research joins this discourse offering new research on the ways painting can be activated to subvert binary systems of othering, repair agency, discover hopeful futurities, and through art practice, visualize these empowerments in experiential ways.

With these positions in mind, we can see within reparative painting, colour studies, as well as women's, gender, and sexuality studies theory, the emergence of a kind of world building that shares similar proposals for performativity, perceiver dependence, a kind of fabric of relativity through contextual production, and an exit from any fixed nature of being claiming to be the singular real. *Outside Color* for example works to debunk the idea that the 'reality' of the world is as we see it and therefore assume it to be. As such once colour generation is understood as a phenomenon created in interaction "...then it comes more naturally to be expected that at least some of the properties represented visually are perceiver-related ones."²¹⁷

Chirimuuta further links this dynamic of 'perceptual variation' as the grounds for the proposal of 'colour relationism'. This theory suggests that red is not an intrinsic property of a strawberry, but a phenomenon produced in an assembly of perceiver-strawberry-environment. As is perhaps becoming more apparent, Butler suggests gender operates in similar perceiver, performer, and interactively involved ways, as Churimuuta's arguments about colour. While Stuart Hall's arguments about cultural production of race also share some aspects of this theoretical space. For example, Hall argues that "... race is a discursive

²¹⁷ Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*. 6

construct, a sliding signifier.” not a simple matter of biology with fixed traits.²¹⁸ It should be included here that he defines discursive in this context as what “... gives human practice and institutions meaning, that which enables us to make sense of the world...”²¹⁹

Outside Color indicates that the ‘secondary qualities’ (colour, sense, smell, sound, taste, tactile et al.) are linked to what will likely be key considerations in the future of colour philosophy by suggesting that discourse around these phenomena shares similar concerns to the perception/physics debate in the table example included above. The puzzle of colour (and the ‘secondary qualities’) speaks to

... the wider issue, that encompasses mind, the manifest colour and other sensory qualities, the *problem of the qualitative*. Philosophers whose goal is a materialistic theory of everything are presented with the seemingly intractable challenge of accounting for the qualitative and mental in terms of quantitative and physical.²²⁰

One does not have to venture too far outside of colour philosophy to discover artists have also had a key role in colour studies, another example of how inhabited embodiment can go beyond the scope of conceptualization and observation. Artists can create seemingly endless colour encounters which they can observe, then begin to decipher the ways colour perception operates in the context of its infinite encounters. Josef Albers was exceptionally engaged in investigations of colour encounter. Albers’ close observation of how colours become what they appear to be in studio work served as the research for his seminal book *Interaction of*

²¹⁸ Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle : Race, Ethnicity, Nation*, ed. Kobena Mercer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017). 32

²¹⁹ Ibid. 31

²²⁰ Chirimuuta, *Outside Color : Perceptual Science and the Puzzle of Color in Philosophy*. 13

Color which has become amongst the most important texts about colour in practice. The book details the dynamics of relativity and inconstancy of colour in depth, with a level of specificity about its apparent rules of operation in its ever-becoming encounters with context that is unmatched. Unlike Chirimuuta, Albers seems to believe there is a fixed colour which is the colour “as it really is” and that fixed colour is changed by its existence in the context of its surroundings.

In visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is-as it physically is. This fact makes color the most relative medium in art. In order to use color effectively it is necessary to recognize that color deceives continually. To this end, the beginning is not a study of color systems. First, it should be learned that one and the same color evokes innumerable readings.²²¹

Debates about if colour exists, if it is experienced in equivalent ways across the population, what individual colours mean/do, and the unusual characteristic of light being what it is not (this includes examples such as the nature of light being somehow both a particle and a wave, how the light touching the eye producing colour experience is everything but the colour we perceive, that the colour we ‘read’ might not be a real aspect of the object perceived.) With these ideas in mind, colour seems a promising site of exploration in the context of identity studies as they are similarly invested in productions of being/not being, perception, and visibility. *Chromophobia* offers further contributions on the role of colour in cultural production suggesting that

²²¹ Albers, *Interaction of Color*. 1

The notion that colour is bound up with the fate of Western culture sounds odd, and not very likely. But this is what I want to argue: that colour has been the object of extreme prejudice in Western culture. For the most part, this prejudice has remained unchecked and passed unnoticed. And yet it is a prejudice that is so all-embracing and generalized that, at one time or another, it has enrolled just about every other prejudice in its service.²²²

Here Batchelor teases out ideas about how colour has become a toxic and damaging agent of hegemonic Western cultures. In the “Apoalypstick” chapter he suggests that “Colour may or may not have homoerotic content, but its association with irregularity, or excess of one kind or another is quite common and, in some cases quite explicit.”²²³ Batchelor offers many examples of the complexity of colour and how, it seems to be able to hold opposites together in its visuality and I wonder if he would agree, in its inconstancy. He sees the power of colour in culture making saying that “Colour threatens - or promises - to undo all the hard-won achievements of culture. It threatens - or promises - chaos and irregularity. Colour threatens disorder - but also promises liberty.”²²⁴ Conceptualization of how colour can threaten, create chaos, generate liberty, and irregularity while convened in a powerfully dynamic agent are important to note here. Interestingly, they will appear again in discussions of monster theory.

Painting-colour’s ability to operate as both colour and culture offers a compelling demonstration of the influence of context to generate perceptions of what is. Colour provides evidence of the powerful ways these forces are embodied in sense driven perception-oriented material encounters. Similarly, identity-based othering can be generated by a

²²² Batchelor, *Chromophobia*. 22

²²³ Ibid. 64

²²⁴ Ibid. 64-65

diffractive 'reading' of the subject's person with the targeted cultural production of identity-based biases it crafts for that purpose. Further, where the other here is crafted as 'monstrous' due to its 'nature' as narrated by cultural productions, we can see the evidence of this dynamic traced in painting-colour. For example, in the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series and the painting sketches leading up to it, colour has the ability to use yellow to turn green blue. What is suggested here is not that colour has a nefarious monsterizing aim, but as was analysed above, colour possesses the power to influence how each other are perceived, just as culture has the power to influence how certain of its members are perceived. Then, if colour and/or context has the power to alter perception, it follows that context/culture can generate impressions, perceptions, infused with either reparative or damaging (or in some combination thereof) consequences.

Those 'othered' by these hegemonic systems of Western culture are often *created as* monstrous through cultural identity production that deploys bias oriented signifiers that might include false narrative, stereotype, colour, visibility, and bodies.²²⁵ These biases can be activated in the visual realm (in addition to others such as the linguistic) while in encounter with conceptual/cultural. For example, gender stereotypes are activated by our ability to see people's bodies, hear their voices. Based on those observations, the culturally produced narratives we are exposed to attach to the individuals we see, blending those stereotypes with our perceptions of the individual we see.

²²⁵ Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line : Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000). For example discusses Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species* (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by Robert Aitken, at Pope's Head, Market Street, 1787). 23 and R. von Krafft-Ebing and Domino Falls, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (London: Velvet Publications, 1997). 18

For example, female gender stereotype can be visually signified by colour as a facet of its production is activated by culturally contextualized colour experience tropes such as the pink and other pastel coloured Disney princesses seen in the researcher's collage *Truth of Gabrielle d'Estrées* below. A piece that works to trouble the issue of gender stereotype as well as related tropes of power linked to Marvel's male action heroes. Where gender stereotypes or tropes are deployed in the contemporary, the bias generating system links girls to pink and boys to blue. Further blending sensorial colour experience with cultural production that system then assigns qualities to each colour designed to reinforce cultural stereotypes (pink=weak/soft, blue=true/strong). Similarly, colour-based meanings in instances of racism seek to use skin colour as a vehicle to activate racist stereotype constructions (black=dangerous/bad, brown=dirty/unclean, white=clean). Colour is also used to mark sexuality through red light districts, pink functioning as a type of queerness and/or emasculation, as well as the rainbow a symbol for LGBT pride. At work in the psycho-emotional-experiential aspects of painting-colour exist many additional affective qualities. The foundation of reparative potentiality in painting and its sense of aliveness are substantially developed through colour and form. Graw asserts the significance of colour to painting stating that "Color was constantly declared to be the most important vehicle... which is to say that it contained artificial aliveness and was credited with the capacity to bring dead matter to life".²²⁶ In summary, colour is used to produce meaning, activate cultural belief, and shape perception.

²²⁶ Graw, *The Love of Painting : Genealogy of a Success Medium*. 23

Graw also sees the assembly of painting-colour-nature as able to hold diametrically opposed phenomena (what is dead and what is alive) and/or opposites together in its material existence. This ability to hold opposites in action together is aligned with a key quality of reparative research, its capability to work with love and trauma in combination, illuminating another aptitude shared across painting-colour and reparative work. As referenced above in the chapter on “Repair”, Best argues that “For Sedgwick, a reparative motive seeks pleasure rather than the avoidance of shame, but it also signals the capacity to assimilate the consequences of destruction and violence.”²²⁷



Image 36 Shannon Forrester, Truth of Gabrielle d'Estrées, 4.5 ft h x 5 ft w, collage, 2014

New materialism offers accounts that material has qualities of indeterminacy, with the potential of aliveness, in assembly, and a multivalent character, in its ever-becoming

²²⁷ Best, *Reparative Aesthetics : Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. 3 Reference to Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling : Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. 139

interactions. As expanded on above as well as in the following, new materialism therefore has commonalities with painting, colour, identity studies, and monster theory in terms of these ideas. Frost and Coole suggest that a critical aspect of new materialism is how it abandons the idea of matter being an “... inert substance subject to predictable causal forces... For materiality is always something more than “mere” matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable.”²²⁸

In the context of light, also a primary aspect of colour, here too the sense of co-creative becomings in encounter arises. This is particularly foregrounded in Barad’s account of lightning which offers a narrative about its (usually hidden) workings, specifically the charged seeking of its electric wanderings as desirous indeterminacies searching for connection. Barad’s account of lightning works as a compelling narrative and in the context of this research the reader is asked to consider how it can also be read as an account of a painter’s experience of painting or painting-colour.

A dark sky... Out of the blue, tenuous electrical sketches scribbled with liquid light appear/disappear faster than the human eye can detect. Flashes of potential, hints of possible lines of connection alight now and again. Desire builds, as the air crackles with anticipation. Lightning bolts are born of such charged yearnings. Branching expressions of prolonged longing, barely visible filamentary gestures, disjointed tentative luminous doodlings — each faint excitation of this desiring field is a contingent and suggestive inkling of the light show yet to come. No continuous path

²²⁸ Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms : Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. 9

from sky to ground can satisfy its wild imaginings, its insistence on experimenting with different possible ways to connect, playing at all matter of errant wanderings in a virtual exploration of diverse forms of coupling and dis/disconnected alliance.²²⁹

While continuing to hold the above arguments about the ever becoming in encounter qualities of colour, light, materiality, paint, culture, and material aliveness, you are now asked to add an additional being-site of action, that of the monster. Monsters have a multifaceted and central role as subjects in the researcher's paintings, as beings made object targets produced by othering, as well as powerful being-sites with rich potentialities for repair and agency generation. The monster often has many faces, many sides, many capabilities. They might be seen as abject, horrific, heroic, terrifying, seductive, or most likely some combination of these qualities and more. As for their role in cultural production, perception of them, like colour, is relative and generated in context. Who authored the monster and what their aims were, the audience engaged with the monster, the monster themselves, and more all determine whether the narrative of that character can become the stuff of nightmares or fairy tales, and as was established at the outset of this chapter, in the case of monsters there is potential for either.

In *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* Jack Halberstam investigates "representational strategies and the particularities of deviant race, class, national and gender markings" as tools of monstrous production.²³⁰ Though Halberstam's book is bound primarily to the 19th century Victorian era, his suggestions as to how and why monstrosity, identity, and

²²⁹ Barad, "Transmaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings." 387

²³⁰ Halberstam, *Skin Shows : Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. [now Jack Halberstam] 8

skin are activated to operate in culture remain of relevance to the contemporary. *Skin Shows* looks closely at how the monster becomes a symbol for identity difference in combination with offering a narrative designed to justify society's hostile reactions to an identity seen as other (monstrous). The monstrous body often has ties to a person, a desire/sexuality, a species/race, which is inherently 'othered' as culture mixes it with "fears of the foreign and the perverse".²³¹ Monstrous narratives are often built on notions of race doctrines and nationalism created to stoke fear and designed to compel support for the supremacy of certain identity groups predetermined by class, gender, sexuality, race, nationality, or similar qualities. In this context the monster is constructed by narratives seeking to establish biological superiority of some, those characterised as pure/good over Others, characterised as monstrous/perverse. It is important to note that these narratives are not based on the actual characteristics of the monsterized themselves (especially when extended to ideas of cultural production) they are instead based on the fictions of false theories which attempt to bolster justifications for the marginalizing outcomes culture seeks.

These familiar fictionalized monster narratives are echoed in real world socio-political contexts. Currently, this is especially true in the case of narratives put in circulation by the former American president Donald Trump. Who for example in 2017 called some of the white-nationalist neo-Nazi KKK affiliated domestic terrorists marching to protect a Robert E. Lee monument in Charlotte (one of whom drove his car into a crowd of unarmed counter protesters causing death and mass critical injury) "very fine people".²³² We can see from this quote, the monstrous production is closely tied to the author's positioning of its creation as

²³¹ Ibid. 14

²³² "Remarks by President Trump on Infrastructure," (USA 2017).

most would consider domestic terrorists monstrous, yet with a carefully crafted narrative, those same terrorists can be positioned as very fine people where as those protesting for civil rights are characterised as thugs (monstrous) by the same narrator.

This example makes clear that those who hold the power to control and produce cultural narratives can use that power to determine who in society are deemed monstrous as well as who are deemed worthy to be described as “very fine people”. It is in the exposure of these nefarious truths about the power of narrative in terms of identification and meaning making where the potential for reparative painting arises as in the moment of creation, if the artist chooses to, they have the power to repair the monster. The power to re-cast/create its character narrative through visual sensorial experience of the mind, through their artistic agency, in encounter with painting-colour. But first, the artist must imagine, perhaps reimagine, who that character could be were they not the subject of cultural monsterizing.

A central text dedicated to thoughts on the role of monsters, *The Monster Theory Reader* edited by Jeffrey Weinstock, offers a sweeping review of the monster through time from the ancient to the contemporary.²³³ There are a few key papers in the collection of particular significance to this project, they include works by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, Alexa Wright, and Donna Haraway.²³⁴ Weinstock argues that monsters have a central role to play in culture and that their existence “...insist[s] that there is more to our

²³³ Weinstock, *The Monster Theory Reader*.

²³⁴ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," in *The Monster Theory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020).; Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, "Introduction: A Genealogy of Monster Theory," *ibid.*; Alexa Wright, "Monstrous Strangers at the Edge of the World: The Monstrous Races," *ibid.*; Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/D Others." 37-58, 1-36, 173-191, and 459-521

world than what we can see and touch. The monster threatens, but also promises liberation—a liberation that itself can seem threatening.”²³⁵ His proposal resonates with Batchelor’s arguments above in relation to the power of colour in culture as well as Barad’s description of lightning’s wild desirous wanderings.²³⁶

Weinstock eloquently states that in terms of “... the strategic deployment of monsters for socio-political ends. This perspective on monsters thinks in terms not of “what is this thing?” but rather “how can I use this thing to achieve my goals?”²³⁷ Though the monster paintings submitted as part of this project were not created because of this quote, Weinstock’s ideas resonate with aspects of how the researcher’s paintings operate as part of reparative practices. The researcher’s *Beautiful Monsters* and the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* painting series began with an ambition to effect repair of the monsterized. The paintings started with a question that asked how monsters and colour could expose, and enfold in that exposure process, repair of the damage othering systems generate. It should be clarified here that dynamics of monsterization are narrative systems of identity-based othering and here it is helpful to turn to Weinstock again, specifically his arguments about monsterizing in the contemporary and its cultural construction,

...monstrosity is a socially constructed category reflecting culturally specific anxieties and desires, and often deployed-wittingly or not-to achieve particular socio-political objectives. Contemporary monster theory thus disavows (or at least side steps the question of) the monstrosity of human subjects based on morphology and instead

²³⁵ Weinstock, "Introduction: A Genealogy of Monster Theory." 20

²³⁶ Supra, Batchelor 136-137 and Bard 140-141

²³⁷ Weinstock, "Introduction: A Genealogy of Monster Theory." 25

focuses on the means through which such subjects are “monsterized” and the implications of this process.²³⁸

Monster painting for this research began in 2017 with an initial pen and ink drawing that became the first work in the *Beautiful Monsters* series. The series includes the drawing and painting titled *Beautiful Monsters* and the paintings titled *Feather Scales*. *Feather Scales*



Image 37 Shannon Forrester *Beautiful Monster* pen and ink on paper, in h x in w, 2018

²³⁸Ibid. 25

researched how aesthetic tactics and beauty can intervene in monsterizing by subverting its commitments to uglification with beautification. The monster painting collections explore how monsters and monstrosity can be activated as an agent of reparative reclamation, empowerment, and visualise or show baseless claims of hegemonic othering systems. Continuing through to the completion of this project, the painting-led monster research became increasingly central which made diffractive research methodology increasingly



Image 38 Shannon Forrester Beautiful Monster oil on canvas 6 ft h x 45 in w, 2018

important as an approach for discovery. In encounter these materials, painting practice, reaches for creation of new sites that agency can generate. In reparative painting practices, these sites of repaired (beings, narratives, worlds) became paintings which as objects are now theories, and memory pursue a reparative turn through material-discursive narrative that also accessible to viewers.

The first part of the research process for *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* was translating colour interaction knowledge as discussed by Albers from the context of Color-aid collage to paint.²³⁹ This was a necessary step because most of the researcher's prior work in colour interaction was based in the medium of Color-aid collage and this new series was in the medium of oil paint. The research design for the initial painting experiments was not intended to be directly from different specific projects from *Color Interaction*, such as turning three colours into two or two colours into three.²⁴⁰ Those exercises specifically examine how colour interaction between smaller and larger colour fields cause the hue of the smaller colour field to change because of its context in the larger field. This research examines colour interaction, but instead of seeking to make the smaller colour field shift to become a specific colour, this research is primarily interested in hue shifting itself, as opposed to achieving a predetermined outcome of the shift. More specifically here is that the monster figure in *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series was meant to appear to be different colours (even though all were the same) however the series did not seek to shape the colour perception of the monster figure to align with any hue(s). Though it wasn't intended, some of the results

²³⁹ Please see Albers, *Interaction of Color*. for in depth details on the dynamics of colour interaction and guidance on learning its traits through vision and fine art practice.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.18-21, 29-33

achieved in the colour sketch experiments could have been outcomes of specific exercises from the book. For example, as seen in the Image below, the hue of the small colour field shifts to a close match of the opposite larger colour field, making it seem like there might be only two colours in the painting when in reality there are three different colours (which is the aim of Albers' three into two exercise).²⁴¹

As was asked of readers earlier, it is again requested that while reading about colour interactions in this section a diffractive thought process is engaged in by concurrently continuing to hold dynamics of encounter, cultural production and becoming in focus as well. Thinking these sites together helps make them, their fuller traits, and their interconnected impacts or the becomings they spawned more accessible. To get to this idea of co-creative becoming in paint, many colour combinations, or perhaps they should be called colour



Image 39 Shannon Forrester Colour Experiment Lavender, Steel, and Blue, oil on paper, 2020

²⁴¹ Ibid. 18-19

encounters here, were explored in the painting sketch experiments. For example, to sharpen the scope of inquiry, paintings were made using: all cool colours, all warm colours, toned colours, contrasting colours, closely related colours, as well as different sizes of small and large colour fields. The research aim of these paintings was to determine what combinations of colours in interaction (or colour encounters) produce successful colour shifts (or new colour becomings from encounter) in the small colour fields.

The differences between this colour interaction work in the medium of oil paint, when compared to Color-aid collage, were significant and challenging. This is in large part because when using Color-aid as a medium, there are hundreds of premixed colours available, each pack arranged in colour relationships, the colours are uniformly adhered to the paper using silkscreen, each readily available to look at, then select from. In contrast, using the medium of paint is far more challenging partly because one can only set out comparatively few colours



Image 40 Shannon Forrester Colour Experiment, Maroon, Orange, and Gold, oil on paper, 2020

during palette mixing and those limited colours would need to be used to create the many different colours of the small and large colour fields. This small number of different paint colours can produce an immense variety of different mixed colours; however, unlike using color-aid, one must imagine each one then mix it. Further complicating the process, there are many variables to navigate in paint such as viscosity, transparency, dry time, imagination. During such a process, all these challenging elements come into play by using paint, a medium that is much closer to its state as a raw material.

This research progressed first through colour preparation palette mixing, then into the colour sketch experiments, and finally creation of the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* painting series. The painted colour sketch experiments were created in preparation for the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series. The colour sketches purposefully sought to foster openings through which conscious colour mixing might emerge that would specifically heighten or instigate the resulting level of colour interaction drama in the planned *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* paintings. To realise the aim of this aspect of the research, developing painting-colour approaches that would allow the researcher to improve their capacity to consciously expect and/or theorise how colour might become in encounter were important elements of this investigation.

Materially this meant considering as well as experimenting through painting practice with colour encounters directed by certain aims. For example, by mixing colour fields that can shift grey to orange-grey, blue-grey, brown-grey, or purple for example as this could lead to the desired outcome. A series of eight paintings with monster figures that appear to be or are

perceived to be different colours yet are all the same colour. Next, this colour interaction effect, the dynamic of colour becoming in encounter, would need to be reproduceable.

Some of the conscious choices used in the targeted painting research of the colour sketch experiments included selecting colours related to each other that would be mixed into both the large and small colour fields. This allowed for incremental step change shifts through colour mixing. Additionally, including common colours in all colour field palette mixes would retain visual connectedness across all hues, creating a visually powerful advantage when trying to use one colour to change the perceived hue of another. Colour strategies to enable a colour to move from warm in the larger colour field to cool in the smaller colour field were also used.

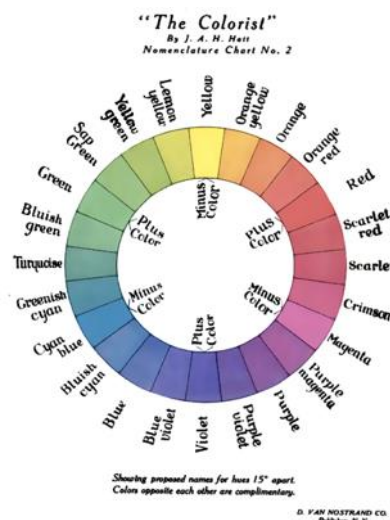


Image 42 Colour Wheel from: J. Arthur H. Hatt, *The Colorist*, ebook

The significance, or degree of change observable in colour interaction (encounter) was of primary importance and as colour shifts are frequently most striking when the different colours at play are not too far away from each other on a value scale and/or in a colour wheel such as the one pictured at left. Or said a different way, hues more closely related to each

other on the colour wheel were prioritized. As a form of guidance while mixing colours the researcher consciously considered what is understood about the ways colour interaction operates. For example, a strong dynamic in colour interaction is that the large colour field will subtract what it is from the small colour field. This means that if a large colour field is red and the small colour field is orange, when put in interaction on a picture plane, the small orange colour field will shift hue, becoming yellow. For optimal hue shift, the proportional scale of each colour field would need to be of significant difference in terms. Meaning that within the picture plane, the colour field surrounding the monster figure would need to be significantly larger than the monster figure itself.

After working on the colour sketches, it became clear that this approach to conscious selection in colour mixing would have a positive effect in generating hue shifts in interaction. However, the real magic of colour is that one really cannot know exactly what will happen until the precise colours are in play with each other on the picture plane of a painting. Colour is surprising, unexpected, mysterious, and secretive. After engaging in extensive colour mixing experiments and painting several sketches over the course of many days, I prepared to make the series of eight new paintings.

The aim for the painting collection was to work as evidence that could elucidate the power of context and encounter to wield perceptual definition of the monster's hue identity, or in perhaps more theoretical terms its perceived identity. Specifically, the research design of this collection, from the sketches to the series of eight paintings, was structured to show colour's dynamic ability to generate colour identity. This is evidenced by the larger colour field's ability to shift the colour of the monster figure which becomes visible when the monster's hue is

compared across each of the different eight paintings in the series. The research design and practice-led investigations proved successful because though the eight monster figures appear to be different colours, each is the same colour, therefore demonstrating the power of colour becoming in encounter.

Considering the seemingly infinite number of possible colours that could be mixed and to only have form as the additional tool for use in this part of the research presented many challenges. During the early stage of this research, it became clear that full engagement with the immense number of possible colour combination choices could never be pursued, possibly not in a lifetime, definitely not within the context of a single thesis. As a result, the painting-colour research process approach required the expansive colour options be edited down to subset colour collections that would allow for more targeted inquiry. This more targeted scope was critical to finding the hues that would meet the research aim of the series.

Though each monster was the same colour, the hues that contributed to creating the final colour were not painted in a singular layer. They were painted in many layers. With each new hue the effect on each of the painting's colour interactions (encounters) were tracked through observation. Specifically, the perceived colour of the monster figures was observed to compare what colour each one appeared to be in relationship to the others. For example, monster one was bluer compared to monster 2 which appeared yellow grey). During the research process, the colour of the monster figures changed many times. However, the monsters always remained the same colour in every generation or repainted layer. Each monster is made of the same colour layers, the same colour material. More simply put perhaps, each monster is painted with the same paint colours.

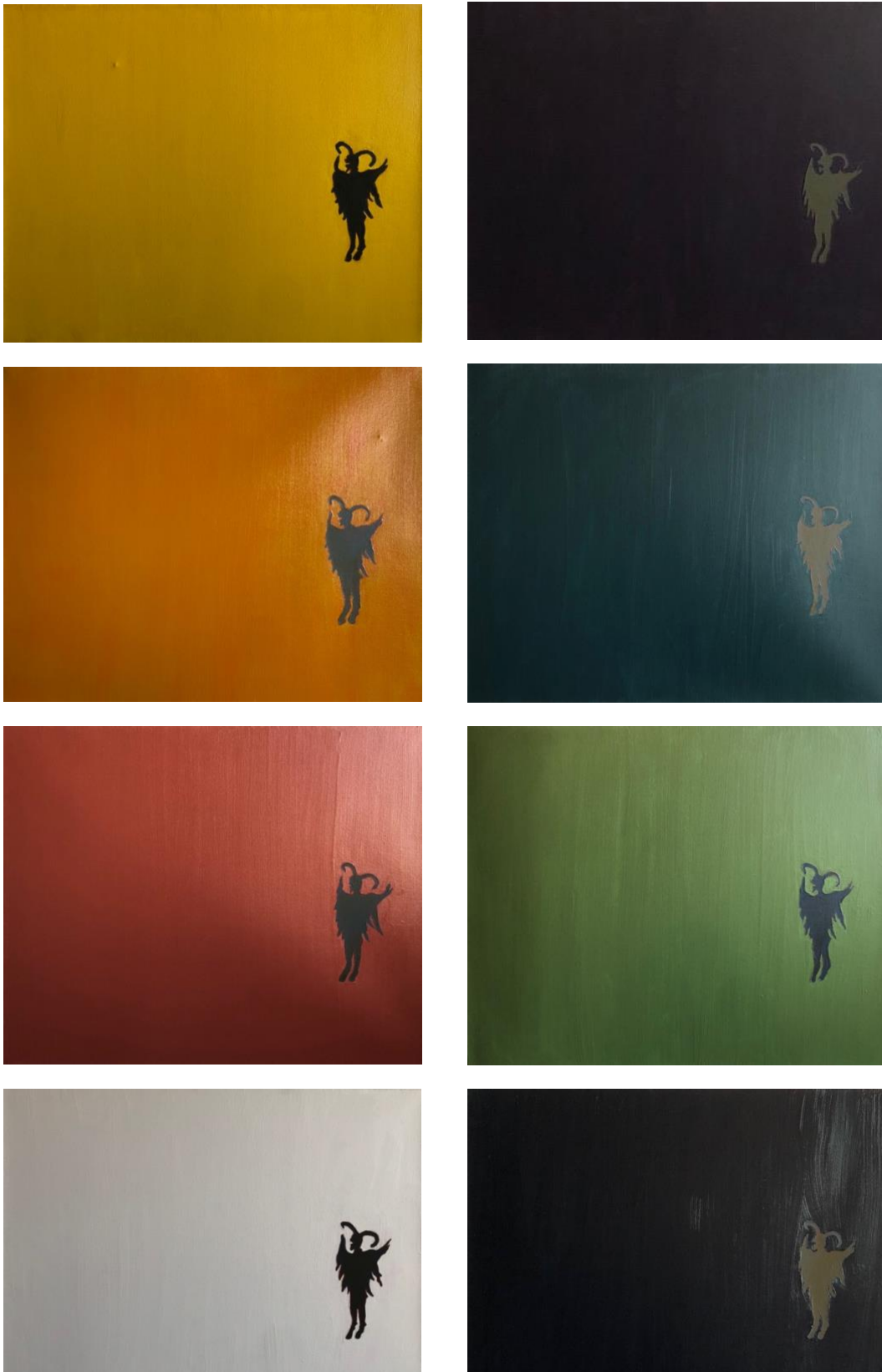


Image 43 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters paintings (in progress), each 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 45 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters yellow ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 44 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters purple ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 47 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters white ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 46 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters chromatic black ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 48 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters green ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 49 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters red ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 51 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters blue ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022



Image 50 Shannon Forrester Colour and the Relativity of Monsters orange ground, 3 ft w x 2 ft h oil on canvas 2020-2022

As referenced above, an important research aim for the series was to explore as well as demonstrate the context driven dynamic of colour interaction, colour relativity, as it occurs in human perception. To do so, beyond the colour mixing specifics highlighted above, the painting research approach needed to be specifically designed to support that investigation. The practicalities of this required the paintings be created in a way that removed as much variability between the eight paintings as possible. Variable factors here might include different scales of colour field or form, variances in viscosity or reflectiveness. This is because any of those variables could influence the outcome of the primary investigation, colour shift as a result of colour interaction, another way to refer to the dynamic of colour relativity. These terms refer to the dynamic sensorial experience of colour perception while noting that any perceived colour is only ever accessible because of that colour's relative relationship and encounter with its surroundings in combination with the animal perceiving it.

Returning to the research design for this series, specifically its approach to removing variables, a predetermined and repeatable composition was created for the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* paintings. This was an extraordinarily different approach to painting compared to how the researcher had previously worked. Not only did it require setting up multiple paintings with the same composition, but the entire series had to be painted in response to a tightly targeted research aim, specifically that each monster be perceived as different hues. The first step was to create eight canvases, each of the same size. The number of canvases was not critical, the fact that there were many of them was, as this would allow for multiple instances, in fact eight of them, that would show the effect of colour shift in the monster within its interactive encounter with the ground colour. Eight strainers that were

basically identical in size were then constructed of pine. The canvas was stretched onto each strainer and each canvas was primed using the same number of gesso coatings. In line with the goal of minimizing variables across the eight paintings, this process created eight substantially uniform surfaces to use as the substrate for the next stage of research, painting the *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* series.

Beyond construction of the painting's substrate, there were still several critical variables that needed to be addressed to meet the research design parameters requiring that to the greatest degree possible, between each canvas the only variance in the paintings would be their painted colour. As mentioned above, a composition was developed then repeated across each of the eight canvases. This predetermined composition required the researcher to place the (basically) same sized monster (which serves as the small colour field in this case) in (basically) the same place on each of the canvases. To achieve this a stencil of the monster character was created to set up a uniform figure size. The stencil was then traced onto each canvas. Small holes were added to the stencil so it could be placed as precisely as possible in the same location on each rectangular canvas. Then using drawing and measuring tools, the stencil placement used endeavoured to limit variables even in handmade paintings. To the greatest degree possible, stencil placement was aligned across all eight canvasses then each monster was marked out on the primed canvas substrates. Process photos are included below to document these steps and capture the research method used to achieve a repeatable composition across each of the eight surfaces.



Image 54 Shannon Forrester, Colour and the Relativity of Monsters, research documentation process 3: layout, 2020

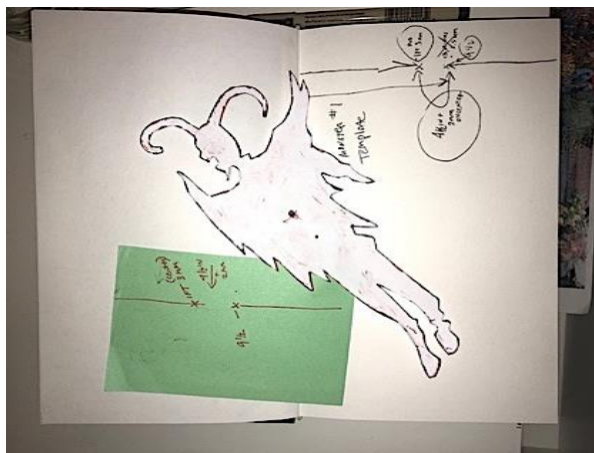


Image 53 Shannon Forrester, Colour and the Relativity of Monsters, research process documentation 1: Sketchbook, stencil, measurements 2020



Image 52 Shannon Forrester, Colour and the Relativity of Monsters, research process documentation 2: Canvas, stencil, drawing 2020.

The next step was palette mixing while concurrently considering the colour interaction findings from the earlier colour sketch experiments to determine the colour of the monster. As painting with colours commenced the volume of the colour mixed for the eight monster figures also became a concern that had to be monitored throughout all the painting layers as the amount of paint had to be of sufficient quantity to apply a uniform paint layer on all eight monsters as well as allow for some to be put in reserve in case of later need. Using the drawing already completed on every canvas, each monster was then painted with the mixed colour, then allowed to fully dry.

The following step was again palette mixing, this time to determine the large colour field colours and again ensure enough of each of the eight colours was mixed so an even paint layer could be applied to each painting. Of the eight large colour field hues selected in the first layer, each had different aims. For example, the painting using chromatic black and the one which uses white foreground a colour interaction significantly relative to value, while other large colour fields explored toned colour or focused on pure hues, where others experimented with warm or cool colours in encounter with the monster's colour.

The *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* paintings, along with *Feather Scales* and *Beautiful Monster* included in the following pages work collectively to lead the practice element of the colour and monster elements of this research project. In addition to the colour-led research detailed above, practice-led research examining how words might affect the visual realm and how the visual might access language in the context of encounters involving reparative painting, poetics, and looking were also undertaken within this research. These encounters

occur for the painter as well as the viewer when engaging with creative work and have the potential to continue evolving, becoming anew, during ongoing reflective periods.

These moments of encounter during making as well as viewing painting can offer a kind of exit from hegemonic othering by generating new knowledges, narratives, and perceptions. This sense of departure, specifically departure from othering, can be generated by painting as well as poetic reparative outputs which enfold new narratives of existence and identity with the capability to subsume traumatic impacts of bias and exclusion. At the same time, as detailed in the case studies and practice-led examples above in the “Painting from the Other Side” chapter (for example), these encounters and practices push culture forward through their new proposals. Their material-discursive workings change beliefs as to what is possible, or what is true, painting-colour in reparatively engaged practice can recast culture towards more egalitarian values grounded in care, understanding, empathy, empowerment, and hope. In addition to painting practice, curatorial, and colour-led research, transmutative expositions in painting, text, and concept were also researched during development of this thesis. Using different modes of practice (text, painting, and theory) can create a potential for wider accessibility to the topics of this research by facilitating access to reparative practice through these different forms as some find painting more accessible than theory, whereas others can more directly access text. While still others might find some combination the best way to understand the content.

Transmutation research in modes of visual, narrative, and creative text was key specifically to the work for the researcher’s painting *Begin*. Findings from *Begin* became most compelling because the work was made in modes of painting and creative text with shared content. The

synergies between each of the three sites of practice (concept, painting, creative text) in *Begin* were a kind of research surprise, maybe research magic. The ideas for *Begin* first entered the research as painting, or perhaps to be more specific, as a shimmer from the cognitive nonconscious that became the painting titled *Begin*.²⁴² The researcher later realised that the painting was connected to an experimental poetic text (included below) that was written many weeks after completing the painting. It was enlightening to explore the relationships between these very different research outputs and consider how, when conceptualized/experienced together, they generated new knowledge that neither could exactly produce individually.

This is a successful example of content transmutation because by using different media, specifically the medias of painting and text, to create multiple outputs with shared content, different impacts were created because of the combination. By working with the content in different forms, the sum of the parts became stronger, or clearer, or perhaps both. The painting was emboldened to speak in a new language, while the poetics were given a new sensorial life, together they created new depth of meaning.

Begin

There was no light, dirt (another being) covered the small human figure, a bestowal from Patriarchy's Workshop to function as a public broadcast of her shame, her name, her meaning made embodied, that which is a marker of her

²⁴² Hayles, *Unthought : The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*.⁹ Hayles defines cognitive nonconscious as "... the cognitive capacity that exists beyond consciousness..."

object caste. Built on in layers with every unfolding year, though she was only about seven, the coating was material, aural, visceral, and seemingly all powerful, though she could not even see it. A droning, relentless transmission of psychic and physical excruciation, it enveloped with mercenary mastery. It's thick-heavy volume weighed upon every flicker of her material and immaterial being. As a captive of Patriarchy's Workshop, she was conscripted to carry it as her outermost layer, her most prominent identifier, this embodied dirt-other had travelled with her during every moment of her life so far.

To spite constructed appearance, it was not actually of her but on her, a permeable layer fiction-being-signifier forged with all the ill intent the Workshop could construct. The immensity of shame, of droning transmissions, began eroding her spirit from the moment she began to be conscious of the socio-political. That was when it came home to roost, commencing its parasitical dance of nightmares on her frame. The process began years before the layers weighing her down were so thick. It is constitutively productive in its complex and ingenious character. It was a spark born from darkness that allowed her story to be told, as The Workshop's corrosive agent was meant to silence her, render her forever without light. The Workshop didn't understand the power of no-light, as within it, the little captive could drift through the immense field of her mind and there she found truth, escape, seeds, and matches.



Image 55 Shannon Forrester, Begin, 6 ft h x 45 in w, oil on canvas, 2018.

Beautiful Monsters is a collection that currently includes *Beautiful Monster* the drawing, *Feather Scales I*, *Feather Scales II*, and *Beautiful Monster* the painting. The series is related to the painting-colour led research above which also examined repair of monstrous narratives through beauty in colour and material. The drawing began with an exploration of what the form of a beautiful monster could be, the painting then wondered what the monster's skin might look like if that skin was deeply beautiful, perhaps namelessly so. The painting process asked, what would, what could, it look like if the exterior of a monster was beautiful? These



Image 57 Shannon Forrester, *Beautiful Monster*, oil on canvas, 42 in w x 72 in h, 2018

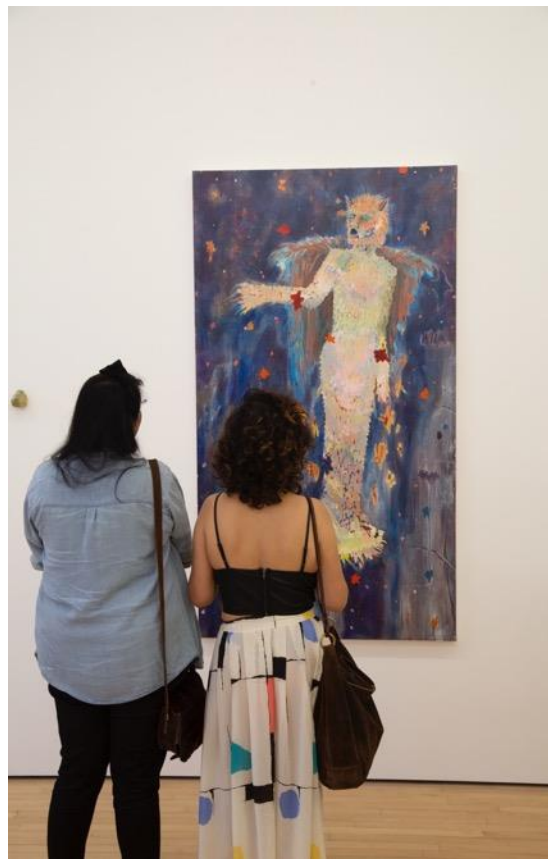


Image 56 Shannon Forrester, *Beautiful Monster* (installation) oil on canvas, 42 in w x 72 in h, 2018

questions led to the feather scale paintings which explore proposals for what the skin of a beautiful monster might materially be. The works experimented with colour and lush painterly media application that worked to embody the feather-scale skin in volumetric paint.

The colours in the paintings vibrate in a way that call the viewer to another place, perhaps a not yet place, definitely a not here now place.

Through painting, *Red Figure* explores visualization of the weight of exclusion and pain caused by marginalization. The content of *Red Figure* works with multiplicity of human, environment,



Image 58 Shannon Forrester, *Feather Scales II*, oil on canvas, 19.5 in w x 19.5 in h, 2018



Image 59 Shannon Forrester, *Feather Scales I*, oil on canvas, 19.5 in w x 13.5 in h, 2018

movement, and time. The figure has a sense of aliveness and emotion, a sense of movement in time. These essences negate and subvert fixed location, singularity, isolation, and linearity. Meanings of the human and the rain figures become in encounter, making it hard to tell where or if one begins and another ends, they produce the meaning and emotion in combination. The approach to figuration and use of colour also work to get beyond gender/race/sexuality binaries. It remains identifiable as human, yet specific identity categories remain aloof, breaking with the fixed binary readings dominant Euro-Western culture demands. This allows the painting to concurrently explore an attempt to exit from the high costs of identity-based subjection and bias through figural shapeshifting as it unfolds multiple different possible identities for the portrait's character.



Image 60 Shannon Forrester, Red Figure, 47 in w x 59 in h oil on

Working again with transmutation and textural paint application, it explores how fixed paint can show the dimension of time. An engagement that connects to the idea that time is a critical agent in cultural production's dynamics of repair, bias, truth, lies, and traumas. Additionally, time is significant to the cumulative effects of patriarchal looking, repetitive experiences of violence and/or bias, as well as the fluctuating/relative quality of identity constantly being performed by the individual as well as projected onto the individual by others.

In many aspects, reparative work comes from the margin, the other, or the monstrous existences that cultures of oppression seek to render abject. However, in bell hooks project

of reclaiming, recasting, and reconfiguring the margin, she constructs the margin as a kind of site where one can work on repair, on change and transformation, engaged in the project of freedom for self and others.

We know struggle to be that which is difficult, challenging, hard and we know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfils desire. We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world.²⁴³

The margin hooks says is a place of radical openness and creativity. This thesis adds, the margin, and beyond it, is where artists (and others) can engage in work involved in projects of repair.

²⁴³ hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness." 23.

┌ CONCLUSION ┐

├ Conclusion ┤

To research the many sites informing this transdisciplinary project through each other and in encounter, this thesis used a diffractive methodological approach. Transdisciplinary here is used in alignment with Myra H. Strober's definition which states that "...the term transdisciplinary [is used] where there has been such a degree of integration of disciplines that tracing distinct disciplinary traits is difficult."²⁴⁴ Of note is how Strober describes transdisciplinary research in a way that shares resonance with diffractive methodology. While being led by painting, the scope of this work engaged in; practice-led artistic research in painting, participatory action research (PAR) at the intersection of curating with contemporary artist participants designed to develop case study proofs of reparative painting, and practice-led research on the influence of encounter, colour, and transmutation. The focus of the research questions asked how diffractive methodology can be used to discover the ways painting has the power to repair damage caused by cultural othering and generate agency.

The "Repair" chapter offered a genealogy of the theories that informed the aim of this research in reparative painting practice theory. Focusing primarily on scholarship by Klein, Sedgwick, and Best it outlined theories of repair in psychology, feminist, and queer studies, as well as contemporary art photography, then offered new proposals as to how repair operates in painting and in (new) materialist contexts. The "Painting from the Other Side" chapter focused on the PAR aspect of this project used practices of curation, discourse, and

²⁴⁴ Myra H. Strober, "Habits of the Mind: Challenges for Multidisciplinary Engagement," *Social Epistemology : A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* 20, no. 3-4: Universities in the Knowledge Economy: Places of Expectation/Spaces for Reflection? 320

pedagogy as methods, or mediums, to produce an expansive series of case studies. A diverse collection of detailed proofs, the case studies outline ways agency generating world building can operate through narrative, aesthetics, reclamation, or power transfer to subvert hegemonic systems designed to monsterize, marginalize, or other based on targeted identity-based characteristics. The case studies detail the ways dynamic reparability is traceable in figuration, abstraction, surface, materiality, colour, narrative, encounter, as well as an array of other elements.

These visual agents in painting have the power to produce a position capable of generating feminist and liberatory agency that offers the potential for repair through the embodied action of painting. In the context of her book on artists curating, Alison Green said “Kosuth made art to demonstrate that art is a category of thought, not a practice of making things.”²⁴⁵ This thesis complicates that a bit by arguing art is a category of thought and practice of making things. This thesis offers a kind of research curation engaged in discovery of, or perhaps it could be more accurate to say, more consciously noticing, painting from the inside. Painting from the inside considers creative process not just as a mode of production, but also as a mode of experience. It pays attention to the painter’s experience during their creative practice in a way that could be considered accessing a kind of narrative recounting of their process. Those elements that make up an artist’s creative experience are frequently inaccessible to an external viewer.

²⁴⁵ Green, *When Artists Curate : Contemporary Art and the Exhibition as Medium*. 218

To describe this in a way more specifically related to this thesis, the reparative turn can be followed in painting from the inside, the artists experience of creation. This is not to say that in some cases it might also be observable by looking at the painting as an object. Painting from the inside refers to the artist's internal work through practice developed over a period of time. Painting from the inside can be understood as a process involving encounters and embodied materially of the painting object. Painting from the inside continues beyond the painter and their completion of the painting. It also emerges in the viewers encounter with and can evolve through memory as a work of art continues in the minds of those who experience it. The difference between knowledge accessible in painting from the inside vs. painting from the outside is particularly vast in cases where the researcher has no access to discourse with the artist. In short, new knowledge from the inside of painting is uniquely accessible via practice-led research and to a degree through collaborative discourse between researcher and artist as drawn out in the "Painting from the Other Side" chapter.

A key aim of this work was to test the project research questions that asked; how will practice-led painting research materiality further approaches to reparative oriented research? How can colour, aesthetics, form, paint, narrative, and material be mobilized to engender agency and reparative affect? The opportunity to research painting from the inside with other artists expanded on the dimensions of reparative painting beyond my personal studio practice through the work of eight other painters.²⁴⁶ Further, the exhibition in companionship with the written elements created a platform for each case study to be considered in relationship to the others and in the context of the core research questions of this project. As David

²⁴⁶ Supra Chapter 2 "Painting from the Inside" 68-116

Freedberg said about Kosuth's "Play of the Unmentionable", "the texts and objects Kosuth had assembled for this installation forced us to ask ourselves about their meaning ... and to be honest about those meanings."²⁴⁷ When one draws this question, which prompts us to consider meaning in assemblage (between text, context, and object), into the frame of the PAR, then adds that in this thesis sites of meaning extended to also include artist research participants (including the author), exhibition attendees, and those who read about it here or in other accounts, the prospects for meaning making grows further still. In Kosuth's curation as a medium as well as in this thesis, the works in their encounters create new meaning and new art. This thesis detailed several specific cases of reparative painting. But it also took a further step, to propose its openness and suitability as a painting practice theory of significant plasticity, that can be used by artists interested in engaging in work addressing or redressing issues of finding an exit from othering as well as repairing some aspect of the damage it causes.

Research for the "Painting-Colour" chapter diffractively considered the ways painting, colour, and culture operate as contexts that produce monstrous perceptions. This showed that just as colour interaction in encounter (such as when deep blue can turn what was a warm lavender pink) operates as a system of contextual definition guiding perception, that then the monsters developed by cultural productions are just as malleable to creation of new narratives and perceptions. This creates an opening for new repaired identity formations. The "Painting-Colour" chapter also researched how, when reclaimed and exposed for conscious

²⁴⁷ Freedberg, *The Play of the Unmentionable : An Installation by Joseph Kosuth at the Brooklyn Museum*.

consideration, those perceptions created through contextual meaning making encounters, can be re-visioned in reparative ways that generate new narratives of self and other.

This thesis undertook creative work in painting-colour, PAR, transmutation, and practice-led theory focused on repair of issues related to the wicked problems of othering and monsterizing as well as the unfinished project of freedom. Because if one can know and understand this function of othering and monsterizing, that knowledge offers a kind of agency to the knower, empowering them to recast contextual power in the service of reparative work.

The outset of this thesis asserted the multivalence of both reparative work and diffractive methodology. Similarly feminist research or theory should not be construed as a singular monolithic idea but as Alison Jaggar explains, feminism is a "... a cluster of social ideals that continuously evolve and change... [in the context of]... a world where gender remains a primary category of social organization and a primary tool for domination."²⁴⁸ This thesis expands on this to add that in addition to gender, constructions of race and sexual minority function likewise, as primary categories of social organization and domination. Andrea Doucet and Natasha Mauthner describe this well-established broad scope of feminist inquiry as "... research that is driven by, and aimed toward, a desire to challenge multiple hierarchies of inequalities within social life."²⁴⁹ This thesis traces how by advancing agency and equity, reparative painting practice theory, this feminist project of repair, has the power to intervene

²⁴⁸ Jaggar, "Introduction: The Project of Feminist Methodology." vii-viii

²⁴⁹ Andrea Doucet and Natasha S. Mauthner, "Feminist Methodologies and Epistemology," in *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant and Dennis L. Peck (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2007). 42

in socio-political dynamics committed to the dominance of some over others, while also having the capability to subvert hegemonic systems of othering dedicated to projects of identity-based monsterizing. As Nochlin argued at the outset of feminist art history artists whose identities are beyond of the traditional Western cannon of art (i.e., Artists who are not male and white) are grappling with "...outer monsters of ridicule or patronising encouragement". Further Nochlin argues that these artists are

...outsiders in that of ideology [when compared to the great, always male, artists of the Western canon], women can reveal institutional and intellectual weakness in general, and, at the same time that they destroy false consciousness, take part in the creation of institutions in which clear thought-and true greatness-are challenges open to anyone, man or woman, courageous enough to take the necessary risk, the leap into the unknown.²⁵⁰

The first research question asked what the implications of using diffractive methodology would be in interdisciplinary practice-led research. This was demonstrated throughout the chapters as each one considered a complex assemblage of theories, practices, and encounters through each other. For example, the "Painting-Colour" chapter considered the ways paint and culture operate in similar ways, thinking the monster as the othered, and holistically how these sites as well as their encounters could teach us about meaning making, through each other. In the "Painting from the Other Side" chapter diffractive methodology allowed for hegemonic issues of marginalization to be thought with an exit from it (utopias, wildness, repair) and through practice to discover how the world could be made anew through painting.

²⁵⁰ Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? Thirty Years After." 67

Additionally, it discussed how painting from the inside and the reparative turn in painting works in concert with these encounters, memory, and desire for repair of the traumas bias inflicts.

This thesis also examined how a practice-led approach in painting materiality furthers reparatively oriented research as well as researched how colour, aesthetics, form, paint, narrative, and material can be mobilized to engender agency and reparative affect. One way the questions were answered was in the case studies. For example, where Ugiagbe's work seized the power, previously denied by hegemonic authorities, of pedagogy to educate by taking the chalk into his own hand. *Colour and the Relativity of Monsters* addressed the ways painting-colour works through visualized and materialized modes in encounter to shape perception akin to how culture defines perception through the social contexts producing human experience.

The painting, poetic, and curatorial practices which collectively led the research investigated how ideas/intentions/truth/repair may move amongst and/or become embodied between forms through transmutation, translation, as well as transfiguration. This occurred through form shifting traced in movements from concept to painting, painting to text, text to intention, and painting to concept. This occurs in a field of active encounters alive with indeterminacies and openness of ever emerging, shifting, existences in liminal interstice as well as in loud clear and bright productions within a concert that likely has infinite additional possibilities. Indicating that where hard lines of separation seem to be drawn or fix-ivity a given, there actually exists an ever-evolving encounter between a complex field populated by diverse actors. Flat clarity shaped by fixed, possibly binary, productions and static notions,

were thinking modes the research sought to leave behind. Instead, it pursued considerations more sidereal in their relationship to what everyday perception implies, and in that vastness discovered the potentiality for those new becomings to generate something deeply novel even recast the world anew.

This dissertation offers the first comprehensive view of reparative painting practice theory, a novel mode of working in and through material-discursive practices as they unfold in encounter. This research offers a practice-led framework with multifaceted potential to subvert as well as repair damage inflicted by bias. It analysed, recorded, and recounted painting approaches of research participant artists, as well as in personal practice, that explored a multitude of reparative permutations through their production of uplift, imaginative optimistic futures, expression of wounded narratives, transfer and/or realization of power, beauty, rage, recovery from trauma, reclamation and more to meet this aim. It also developed ideas of contextual production as drawn together through a diffractive lens with debates as to if gender and colour exist. It considered how colour behaves like culture and the ways all of this emerges in ever becoming encounters.

The knowledge created here offers a new framework detailing how an embodied diffracting process might be used to create constructive and productive exits as well as generate agency which can provide release from and repair of the damage resulting from dynamics of othering. This reparative practice framework has an ambition to offer artists, researchers in and of the arts, scholars, teachers, as well as viewers, insight into the highly flexible potential of reparative practices. This research was developed using a diffractive methodology which includes working with a far-reaching collection of ideas and practices as seen through and in

combination with Sedgwick's concept of reparative reading practice. As such, it also has implications in those intersecting fields as well as other creative disciplines. As the many crises of our contemporary escalate, constructive approaches to generating individual as well as collective agency and approaches offering a reparative turn towards an exit from damaging impacts of systemic racism, misogyny, and homophobia have become increasingly critical. This project answers Sedgwick's call for increased engagement with research using reparative approaches in addition to the urgent need for novel paradigms to address issues of social injustice, the mitigation of collective and individual traumas, as well as the collective imperative for new energetic wild imaginings of what the fabric of hopeful futures might be woven with. It accomplished this through practice and by conceptualizing the inseparability of material, idea, collective, individual, and narrative realms. By doing so, it enabled evidence from disparate sites of knowledge to inform and prove the validity of the different ways each demonstrate far reaching potential for the use of this reparative practice framework.

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