

**MODELLING AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO INTERMEDIALITY WITHIN
VISUAL ART PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Volume I

by

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Declaration

I declare that “Modelling an innovative approach to intermediality within Visual Art practice in South Africa” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature:.....

Date: 15 November 2015

Title:

Modelling an innovative approach to intermediality within Visual Art practice in South Africa

Summary:

The study is practice-led in visual art and it explores the impact of intermediality to validate that new knowledge emerges via processes that lead to possibilities of transformative hybridity. Intermediality was established and generated through a productive reciprocity between practice and theory as well as between analogue and digital art. The research created a community of enquiry through an exhibition entitled *TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice* (2011) in order to model innovative approaches towards improvement of transmedial artistic practice. The diversity of work by artists involved in this exhibition allowed exploration of a range of creative processes to investigate and understand characteristics of productive intermediality. The concept of transcoding in this study was derived from Deleuze and Guattari, which describes how one milieu functions as a foundation for another, implying an intermedial tension. *TRANSCODE* alludes to the mediation that transcribes meanings across boundaries and within complexity. Selected characteristics of narratives, space, embodiment and visual systems were researched through the lens of mediamatic thinking, which refers to thinking via media. The study proposes that intermediality is best seen as a construct of the tensional differences that become enriched within the grey areas. In applying Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor of the rhizome and Tim Ingold's concept of the mycelial mesh, the research project not only prompted structured collective thinking through practice, but also captured various case studies relevant to practice-led methodology.

List of key terms:

Analogue art; complexity; dialogue; digital art; embodied; hybridity; intermediality; mediamatic; mycelium; narrative; practice-led research; reciprocity; rhizome; transcode; transmedia

PREFACE

A life-long passion for the constructive contribution of visual arts as research and its ability to suggest new ways of thinking about society led to choices made in this research. My engagement in both art practice and education resulted in embodied understanding of the reciprocity between analogue and new media. The notion of an exhibition that positions the author in the creative relationship with a specific group of artists not only acknowledges them as influences on this thesis, but has facilitated both this project, the exhibition *TRANSCODE*, and ongoing practice and cyber exhibitions building on *TRANSCODE*. The growth of intermedial studies within the South African academy and the corresponding need to expand and further define the field has contributed to the orientation of this thesis.

The catalogue of the *TRANSCODE* exhibition is an integral part of this thesis and developed in dialogue with the processes of practices as articulating understandings. The first three chapters of the thesis present the theoretical and methodological underpinning for the research practice. These are the Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology, and are intended to familiarise the reader with the research topics and the notion of research through practice. In Chapter One (the Introduction), the rationale for the study, the research problem and research objectives grounded in the aims of the *TRANSCODE* exhibition are presented. This first chapter also sets out the proposed significance, research questions, parameters and scope of the research. Chapter Two (Underpinning Theoretical Framework and Literature Reviews) locates the theoretical frameworks for the main concepts, provides a review of the relevant literature and defines the concepts 'digital', 'analogue', 'intermediality' and 'reciprocity'. Chapter Three reviews the methodology of practice-led research, its grounding in the syllabus of Visual Arts at UNISA and the application of methodology for this doctoral research. All three chapters relate closely to, and inform understanding of, Chapter Four and the catalogue of *TRANSCODE* (2011).

Chapter Four contains evidence of practice, and discussion and critical analysis of that practice as reflected via the work of the selected artists. The four sections in this chapter correspond to the four rooms of *TRANSCODE* (2011). In relation to the last room, I report on and analyse my own art making as research and highlight critical reflections. The reader is requested to view each room in the catalogue before reading the specific section in Chapter Four of the thesis.

My sincere thanks go to my promoter, Dr Nombe Mpako, for providing me with critical guidance and moral support. My gratitude is also due to all without whose support this research would not have been possible: critical readers and practice-led experts Dr Iain Biggs and Dr Louise Hay, specialist mentors Prof Frikkie Potgieter and Prof Amanda du Preez; editors Dr Leonie Viljoen, Catriona Botha and Mandy Conidaris. To my studio and installation assistants Ciara Struwig, Adelle van Zyl, Katya Venter, Amanda Camacho and Fabian Wargau, who supported me in so many ways, I am humbled by your kindness and selfless dedication. I am grateful to all participating artists whose research methodologies, conceptual strength and collective thinking through practice were core to the *TRANSCODE* project: Carolyn Parton; Colleen Alborough; Churchill Madikide; Fabian Wargau; Frikkie Eksteen; Lawrence Lemaona; Marcus Neustetter; Minnette Vári; Nathaniel Stern; Sello Mahlangu; and the *Journey* collaborative artists, in particular Celia de Villiers and Intuthuko Sewing Group. Your impact on my thinking was there before *TRANSCODE* and you will continue to inspire me beyond this project.

I thank the galleries Arts on Paper, UNISA and Sasol for the loan of works from their collections. My sincere gratitude to the University of South Africa for granting me study leave, bursaries and financial support to have the expertise of critical readers.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial intelligence
ICT	Information and communications technology/ies
<i>Journey Project</i>	<i>The Journey to Freedom narratives.</i>
<i>Journey Projects</i>	Both <i>the Journey to Freedom narratives</i> (2003-2008) and <i>Synchronic Journey</i> (2011).
FDMT	Bullock, A, Stallybrass, O & Trombley, S (eds). 1988. <i>The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought</i> . 2nd ed. London: Harper Collins.
MWD	Merriam-Webster dictionary (online)
SOED	The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
<i>TRANSCODE</i>	<i>TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice.</i> (Title of the DLitt et Phil exhibition at UNISA Art Gallery in 2011.)
UNISA	University of South Africa

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Analogue art In this thesis analogue art is equated with traditional/older/pre-digital art forms positioned opposite digital art as a point of departure. Analogue art is associated with physical materiality (Belting 2005:304) as “tangible” (Belting 2002:2), as “thing” (Lechte 2011:354-357) and as “evidence” (Newell 2012:287,288) in contrast to the manipulability of digital data and the variability of its platforms. For the purpose of this study analogue is linked with media such as embroidery, painting, drawing, printmaking, collage and object-based sculptural work.

Complexity Complexity is integral to conversations within intermediality as by definition intermediality deals with the blurring of clear boundaries. As complexity can result in dissonance/discord (Massumi 2004:xi), it is valued as an essential ingredient for transformation. The multi-layered nature of research also acknowledges that no singular response is possible; rather it is necessary to include a range of conflicting possibilities resulting in complexity.

Dialogue Dialogue is “the process and practice of communication among selves or objects” (Bakhtin 1981:84-258). It can be an exchange between persons and objects, between inanimate objects, between groups and ideologies, and between elements in compositions. Dialogues are also read as a flow with multiple contact points and overlaps within an exhibition. For the artist, these exchanges also take place in the *creative process*. Both *TRANSCODE* and this thesis involve multiple dialogues; hence achieving a polyvocality appropriate to articulating multiple strata of thought.

Digital art Digital art is presented numerically which implies that in some phase of its production the art process involved programmed software (Manovich 2001:27-48). “Digital art” is often used interchangeably with new media art and software art. Christiane Paul (2008:1) describes new media as: “an inherently time-based, dynamic, interactive, collaborative, customisable, and variable art form...” in contrast to analogous traditional pictorial space.

Embodied ‘Embodied’ implies to realise, manifest or give material form to expression. *Embodiment* can be seen “as incipient activity” (Stern 2013:2) that is not a thing/body but an active relation. That is, the body of the artwork exists beyond the ‘object’. Processes are considered as being part of the embodied work: practice-turn methodologies describe ‘practice’ as an embodied activity (Schatzki 2001a:2).

Hybridity Hybridity is a merging or mixture of previously separate entities or characteristics and gauged as more complex than the forms from which it evolved. This research pursues shared characteristics of hybridity in digital and analogue art forms, as well as pointing out differences. Hybridity can be interpreted as a condition where an intermedial process is established at a particular time/interval within the grey area of development. The discussion of hybridity relates closest to Schröter's (2011:2) category of synthetic intermediality, namely a fusion that invigorates and regenerates borderline experiences to alter horizons.

Intermediality Irina Rajewsky (2005:45) provides a generic definition: "intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that in some way take place between media." Intermediality's characteristics of interaction/ integration and evolving practices furthermore acknowledge a world that is not only physical but also relational. In "Discourses and models of intermediality", Jens Schröter (2011:2) distinguishes four models of discourse: synthetic intermediality, formal (or transmedial) intermediality, transformational intermediality and ontological intermediality. In my thesis I apply these and propose *reciprocal intermediality* as an additional model. The characteristics of reciprocal intermediality hinge on the ongoing processes that contain both the independence of entities, and the feeders between the complexity of difference and hybridity.

Mediamatic Mediamatic thinking suggests that the critical reflection of artists takes place through their media and can be read in/from their use of media. The term 'mediamatic' is drawn from Dutch theorist Henk Oosterling (2003:42). The objective of thinking is therefore always integrated: requiring material and human agency; it cannot be neutral. It also offers a mechanism for observation and modelling of innovative approaches to intermediality.

Mycelium The entangled filaments of fungi are formed as a mass of fine tubes or hyphae (<http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Mycelium>) that facilitate the flow of liquid/nutrients between the boundaries of cell structures in an environment. 'Mycelium' as a metaphor of porosity and constructive support echoes the reciprocal character of tacit and cerebral knowledge. The metaphor of the mycelium is described by Tim Ingold (2011) as an appropriate image for social theory, for it acts as a mesh to connect different roots. Cultural anthropologists state that collaboration may be equated to mycelia as it acts in-between root and host (Tsing 2012:416). My research proposes mycelium as an addition to the concept of the Deleuzean rhizome.

Narrative In our attempt to make sense of the world we convert events into stories both through processes of conceptualisation and through intuitive experiential processes. Narrative structures are found in writing and artworks but also in curatorial approaches (Bal 2012:179; Richter 2013:[sp]). The narrative can establish itself as a plot-centred group of causal events that have some relations between them (Ryan 2005:4; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:6) and often includes suspense and closure (Wolf 2005:85). Contemporary stories could be deliberately anti-narrative (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:6, 23). The development of intermediality through the 1990's accelerated the redefinition of narrativity across disciplines, with the result that narration is currently accepted as a cross-medial phenomenon.

Practice-led research Practice-led research is itself located within the mind-set of a broader practice turn (Coessens, Crispin & Douglas 2009:15; Mitchell 2005). Whilst earlier approaches interpret and explain culture primarily through the language and images used, the practice-led research values materially grounded *practice* in relation to understanding. In visual art, meaning is mediated through the objects, materials, or techniques as *actively* applied. The emergent nature of practice-led research thus searches for new methodologies as it proceeds. Barrett (2007:1, 2) refers to this methodology as “production of knowledge or philosophy in action” that enables “multiple intelligences” to produce new insight. In practice-led research, the practice and textual components are in dialogue with one another.

Reciprocity Reciprocity is an *exchange that affects entities in relation to one another* of which ‘interchange’ and ‘mutual benefit’ are typical implications. Reciprocity is a norm in human behaviour (Falk & Fischbacher 2001:1), but in this research the concern is primarily with reciprocal actions as phenomena of processes and the objects these produce. In the context of the arts, cooperation could be based on shared interest of *process, conceptual* or *thematic choices* or potential career advancement with the conviction that reciprocal benefit will result. Intermedial theories by nature include a degree of interdependence that involves reciprocal actions (Guralnik & Friend 1964: Sv. intermedial theories).

Rhizome Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) proposed model of thought of non-binary, non-linear, non-hierarchical structures is based on the growth system the rhizome in contrast to the aborescent model of binaries. Whilst the rhizome mainly refers to plant life, Deleuze and Guattari (2004:6, 7) also link rhizomorphic systems to packs of animals, rats, ants and burrows. The rhizome structure's ability to continuously establish connections and potentially undergo metamorphosis is one of my models for my search for intermediality in the *TRANSCODE* project.

Transcode “Transcoding or transduction is the manner in which one milieu serves as the basis for another, or conversely is established atop another milieu, dissipates in it or is constituted in it” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:345). In transcoding there is both action (practice/construction/growth) and rhythm (unfolding over time and ordered space/chaos), which take place in between milieus. Manovich (2001:64-65) explains two dialogues of cultural transcoding: the digital translation of established culture and the imprinting of a digital logic on culture in general. Within the exhibition *TRANSCODE* analogue and digital art milieus transcode another in idiosyncratic fusion or friction.

Transformation The change brought through conversion, modification, revision, decontextualisation or transfiguration. In a practice approach, accounts of practice become the platform through which transformation takes place via mediated activity (Schatzki 2001a:2). Transformation is inherently linked to the advance of knowledge but also to a sense of flux and becoming. Transformation is positioned as a process to uncover new knowledge and in this research and exhibition transcoding is the structuring process through which transformation transpires.

Transmedia Marsha Kinder is credited with coining the term “transmedia” in 1991. The term stems from narrative theory, yet the application of transmedia has been strongly influenced by the character of communication from the Internet and therefore is spread across various media. The concept of transmedia, a story being told over several platforms, is central to convergence culture, where old and new media collide (Jenkins 2006: title page). When a motif, aesthetic or discourse appears across a variety of media, it is seen as a transmedial phenomenon. ‘Transmedia’ is relevant to *TRANSCODE* in the manner the ‘story’ of the engagement between digital and analogue is told over several platforms unfolding through the practice of different artists.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This research interrogates the impact of intermediality through the practice of a selected group of contemporary South African artists that culminated in a curated exhibition entitled *TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice* (2011). The diversity of work by artists involved in this exhibition allowed exploration of a range of creative processes to investigate and understand intermediality. The thesis reports on the research that *led to, developed in and evolved from TRANSCODE*, and it supports the productive reciprocity between practice and theory, and between traditional and new media art. The concept of transcoding was derived from Deleuze and Guattari, where intermedial tension becomes an operating mechanism due to one milieu functioning as a foundation for another. The exhibition is archived in a catalogue, while the documentation of the creative processes and analysis are presented in the thesis and appendices and a complete package is collated to articulate the practice-led research. The process of curating *TRANSCODE* became in itself a method of practical and conceptual exploration in which I consciously positioned myself as an artist amidst a peer group of artists. I moved between what are conventionally seen as distinct roles – participating artist, curator, art educator and art critic – so as to occupy the hybrid role of artist-researcher appropriate to an emerging South African context. As the researcher, I consciously had to adopt a multifaceted lifeworld in order to understand and rationalise these roles. Due to the nature of art practice as enacted research, important aspects of curation were discovered through a collaborative intervention. The conclusion of this thesis presents observed transmedial and intermedial approaches which were discovered through reciprocal processes. This study confirmed that art practice as research is a broad activity that includes identification, transformation, processing, manipulation and confirmation of stringent scientific research objectives; it makes a significant contribution to academic research.

1.1 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The transformative capacity of complexity underlies the rationale of this thesis. Simplicity is needed for rationalising a lifeworld; however, ignoring complex contradictions and multiple perspectives ultimately provides a restricted and desaturated view of any realm. The limitative nature of exclusivity contributes to the creation of hierarchies (Massumi 2004:xi), and therefore it is also necessary to embrace the dissonance that results from complexity, even though it might be in contradiction to exclusive definitions/properties. The desire of this research for non-hierarchy resulted in drawing multiple artists into the project, allowing diversity in processes and outcomes. Consequently, the complexity of multiple personal lifeworlds underscored the exploration of models of intermediality in practice.

Personal lifeworlds are described by artist and academic Iain Biggs (2014:262) to be “rural lifeworlds as directly experienced by individuals, subjectively, in and through their everyday life and work”. Biggs describes “rural” as a specific lifeworld that denotes a person’s experience in general (and not a life in the countryside). He further highlights the dilemma of the simplistic hierarchy within the perceived order of experience, by stating that lifeworlds “are frequently rendered into simplistic categories by those speaking authoritatively” from an outside position about the rural. The tensions between broader ‘lifeworld’, issues of professionalism (as dictated by institutions), and ‘social’ identity are experienced by art lecturers in general. An example is the ideal art lecturer as the impartial educator on the one hand and “self-seeking partiality of the artist” on the other (Thompson 1994:46). In this sense, the rationale of this thesis is informed by contradictions that arise from the plural lifeworlds of academic artists.

UNISA acknowledges only research that is published in peer-reviewed journals or books. Exhibitions and creative practice, visual art, music or creative writing, are not recognised as formal research practice. Thus creative outputs are not remunerated nor accredited. This study as practice-led research is the first of its kind in the Department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology at UNISA. This thesis thus challenges the stereotype associated with definitions of research at Unisa. The rationale of writing from the specific experience of an artist-academic, together with the authority of the creative work of artist-academics, engages with the complexity of individual lifeworlds and the institutional “world-into-itself” as research. These dynamic and complex dimensions, described as “polyverse” (Biggs 2014:261-262), are embraced as interwoven activities of the artist-researcher and academic-researcher.

Internationally, practice-led research methodologies have opened up doctoral-level opportunities for visual art students previously only open to art history scholars (MacLeod & Holdridge 2006; Jones 2006; Barrett & Bolt (2007); Elkins 2014). The recognition of the integrity of creative work as research can further only come into its own when the complexity and intermedial nature of the “lifeworld” of the artist-academic is *interrogated* (Biggs 2014:262). Lifeworld refers to the balancing of different academic roles, such as academic, artist-researcher and curator, as well as writing about art.

The complexity of my lifeworld as an artist-academic further substantiates the rationale of this study. In teaching third-level courses at UNISA, I work with a diverse group of students.

Whilst modules at this level focus on conceptual development, some students specialise in digital arts, while others practise more traditional disciplines, including drawing, painting and sculpture. By actively encouraging approaches beyond those traditionally practised within their discipline (either analogue or digital), I have observed that those students who are most open to transmedia, intermedia or multimedial approaches become the most original in their creative processes. *TRANSCODE* included the work of few artists, some who had completed their undergraduate studies at UNISA. I also incorporated digital art in my own art practice as a painter to develop both as academic and artist. Two major projects resulted from my art practice, one of which is incorporated and extended in the doctoral project namely *The Journey to Freedom narratives*.¹ In this project, I positioned diverse individuals who cross-influenced one another and placed myself in shifting positions. This project altered my perspectives on art-making strategies to incorporate aspects of collective thinking that takes place in teaching.

This approach resonates with a broader contemporary culture characterised by intermedial tensions. It is described as a culture of convergence, which media theorist Henry Jenkins (2006:1, 3, 4)² defines as follows:

Convergence culture does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they may become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments of information we have extracted from the ongoing flow of media around us and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives.

The crux of this convergent culture had significance in developing *TRANSCODE*. The layering of influences from the everyday life of an academic artist implies that the complexity of micro-political sensibilities, philosophical concepts and general interactivity all ultimately have an impact on artistic multimedial creativity as ingredients of intermediality (Oosterling 2003:30). The basis for complexity is that *media* has socio-political and cultural associations, which reconfigure when interaction takes place in an intermedia event. By looking at points of contact between practice and discourse, specifically of narratives, space and embodiment, this research extends the discourse of intermediality.

¹ The other project was *Die Verraaier* ("The Traitor") (February-April 2003), a passion play, which combined digitally reworked details from my paintings into animations. My art work aimed to speak to the script and music of the play, requiring close collaboration with the composer, choir and stage directors. Three performances took place at the University of Pretoria.

² See more at: http://henryjenkins.org/2006/06/welcome_to_convergence_culture.html

Art, politics and science are evolving due to intermedial research, which results in cultural domains developing new knowledge. As this research progressed, it became clear that artistic intermediality demands the inclusion of art *making processes*. Thus, the basis of complexity shaped these research layers; acknowledging the lifeworld of a researcher as artist in context with others articulated the polyverse expression that is vital for modelling innovative approaches to intermediality.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The primary aim of this study was *to develop an innovative approach of intermediality*, outlined in a particular geo-cultural context. A geo-cultural context emphasises the diversity of cultures by outlining the challenges of the realities of a society. Visual artists who explore and manifest *intermediality* in their works are defined in this study as practitioners who work *between and beyond the traditional and new media boundaries*. The selected artists' work is characterised by the unconventional use of conventional material and by a combination of both traditional and new media, resulting in the layering or integration of different techniques. The work can also be said to articulate cultural mind-sets, in particular, that practice is embodied in material and knowledge emerges through processes (Barrett & Bolt 2007:6). This position also implies that conceived margins of both traditional and new media are becoming perforated and rearticulated in the process. In this research, the terms "traditional" and "new media" are referred to as "analogue" and "digital" respectively.³

During the last two decades, contemporary art discourse internationally has acknowledged the pervasive connectedness among media, and this has given rise to a widespread use of the term "intermedia" (Joachim Paech's "early" 1998 publication is evidence of the heightened awareness of the discourse).⁴ Intermediality "emphasises in particular the aspect of mutual influence (interaction)" and in these co-relations a redefinition of media evolves, which leads to refreshed perception (Kattenbelt 2008:25). In this study, intermediality integrates perception and cognition in a search for processes of thinking, and in particular a materially grounded thinking. Intermediality's characteristics of interaction/integration and evolving practices furthermore acknowledge a world that is not only physical but also relational.

³ This is due to a broader understanding that their contexts are debatable in the contemporary art discourse: contemporary artists associate 'traditional' with out-dated, old and out-of-fashion thinking, whilst the use of 'new media' is also not ideal as it entails the 'new'. 'New' can be all the latest developments encompassing a wider range of practices and applications that fall beyond the scope of this research. Thus, the binary pair analogue and digital proved to be most suitable vocabulary as they are generally used in most literature (Joachim Paech & Jens Schröter 2008; Lev Manovich 2001, 2003, 2005; Sean Cubitt 1998; Peter Lunenfeld 1999, 2012; and Christiane Paul 2003).

⁴ I reference the primary voices of Irina O. Rajewsky (2005); Jürgen E. Müller (2010); Marie-Laure Ryan (2010); Jens Schröter (2011); and Werner Wolf (2011).

Apart from the interrelations of analogue and digital, intermedia as *in-between* mediation refers to a layered way of thinking and a construction of thought as hybrid text. As this thesis unfolds, it probes further layers of intermediation. These are:

- the interrelations between the thinking and practice of artists who participated in this project;
- the researcher's role as *both* art maker *and* curator;
- the in-between of thinking through art making and writing as a constant exchange of action and contemplation.

In acknowledging the necessary *multiplicity in intermediality*, this research uncovers the primary site of research as *transmedial layers* unfolding through the practice of artists, along with the metaphorical resonances these offer to thinking.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In comparing the platforms or layers in intermedial conversations, one searches for the shifts highlighted by the difference between layers (disagreement), but at the same time by identifying grey areas (some agreement) or complete hybridity (merging). The objectives of this research have consistently been to compare tensional layers of *difference and hybridity* in order to map the zones of contention both in practice and in theory.⁵ 'Difference' refers to the process of identifying variance of character in the evidence of analogue and digital art, whilst 'hybridity' refers to the analysis of cross-influences and new combinations. The 'comparison of tensional layers' refers to the understanding that research processes bring forth multiple results and unpredictable changes, which may be contradictory to each other and therefore demand vigilant interpretation. This difference is found *within* particular artists' processes and *between* the artists' approaches.

The main objective of this study was to interrogate the value of reciprocity⁶ in the practice of the chosen artists, using theories of intermediality.⁷ While this thesis does not draw out the wider sociocultural implications of this reciprocity, these remain part of the wider context within which the artists work. Through a practice-led methodology (Biggs 2006a, 2006b; Elkins 1999, 2006; Jones 2006; Macleod & Holdridge 2006; Sullivan 2009, 2010), practice and theory interrogate these tensional layers with the primary aim of *modelling an*

⁵ "Praxis is the sum total of our moral and artistic activities, the enactment, practice, embodiment or realization of our individual and collective contemplation and speculation regarding the experience of social life within the natural world" and theory "involves the 'contemplation' or 'speculation' of natural laws and phenomena of life. Ultimately, a theory is a representation of experience so that others may also acknowledge and understand" (Rolling 2013:1).

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari (2004:555); Boyd and Richardson (1982); Learmonth and Huckvale (2012); and Falk and Fischbacher (2001).

⁷ Wolf 2005, 2011; Schröter 2011; Müller 2010; Elleström 2010; Oosterling 2003.

innovative approach to intermediality within a South African context. Deleuze and Guattari (2004:555) emphasise that within a “territory” (a particular domain) there exists a “reciprocal presupposition” or assumption. Serving to reciprocate beneficial interest, artists in this project acknowledged the intermedial dialogues; thus, *TRANSCODE* created the domain to *cultivate* reciprocity. As a creative act, the curation not only fostered reciprocity but also enabled the research to identify the specific nature of this reciprocation.

An initial objective of this research was to determine and articulate the reciprocation of exchanges within a sample of intermedia art to establish whether the evidence recorded in a transmedial event can generate constructively *inventive strategies*, i.e. *be transformative* in terms of both the practices themselves and the thinking for which those practices serve as metaphor. Reciprocity is achieved by probing *mediamatic* thinking. *Mediamatic thinking* refers to the implication that the critical reflection of artists takes place through their media and can be read in/from their use of media. The term ‘mediamatic’ is drawn from Dutch theorist Henk Oosterling (2003:42), who asserts that: “on the level of production, in multimedial practices and interdisciplinary activities of avant-garde artists, critical reflection is first and foremost mediamatic, i.e. articulated by and constituted in and with the media the artists use”. The objective of *thinking* is therefore always integrated, requiring *material and human agency*; it cannot be neutral. The importance of matter is accentuated, not language as being “more trustworthy than matter” (Barad 2003:801), for “[m]atter matters, at least as much as language and (its) structure” (Stern 2013:10). Mediamatic processes emphasise the *development of methods* through which artists think and work. It also offers a mechanism for observation and modelling of innovative approaches to intermediality.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions, developed from the initial objectives, were articulated more fully as the practice (as discussed in 1.5) unfolded. This clarified specific problems that are set out below. The *primary research question* is formulated in two sections and deals with the contentious issues around *art as a research tool and as a thinking mechanism* by positioning art in the discourse surrounding intermediality, namely:

- What are the characteristics of *intermediality* when mapped through an enacting *process of physical thinking* as well as by comparing discursive theories? Furthermore, could this charting form a multi-layered approach towards a new understanding of the relationship between digital and analogue art-making processes?

Although all of these processes of physical thinking and discursive theories intersect and influence each other continually, the premise in this study is that the thought processes of art making (form) and the corresponding concept expressed in theoretical writing (abstraction and extraction) are seldom directly exchangeable. When transforming something from one 'state' to another there is an "untransformable" residue within the former, and the latter will creatively make changes depending on its purpose (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:151). There is a measure of "untranslatability" (Hay 2006:58)⁸ in images and thus it is crucial that the material image be an integral part of the thesis. The assumption was that reflective mapping of intermediality via process in narratives, in spacial interpretation, in embodiment and systems in the work of the *TRANSCODE* artists would reveal a fresh perspective in the conversation between making and expository writing. The question aspires to plot a specific trajectory to reveal reciprocity, an approach that raises two further questions.

The two *secondary questions* address the nature of intermediality as a construct of *different or opposing ends*:

- To what extent can *difference* be delineated to articulate contrast, anticipate potential change, or revisit possible grey areas?
- Does difference embrace dichotomy / dualism, or does it emphasise the incommensurability of certain media, such as embroidery and animation?

The research therefore needed to identify the *dissimilarities* and characteristics of artists' approaches and processes. These differences were scrutinised to compare and propose possible shifts in thinking. The premise was that deeper knowledge and insight might be gained by exploring anew the associations and links that occur within the existing information.

The *tertiary research question* posits the issue of new knowledge:

- Could processes as *established hybridity* provide an indication of reciprocity and transformation?

Here the research presents findings about the ways that the works of the *TRANSCODE* artists embody grey areas in making processes and so contribute as mediamatic thinkers, by embedding theoretically informed insight within visual innovation. Analysis of the artworks through the processes of creating and curating *TRANSCODE* served specifically

⁸ Kenneth Hay (in Macleod & Holdridge 2006:58) argues that the limit of inter-semiotic translations opens the necessary space for "...a clear appreciation of the cognitive import of artistic practice as concrete abstraction..." and the limits of the translatability between abstract ideas and form. Elkins' (1998) essay "On pictures and the words that fail them" discusses a related idea but it is not described as "untranslatability" – it is articulated that images contain a residue that cannot be understood in words.

to articulate this interstitial space, identifying a site of meaning for the evolving nature of a fluctuating hybrid condition. In the invisible space where discursive language strives to express meaning, mediamatic awareness enabled the unrepresentable to be articulated.

The transmedia context of *TRANSCODE* functioned in an experimental arena within which the multifarious perspectives of the artists could appear. The curatorial space was used to ask questions, and became reflexive of the shifts between viewpoints. *A hybrid constituent of approaches was thus modelled* by moving back and forth between curatorial process-thinking and art making,⁹ between working in collaboration and working in relative isolation, and so from an inter-relational to a self-reflective way of being.

1.5 THE AIM OF THE *TRANSCODE* EXHIBITION

TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice was curated in 2011 with a view to determine the potential impact of reciprocity in *divergent* applications. The artists' practices included were chosen as actively researched intermediality and its interrogation is further extended in this thesis. As a transmedial event, *TRANSCODE* unfolded the research of intermedia practice over several platforms. Apart from seeing these platforms as different media, the exhibition was designed developmentally, and was embodied in four designated spaces, referred to as conceptual 'rooms'. Each room came to offer a different lens through which the artist / researcher / viewer / reader could approach intermediality.

In this context the title of the exhibition, *TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice*, needs some clarification. The term 'transcode' refers to a process that enables the conversion of data from one encoding to another, permitting the export and interchange of dissimilar formats.¹⁰ The title implies metaphoric transcoding between digital and analogue, theory and practice and, to some extent, between the individual artists and the researcher. The notion of *transcoding* is contextualised in the pamphlet designed for *TRANSCODE* (and handed out during the exhibition – Appendix 1, Miller 2011:2): "...within the context of the exhibition...transcoding also points to the significant, yet often inconspicuous manner in which we adjust our lives in a world of ubiquitous technologies. In the context in which Deleuze and Guattari (2004:345) position transcoding, they describe "an intermediary milieu of membranes and limits" in which constant change takes place. *TRANSCODE*

⁹ The hybrid role of artist and curator, or artist-as-curator, is a developing trend, but it has gradually become more pronounced as phenomenon since the second half of the twentieth century. Writing about the artist as curator (as artist), art critic Simone Menegoi (2012:104) muses: "Indeed, there are some artists who immediately come across as a hybrid of the two roles, occupying that grey area between production and reception, poetics and critique, which constitutes one of the most distinctive phenomena of the last ten years."

¹⁰ A practical example is when a Photoshop file is saved in jpg format for a specific purpose, which could be compression or transferability.

relates to the search for situated intermedial practice, not as a singular response but as a complex and at times necessarily conflicted range of possibilities to address the primary research question. The research question: (a) *searching for the characteristics of intermediality* in (b) *a multi-layered approach towards a new understanding of the relationship between digital and analogue art*, is therefore largely developed via thinking in art processes in dialogue with discursive theories.

It is important to emphasise that *TRANSCODE* functions as the core of this research, forming a practical “process of enquiry” (Jones 2014:[sp]) through practice as enacted and embodied thought. The practice-led methodology is expanded on later in this thesis (Chapter 3). This practice-led research is itself located within the mind-set of a broader *practice turn* and is distinct from the earlier linguistic turn of the 1960s/ 70s (Coessens, Crispin & Douglas 2009:15; Mitchell 2005). Whilst the earlier approaches interpret and explain culture and society primarily through the language and images used, the practice turn values and privileges *materially grounded practice* in relation to understanding and research. In visual art as a field of practice, meaning is mediated through the objects, materials or techniques *as actively applied* in relation to the organisation and transformation of society. The practice turn is grounded in the field of *practice*, where activity is dependent on shared skills and understandings (Schatzki, Cetina & Von Savigny 2001:3). Furthermore, it is closely connected to the practising individuals: linking subject and object in a *relational dynamic*. This is important with regard to the way the articulation of theoretical lenses became clear through the group’s work: for example, the artists in Room *One* firstly relate to my point of ‘historic’ departure of this research and secondly, the works deal with telling stories. In this manner, the exhibition’s curatorial dynamic developed over time by close *thinking through and thinking with* the relational links between artists and artworks: determining placement, thematic concerns and theoretical development for the specific exhibition spaces and the linked chapters in this thesis.

In this research project, the shared orientation towards intermediality in practice by the artists in *TRANSCODE* should not be taken to imply a unitary approach. Rather, as highlighted in the rationale, it generated a complexity of different perspectives and skills that, in consequence, showed “...distinct individual capabilities” operating as a “composite” rather than a “unitary object” (Barnes 2001:22-23). The varied approaches were necessary to the strategy and purpose of the exhibition if it was to examine different ways of thinking about intermediality in practice-research approaches within a South African context. Consequently, the specific context and meaning of intermediality, conversations, reciprocity

and transcoding only become clear via the specificity of their use in relation to the particular practices explored by this research.

1.5.1 A reflexive tool

As a participant in this research, I had the role of contextualised observer to develop understanding via action: scrutiny, making art, experiencing, describing and comparing. It must be emphasised that the predominant voice in this research is that of the art maker, not that of a phenomenological philosopher. Yet, at the same time, the artist does not stand apart from theory, for art processes are tools for critical thinking. Developing theory from observation of practice is phenomenological in approach. Edmund Husserl (1983:49) considers the phenomenological methodology when he muses: “By my seeing, touching, hearing and so forth, and in different modes of sensuous perception, corporeal physical things with some spacial distribution or other are *simply there for me, ‘on hand’* in the literal or the figural sense.” Whilst one could argue that the immediacy implied in this statement is contentious, the presence of observation is accentuated. Thus, the process of *curating TRANSCODE* became in itself a method of practical and conceptual exploration, positioned as an extension of art making. Presentation and curation are inherently part of the conceptualising process in contemporary art, as is argued in Chapters 3 and 4. Participating artists as collective thinkers are individuals with whom I have shared working experience. In this regard, the research also embraces the reflective role of the artist as a writer that extrapolates the creative reflection. My own experience is positioned as both investigator and instrument/elite informer in the field of art making, thereby underscoring a reflexive approach. This demanded refined shifts in approach as insight and understanding grew within the development of the project.

As the research advanced from these sensibilities, a tacit understanding of the relationship between concepts and processes developed. Tacit knowledge can only be developed via “prolonged social interaction with members of the culture that imbeds the practice” (Collins 2001:107). This is why the choice was made to *work with art making* through ideas and along with art makers rather than *only* working with literature. As per definition, tacit knowledge can often *not* be fully ‘explained’: for example, when artists work, they ‘lose’ themselves and manipulate material and images intuitively in the process. Artists often only see the context of what they are creating when standing back to view the artwork from a distance. In this regard, James Elkins (1999:3-4) writes that “to an artist, a picture is both a sum of ideas and a blurry memory of ‘pushing paint’, breathing fumes, dripping oils and wiping brushes, smearing and diluting and mixing”. The use of “blurry memory” captures the intuitive processes of the artist’s enacted thinking. This thesis goes to lengths to articulate

and apprehend as much as possible, yet, as emphasised elsewhere, the artwork is not directly translatable in discursive language. This is why the visual *documentation of processes* in both the thesis and the catalogue present further evidence of the tacit knowledge as a way of capturing this research. Furthermore, apart from information provided in both the thesis and catalogue, there is also a body of evidence surrounding the selected artworks that can be found in the portfolio that forms part of this DLitt et Phil study package. This package includes the curatorial process of dialogues with artists, marketing, press releases, publicity, reviews, interviews, digital presentations, the catalogue of *TRANSCODE*, as well as other catalogues of post-*TRANSCODE* exhibitions that contain extended practical research for this project. These items were part of the process of continual re-thinking; restructuring and reselection that had an impact on this thesis as a web of interwoven layers of reflexive thinking.

1.5.2 The importance of exhibition presentation

The thematically grouped rooms provided different platforms as transmedial narratives; that is, telling the story of transcoding from different angles. The different themes in the rooms bring layers of mediation that provide opportunity for the shift of context, identifying difference, grey areas and hybridity. These key concepts provided the format for the exhibition, yet the exhibition rearticulated the key concepts to arrive at the research questions of this thesis and this process is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. The catalogue is considered an archival document and it includes the works of every exhibiting artist allocated to the four rooms as well as providing a clearer image of the physical juxtapositioning of works. This enables the reader to visualise the artworks *in situ*.

I identified selected works from every artist done before *TRANSCODE* that I gauged already addressed aspects of intermediality (a process that developed the issues around intermediality within the *first research question*), and used these works to investigate and articulate incommensurability (the *second research question* evolved around difference). The new works for *TRANSCODE* aimed at the crux of new knowledge to model innovative approaches through processes, by probing reciprocity, hybridity and transformation (a step towards a conclusion that became articulated as the third research question).

Under the title *INTERMEDIAL NARRATIVITY*, *Room One* explores the reciprocity between the analogue media of textile, embroidery and sewing, and the digital media of animation and Photoshop rendering. The emphasis on the unfolding processes in art practice presented the primary research to be analysed in the thesis, contextualised by discursive theories of narrativity. Through the layered research, the intermedial relationship aimed to

reinvigorate narrativity within the media. As narratives unfolded over and within time and space, the logical theme of *INTERMEDIAL SPACE* follows in *Room Two*. The artists grouped in this room all problematise specific sites: both physical and conceptual. Thus, issues of spatiality are embedded in their practice, reflecting inherent thinking that led to extended theoretical research. This facilitated the contextualisation of the impact that technology exerts on our perceptions of space. In this room and its corresponding section of writing, analogue (primarily painting and drawing) and various digital mediations in art remodel conventional perceptions of space to intermedially sense flux and *becoming as transformation*.

As space is defined through experience, the embodied articulation in *Room Three* interrogates assumed differences within the theme of *INTERMEDIAL BODIES*. The artists probe conventions of disembodied digital art to produce innovative work by thinking through the process of printing, animation and physical interactivity. Differences and hybridity were articulated to reposition intermedial readings of materiality in both practice and reflexive writing.

Researching the impact of intermediality through themes of narratives, space and embodiment provided the base for contextualising structure. Room Four's title, *INTERMEDIAL STRUCTURES*, considers order in formal and conceptual processes of digital printing, mixed media and assemblage artworks. A visual logic of practice critically considers processes and relations to model structural possibilities of intermediality.

The purpose of the exhibition *TRANSCODE* was therefore to create a carefully considered and continually unfolding research site reflecting *enacted* thinking in close consideration with several research objectives and questions. In turn, these research questions became refined, honed and clarified via the practice. In order to achieve the manifold strata, I consciously pulled a larger group into the research than what I would eventually select for the thesis. The grouped artists constructed a rich and sound pool of thinking, containing evidence that could be expanded beyond this thesis in post-doctoral reflection. Therefore, for the purposes of written analysis I selected 'one artist'¹¹ from each room, which forms the content of Chapter 4. These artists were selected as they share insight into the research methodology of the same art department. For research purposes, although this theoretical base was shared, they each explored through their own methodologies. The practices within this exhibition thus actively researched and remodelled intermediality; the contemplation of which is extended in this thesis.

¹¹ One of these is a collaborative project, thus the reason for placing the word in parenthesis.

1.6 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

It is through the practice of mediamatic thinking that an artist who is also an academic is able to *contribute a different understanding from those presented by either non-academic artists or by art historians/critics and philosophers (who are not involved in creating art)*.

Admitting that there are overlaps in the demarcations of these professionals, one also has to acknowledge that each of them comes from a valued and different angle towards an area of investigation. Mediamatic thinking, from the artists' perspectives, brings the complexity that is present in the realm of visual arts towards a measure of non-hierarchical understanding, as argued in the rationale at the start of this chapter.

Of further significance is the fact that this research acknowledges how critical thinking in visual arts reflects the scholarship and academic processes of research as practised in the visual arts department where I teach. The chapter on methodology reflects in more detail on the structures developed in teaching that come from my own experience as artist and from being integrated into an institution that has developed visual research from first-level practical modules to reflect methodological thinking in creative work.¹² This aspect has not been captured in research before. By developing and probing international discourse on practice-led research, this investigation aims to contribute to developing the much needed career plan for students and staff who are art makers. Furthermore, the study endeavours to diversify the concept of research at UNISA, as critiqued in the rationale of this research. Considering that South Africa produced its first doctoral candidates in Visual Arts as recently as 2013¹³ and no practice-led research DLitt et Phil in visual art has been completed at UNISA to date, the gap in this country and this institution is evident. I consciously selected a strategic platform by choosing the discourse of *intermediality* to address the ambiguity and suspicion with which artists' research credibility¹⁴ is viewed within a broader research community. In revealing the artists' thinking through making and acceptance of the artist's voice in research (institutionally recognised), this project adds a significant contribution to the career of the *artist as an academic researcher*. *TRANSCODE* served as an appropriate transitional platform that allowed the participating artists to make innovative shifts within the paradigm of practice-led research through the lens of intermedial relationships.

¹² By including selected Unisa alumni's work in the exhibition I aimed to specifically illuminate particular thinking patterns, but due to the vast amount of works eventually produced, I decided that comparative methodologies of the selected artists (as in chapter 4) will suffice without the alumni's work being analysed. The advantage of the inclusion of the alumni is that it offers further publication beyond the D.

¹³ Leora Farber graduated with DPhil Visual Art (Creative Production) in 2013 at the University of Pretoria, http://leorafarber.co.za/?page_id=9 (Accessed 20 April 2015). John Roome completed his practice-led doctoral research in 2013 at the University of Durban.

¹⁴ To substantiate this: at UNISA an exhibition is not credited as research, whilst a published article is acknowledged as research and captured in the annual performance assessment (IPMS) and college reviews.

Curation is an integral part of conceptualisation in art as research. The place of *curation as critical thinking* is noteworthy in considering the specific perspective in *TRANSCODE*. To substantiate the integrated functioning of artist-curator further, Butt (2016) asserts that the tendency to place these two concepts of artmaker and curator in separated boxes is a “false division between making and thinking” and expresses a responsibility for reconciliation of this division to an “artist-curatorial hybridisation”.

As evidenced in critical literature, the role of the art gallery has changed since the 1990s to embrace an educational turn and a practice turn, away from “storehouses of objects” (Cook 2008:28). The aim to use the gallery as an *intermedial space for making and thinking* was significant in this project, because several artists consented to make and/or alter works in the gallery thereby expanding the creation process. Using an art gallery as an extended studio space requires to be further investigated. The *blurring of boundaries* between the studio and the gallery are intermittently discussed in Chapters 2 to 4. The artistic creation by the participating artists together with the researcher in this study was significant because it facilitated mediamatic thinking processes, which is to think through media. This creative collaboration embraced the reflection in practice while expanding the curatorial process. My research sought to reflect on the voices that influenced my art making *in practice and through practice*. This approach is still unconventional in practice-led doctorates. According to Hoffman (2014:22) a “group show can rewrite history or open a new dialogue simply by taking an expansive view with its roster, making unexpected connections or pairings between artists”. In contrast, a solo show produces in-depth views of a single artist. My interest was to uncover the unexpected by creatively being in dialogue through processes. Whilst the group exhibition is usually reflected on from the ‘outside’ (for example by an independent curator such as Jens Hoffman), *TRANSCODE* was a thinking through unexpected processes which were considered from an insiders point of view as art maker.

The significance of this research lies in its original contribution to the discourse around intermediality in *the visual arts* and in the light of the recent development of intermedial and transmedial platforms. Whilst intermediality has grown over the last century, specific niches in the interaction between digital and analogue have been finding their impact only within the last few decades. The development of intermediality around the 1990s has done by far the most to spur, for example, the redefinition of narrativity across disciplines. Wolf (2005:84) indicates that the “export” of terms and concepts across fields of knowledge has

now become relatively commonplace and yet is still expanding.¹⁵ In line with this sentiment, media scholar Jürgen E Müller (2010:15) refers to intermediality as “work in progress”. To substantiate by example the relative ‘newness’ of intermedia and transmedia on an international platform: it was only in 2012 that the Tribeca film festival, which is mostly dedicated to film, launched a new transmedia programme¹⁶ to provide an avenue for storytellers who use multi-platform approaches. Further evidence of the ongoing debate was the 2013 conference *Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age*, presented by the International Society for Intermedial Studies (ISIS) at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.¹⁷ These few examples attest to the *continued* search on various platforms to articulate intermediality. My research is also significant in that it uses the categories of intermediality as formulated by specialists in media culture studies and film, such as Jens Schröter (2011) and Müller (2010). These categories facilitate thinking through visual art making as a means of reflection and potentially articulating into relevant hybrids.

The current interest in the interrelationship between traditional and digital art is reflected in a few South African cases. Artist and lecturer John Roome’s artwork and reflective writing on “old” technology of wood cut and “new” technology of computer drawing in his recently completed doctoral thesis (2013) search for new connections in a similar vein as my study. However, Roome does not engage with intermediality and focuses predominantly on technical and formal impact in his own work. The search for knowledge regarding intermediality and conceptual tensions outlined within a group of artists in *TRANSCODE* remains a novel approach in the application of transcoding via Manovich, Deleuze and Guattari. The continuing changes in digital technologies in specific relation to the chosen research subjects and the meaningful exchanges in *TRANSCODE* with its research findings set a significant creative foundation for reciprocal growth, academic liaison and the nourishing of learning structures, opening terrain that will assist the academic artist to position intermedial exploration. The noteworthy significance of this study also lies in the educational and creative realm, where the visual arts lecturer in particular embarks on a constant search for *inventive strategies* in order to mediate transformative processes.

¹⁵ Werner Wolf’s article *Metalepsis as a transgeneric and transmedial phenomenon* (2005) expands on the problems of this trend. “Metalepsis” means “paradoxical transgressions between (onto-)logical levels suggested by works of various media”.

¹⁶ <http://www.screendaily.com/news/digital/tribeca-to-launch-new-transmedia-programme-with-bombay-sapphire/5045123.article?blocktitle=Latest-digital-news&contentID=263>

¹⁷ <http://film.sapientia.ro/en/conferences/rethinking-intermediality-in-the-digital-age>. I presented a paper at this conference, titled: *Mediamatic processes in the hybrid artworks of Frederik Eksteen*.

1.7 LIMITATION AND SCOPE

Several factors influenced the direction and focus of this study. Three artists that have worked with me recently in lecturing were selected as main subjects/artists due to the influence of their thinking and approach on my art practice and the shared belief in their personal art making in the exchange between analogue and digital languages. These three artists also gave me access to their studios and workspaces for regular discussions and interviews beyond the workspace. The second grouping of artists emerged from the influence and/or contradictions I saw with the main subjects. The third cluster was the students whom I had taught. As mentioned earlier, this study grew from my experience in teaching and related practical research, where the directions taken by students played a role in the deductions and questions. For this reason, their choices also posed a natural limitation to media, techniques and concepts. For example, these students did not engage with internet art or performance art in their work, so setting margins for this research.

A determining factor was that all the artists, (apart from the student artists) have a strong involvement with education and that they are *all both artists and educators*. I believe the characteristic of this rural identity contributed towards producing art as a form of research. Boyd and Richerson (1982:326) refer to the way people who have *interests or aims in common tend* to work together and the natural urge to *reciprocate* knowledge and understanding in such groups. A range of shared interests is an important tool for the selection of artists to work with. All parties have to *consent to interact* before any cooperation or exchange of ideas can take place (the principle of consensual cooperation) (Falk & Fischbacher 2001). One of the limitations in my process was that I needed to work with artists who *agreed to participate*, which acted as a *natural filter*, for not all the artists I approached were willing to participate. At times, the limiting factor was distance, for I needed to be in close range with my key informants mainly for regular interaction. I also had to gauge the *flexibility* of the selected artists, for *consent to interact* also implied the willingness to 'give and take' in this particular project. Furthermore, I needed to balance the projected planning and concept development with reading the *unfolding process* to enable reciprocity. To be able to establish this in practice, I had to uphold respect for difference.

It follows that to apply this type of reciprocity to creative processes and artworks one needs to bring together not only differing approaches, but also approaches with a *potential for working* together. An example could be where embroidery, made stitch-by-stitch, finds similarity with the digital process of working pixel-by-pixel. These differences are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The research and reflection in this thesis are restricted to the specific works *selected and created* for *TRANSCODE*, not venturing into the wider context of the artists' oeuvre, yet strengthening conversation between artistic vision and selected theory. The self-imposed boundary on context therefore limits the study, yet for the scope of this research, it became vital to set margins. Furthermore, this thesis does not argue that the selected artists are the *only appropriate* conduits for the research, but simply suggests that the boundary was drawn to specific influences on my own ideas and thinking due to the artists that surround me in my workspace.

In conclusion, the *rationale* of complexity positioned within a convergent culture of personal lifeworlds and of digitisation underscores this study's implementation of a polyverse expression. As articulated early in this chapter, the *research problem* of locating and developing innovative approaches of intermediality was structured to be researched via art practices that apply unconventional approaches to conventional material. In the aim to address this *research question*, the multiplicity of creating and curating art between and beyond the traditional and new media boundaries interrogated transmedial intermediality. In the *objective* to identify both difference and overlap in the various layers, the research focused on the processes within and between artists' practices. The reciprocity within processes of selected intermedia art aimed to probe mediamatic thinking and thereby establish mechanisms of transformation. The *objectives* of this study highlighted that apart from contributing to the importance of mediamatic thinking as critical reflection of artists, the development and methods of artists offers a mechanism for modelling of innovative approaches to intermediality. In being able to achieve objectives, *three research questions* form the structure of the rooms in Chapter 4. These questions firstly pivoted on defining intermediality in the conversation *between processes of physical thinking and theory* in selected examples of digital and analogue art making. Secondly, intermediality as a construct of opposing ends, probes *dissimilarities* to search for change or grey areas. Thirdly, *reciprocity and transformation* are questioned within *processes* of establishing hybridity. These three levels of interrogation serve to *model a hybrid constituent of approaches*, enabled via *TRANSCODE*. The exhibition was both a reflexive tool and a physical format of four rooms equating four sections in Chapter 4, which aimed at the crux of new knowledge to model innovative approaches through processes. The *significance* of mediamatic thinking along with the scholarly research processes establishes the critical thinking that forms a valuable contribution to the discourse around intermediality in the visual arts in this study.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERPINNING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEWS

The aim of this chapter is to clarify the terminology within relevant theories as grounding for the artworks in Chapter 4. The links and differences between terminologies of digital, analogue, intermediality and reciprocity are contextualised with brief literature reviews.

2.1 THE DIGITAL AND THE ANALOGUE

The word 'digital' originates from a historical (1650s) reference to the digits of our hands (from the Latin "digitalis") (Van Tuyl 2003:30) and it was only after 1945 that the association with computers came into being. This history binds the traditional arts to new media art in an origin that is both embodied and mechanised. It is widely known that digital systems translate all information to binaries of zeros and ones, enabling the storage, transferability or manipulation of data as numbers. However, it is important for this thesis to set out how the characteristics of digital data differ from the nature of analogue imagery. As an example, Peter Lunenfeld (1999:xv) states that "in both the analogue phone call and the analogue photo, there is a proportional, continually variable relationship between the original and the mediated copy". In other words, the source image looks similar to the represented image, even though formal properties such as scale or tone vary. This cannot be said of the digital, where the *storage* of images as information does not resemble the original. The creative possibilities of differences such as these are identified and analysed in this project for the potential evidence of intermedial models.

The growing dominance of digital systems above analogue systems in general stems from the vast capacity of digital systems to store information; the information can be controlled by standard equipment – the computer. In contrast, in analogue art forms, which are manipulated by hand or simple tools, the activity of the process of making is mostly restricted to the original artist/s. Furthermore, the traces of making are often evident in the final work (such as the motion of the painter's hand), whilst the digital processes are often not evident (such as the layering in Photoshop). This is explained particularly in the discussion of Chapter 4.1 (Room One) of this thesis, where the visual evidence is presented.

Reflecting on the use of the word "digital", Lunenfeld (1999:xv) emphasises that it has become a *placeholder* until a more appropriate term can be agreed upon. At present "digital" is linked to electronic, cyber and telematic, as the concept of digital moves beyond technological terminology in similar ways as the analogue "describes more than a

proportional system of representation” (Lunenfeld 1999:xv).¹⁸ Lev Manovich, a primary voice on new media theory, also problematises the use of “digital” art and describes “software” art to be a more accurate term in the article *Avant-garde as Software* (2002). The dilemma that is outlined by Manovich is, amongst others, that “digital” by itself does not have unique properties – it is the creation and access via software that creates the properties. Yet he agrees that digital art is far more recognisable as a descriptor and therefore accepts the term ‘digital’ in the generalised context. I therefore continue the use of the term digital on the authority of the general consensus regarding its broader acceptability. Manovich (2002:3) emphasises that changes in technique and conventions of media are “not the result of a technological change”, but the “result of intellectual ideas by people who conceived of it in the first place” and are effected due to cultural and social processes.

The broader understanding of “cyberculture” is not included in this research. In *The language of New Media*, Manovich (2003:8) provides the following useful outline:

Examples of what falls under cyberculture studies are online communities, online multi-player gaming, the issue of online identity, the sociology and the ethnography of email usage, cell phone usage in various communities; the issues of gender and ethnicity in Internet usage; and so on.

He then describes these aspects as social phenomena that do not deal “with new cultural objects”. Manovich further indicates that digital computer technology is used for distribution and exhibition of the cultural objects called new media:

Thus, Internet, Web sites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMs and DVD, Virtual Reality, and computer-generated special effects all fall under new media. Other cultural objects which use computing for production and storage but not for final distribution – television programs, feature films, magazines, books and other paper-based publications, etc. – are not new media” (Manovich 2003:9).

The terms ‘new media’ and ‘digital art’ research are used in this thesis to refer to art “objects” but include the *processes and relationships* that played a role in the development of the artists’ creative thinking that resulted in the artworks featured in the *TRANSCODE* exhibition. The wider media ecology of *TRANSCODE* thus includes the reciprocal relationship between analogues and digital, a zone of focus that overlaps only partially with Manovich’s field of reference. However, Manovich’s differentiation between these two key

¹⁸ Similarly, the term “new media” is seen as a cultural production that is somehow agreed on, without being very clear. New media is actually not that new: video art, which is considered to fall in this category, has existed for decades.

terms remains productive and will therefore be further expanded.¹⁹ I acknowledge the validity of WJT Mitchell's (1986)²⁰ warning against emphasising only the differences between media because inherently media contain many similarities. Yet, as philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (2004:22-23)²¹ point out, differences need to be drawn out in order to overcome them:

We employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we pass.

To further develop an understanding of the differences between the two key concepts, digital and analogue, scholar and digital curator Christiane Paul (2002, 2003, 2008) expands on the shift of emphasis from object to process. Paul (2008:1) describes new media as: "an inherently time-based, dynamic, interactive, collaborative, customisable, and variable art form..." in contrast to analogous traditional pictorial space. These qualities of a process-orientated spirit of new media challenge traditional notions of art as *object*. However, this generalisation is somewhat problematic. Art forms such as installation and performance art, which in Lunenfeld and Manovich's terms can be classified as analogue art forms, assume art to be less an object than immersive space. When Paul (2002:471-484) describes a broad range of artistic practice as digital art, she also points out that a prominent characteristic is their hybrid nature.²² In the mentioned examples, these categorisations (digital/new media/software art/analogue/traditional art) highlight the breadth within the field labelled 'new media' and the problematic nature of uncritically grouping such diverse practices. In my research, I argue for the hybrid nature of all art forms in *TRANSCODE*. This implies that this research pursues shared characteristics of hybridity in digital and analogue art forms, despite pointing out differences.

The digital practices employed by *TRANSCODE* artists are: animation, software art, digital printing, interactive installation, physical computing, light and sound environments and digital film. Analogue art forms employed are textile work (including hand-embroidery and

¹⁹ In the research process I consulted various publications to draw up and understand differences, e.g. Blais and Ippolito (2006); Bolter and Grusin (1999); Bonami (2006); Cook (2008); Crowther (2008); Dalgaard (2007); Lechte (2011); Lütgens (2003); Manovich (2001, 2002, 2003, 2005); McLuhan (1994); Newell (2012); Paul (2002, 2003, 2008); Poster (1995a, 2006); Rhizome Artbase (<http://rhizome.org/>); Robins and Webster (1999); Rush (1999, 2003, 2005); Van Tuyl (2003); and Walker (2006). For the sake of brevity, however, I will not expand in detail on all of these.

²⁰ William Johan Thomas Mitchell is generally referred to simply as WJT Mitchell.

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari have had a substantial influence on this research project and I will offer more detailed discussions of their ideas in the section Reciprocity and engagement (2.3).

²² Paul further identifies the following forms: internet-based art, animation, software art, interactive installation, physical computing, installation with network components, plotter graphics, light and sound environments, sensing "robots", digital film, and video.

machine-stitched work), two- and three-dimensional painting, drawing, collage, installation, three-dimensional sculptural form, intaglio and monoprint. However, this chapter does not discuss these in any detail, but rather searches for a broader understanding of the difference and overlap between digital and analogue.

In the light of the viewpoints discussed above, it is clear that categorising any art form by media can be problematic. For example, if physical pigment on a constructed flat surface becomes the qualifier for categorising an object as 'a painting', then the artist who uses paint without such a surface, or a painter working with coloured light, cannot be designated 'a painter'. In a discussion of painting as 'representative' of analogue art, curator Douglas Fogle (2001) presents some considerations for the relationship between digital and analogue art. Writing about the relationship of painting with photography, film, conceptual art, performance art and the pixel, Fogle (2001:14-19) sketches the battle of painting over decades of deaths and rebirths. Humorously labelling paintings' status as the "Lazarus effect", Fogle (2001:15) writes: "In fact painting has never gone away, but, like a virus exposed to an antibiotic, it has mutated, imprinting its genetic code on an entire generation of descendants." The concept is extended in *TRANSCODE*, where animation is at times 'encoded' by embroidery and at times informed by the inking of etching plates; where morphing takes on the glazing actions of painterly traditions and digital printing is transfigured into assemblage-like actions. Therefore, it is both the resilience and relation to specific contexts that steers the medium's identity to possibly be more than 'pure' identity. Fogle (2001:15, 22) ponders on the boundary between canvas and world, proposing that "the conventional definition of the medium as paint on canvas" or as a window on the world cannot be the sole carrier of what painting is today. Rather, the *philosophy* of a medium becomes the crux, where a sensibility is questioned as medium and proposed to be a mode of thought. In *TRANSCODE*, the value of processes of thinking is experimented with in various strategies to enact and invent intermedial modalities.

Fogle's reasoning expands the way in which we need to think about analogue media, and this thesis proposes another layer of interpretation. In relation to the emphasis on *mediamatic thinking* in this research (see 2.2; Chapters 3 and 4), it posits that the boundaries between 'medium' and 'mode of thought' described by Fogle (2001:15, 22) are not fixed but 'porous'. The art historian Hans Belting (2005:302) positions medium as "the agent by which *images* are transmitted" (my emphasis), setting out his triad of "image, medium, body". He positions 'medium': "not in the usual sense but in the sense of the agent by which images are transmitted" (2005:302); in short, not simply as paint, or textile or ink, so as to emphasise the positioning of 'image' as existing both *by means of* the medium and

as an envisioned interpretation in our mind (the perceiving body). While I accept that images “happen via transmission and perception” (Belting 2005:302), I would also emphasise that medium is not *always in service* of image. The emphasis here is on a shift away from Belting’s (2005:304) view of medium as the “carrier of host”, which might be taken as positioning it as less important than image.

Although this is true in some cases, this thesis interrogates precisely works that are not *image dependent*, but which derive their authority from material presence and thinking processes explicated through media. From the perspective of an artist, the medium of art making is the *enactment and at times the instigator of thought*. Therefore, the medium is a vehicle for thinking. Expanding on Belting’s (2005:305) view that the use of the phrase “visual technologies” in contemporary discourse opens the understanding of medium, I propose an emphasis on medium as *the agent* by and through which understanding is invited (Belting 2005:31).

Following this argument, the *visuality of mediation* embraces the possibility of Fogle’s ‘painterly sensibility’ as an approach. The spirit of Fogle’s locating of painting as a changing and morphing medium thus becomes applicable to all traditional media in a contemporary world. This suggests that analogue media and digital media share similar issues of complexity and variety. Consequently, when considering analogue art – for example embroidery, printmaking (monotype or etching), collage, installations or three-dimensional work – an *analogue sensibility* is taken into consideration. This approach allows for designations that are more flexible, and focuses the discussion of particular media and the thinking around them on the specific works in *TRANSCODE*, rather than attempting to address the generality of possibilities existing today. The approach therefore allows for both porosity in definitions and constricting selection.

Manovich (2001:27-48) identifies five principles of new media that distinguish it from “old media”. Each of these will be discussed and expanded on throughout the thesis, but by way of introduction are summarised below:

- Numerical representation: mathematical functions are used to describe forms; new media’s algorithmic manipulation makes it programmable; digitisation implies that data is sampled at intervals, which “is referred to as resolution” turning continuous data²³ into “discrete data”, measured in units

²³ According to Manovich (2001:49), analogue data is continuous data, which means “the axis or dimension that is measured has no apparent indivisible unit from which it is composed”.

and quantified “(such as 0-255 in the case of an 8-bit greyscale image)” (Manovich 2001:49).

- Modularity: referred to as the “fractal structure of new media”, for example, when images existing in pixels are combined with other objects they do not lose their independence: “Because all elements are stored independently, they can be modified at any time” (Manovich 2001:51).
- Automation: “Numerical coding of media (principle 1) and modular structure of a media object (principle 2) allow for the automation of many operations involved in media creation”, removing human decision making in part. For example, the contrast of a scanned image will be automatically corrected in Photoshop (Manovich 2001:52-53). This example is typified as “low-level” automation, whilst simulation of human intelligence (AI) as used in computer games, “media assets” (as databases of global entertainment conglomerates), and hypermedia are seen as “high-level” automation.
- Variability: Many versions of a new media object or image can exist, a characteristic also described as “mutable” and “liquid” (Manovich 2001:56). Selected examples (Manovich presents multiple examples): due to new media objects existing in data, custom-made products can be delivered, menu-based interactivity allows choices which result in the user continuing along a particular branch of activity, and the simplest form of variability is “scalability” (Manovich 2001:58): “different versions of the same media object can be generated at various sizes or levels of detail”, such as maps. This principle is also the result of principles one and two.
- Transcoding: As in the case of the principles of automation and variability, transcoding is dependent on the first two principles of numerical representation and modularity. Transcoding, as a fifth principle of new media, is described by Manovich (2001:63) as “the most substantial consequence of the computerization of new media” and indicates two layers within transcoding: a “cultural layer” and a “computer layer”. He explains cultural transcoding as ways in which the computer changes media into computer data, the first being *structural*, and perhaps in that sense closest to conventional understandings of space. Since many aspects of culture are patently structural, such as an object’s physical form or the grammatical structure of sentences, this kind of transcoding may appear quite familiar and natural. The second change is, however, far less conspicuous and is based on the idea that, through persistent exposure, the logic of programmability becomes imprinted on culture (for example the way we tell a short story or

the depiction of our sense of humour). The cultural layer and the computer layer also influence each other. In short, two *dialogues* of cultural transcoding are implied: the digital translation of established culture and the imprinting of a digital logic on culture in general. Manovich (2001:64-65) emphasises the significance of the latter as an example of the general principle of transcoding: “cultural categories and concepts are substituted, on the level of meaning and/or the language, by new ones which derive from the computers’ ontology,²⁴ epistemology and pragmatics”. To expand on the example; this is becoming evident in the way the database is “becoming a new cultural form of its own” (Manovich 2001:64).

The principle of cultural transcoding that points to the nature and relations established in making art in a time where digitisation is prominent is of particular relevance for the *TRANSCODE* research, more so than digital-to-digital transcoding. This understanding of transcoding led to the choice of the title of *TRANSCODE* and provided a focus for the thesis. ‘*TRANSCODE*’ in capitals and cursive is an abbreviation that refers to the title of the exhibition, *TRANSCODE: dialogues across intermedia practices*. *TRANSCODE* alludes to the mediation that transcribes meanings across previously powerful boundaries.²⁵ I emphasise that in visual arts the object and its linguistic equivalent is even further removed from one another, making explicit meaning even more complex. The application of ‘transcoding’ in the exhibition means that in animating the digital-to-traditional (or traditional-to-digital) conversations, there is the possibility of an impact that can irreversibly change the way in which *artists think and make art* and, by implication, can model possibilities of social understanding and hence of social change. This insight and understanding can be extended or even discursively disproved, yet never undone. The dynamic may be localised and on a small scale, yet the bringing together of the artists in this exhibition evidences that animating dynamic. Significantly, Nicolas Bourriaud (2002a, 2002b) identifies a “formal nomadism” in the concept of *transcoding*, suggesting that where culture is shared and people are productively contaminated with one another’s worlds, this can lead to crossbred and novel visual dialogues. The action of applying a technical term *metaphorically*, (that of ‘transcode’ as in this research), is also practised by acknowledged authors such as Lunenfeld (1999:xiv), who writes in regard to his use of ‘screen grabs’ as “...the first of

²⁴ Examples are algorithms, modularity, lists, “process and packet (as in data packets transmitted through the network); sorting and matching; function and variable; a computer language and a data structure” (Manovich 2001:63).

²⁵ The process can also refer to Roman Jakobson’s (1980:233) ideas of “intersemiotic translation” which is the translation between language and “non-verbal sign systems.” Similarly, our understanding of interlingual (between languages) translations requires equivalent messages in the different systems. Jakobson emphasises that different cultures contain specific understandings of objects, which limits translation.

many such liftings from technical manuals”. Similarly, the use of ‘transcode’ embraces the porosity inherent in the potential given by movement *between* concept and metaphor.

In this research, I argue that *remediation* as a concept can continually be read to mirror the complex heterogeneities in the relationship between contemporary art and its cultural and political contexts. Bolter and Grusin (1999) formulated the theory around remediation by indicating the complex interrelationship between traditional and new media. Whilst the crux of their thinking is that new media is remediated by traditional media, the ‘*TRANSCODE*’ research demonstrates that remediation works in both directions, emphasising their reciprocal relationship. While the computerisation of culture results in both new forms of artistic creation and in the redefining of older disciplines, it is equally the case that new media also rely on “older cultural forms and languages” (Manovich 2001:34). Transferred into the field of social metaphor, this insight has important implications for cultural attempts to mediate between ‘progressive’ and ‘traditional’ elements of culture.

Up to this point this chapter has delineated difference and overlap between concepts of analogue and digital art. Apart from sketching the pros and cons of the choices of the terminology, specific characteristics were highlighted, while simultaneously expressing caution about the articulation of categories. The discussion pointed towards intertwining contrasting features of these art forms and proposed that hybridity is evident as the nature of much in the real practice. It is in this grey space that intermedial models are constructed for the sake of thinking through possibilities of ‘contamination’ or lifeworlds.

2.2 INTERMEDIALITY

This section briefly sketches the origin of the concept of intermediality as a relationship and interaction between media, and then moves on to define specific models of intermediality and associated terminology as applied by primary voices in literature relevant to this research. The discussion and clarification of a mediamatic sensibility is contextualised within intermediality. This section leads up to the articulation of the *TRANSCODE* research through the four distinct rooms, thus linking the reading of critical theory to practical processes. Various types of intermediality acted as grounding, some of which were deliberately applied by artists in this research and others are deduced via interpretation. In order to develop a relevant model for intermediality via the artworks created as research, it is vital to give this synopsis of background research on intermediality.

Intermediality as research terrain was first established in the discipline of literary studies and has consistently expanded due to the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge today

(Müller 2010, Schröter 2011).²⁶ Two primary texts within the literary field regarding intermediality are by Rajewsky (2005): *Intermediality, intertextuality and remediation: a literary perspective on intermediation* and Wolf (2005): *Intermediality*. There are on-going attempts to demarcate categories within intermediality and I identify some of these below. Rajewsky (2005:45)²⁷ provides a generic definition:

...intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix *inter*) in some way take place *between* media. "Intermedial" therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media.

Rajewsky (2005:45) goes on to indicate that it is important to "differentiate intermediality from *transmedial* phenomena". When a motif, aesthetic or discourse appears across a variety of media, it is seen as a *transmedial* phenomenon.²⁸ Apart from indicating a crossing, the prefix 'trans' also implies that one can go beyond prescribed limits of any particular 'law'. This alludes to the critical space of our contemporary art culture, which values thinking in doubt or suspense. It is necessary to highlight that in carrying meaning over from one form (medium/language) to another, something is always left behind and something new is generated (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:151). Kattenbelt (2008:24) further explains transmediality as follows: "[a] transposition of construction principles, stylistic procedures and aesthetic conventions means that one medium takes-up or imitates the representational principles of another medium," which emphasises the exchange taking place in the conversations between media and images. The term stems from narrative theory, yet the application of transmedia has been strongly influenced by the *character of communication* from the Internet and therefore is spread across various media. Although "transmedia narrative" is a new concept, it also has old roots in religion, which uses various ways of retelling and re-enacting parables. 'Transmedia' is relevant to *TRANSCODE* in the manner the 'story' of the engagement between digital and analogue is told over several platforms (the exhibition rooms). Although each platform in this research conveys the story with new technology and new angles, the narrative becomes extended, not unlike the organic manner in which the rhizome structure expands, as postulated by Deleuze and Guattari (2004:3-28). The unfolding of *TRANSCODE*'s structure was neither prescribed nor

²⁶ The term 'intermedia' was first used in 1812 by English poet, literary critic and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge. There are some inconsistencies regarding the date: Oosterling (2003:35) refers to 1818. The crux is that the term was used at the start of the 19th century.

²⁷ Rajewsky is quoted by most authors within the discourse of intermediality.

²⁸ Marsha Kinder is credited with coining the term "transmedia" in 1991. Alison Gibbons (2010: 284-286) further extends intermediality to plurimediality and multimodality, terminology that I will not expand on due to the set boundaries of my research.

linear in its development. The transmedial shifts are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 under designated rooms.

Returning to the overarching term 'intermedia', it is useful to note that Joachim Paech (1998, 2008),²⁹ a pioneering theorist of intermediality and film, has stressed the currency and significance of the mind-set surrounding intermedia. In line with this conviction, Rajewsky (2005:44) urges us not to think too narrowly about intermediality as residing in the boundaries of newer media:

While it is true that some new aspects and problems have emerged, especially with respect to electronic and digital media, intermedial relations and processes *per se* remain phenomena which have been recognized for a long time. This fact is easily overlooked on account of those approaches to intermediality that concentrate specifically on so-called New Media; traditional *interarts studies*, however, have in their own way consistently acknowledged it.

Examples of such interarts studies are found in the Dada movement, Black Mountain College³⁰ (1933-1957) and Fluxus,³¹ where interdisciplinary experiments were the order of the day. Linking up with the positioning of intermediality in a historical perspective, literary theorist Jürgen Müller's (2010:17)³² description of intermediality as a "research instrument" presents a historical overview as a contextual insight into ways to approach this discourse. I want to emphasise not his overview but rather his description of the relationship between media and contextual making of meaning to extend an understanding of the width of intermedia. Müller (2010:16, 17) writes:

On the one hand, it is closely linked to particular artistic, material, media-related and communicative forms of action; on the other hand, it should always be seen in the context of production of meanings that grow from these actions for a particular historical audience or historical users.³³

²⁹ Paech's publications around intermediality in the 1990s positioned him as a theorist in this regard; however, he continues to engage critically with the field. In 2013 he was a keynote speaker at the conference of the International Society of Intermedial Studies (ISES) in Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania, Romania, where he analysed his earlier research.

³⁰ Lesser known than Dada, is the Black Mountain College (1933-1957). In this institution educators such as artist Joseph Albers, musician John Cage and dancer Xanti Stravinski collaborated. Students had to take both art and science subjects (2015: <http://www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/black-mountain-lehren-und-lernen-als-auffuehrungskuenste.html> (accessed on 17 August 2015). Captured in the Black Mountain research and the exhibition "Black Mountain. An interdisciplinary experiment" (2015), Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum for Contemporary Art, Berlin).

³¹ Evidence of interarts in Fluxus can be found in *A Dialectic of Centuries* by Dick Higgins (1978).

³² In "Intermediality and media historiography in the digital era".

³³ Also see Elleström (2010:8). Other sources around intermediality and intertextuality that I referenced were Peach and Jens (2008), Arno Gimber and Asunción López-Varela Azcárate (2010), and Ryan (2001a, 2001b, 2005), which will not be discussed due to the restrictions of my topic.

Müller (2010:16, 17) therefore indicates that he sees intermediality as a “search term” because one accepts that it is part of “an on-going process of development,” an idea that links with the early positioning of Fluxus artist Dick Higgins of intermediality with fluidity. Higgins’ reference of intermediality in visual art practice articulated values of change, movement, fluidity and renewal. These qualities had a lasting impact on the concept of intermediality. In reflecting on the attempts to categorise intermediality, Müller (2010:16) is of the opinion that: “The systems proposed hitherto, be they structuralist or poststructuralist in kind, fail to do justice in almost all cases to the aims formulated in preambles – though they often claim to do so.” He continues to state that approaches need to be adjusted to address new complexities in audiovisual and digital media. The crux of Müller’s argument emphasises the continuous need to expand the understanding of intermediality and allow for fluid interpretation via the arts. My research strives to address this gap in searching to articulate intermedial tensions in the specific relationships between analogue and digital approaches. In the development of *TRANSCODE* as a particular “historical” group hybrid approaches were incorporated to transgress conventions. Examples of these approaches involve deliberate disruption of traditional approaches such as embroidering from animations, or scanning oil paintings, manipulating them and repainting the result in order to critically rethink presentation (as will be set out in Chapter 4). Hybridisation is a tool that “allows for spaces of interchange... wherein the fixity of subject and object relations is disrupted” (Farber 2012:34).

In order to reflect on the research done via *TRANSCODE* the processes and evidence of making have been analysed by reference to Jens Schröter’s definitions of intermediality. In “Discourses and models of intermediality”, Schröter (2011:2) distinguishes several models of discourse.³⁴

1. Synthetic intermediality: a "fusion" of different media to super-media, a model with roots in the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* with political connotations.
2. Formal (or transmedial) intermediality: a concept based on formal structures not "specific" to one medium but found in different media.
3. Transformational intermediality: a model centred on the representation of one medium through another medium. Model 3) leads to the suggestion that transformational intermediality is not located in intermediality but in processes of representation and thus transformational intermediality is the flip side of model 4).

³⁴ Oosterling (2003: 30, 31) also defines several domains of intermediality but this research will use Schröter’s distinctions.

4. Ontological intermediality: a model suggesting that media always already exists in relation to other media. Thus, model 4) suggests that there are no single media but that intermedial relations take place ubiquitously.³⁵

Throughout the chapters, I will refer to the applicability of these sub-categories. The most relevant of these in relation to *TRANSCODE* is transformational intermediality due to its emphasis on processes, yet characteristics of the other mentioned categories such as transmedial intermediality are also appropriate at times. The application of Schröter's (2011) models is done in Chapter 4 and in the reflection in the conclusion (Chapter 5).

Within the last decade, critical voices have also questioned intermediality, in particular its association with the politics of totality and the association with *Gesamtkunstwerk* (which refers to the *total work of art*) Schröter (2011:2) found in synthetic intermediality. The critique is aimed at the totalising coherence that is associated with art in the service of politics (Oosterling 2003:33). Such totality still exists today in globalisation and the metanarratives of market fundamentalism (Oosterling 2003:33-35). A hierarchical view of media in service of progress or politics is not upheld in *TRANSCODE*; rather, the ensuing dialogues are read as a flow with multiple contact points and overlaps.³⁶

The work of literary critic N Katherine Hayles (2012:1) emphasises the role of the internet in expanding the intermedial nature of the world.³⁷ Hayles (2012:2) mentions the impact of common web searches: in contrast to generations of scholars that "...used to haunt the library..." Hayles' reference to the way artists (and others) think through media links with mediamatic thinking as articulated by Oosterling (2003:42).

Medium is historically understood as the "carrier or host" of the image. Belting (2002:304, 2005:3) writes that the symbiosis of medium and image is factually one, but that we separate the two by means of our ability to analyse. Belting (2002:305, 2005:4) states that we can only focus on one or the other: "Visual media compete, so it seems, with the images

³⁵ Schröter (2011:2) writes that he is still developing another category, namely "virtual intermediality", which is not yet clearly defined.

³⁶ A second hierarchy that is set aside in this thesis is the notion that theory reigns over practice and in particular the 'language turn' over the 'practice turn'. I deliberately do not venture into post-structuralist theories because the emphasis of my research is not on semiotics but on practice. For this reason, intertextuality is also not discussed. Oosterling (2003:38-39) emphasises that mediamatic thinking does not need to engage with the dominant mind-set of the 'language-turn'. I acknowledge this as a problem in intermedia applications that touches on diverse elements that cannot be entirely excluded; yet, neither can all be included. This dilemma is read in Oosterling, who chooses to interpret intermediality from a post-structuralist perspective. For this reason, I also do not emphasise his detailed analysis of intermediality, rather steering towards Müller and Schröter.

³⁷ Hayles (2002) acknowledges the historical development of this idea via Marshal McLuhan and Manovich.

they transmit. They tend either to dissimulate themselves or to claim the first voice.” Therefore, although we understand the fact that these entities are inseparable, image is seen to be “transmitted” by medium (Belting 2002:305, 2005:4). Belting (2002:5) adds: “I do not speak of images as media, as is often done, but instead of their need *for* and use *of* media in order to be transmitted to us and to become visible for us.” Belting’s (2002:6) interpretation of the body in relation to *understanding* images through media (which he describes as “the missing link between images and our bodies”) is positioned from the perspective of the observer. I suggest that there is a shift in how the art historian and the artist perceive the tension between medium and image, due to the process of making that belongs primarily to the artist because of the artist’s intricate enactment of concept through media.³⁸ In contrast, Belting’s focus is very much on the artwork as complete entity (i.e. as traditionally presented in the art museum).

As an artist, I ‘read’ the play of media in such a manner that media ‘speaks back’ to me and influences the concept and images through the possibilities and limitations of its applications. Media and techniques have intertextual meanings and thereby the choice of medium influences concepts. In this way, the mediamatic process implies a thinking conversation between the artist and the media he or she uses to articulate perspectives. I situate mediamatic thinking as a central action within intermediality in this study to enable research to be acknowledged across the boundaries of practice and theory.

I also want to emphasise the understanding of the interrelation between the varying perspectives of the artist, the historian, the literary critic and any other vocational viewpoint. Kattenbelt (2008: 20) writes that:

A significant feature of recent art and media theoretical discourses is recognition that the arts and media should not be studied in their own historical developments and with their own rules and specifications, but rather in the broader context of their differences and correlations.

This statement not only cross-references interdisciplinary and intermedial analysis, but also acknowledges the value of the difference of viewpoints, that is, recognises *specificity* in context. Therefore, the analysis and observation of art practices in relation to a variety of approaches in *TRANSCODE* are as necessary as the selection of a specific group to rethink and recontextualise influences.

³⁸ This is in particular relation to my position as being an artist and my engagement with the artists within the context of *TRANSCODE* and therefore I do not claim that this perspective is necessarily true for all artists.

To conclude this section on intermediality and mediamatic sensibility, one must acknowledge that the field is diverse and the selection of voices can each be expanded by exploring specific constructs. There will be some expansion in the introductory sections of the artists' rooms, to apply intermediality in discourses with a more detailed focus on narrative theory (Room One), space (Room Two), embodiment (Room Three) and order in process (Room Four).

2.3 ARTICULATING 'RECIPROCITY' AND 'ENGAGEMENT'

Intermedial theories by nature include a degree of interdependence that involves reciprocal actions (Guralnik & Friend 1964: Sv. intermedial theories). 'Interchange' and 'mutual benefit' are typical of reciprocity as an exchange that affects entities in relation to one another. This section of the thesis discusses theories of reciprocity in Falk and Fischbacher (2001), Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and Boyd and Richerson (1982) to find an appropriate approach to this research.

Falk & Fischbacher's (2001) theory of reciprocity focuses on social and economic contexts and their relevance here is limited, although I will propose its limited application to the art milieu. *Reciprocity* is a norm in human behaviour (Falk & Fischbacher 2001:1), but in this research the concern is primarily with reciprocal actions: the phenomena of processes and the objects these produce. It is important to note that here the connections and processes of the chosen artists were identified with the specific intention of discovering the value associated with the reciprocal nature of the intermediation within their practices.

Falk and Fischbacher (2001:2) remind us that both *intentions and consequences* are important when judging actions, and that the same consequences can result in different reactions. Due to the way artworks can be co-constituted, artists' conceptual understanding is often transformed through practical and theoretical engagement. Artists search for cross-influence, for imprints, for growth or for refusal. This thesis further engages with its process in written words, by articulating another layer of theoretical exchange that reciprocates creative art.

Falk and Fischbacher (2001:1-3) also claim that reciprocity theory includes an understanding of fairness; basically, "people reward kind actions and punish unkind ones". In turn, each cultural niche has its own understanding of what is kind, fair or just and then cooperates based on how it will serve their interest. For example, within the context of the arts, cooperation could be based on shared interest of process or thematic choices or potential career exposure and advancement with the conviction that reciprocal benefit will

result. Opening oneself to influences that will be 'unkind' to one's work implies that it will influence the work to its detriment or disadvantage, where the artwork will move away from that which makes its concepts authentic. On the other hand, when positive reciprocity (Falk & Fischbacher 2001:3) would emerge, the validity will be further legitimised, rewarding the artist for her/his commitment to collaboration. The general choice of conduct (rightfulness, justice, validity, authenticity, legitimacy) or misconduct (transgression, offence, and unethical behaviour) of society is therefore structured and judged through 'affect' of relations. Consequently, in the present context 'kindness' is reconceptualised as beneficial 'productivity'. However, as with other professions that frequently engage with controversy, reciprocity does not necessarily benefit the artist in obvious ways.

Boyd and Richerson (1982) write from a sociobiological perspective, offering insights into cooperation and cultural transmission. Self-interest and the welfare of others are positioned as the two behavioural factors that are said to drive people to cooperate and to have common goals (Boyd & Richerson 1982:326). These two factors can typically be found in the workspace, being both formal employment or art making. Professional reciprocity is reflected in this study to explain *choices in the curatorial* process and the management of evidence of the creative processes. Falk and Fischbacher (2001) propose that a feeling of *obligation* is usually established when people cooperate.

I will now consider the paradigm of 'affect' and how Deleuze and Guattari's construct of 'becoming' can be seen as a model of reciprocity within intermediality. Thereafter, the possibility of engagement is considered via brief reflection on models of dialectic, concluding with a contemplation of reciprocity between image and text.

Brian Massumi, translator of Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) *A thousand plateaus: capitalism & schizophrenia*, presents his understanding of the concept "affect" or "affection" as follows:

L'affect... is 'an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. *L'affection...* is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and the second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include "mental" or ideal bodies) (Massumi 2004:xvii).

For Deleuze and Guattari "affect" does not relate to personal feeling or sentiment, it considers relational *structures* of thought and whether they are fixed or open-ended (2004:x-xi). The danger of rigid relationships is outlined by Deleuze and Guattari (2004:4-6)

as tracings or reflections of another, where the one will be judged as inferior to the other, as one would find in a dichotomous comparison. In embracing their perspective when searching to identify reciprocity, one must therefore be vigilant not to create simple binaries.

In his introduction, Massumi (2004:xii-xiii) outlines an anti-hierarchical relationship which describes the open space in between entities and “the changing state of things”. He explains hierarchical relationships as established order, where truth, identity and *logos* (law) clearly present a *unified and fixed* idea of knowledge and society (Massumi 2004:xii). This is the order of the tree or the “arborescent model” as defined by Deleuze and Guattari (2004:xii, 17, 18), in which they propose that thinking is a metaphorical taproot with secondary roots developing from the primary root. This would indicate that one idea would be central whilst the second becomes its tracing and could be judged to fail or supersede its predecessor in a search for perfection. As Massumi (2004:xiii) introduces Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the rhizome network in contrast to the roots of the tree, he projects the relational dynamic as an open system, which “is not confined to philosophy... Filmmakers and painters are philosophical thinkers to the extent that they explore the potential of their respective mediums and break away from the beaten paths”. This structure of rhizomatic thinking was an important building block in developing an innovative approach to intermediality in the *TRANSCODE* project.

The way of thinking about relationships as non-hierarchical presents *diversity* (in contrast to the arborescent model above): “The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:7). This model of thought proposes that any point could be connected to another with no fixity of order, that a shattered rhizome can rebound again, and that multiple lines of thought can “tie back to one another” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:10).

In this research, relation to ‘affected’ and ‘affecting’ bodies is applied to a combination of connections, not to progression or regression, to avoid or subvert simple binaries and hierarchies. The evaluation of reciprocal impact within *TRANSCODE* not only addresses different artworks from the various artists, but also the pivotal exploration of relational *structures* of thought and process in the intentional connection between analogue and digital art. The thesis thus proposes that the reciprocal impact on another ‘body’ (in the broadest possible sense) equates to what Deleuze and Guattari (2004:11) describe as “movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization”. They use the example of the wasp and the orchid, referring to the processes by which the wasp becomes an extension of the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. When the orchid develops to look like

the wasp, Deleuze and Guattari (2004:11) describe this as: “The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image.” The authors continue by arguing that this is not imitation, but “a capture of code”. Following Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004:11) definition of a capture of code as a “becoming”, the research here aims to underline the value of intermediation in practice, the developing of codes of affect, and the reciprocity of ideas. In terms of becoming, the capture of code (the imprint from other bodies) is interpreted as producing ourselves (through our work as artists) in a reciprocal relationship to structures of thinking that surround us.

The reason for choosing to enter into a reciprocal relationship and to become imprinted with other ‘codes’ of characteristics can be linked to the perceived benefits of cooperation. In consideration of implied benefits or considered cost, I now compare Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘becoming’ to Boyd and Richerson’s ‘cooperative behaviour’ (sic). For Deleuze and Guattari (2004:262), the idea of ‘becoming’ indicates neither progress nor regress (which would lead to being hierarchical). My application of Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) ‘becoming’ to an understanding of reciprocity will open a different perspective of reciprocity to the publications of both Falk and Fischbacher (2001) and Boyd and Richerson (1982). In this regard, Boyd and Richerson (1982:326, 327) emphasise that cooperation is related to self-interest of the individual or of the larger group for achieving a common goal. In both instances, this implies the benefit of productive change. Writing with the production of goods as context, Boyd and Richerson (1982:328) argue that the individual will only be cooperative when the benefit exceeds cost. This is true in the broader context of the marketplace, but I propose that for artists and educators, the far-reaching reciprocation between digital and analogue happens not in the first place because of the primary consideration of ‘benefit’ in this sense; but rather, as an ontological question of where we are, creatively, at this time in our existence. It is here that creative, psychic, and political transformation can intersect.

Alternatively, it could be argued that the benefit encompasses gaining insight into diverse understanding. In *TRANSCODE*, the artists and educators collaborated out of shared interest, despite personal cost. One should not underestimate the value of social networking in the art milieu, as Richter (2013) comments:

Personal friendships, networks, group affiliations, and positionings within the field all account for the social capital that allows one to operate in the fine arts. This social network represents social and cultural capital, which can be translated into economic capital.

As Boyd and Richerson (1982: 328) indicate, collaboration takes place because of shared interest, not because of pre-existing relatedness. The *TRANSCODE* group was formed because of a shared interest in art making and education, not because of any pre-existing kinship. In Boyd and Richerson's terms, this is the "non-kin cooperation" necessary to cultural transmission (1982:326). It is my experience that the sharing of knowledge for the sake of larger goals (which is possibly the same as Boyd and Richerson's (1982:327) "public good") is part of the cultural group dynamic of the *TRANSCODE* artists as educators. The concept of group dynamic in a context of being amongst others necessarily places the practitioner in a social field.

For the artist, these exchanges also take place in the creative process: "Working with paint and canvas, with chisels and stone, with earth and sticks, or only with voice and body in a solo performance piece, an artist engages in a dialogue with perception and shares knowledge about the world" (Haynes 2002:[sp]). In generalised terms, one can equate 'engagement' with dialogue, which is an 'open' activity that typifies a way of life: "To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds" (Bakhtin 1984:293). It is through such dialogue that we know not only ourselves, but also other people and the fabric of the world. Bakhtin's concept of dialogue is articulated around the idea of answerability – "as responsibility or moral obligation toward others and expressed as an artist's concrete response to actual persons in specific situations" (Haynes 2002:[sp]). In relation to *TRANSCODE* and my position as artist in the context of other artists, I am, in Bakhtin's words "answerable" to every work and artist's process, which means in dialogue with them. These definitions bring to the fore the fact that dialogue relates to various contexts. It can be a refraction of meaningful exchange between persons and objects, between inanimate objects, between groups and ideologies, and between elements in compositions.

Dialogical practices incorporate encounters, narratives and dialogues (Sullivan 2009:49). The emphasis on 'dialogue' is described as both a conversation (*dialogou*: Greek for conversation) between two or more people and a literary work (SOED: Sv "dialogue"). This basic understanding can be further extended to include an "exchange between a person and something else ([such] as a computer)", such as dialogue within an artwork (MWD: Sv. "dialogue"). This general understanding of dialogue overlaps with Bakhtin's (1981:84-258) view that dialogue is "the process and practice of communication among selves or objects". However, this open model of dialogue is contested. Deleuze and Guattari (2004:5-7) equate dialectical thinking with the structure of the system of a tree, where the hierarchy of central

thoughts dominates. A cyclical system is envisioned to be closer to a rhizomatic structure, where any point can be connected to another and unity is “consistently thwarted and obscured” by continuous return to and rethinking of ideas (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5-7).

In the field of classical artificial intelligence (AI) the older Cartesian dualisms³⁹ of mind-body (Davis 2003:14) are implied. However, in art practice, as demonstrated in the *TRANSCODE* project, the cyclical/rhizomatic system is built upon. Deleuze and Guattari’s argument as it applies here is a model that is “...perpetually in construction or collapsing...”. Both *TRANSCODE* and this thesis involve multiple dialogues; hence achieving a polyvocality appropriate to articulating multiple strata of thought. A cyclical approach sets up engagement as processes that are produced, reversed and modified by visual artists’ works. Every conversation is provisional, located within an on-going exchange, an unfolding network.

One can make a comparison between the description of Lunenfeld’s (1999:xvii) understanding of dialectic as “the dynamic process in which one proposition is matched against another (often its opposite) in order to bring a third, combinatory proposition into being...” to Hegel’s dialectic of the opposites of thesis and antithesis to achieve a synthesis (West 2010:41). Both propose that unity is inevitable, possible and desirable. The dialectic of Hegelian synthesis does not take into consideration the possibility of dialogue without agreement, where differences of opinion are upheld, yet still contribute to constructive understanding (MWD: Sv. “dialectic”). The art works in *TRANSCODE* subscribe to varying positions regarding dialogue: analyses through Chapter 4 indicate that some works strive towards fusion, whilst others embrace disagreement/difference.

Concerning diversity and complexity of engagement, this research enacts theory making and art making in practice. Holly (2002: 449) finds reciprocity between specific practices of spacial, temporal and narratological representation encoded “in their scholarly commentaries”. However it is vital, from the perspective of this thesis, to emphasise that the reciprocity, or what Holly (2002:449) calls “a productive correspondence...between image

³⁹ See Descartes’ *Meditations* (1975) for further reading. Given the focus in this research, I will not expand on *cogito* and *res cogitans*. Davis (2003) elaborates on the rational projects in relation to Cartesianism. “To be in conversation, means to be beyond oneself” – this scenario is described by Gallagher (2002:51) as bridging. Gadamer’s theory of conversation also aims at a sense of fusion, yet it is seen as temporary for the sake of being able to step into negotiation. Gadamer does not intend ‘oneness’ in conversation, but that the horizon of two persons merge in the specific conversation, which, according to Gallagher (2005:56) is “...a case of a plurality of conversations”. One needs to keep in mind that ‘dialogue’ is linked to interpretation, for to interpret a work of art implies that you are in conversation with the work. In the sense of this research, the dialogue with every process and artist needs to be negotiated in the context of agreed margins that differ from work to work.

and text”, can never be a mirroring due to the untranslatability of different media.⁴⁰ A strong point of agreement is that the viewer’s experience is characterised by a specific time and culture (Holly 2002:251). The observation and making of the artworks of *TRANSCODE* is evidently a reciprocal rendition of experience between me and the presence of the works, which changes at the various times of my revisiting individual works and being ‘enfolded’ by their presence.

The participating artists did not have a common idea of how the dialogue in their art operates, either via process or as an intermedial exchange. This implies that the dialogue needs to be ‘unearthed’ in the discussions. Similarly, reciprocity as an action or result cannot be predetermined. The underlying structures and theories will be reciprocated differently through varying processes of making and through the perspectives of individual artists. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (2007) are significant voices in the discourse surrounding personally motivated knowledges to further drive our understanding of how the artist as a new breed of scholar engages with multiple aptitudes. My research strives to find the reciprocity between knowledges of the artists in this study.

In this chapter, I have outlined the broad theoretical understanding of digital and analogue systems. By identifying differences, this chapter also indicated that this study searches for hybridity in the relationship between digital and analogue art. The agency of media becomes affected due to the transcoding of our culture: imprinted on each other. Our reciprocal relationship reveals a research instrument, intermediality, which will be applied as probe for the sake of critical review of hierarchical order. This reciprocal affect to develop intermedial dynamics leads to a visualisation of the complexity of practice.

⁴⁰ Another term that is related to this discourse is the nature of “polysemy” that acknowledges different dimensions of languages, as discussed by Galvano Della Volpe (1991).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied has been pre-framed by the rationale explicated in Chapter 1 of this study, which sets out to interrogate and redefine simplistic institutional⁴¹ definitions of research and art revealed by the processes of *TRANSCODE*.

TRANSCODE as the main construct of this research seeks to reflect the complexities of the personal lifeworlds of the participants as both artists and researchers. The contradictions that arise from dynamic and complex dimensions of interwoven activities in the plural lifeworlds of academic artists are underscored by the exploration of models of intermediality in practices of these participating artists (Section 1.2:3).

There is a structural relationship between this study's methodology and the overall *research problem* "of locating and developing an innovative approach of intermediality". This multifaceted geo-cultural context is exemplified through the methodologies of artists within the *TRANSCODE* project and the definition of research in South African Higher Education. Furthermore, the multimedial practice of educator-artists and intermedial teaching methodology in Visual Arts at UNISA contrasts with the institution's *non-acknowledgement* of creative output as 'official'/accredited research. The *comparison of tensional differences* describes the foundation of the methodology of this study.

This chapter primarily interrogates methodological issues of practice-led research in the geo-cultural context of this study and draws from international critical voices. The nature of thinking in-between art writing and making, as 'layers of intermediation'⁴² continue to inform the methodology outlined in this thesis. In the first section, the relevant aspects of methodology are positioned through a brief general definition of 'research' and its specific parameters.

By illuminating the inbuilt methodology in my *research questions*, I discuss how expansion of the mentioned definition of research will be critiqued practically. The brief contextualisation of *the practice turn* in the second section substantiates how practice enables understanding. The third section highlights primary influences on the methodology of practice-led research as approached in this study. Section four contextualises contemporary curation and then reports on the processes followed in the curation of

⁴¹ What Biggs (2014:262) described as "those speaking 'authoritatively'".

⁴² As initially articulated in the Research Objectives in Section 1.2, which grounds the methodology.

TRANSCODE, responding to the intermediality of the researcher's role as both art maker and curator. The section indicates the interwoven nature of the hybrid methodology followed in this study. The chapter concludes with a statement of ethical responsibility.

3.1 THE DEFINITION OF RESEARCH IN RELATION TO THIS STUDY'S METHODOLOGY

In seeking to understand what practice might add to research, I revisit the definition of research as:

a self-conscious and self-reflective process of inquiry both in the wider investigation of subject and in the specific original discovery senses. The generation of new knowledge or significant contribution to the domain of knowledge is the critical objective in each instance (Corcoran 2005).

A summary produced by the *European League of Institutes of the Arts* (ELIA) reports that practice-led research in visual art education requires characteristics that are generic to higher degrees across disciplines. These include the need to *investigate systematically*; to have an inquiry that is *rigorous* and to devote oneself to *criticality*. Furthermore, research has to be *transparent and accountable*, implementing *valid judgement*. It must persuade of knowledge in a *lucid context*, reflecting *originating ideas* (Corcoran 2005:1, 7).

The methodology followed in my research subscribes to all of these mentioned characteristics. As stated in the *Research Objectives* (1.3), the intermedial conversations within a primarily practice-led approach searches for difference (disagreements), grey areas (some agreement) or complete hybridity (merging), which *directs the methodology* of identification, analysis and comparison from multiple perspectives. As the tensional stratum of practice and theory maintain a critical dialogue, difference and cross-influences are reweaved to align with the primary aim of demonstrating an innovative approach to intermediality within my geo-cultural context. The methodology of this research has thus consistently been imbricated into the conceptual interrogation of rationale, research problem and objectives.

In addition to these points, it is important that practice-led research can demonstrate the potential to have a relevant influence on the practice of peers and policies within its subject area.⁴³ This potential reciprocity can lead to innovation and expansion beyond boundaries, typical of a multiplicity (Burns 2007:705). This point is emphasised by Deleuze and Guattari

⁴³ This point was emphasised at research assessment at UNISA (1996).

(2010:239), who are amongst the primary sources that influenced the methodology of this study. The art practice-led methodology in this study is also fed by *TRANSCODE*'s development as a research project (thus the back-and-forth conversation between practice and theory). The methodology also emerges in part from the teaching philosophies of Visual Arts at UNISA and is informed by practice-led research methods from other tertiary institutions. Furthermore, there is a reciprocal influence between this methodology, my own teaching practice and my practice of art making and curation (as extension of art making).

As research has become the primary concern within all academic subjects, artists working in tertiary institutions have been pressured by institutional politics to position their practice in terms of knowledge and in accordance with policies that privilege what is evidence-based, accountable and auditable. This would appear to be the position taken by Graeme Sullivan (2010:xx-xxii), a main theoretical source of reference, who argues that the arts can make a prominent contribution to the development of new research methodologies due to its unique capacity to critique. Following this line of thought, art becomes another means to innovate and instigate change. Sullivan (2010:xxi, xxii) therefore argues that systems and structures are "inextricably interconnected" and also points out that art should be "robust enough" to meet the existing benchmarks set by institutions. However, Biggs (2006a:2-3) warns against uncritically accepting institutional priorities and assumptions, which are based on traditional concepts of knowledge, above what art can offer and argues that "the value of art as research lies in no small part in its questioning of definitions of knowledge as dictated by the state conception of 'science'".

This research employs a hybrid methodology predicated on the critical interrogation of a cluster of specific art practices. The research is seen as a heterodox form of knowledge generation, one able to combine those generic concepts of the science-led research tradition that stress the "conscious, deliberate and rigorous" (Babbie 2013:xxiv) with a recognition of its evocation of a tacit sensuous knowing through art practice (Biggs 2006a:2).

In response to Biggs (2006a:3), who argues for a negotiation through "understanding" rather than an attempt at objective "measurement" for authentic research, I make reference to the methodological structures underpinning the teaching of selected modules in the Department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology, UNISA.⁴⁴ This methodological structure adopts all the principles of an accepted research process as substantiated by

⁴⁴ The visual research methodology followed in the first level tutorials of Painting (TWF1501), Drawing (GAR1501) and Sculpture (THF1501)⁴⁴ at UNISA identifies four stages.

Johan Mouton and Chris Kapp⁴⁵ and indicated in Table 3.1 below. Column A of Table 3.1 presents the creative development of art processes through a structured research methodology. These four stages mirror definitions of scholarship by Mouton and Kapp (as is set out in Column B below). These are presented here as rigorous research process in visual arts, which ironically is still not funded by the South African Higher Education system as accredited research outputs.⁴⁶ I establish a working position against which to test the four stages to argue for the value that constitutes an intervention process that is both *institutionally adequate* and *creatively sufficient at the level of artist-researchers*. It is on the basis of this productive tension between accepted academic research and art practice that my methodology is able to model an innovative approach to intermediality within a South African context. In this way, the thesis may also be seen as meeting both Biggs' (2006a:3) need for negotiated understanding, and the auditable benchmark required by Sullivan (2010:xxii).

Table 3.1: Comparison between the proposed creative art development processes and accepted research principles.

Column A: Formal stages in creative methodologies UNISA ⁴⁷	Column B: Principles of scholarly knowledge (Kapp 2006, Mouton 2006)
1. PHASE 1: Reading and written research – accessing information and ideas. 2. PHASE 2: Exploration of ideas; experimentation of techniques and media, development of new processes. Record and analyse. 3. PHASE 3: Reflection - consideration of formal, technical and conceptual results from the exploratory phases 1 and 2. Comparison 4. PHASE 4: Artworks based on processes in Phases 1 – 3. Synthesis	1. Identification and definition 2. Delimit the area of inquiry: e.g. must be knowledgeable about classical literature. 3. Observation, field notes 4. Description, collect data 5. Analysis 6. Comparison 7. Interpretation 8. Reflection and immersion into topic 9. Synthesis: speak with authority and clarity

In a comparison between the characteristics of column A and column B mentioned above, in the figure below (figure 3.1), the green arrows indicate the linear movement whilst the orange and yellow arrows indicate reflexive consideration. The model is the foundation

⁴⁵ Mouton and Kapp are South African academics at the University of Stellenbosch and are leaders in the field of Higher Degree training of university educators. Content of courses attended in 2006 assisted me to draw up the list in Column B.

⁴⁶ Research outputs are stipulated in the Government Gazette (Vol. 597, 11 March 2015, No. 38552).

⁴⁷ These principles are introduced in tutorials 101 and 102, but are then integrated in the projects as set out in tutorials up to 107 (GAR1501/101/2015:17).

towards developing the intermediary model being proposed in this study and further refinement is explained in Chapter 4. This model acknowledges the value and the principles of scholarly processes built into the UNISA visual art research methodology. Through rigorous critical consideration of this proposed model, a need for greater recognition of tacit knowledge within complexities of this process will be addressed. The danger of this process (as in Table 3.1) is that a linear approach can easily be adopted, even though built-in *reflection* (phase three) is an essential requirement. As the practice unfolded in *TRANSCODE* and the writing developed through its engagement with practice, it became clear that participating artists re-enact visual research and medium exploration⁴⁸ in different ways. The artists' voice and the methods of the artists in *TRANSCODE* was the chosen terrain of this thesis. Chapter 4 therefore continues the search for articulation of emergent methodologies in-between rationales and practices.

The argument of this thesis is that the processes involved in *TRANSCODE* revealed the importance of a sensual and complex system of development (methodology) where media can generate thinking, as reflected in the *Research Questions*. Question one (articulated in Section 1.4:6) set out to probe the progression of practice along with its conversations with discursive theories, to understand intermediality and to specifically uncover the nature of mediation between digital and analogue art.

The inbuilt methodology is illuminated by considering that the *transmedial* narrative (unfolding story of media suggested in "the process of physical thinking") will reveal *intermedial* structures (tensions in grey areas between multi-layers) through the *multimedial* use (differing media ranging between digital and analogue) as applied by *TRANSCODE* artists.

⁴⁸ Expansive theoretical research can be done on the question of semantic and generic specificity of different art practices and media through the theories of Della Volpe and Bakhtin, yet for the scope of this research it could not be included.

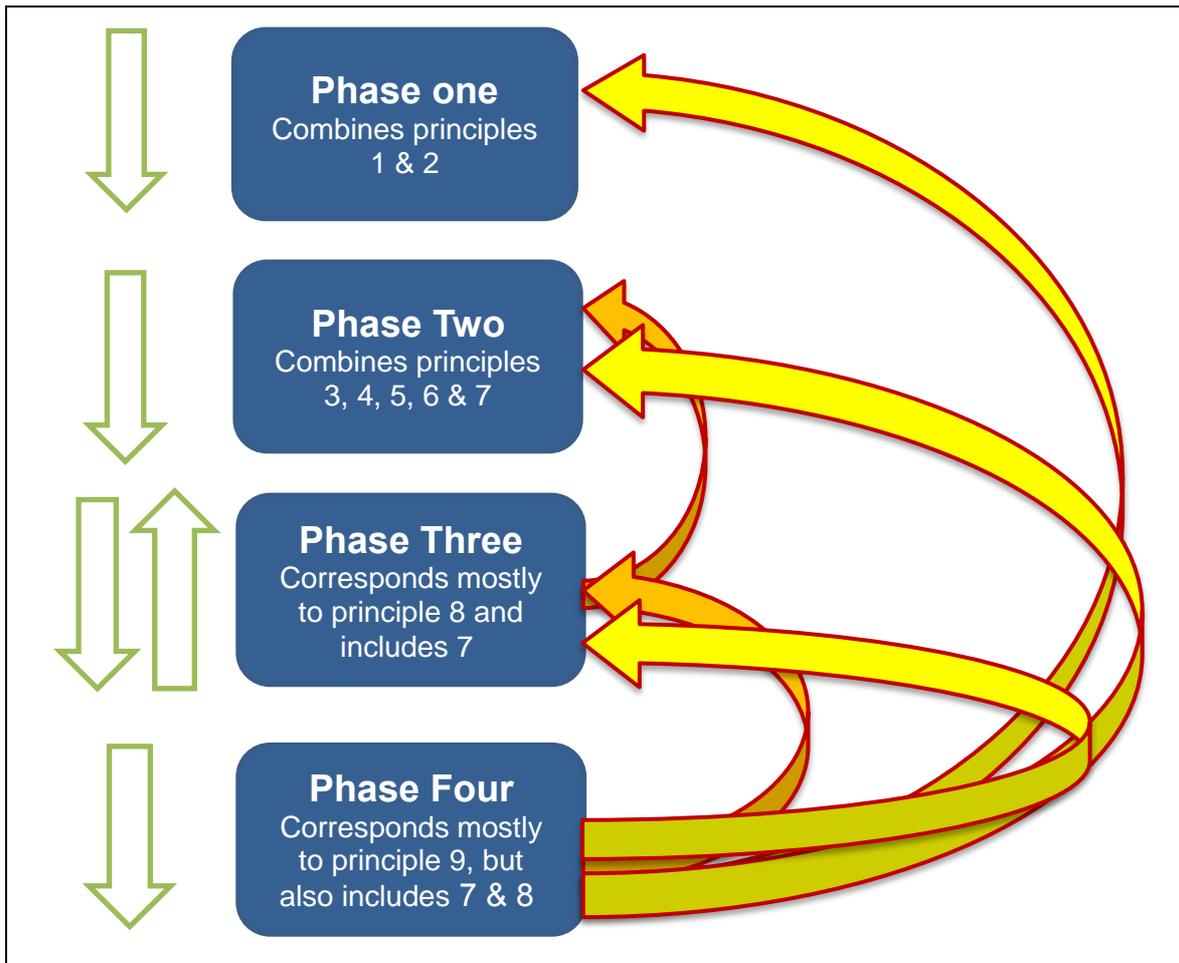


Fig 3.1: Proposed model of methodological development in art practice.

As a methodology of multi-layered complexity, the secondary question (Section 1.4.7) address the nature of the intermediality as *difference* that could be characterised by several layers such as contrast, anticipated change, grey areas, dichotomy or incommensurability.

The impact and circuitous character of this methodology is suggested in the research question by the consideration of various options, including possible un-transformable residue due to the tension between making and expository writing. The diagram in figure 3.2 represents an emergent and rich reality of tacit thinking, which implies a reality of layered, complex and intuitive actions. This entangled strands model communicates the artist's strategies of practice at various intervals of creative processes. It also suggests a flow of energy through which artists find their path via a seemingly perplexed order. The segmented triangle suggests multiple practices of theory, concepts, dialects and contexts (Sullivan 2009:49) that continually bounce off one another. This model is explicit in its nature. Barrett (2007:1, 2) refers to this type of methodology as "production of knowledge or philosophy in action" that enables "multiple intelligences" to produce new insight. The model

in figure 3.2 therefore visualises and communicates both the opacity of tacit knowledge and at the same time finds a visual equation for ‘speaking’ about the undercurrents of structure, cross-referencing and reciprocity that have the potential of being illuminated through emerging research.



Fig 3.2: Gwenneth Miller, An emergent method of tacit thinking.

The tertiary question (Section 1.4:7) follows through by inquiring about the nature of reciprocity and transformation by examining hybridity, which then relates to the overarching framing of the context of the artist-educator to reveal fresh perspectives or, in traditional research terms, innovation. Applying this approach back and forth results in modelling complex intermediary knowledge. Reflecting on the phases of the model in figure 3.1, I argue that it does not consider the complex and interwoven nature of mediamatic thinking. Biggs (2006a:3) refers to the negotiation that has to take place as a “wager”, between diverse ways of understanding research and knowledge in different universities. It is therefore paramount that I identify my reflexive understanding of the pedagogic context of art education at UNISA as a means of articulating my own approach within this context. The approach to different methodological positions allows me to find an intermedial relationship between academic environments and expectations that can “function as foundations for one another (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:345).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See the definition of “transcode” in the summary of this thesis (Miller 2015:ii): “The concept of transcoding is interpreted by reference to Deleuze and Guattari as the way in which one layer or milieu functions as a foundation for another, (or equally, may be established atop another), which implies an intermedial tension.”

To briefly summarise the argument above, the fundamental importance of scholarly principles being integrated in practice teaching is acknowledged but it is in the application of these principles that there is room for development. In the linear, seemingly one-directional structure of an 'outcome' (fig 3.1, green arrows), process is included, but in the model's current formulation, it results in a synthesis. In *TRANSCODE*, the search was for a stronger articulation of tacit sensuous knowing in relation to scholarly principles. As indicated in the *Research Objectives* (Section 1.2:5), comparison of tensional layers implies that research processes bring forth multiple results and unpredictable changes, which may be contradictory to each other and therefore demand vigilant interpretation. The hybrid methodology interlinks the established qualities of research (systematic investigation, rigour, criticality, transparency and accountability) with continuous analyses and comparison of cross-referencing to processes of the practice and *originating ideas* of artists to formulate a possible innovative approach of intermedial sensibility. Working with the complexity of dissimilarity and hybridity strives to persuade knowledge in a *lucid context*.

3.2 THE PRACTICE TURN

In contextualising the nature of this hybrid research method, this section defines practice turn and emphasises that it embodies action in a more complex manner and therefore it is a more valid form of research than theory alone. As an individual, one is integrated in a *social system of practice*, which offers critical thinking tools in a relativist world (Kurfiss 1988:7). My ideas and values are in place because I find myself in a community of artists with *specific practices* being formed due to a common (or at least overlapping) understanding. This research assumes that thinking solves problems through "coping" within an interactive and practical world that leads to an *understanding* of what practice enables (Anderson 2003:91). The underpinning theory of the *practice turn* is the grounding for the practice-led methodology because of its emphasis on new knowledge. In a practice approach, *accounts of practice* become the platform through which *transformation* takes place through mediated activity, emphasising that "the field of practice is the linchpin" (Schatzki 2001a:2) for embodied cognition (Anderson 2003:91; Coessens, Crispin & Douglas 2009:17). The emphasis on 'the field of practice' as the research site, can also be interpreted as "situated activity", suggesting "... that thinking beings ought therefore to be considered first and foremost as acting beings" (Anderson 2003:91). Schatzki (2001a:2) explains that this field "is the total nexus" of interconnectedness. A practice approach emphasises embodied thinking mediated by complex environments, interaction and objects (props/stuff).⁵⁰ This

⁵⁰ In positioning practice-theory, Schatzki (2001a:2) indicates that there is the consideration of practices as "arrays of human activity" and that the post-humanist scientists include activities of non-humans, such as machines or objects, to the field of knowledge and making meaning.

implies a “middle ground between materials and the things people do with them” (Mitchell 2005:204).

Art practice is thus a seminal site for analysis and making deductions about the impact of reciprocity. It is via the way people *use and react* to meaning or language that we give or assign value to making or language (Schatzki 2001a:12). This is a value that can only be attained by looking at multiple reactions in a social dimension (“embracing the multiple”, according to Schatzki 2001a:12). Our lived experience as artists, educators and researchers reflects this multiplicity (Biggs 2006:194) and therefore requires a creative practice research that is appropriate for the lived and concrete dimension of artists as research practitioners.

The methodological rigour of the practice of some artists is compared to the creative edge of some scientists in that neither can escape human and social conventions, and also that both exhibit a fragile and fragmented view of reality (Coessens, Crispin & Douglas 2009:39,41, 43).⁵¹ No clear map exists to portray reality, for it is too complex and constantly changing, which demands an acknowledgement of a measure of our inadequacy to categorise it (Biggs 2006:193). It is in regarding complexity’s contribution as valuable that practice theorists with a practice-led methodology provide an angle for research and a unique contribution to knowledge.

3.3 ART PRACTICE AS A BASIS FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN PROPOSING AN INNOVATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, I first briefly consider a selection of critical voices in the discourse around practice-led methodology in visual arts in higher degrees, and then set out a proposed interpretation of the views of Graeme Sullivan, Timothy Emlyn Jones, James Elkins, MacLeod & Holdridge, Biggs and Deleuze & Guattari, influenced by implications of reciprocity.

While a degree of consensus around practice-led methodology has been developing over the last three-and-a-half decades (MacLeod & Holdridge 2006:1; Biggs 2006:190; Jones 2006: 233-235),⁵² this is not yet the case in South African universities. An international institutional view that practice-led research “has come of age as a subject in university level education”, is reflected by academic artist Jones (2014) and emphasised by art historian

⁵¹ Coessens, Crispin and Douglas (2009:21-25) admit that “shared practice is actually a composite” belonging to collectives of practitioners.

⁵² Early practice-based PhDs started in the 1990s. PhDs from 2000 are referred to as a “third generation of practice-base PhD” (at Glasgow) (Jones 2006:236).

Elkins in *The PhD in studio art revisited* (2014). Both emphasise that, as academic art scholars, we now acknowledge an established practice-led “inquiry-based paradigm” that is pluralistic (Jones 2006:238) and productive of a “closely argued, self-reflexive debate” (Biggs 2006a:6). However, in South Africa, the practice-led doctorate has only emerged in the last five years.⁵³ Whilst South African artists and academics have been following international developments closely, the apparatus of state funding has not until recently enabled this form of research. An advantage of entering the field at this stage is the ability to learn from a variety of international practice-led approaches to create a model suitable for a South African context.

This situation informs the context of this research. One of the first conferences around practice-led research in this country was held as recently as 2010 at the University of Johannesburg, followed by a round-table discussion in 2014.⁵⁴ At the second event, Nathaniel Stern (a participant in *TRANSCODE*), emphasised the prominence of process and the role of peer reviewing in practice-led research. As a means of ensuring rigorous ongoing quality checks in an emergent practice-led research culture, he suggested that process needs to be accentuated alongside outcomes as a part of the peer review of any project. My own research has been presented for peer review and feedback to experts in the field, both national and international, at several stages of its development. Sections of the research have also been presented at seminars and conferences for feedback.⁵⁵

⁵³ The first scholars are Leora Naomi Farber, who completed her DPhil titled: *Representation of displacement in the exhibition Dis-Location/Re-Location* at University of Pretoria in 2013 (as the practical component the exhibition *Dis-Location/Re-Location* held in 2006-2008 was accepted for the D), Louise Hay (PhD at the Centre for Visual Art, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2013), John Roome (D-Tech through the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2014) and Fritha Langerman (University of Cape Town, 2015).

⁵⁴ Practice-led writing roundtable: 30-31 January 2014. FADA (Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture), University of Johannesburg.

⁵⁵ Examples of seminars and conferences as referenced above:

- Public talks during the *TRANSCODE* exhibition
- *27th SAVAH conference* (2012), UNISA: paper presented “*TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice*”
- *OTHER VIEWS: ART HISTORY IN (SOUTH) AFRICA AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH* (2011), International conference, Wits: paper presented “Intermedia practice in the embroideries of *Journey to Freedom Narratives*”
- Critical discussion with senior academics on intermedia practice.
- *Cultural heritage and the creative arts. International Conference* (2012), Johannesburg: paper presented “Dialogues between craft and digital art: Intermedia practice and remediation”
- Public lectures in the Bamboo Room & Senate Hall (2012 & 2013), UNISA: paper presented “Intermedia practice in the embroideries of *Journey to Freedom Narratives*. A project extended in the work *Synchronic Journey*”
- *Higher Degrees Seminar* (2013), UNISA. “Reflecting on practice-led methodology in DLitt et Phil”
- *Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age* (2013), Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Romania: paper presented “Mediamatic processes in the hybrid artworks of Frederik Eksteen”
- *Higher Degrees Seminars* (2014, 2015), UNISA “The Practice Turn & Research methodology in Visual Arts”
- *Research and innovation conference* (2015), UNISA: paper presented “The intermedial nature of practice-led research”

It is important to take cognisance of the international requirements in order to understand UNISA's requirements for practice-led research. To this purpose, these have been included in Appendix 2, where a selection of Elkins' research and documentation from the University of Leeds are compared to the standard set out by my research, guided by UNISA's prescriptions. Sullivan (2009, 2010) has been a major influence, as his publications present a detailed study of existing views of practice-led approaches.⁵⁶ Sullivan's (2009) emphasis on the artwork as a research tool is particularly valuable, since his use of diagrams gives visual expression to the processes of methodology. In this way, he employs visual dynamics to address the text, thereby enacting his writings, not merely as an illustration of the written text, but rather as a parallel discussion.⁵⁷ Sullivan (2009) outlines the value of practice-led research for artists in universities for studio practice as technological agency because it is infused with critical vision and reflexive action. The way we respond to the complexity of demands also feeds back to the manner in which we structure our teaching and ultimately art making. Sullivan (2010:4) emphasises that this approach has been filtered through modernism (with its search for truth), postmodernism (rendering a spirit of diversity⁵⁸) and to the present "liquid times",⁵⁹ equipping the practising artist well for the challenge of research. The analyses of the following models show both Sullivan's theory and how the process of this practice-led research in *TRANSCODE* developed.

Through triangulation, Sullivan (2009:49)⁶⁰ provides a diagrammatic explanation (fig 3.3) of the domains of research, proposing the relationship between agency, structure and action, which opens pathways for creating arguments for my thesis:

⁵⁶ Further voices that provided me with insight regarding practice-led research in art are found in articles by Danny Butt (2009), Cynthia Lawson (2012), and Peter Dallow (2002).

⁵⁷ McLuhan and Fiore (1967) applied the principle of running images and text alongside one another to communicate similar ideas in different "languages".

⁵⁸ "Postmodern thinking" in this argument emphasises the complex and multifarious nature of postmodernisms. According to Charles Jencks, postmodernism contains "the principles of complexity, contradiction, eclecticism, contextualism and multivalence." Available at <http://www.charlesjencks.com/> (Accessed on 28 May 2015).

⁵⁹ Also see Zygmund Bauman's theories of "liquid modernity" in his 2007 *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Also, Lee, RLM. 2005, Bauman, liquid modernity and dilemmas of development. Thesis Eleven SAGE (83) November: 61–77.

⁶⁰ Available at http://artpracticeasresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/Sull_Making_Space_Practice_Led_2009.pdf (Accessed on 23 April 2012).

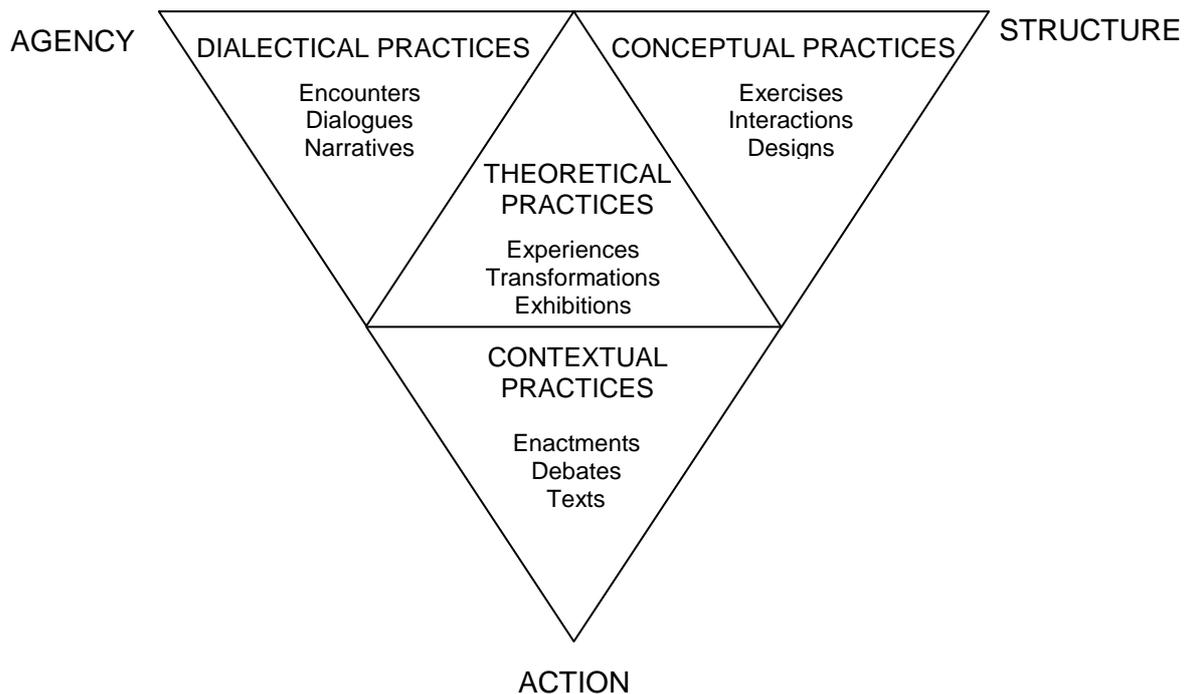


Fig 3.3: Graeme Sullivan, diagrammatic explanation of the relationship between agency, structure and action (Sullivan 2009:49).

Sullivan’s diagram indicates that theoretical practices include experiences, transformations and exhibitions, and these are supported by dialectical, conceptual and contextual practices. Sullivan (2009:49) proposes that: “[T]he central strand that binds the four interconnected areas of practice is inherently *theoretical* and is the site where research problems and issues are found and explored.” I interpret Sullivan’s description in a graphical order moving from what he calls the ‘central strand’ (fig 3.4). In response, I propose an order of reading that does not prioritise the theoretical component (Fig 3.5).

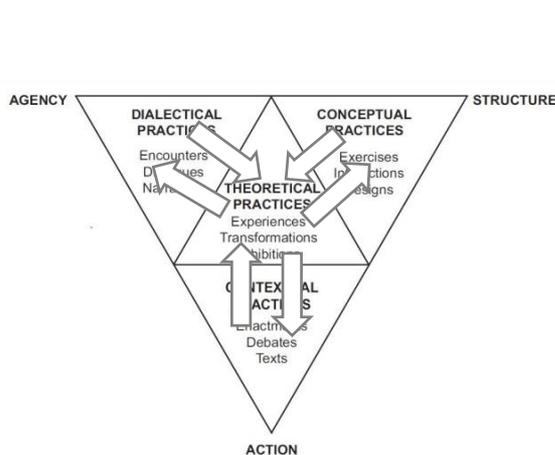


Fig 3.4: Overlaid arrows on Sullivan’s diagrammatic model (2013).

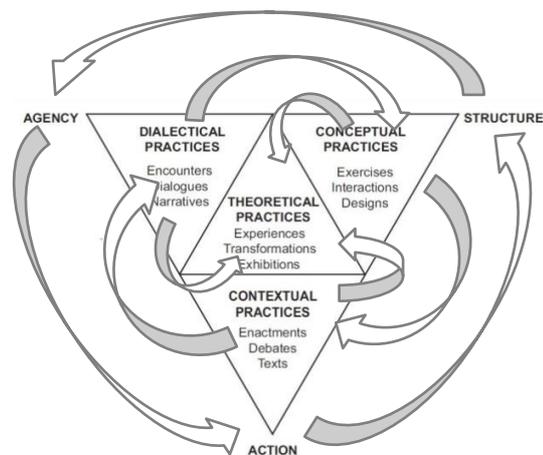


Fig 3.5: Proposed reading by Gwenneth Miller: overlaid arrows on Sullivan’s diagrammatic model (2013).

Although Sullivan (2009:50) acknowledges that artists select in an eclectic manner, his discussion moves from the studio and theoretical practices (seen as central) to the periphery of his model. He moves to discuss conceptual practice as thinking with the medium, the dialectical as creating meaning via experienced feelings and contextual practices as “thinking in a setting”. I propose a reading of Sullivan’s diagram from the perimeters towards the inside, as the exhibition is one of the last stages in the processes of creation (fig 3.5), but importantly, because of the *prominence of reciprocity* in my study. This means that the agency of dialectical practices (of encounters, dialogues and narratives) reciprocates action (enactments, debates and texts) which takes place in particular structures (exercises, interactions and designs). These result in the theoretical practice of exhibitions, experience and transformations. There is no direction dictated, or cause and effect prescribed, as the processes revisit themselves in reflexive critique and rethinking. All of these categories can take place at random intervals, influencing or reciprocating one another as indicated in figure 3.2.

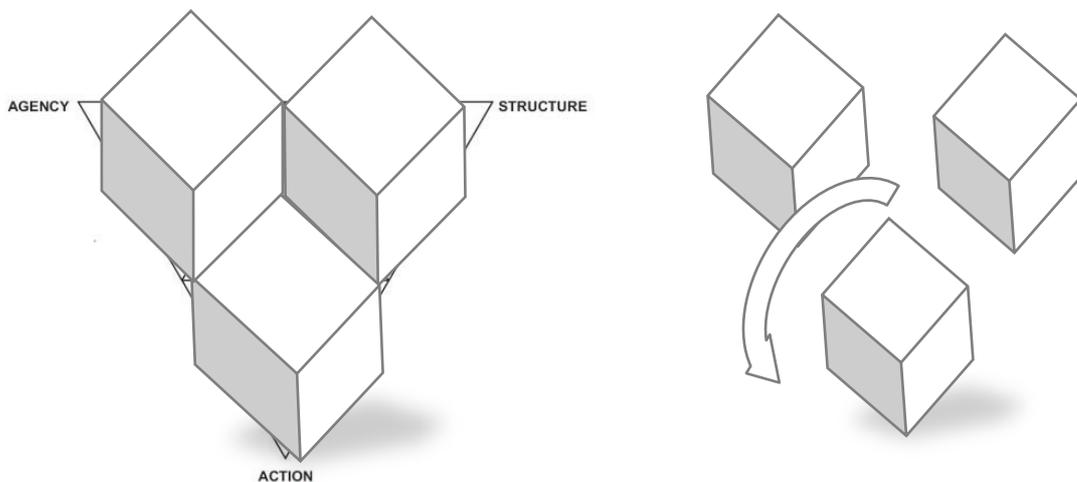


Fig 3.6: Gwenneth Miller: overlaid ‘three-dimensional’ cubes and arrow on Sullivan’s diagrammatic model of the relationship between agency, structure, action and theory. Action is proposed as the pivotal point (‘makes it happen’) whilst lack of context will lead to the collapse/failure of the artist as researcher (2013).

Another reading that I offer is that the creative process ACTION is a pivotal point that “carries” its components of AGENCY and STRUCTURE to give life to the theoretical practices of experience, exhibition and transformation (fig 3.6). This view can be substantiated by theories of experiential knowledge where knowledge is produced through action and reflexion (Barrett and Bolt 2007:5). My redrawn diagram indicates the dependence on each other, but also that the central unit cannot exist without the three surrounding units. The context of all is needed if collapse is to be avoided. Sullivan

(2009:62) argues that the aim of the artist as researcher is to engage with "...inquiry practices that are theoretically rich, conceptually robust and provoke individuals and communities into seeing and understanding things in new ways". In agreement with this section of Sullivan's argument, the *methodology* in this thesis is an engagement and reflexion of action, agency and structure towards understanding things in new ways via decontextualisation (Barrett 2006:6) and transformation.

As indicated earlier, Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) approaches relating to strata, order and disorder have influenced art practice-led research (Macleod & Holdridge 2006, Stern 2013). Transformation, or the process of metamorphosis as a core element of research, is not always "exactly 'about' something, but is a certain way of articulating complexities", as Burns (2007:203-204) points out when analysing Deleuze and Guattari. In visual arts, the process similarly flows into complexity as the artist allows intuitive associations to influence the artwork. This process of transformation allows open-ended readings for both the viewer and the artist. In the same vein of thought, a group exhibition is not a perfectly controlled ordering of concepts.⁶¹ It allows very divergent thinking, at times outside the perimeter of the project. In this regard, this balance between productive and unreserved expression in *TRANSCODE* assists in an 'enacted brainstorming' to find methodologies intermedially. Bolt writes, "this form of tacit knowledge provides a very special way of understanding the world, one that is grounded in material practice." The handling of material is unique and is only sensed by the artist in an in-between manner. As the methodology requires analysis, identification, culling and realignment to be productive, this thesis assimilates these processes, which happened within the *TRANSCODE* experience.

3.4 THE CURATION OF *TRANSCODE*

The hybrid methodological approach to curation is anticipated in the concluding statement of the *Research Questions* (Section 1.4:8) emphasising the "back and forth" movement "between curatorial process-thinking and art making, between working in collaboration to working in relative isolation, and so from an inter-relational to a self-reflective way of being".

3.4.1 The Curatorial Context

It is important to set out a further context for the project in relation to contemporary curation and my own perspective of seeing curation as part of art making. In defining recent shifts in the role of the curator this section serves to position my particular role in *TRANSCODE* of 'artist as curator as artist'. This section discusses the role and identity of the curator as

⁶¹ "Hence the team or the club...is always on the perimeter of the social order, as on a line between a productive group and the gregarious gathering" (Burns 2007:705).

collaborator and artist, an intermediate identity dealing with the tension between inclusive decision-making and directing a project with several research aims, thus reflecting the intermediality of *TRANSCODE*.

Curator and new media scholar Sarah Cook (2008:29) points out that “curatorial practice has shifted in the past twenty to thirty years from museology to a more process-based methodology that focuses on temporary exhibitions and the specific context of their audiences”. This, she argues, is in response to the role-changing effect of considering *process*. The traditional role of the curator as warden of fixed objects shifted to allow for many experimental possibilities due to a developing acknowledgement of *performing* knowledge and interests of invention, as emphasised by practice-led researchers such as Paul Carter and Barbara Bolt. The contemporary idea of collaborative models allows new problems to arise as one enacts research: as exhibitions that include ranges of unpredictable performing components to celebrate complexity and a continuous remaking of ourselves (Carter 2014:18). Bolt’s *The magic is in the handling* (2014:31, 32) reveals how the processes of material production enable their own form of tacit knowledge and thereby extend limits of rational knowledge. The creative action of process in art making includes a curatorial character: to think through objects and material, by shifting, re-ordering and handling their relationships to transform meaning. *TRANSCODE* combines the traditional format of exhibiting art objects while incorporating evidence of process and using immersive spaces typical of digital art practices to help re-enact, re-order and extend the complex role of art as research amidst developing art projects.

Artist, curator and cultural theorist Mieke Bal (2012:179) writes that curation is not simply the showing of works of art, but: “a discourse with all the overtones this word entails”. The perspective is shared by curator and academic Dorothee Richter (2013), who debates the increasing interchange between the role of artist and curator when she critically considers the growing authority of the curator as meta-artist and ponders its effect on the position of the artist. She describes the traditional curator (Richter 2013:[sp]) positioned as “above all the figure subsuming the exhibition under one single heading”. In response to this tendency, Richter proposes a model that “strives towards an open narrative structure, corresponding to the diverse critical contents”, and I align with this approach for *TRANSCODE* by allowing opportunities for ‘curatorial collaboration’ between the participating artists, as a deliberate tactic to encourage productive complexity.⁶²

⁶² This sense of an open project is also inspired by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist. His approaches include curating unknown artists with known artists, searching for interdisciplinary overlap between fields and the concept of curation as an evolving project (Jens 2014:25-27). These approaches are reflected in HUU’s 2007 publication A

Deleuze and Guattari's (2004:8) understanding of "connections" that become collaboration was built upon in curatorial collaboration. The metaphorical image of the rhizome that "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relative to arts, sciences, and social struggles" poignantly indicates that there is "no ideal speaker-listener" (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:8) or meta-artist.⁶³ The multiplicity of relations between thinking and images, bodies and text, artist and curator are interwoven through this research. This Deleuzean sense of complexity became an experienced reality in *TRANSCODE*, so that for a co-participant in the developing project, the presumed impact and collaboration changed from individual to individual and their resulting artworks as practised research. The understanding of the world is "embodied, perceptual and cognitive" (Coessens, Crispin & Douglas 2009: 39), with each of these capacities reflecting on the other. As artists and I discussed relational spaces, so ideas and new links developed resulting in the rooms in *TRANSCODE*. In the action of coming together and at times being created in the gallery these works revealed new interpretation. Writing about "artists as curators as artists",⁶⁴ Hoffman (2014:55) reminds us that *artists* curating exhibitions is not new as a concept, but this collective engagement of artists to think through intermediality is an inventive methodology within *practice-led research* in doctoral studies particularly in South Africa⁶⁵

The independent South African curator Clive Kellner refers to the hybrid figure of the curator as being "some kind of Frankenstein".⁶⁶ Educational programmes, now an integral part of galleries as the result of contemporary gallery practice, require this hybridity to include the role of educator. My research shows how far that concept can be developed through practical knowledge, which demonstrably contextualised and invigorated the work of the *TRANSCODE* project. The hybrid role of curator/collaborator/artist is neither fluent nor consistent, but rather that of an 'open creative conceptualiser', whose position fluctuates between meeting logistical, creative and research demands.

Brief History of Curating, which contains multiple conversations with other curators. HUO's role of instigator of concepts demands the flexibility of an artist. The difference in *TRANSCODE* is that as artist I am inserted in another layer, which HUO does not include in his curatorial position.

⁶³ This idea of connecting individuals is also discussed extensively in the PhD Thesis of Stuart Tait (2009): "Becoming multiple: collaboration in contemporary art practice." Available at <http://stuarttait.com/writing/phd-thesis/> (accessed on 10 July 2013)

⁶⁴ Also refer to Mieke Bal (2012:180) who acts as artist, curator and catalogue writer in exhibition curation, emphasising the multiplicity of involvement.

⁶⁵ At the time of completing this research there was no other practice-led doctorate with this methodology.

⁶⁶ In a lecture during a colloquium of *Curatorial Talks 2013: the educational turn* at Wits School of Arts.

3.4.2 The curatorial process/making and its materialisation

In this section, I begin by setting out the overall process of curation before going on to outline the overall spatial arrangement of the exhibition. The section proceeds to introduce the individual artists and the rooms within which they worked. The processes of mind mapping and reflection are applied to rethink Sullivan's model.

Curation as open creative conceptualisation combines both traditional and the newer approaches to curation in its structure. Some works were pre-selected in the traditional way, while the rest were made-within the time-frame of a year during which various discussions also took place, providing ongoing agency. Furthermore, the exhibition format encouraged artists to present evidence of process (action) and even enabled them to present incomplete or developing works. Dialogue and encounters with the artists took place via emails, interviews and video recordings, while a series of e-mailed documents kept all the artists involved up to date with the project and maintained a flow of conversation to provoke on-going development (dialectical, contextual and conceptual practice).⁶⁷ The unfolding exchange of ideas between the artists-reinforced my initial intuitive sense of which artist would be appropriate for each exhibiting room, so that a more explicit curatorial logic arose for dialogue that could then build up between the works themselves. The fluctuation between rationally controlled stages and intuitive lateral thinking, between the artists' technical knowledge and bodily familiarity with media, between academic theoretical discourse and life experience – these became the *scaffolding* on which the artists developed their personal methodologies.

The curatorial process involved:

- research on practice-led methodologies and intermediality;
- consideration of thematic overlap in relation to a wide group of artists;
- narrowing and identification of artists to find common denominators and sufficient variation in approaches;⁶⁸
- presenting an exhibition proposal to the UNISA Art Gallery (see Appendix 3);
- call to participate, communication with artists via several concept letters (Appendix 4);
- Interviews with Frederik Eksteen (Appendix 5);
- Interview with Colleen Alborough (Appendix 6);
- Marketing, invitation, poster and press release (Appendix 7);
- Press reviews (Appendix 8);

⁶⁷ See Appendices 2, 4, 5 & 6: evidence of curation.

⁶⁸ A proposed list of artists was presented for critical reflection at a colloquium at the Department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology, UNISA (2009).

- Online exhibition of a selection of *TRANSCODE* at *outoftheCUBE* art gallery: transcode <http://www.outofthecube.co.za/transcode.aspx> (launched in May 2015).

The curatorial process itself was initiated in 2011 by a call to artists to participate (see Appendix 4). This call explained my intention as follows:

My wish as a curator and visual researcher is to bring together, in an innovative context, new and previously exhibited works by carefully chosen South African artists who are recoding traditional processes. The focus of this exhibition will be to document how each artist negotiates a mediation between traditional art and the persistence of digital technology, in both the processes of art making and in the broader social realm. Debates around art and technology will continue, and here I aim to construct an environment for related works that have already contributed to this dialogue, as well as new work specifically generated to exist within and extend the theoretical framework of intermedia practice.

Objects or action artworks are evidently, ‘substances’ and their discursive qualities are considered in this thesis and in the introductory essay of the catalogue. It is important to note that one should see the project as “collective” rather than “collaborative”: conceptual overlap and difference created a conversation, yet in only a few cases did we work together physically. Ultimately each artist/collaborative on *TRANSCODE* was represented by at least one older and one new work (with the exception of two students who did not produce new work). While making my own artworks over the period leading up to the exhibition, I interviewed the participating artists and visited some of the studios to build up a research database in order to analyse the relationship between my own making and thinking processes and the artists’ individual concepts.

As discussed earlier (Section 1.5.2), the exhibition was curated into four designated spaces or ‘rooms’ considering the themes of intermediality from the angles of narrativity, space, embodiment and structures. For clarity and detail, also consult the catalogue for *TRANSCODE*, as included in the research portfolio of evidence. The artists involved in the *TRANSCODE* curatorial process are briefly introduced and contextualised below. (They will be referenced thereafter only by their initials).

Room One: Intermedial narrativity (see section marked yellow in figure 3.7)

- Multimedia *Journey projects*, which I initiated, coordinated and participated in, initially involved a large group.⁶⁹ Celia de Villiers (CdV) and Intuthuko Sewing Group

⁶⁹ The complexity of the project is set out in Chapter 4. In the multimedia project, Wendy Ross was the project advisor. The *Journey project* animations also involved digital artists Greg Miller, Sarah Fraser, Reboile Motswasele, Katty Vandenberghe, Kai Lossgott, Nicole Vinokur and me (as digital artist).

(C&I) were chief collaborators.⁷⁰ CdV is an academic and artist: a sculptor and textile artist working in a range of materials, from felt, to glass, Perspex, metal and embroidery. In this study, she is part of a collaborative sewing group who make embroideries. Intuthuko contributed the majority of the embroideries for the first award-winning *Journey to Freedom Project* (2004), which consisted of two quilts and animations compiled in DVD format, depicting the struggle for freedom and reconciliation in South Africa. The project *Synchronic Journey* (2011) was developed by C&I, as DLitt et Phil project curated by myself. The Intuthuko group is from Etwatwa, a township in Ekurhuleni, Eastern Gauteng, and consists of between 20 and 30 women and one male artist (numbers fluctuate as people move in and out of the group). Core members of Intuthuko (in 2011): Lesego Makua; Angie Mamura, Alzina Matsosa, Clarence Nkosi, Evelyn Thwala, Angel Mandlanzi, Irene Ntombela, Lebo Nkashe, Lindiwe Maseko, Mabatho Madonsela, Martha Mabena, Mantwa Mutsi, Nombeko Mashele, Nomsa Ndala, Nomsa Sithole, Rhoda Mpuqa, Sanna Sasabola, Selina Maitse, Selina Songo, Thembi Mabizela, Thobile Mahlangu, Tshidi Leputla, Maria Moela, Rose Skhosana and Rosina Teffo.

- Lawrence Lemaona (LL) is an artist who has worked with textile and print work over the last decade. He is also an academic at UNISA. His work addresses issues of economic change among black South Africans but he also states that his aim is to undermine stereotypical views of post-apartheid black experience, to contrast homogenous singular images of that experience.

Room Two: Intermedial space (see section marked green in figure 3.7)

- Frederik Eksteen (FE): Predominantly a painter, FE has also created three-dimensional installations and digital time-based work that questions the representational system and its underlying mechanisms. Eksteen is an academic and long-standing former colleague whose painterly experimentation is digitally mediated in a variety of ways.
- Marcus Neustetter (MN) has explored the relationship between digital and analogue over the last decade, often integrating a performative element in his installations. As part-time educator, MN is regularly involved in community collaborative projects.
- Carolyn Parton (CP) is a painter interested in the material of paint as leftover. This reflects ecological concerns prompted by her experience of the litter washing onto the coastline where she lives. Her interest in the exchange between digital and

⁷⁰ The second group involved in the *Journey to Freedom* project was Boitumelo. This group is facilitated by multimedia artist Erica Lüttich.

painterly approaches has developed since her third-level studies as a student at UNISA.

Room Three: Intermedial bodies (see section marked blue in figure 3.7)

- Colleen Alborough (CA) works with printmaking, in particular monoprints and etching, and with multimedia assemblages, installations and stop-frame animation. These are often concerned with themes of liminality and loss. Alborough is also an academic and long-standing former colleague.
- Churchill Madikida (CM) works with digital video installations and digital printing on themes of illness, in particular AIDS. Several of his installations have unpacked cultural identity and include three-dimensional objects in relation to digital printing and video work. CM is involved in developing education opportunities for marginalised communities.
- Nathaniel Stern (NS) is a new media artist who specialises in interactive work, installation and prints concerned with the discourse around embodiment. NS lectures both in South Africa and internationally and regularly generates collaborative projects.

Room Four: Intermedia structure (see section marked orange in figure 3.7)

- Minette V`ari (MV) is a multimedia artist and part-time academic, who started her career as a painter and has subsequently developed as a video artist who often performs her own work. Her *TRANSCODE* works included fluid ink drawings that engaged with the motion of animated video work.
- Sello Mahlangu (SM) is a recent graduate whose interactive animation reflects the identity politics of xenophobia. His multimedia approach incorporates photography, ink drawings and collage.
- Fabian Wargau (FW) is also a recent graduate who works in video and its relation to experimental paintings (and vice versa). His installation for *TRANSCODE* reconfigured work developed in his undergraduate studies.
- Gwen Miller (GM): I am a painter who explores the boundaries of painting, drawing, collage, digital work and installations. The curation of an installation is integrally part of the development of art processes, which in the case of *TRANSCODE* and several earlier projects involved multiple artists. Apart from traditional roles regarding my academic occupation, collaborative projects often involve students.

TRANSCODE: tentative layout of wall divisions with placement of artists, also indicating the 4 'rooms'

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Lawrence Lemaona: LL | Frikkie Eksteen: FE | Colleen Alborough: CA | Gwen Miller: GM |
| Celia de Villiers & Inthutuko: C&I | Marcus Neustetter: MN | Nathaniel Stern: NS | Sello Mahlangu: SM |
| /J2F | Carolyn Parton: CP | Churchill Madikide: CM | Minette Vari: MV |
| | | | Fabian Wargau: FW |



FIXED PANEL LIST

PANEL SIZE	AMOUNT
1800 x 3785	= 17
1400 x 3785	= 5
1467 x 3785	= 1
1350 x 3785	= 1
1398 x 3785	= 1
1328 x 3785	= 1
1199 x 3785	= 2
1006 x 3785	= 2
0608 x 3785	= 10
0900 x 3785	= 2
0500 x 3785	= 2
TOTAL	46

Fig 3.7: Gwenneth Miller, planning the rooms with artists in TRANSCODE onto the UNISA Art Gallery floor plan (2011).

The UNISA gallery floor plan (fig 3.7) was used as a base to colour code and plan artists' rooms. The position of artists and proximate placement of works and equipment were mapped out for practical reasons but also as a way of understanding association of key thoughts and setting up difference for the sake of argument. This added to artists conceptualising their artistic response in relation to other works in their rooms.

The decision to include colleagues with a wide variety of cultural, social, educational and skill-set backgrounds is not merely to examine their complex influences upon my own art practice, but to help form a model that reflects and encourages complexity and diversity through research in the Visual Arts department. Students were included in recognition of the artist as educator, as the majority of artists included in the exhibition and I are involved in art education. The *TRANSCODE* exhibition gave the students a space to think through and develop intermedia practice. The artists from outside UNISA broadened the scope of multimedia expertise. As with any collective, it produced a wide range of voices and offered me the opportunity through the *TRANSCODE* project to select those artists who most strongly reflected the specific research aims of this thesis. The continuous consideration of our thinking through the various bodies of work can be found in layers of visual diagrams. Planning was done in the colour-coded ground plan (fig 3.7, 3.8) and in various mind maps (fig 3.9) and these are evidence of process, theoretical practice and transformation of data.



Fig 3.8: Gwenneth Miller, detail of *Thinkbox* (2011).

The various conceptual relationships between artists and works were considered at various stages throughout the curatorial process. This is reflected in *Thinkbox* (2011) (fig 3.8), which was compiled as a work that reflexively considered process within *TRANSCODE*. Figure 3.8 above deals with the relationship between drawings, diagrams, objects and data collected as a way of thinking through making and action. This compilation of diagrams reveals both the information and resulting insight of the curatorial process, one of contemplation and analysis, relational data, curatorial reflection and concept generation. As I shifted the items within *Thinkbox* (2011) (fig 3.8), they raised questions about the understanding of creative research and the curatorial system. They also served as an archive and memos to influences that come from outside the gallery walls, reflecting Cook's (2008:29) statement that "context for the art stretches beyond the museum and collection to the world at large".

The writing and making of all the components of the research was accompanied by continuous visual mind mapping: from small intuitive mind maps in sketchbooks, through carefully planned diagrams to wall-size mind maps (fig 3.9). These visualisations contained text and details of images.⁷¹ The physical moving around and reconfiguration of this material echoed my working process when creating several digital works in respect of their layering, selection, and grouping of fragments. The mind map (fig 3.9) set out research themes that run through the narrative and are indicated by several visual tools such as colour tags, font types and font sizes. These strategies assisted me to read lines of argumentation as artist in a visual manner with structural links and visual 'coding'.

⁷¹ The images of mind maps included here are seen as evidence of my processes and not text that is meant to be read. The reason for this is that the mind maps are large (floor to ceiling) and created for the purpose of my process whilst working.



Fig 3.9: Gwenneth Miller, wall mounted mind map of research (2010-2015).

The enfolding development of a collective project does not imply only that people work together but dimensions of one's own disparate identity can also develop. The curatorial processes reflect both the collective nature of different voices and the differences between old and new media. Heartney (2003:51) proposed that parallel tracks of contemporary art have been dynamically developing during the last four decades: the first is a steady development in painting, sculpture and installation (analogue art) and the second is art

driven by new software technologies (digital art). Intermedial practice argues that the most interesting point of investigation is the place where the mentioned 'streams' converge (Walker 2006:118). The curation explored the density of interconnected meanings within this complexly nuanced terrain, an environment that includes a myriad of conceptual art strands.

TRANSCODE is a demonstration of a methodology that comes alive/becomes embodied through media engagement. Ryan (2005) writes that media does not offer the same narrative resources as discursive sources, but has *different* potential. Therefore, the above application of methodologies in *TRANSCODE* and its links with discursive theory cannot be 'complete,' rather serving as introductory layers for interpretation and association. This substantiates the need for practice-led research and the acknowledgement that artwork and material processes must be read as evidence of thinking beyond and along with the theoretical practice. During the process of *TRANSCODE*, participating artists made independent associations with the media they preferred and concepts they worked with to embody the abstract ideas. These visual processes are reciprocal reflections, systems of analyses and critical awareness within themselves.

I conclude that the content and expression of the research process as a whole forms a unit to *gestate and imbricate* the constituents of new knowledge. In itself, this unit is fluid, flexible and unstable by nature, which from the creative perspective is a positive characteristic that presents possibilities for innovative work.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a research project that reflects on intermediation and reciprocity, the curation of *TRANSCODE* required ethical considerations regarding both practical conduct and consideration of a broader moral responsibility. In contextualising ethics, I refer to Joanna Zylinska (2014:97), who writes that ethics is "a form of regulating ways of co-existing and co-emerging with others. This cultural practice also involves providing an account – verbally, experientially, or aesthetically – of these processes of co-existence and co-emergence". Close consideration was given to the ethical values entrenched in the Unisa *Research and Innovation review strategy* (2016-2010). These values are "autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice" (Policy on Research Ethics, Part 2: 2014)

3.5.1 Autonomy

This research respected the autonomy, rights and dignity of all the participants. Artists volunteered to participate and clear guidelines were provided. I respected the autonomy of

the artist's vision at all times and artists were personally involved with the planning and installation of *TRANSCODE* to ensure artistic professionalism. The interviews, which I included in the Appendixes, were approved by the artists. Artists gave consent for the use of their names in the research as in the case of the arts the authenticity of the work of art is linked to the name of the artist. I recorded details such as dates of interviews, studio visits and relevant other exhibitions accurately. The autonomy of the artwork as practice is also at issue in practice-led research, for at no instance should the practice attempt to illustrate the theory. Barrett and Bolt (2007:2-3) describe this as one of the central ethical issues in practice-led research.

3.5.2 Beneficence and non-maleficence:

This research strives in every way to make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people and the critical development of visual arts. I ensured the credibility of my research by involving several academics and senior advisors as critical readers. Artists' processes and works are all included in the catalogue to give credit and maximum exposure to their artistic career. I invited all artists to participate in public talks and walk-about during the exhibition so that they could position their point of view and benefit from the exposure. Conference papers presented the constructive and critical contribution of artists. No harm was caused to any participant in particular or to people in general. No artwork was positioned in a way that could present it in a negative light.

3.5.3 Justice

The benefits of a group exhibition affected all participants. The risks of research, such as tension and labour are very familiar to artists and I supported all participants both before and during installation in order to attain a fair distribution. The consensus to academic interrogation with constructive intent has been established and upheld in this research project. Participants duly signed consent documents.

CHAPTER FOUR

ROOMS OF *TRANSCODE*

“*Art Practice as Research* continually brings different ways of thinking about research” writes Sullivan (2010:xii). This section outlines how the artists working within the different rooms of *TRANSCODE* contributed to my understanding of developing intermediality. The varying perspectives of the four selected artists/collaboratives are presented with their particular processes as *evidence* of their research strategies. The nature of their media and their inherent properties held the potential for investigating intermediality via diverse art practices. The curatorial decision to work with this group of peer artists was animated by the objectives of this research and with expanding understanding of multi-layered reciprocity between digital and analogue art (see Chapter One). Analysis of each artist’s body of work represents a platform able to contribute uniquely to contemporary art as mediamatic research.

Through the process of curating *TRANSCODE* I realised that due to transmediality’s character as an unfolding storyline it would be appropriate to position Room One thematically as “INTERMEDIAL NARRATIVITY”. The *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2008) was a pre-doctoral project. The ambition of generating a project that reflects social values of reconciliation (working together of different people) in material reciprocity, formal dialogues and unfolding processes was reflected a structural approach. The *Synchronic Journey* (2011) project for *TRANSCODE* was a direct response to the limitations of this first project and formed a new basis for research. This new approach, where older work was selected and critical examination provided new insight into the artists’ working methodologies, was applied in each of the rooms. It also revealed limitations that justified the search for a new model of art practice as research. The last section of each room reveals works that were the result of this new process.

This shows the emergence of a new model of intermediality through practice. Thus, the project held the core structure of a research trajectory that mediamatically considered formal and ontological relations. The themes of the rooms developed from a consideration of the nature of narratives. As stories are told over time in space, they are also embodied in media and reflect academic thinking. Rooms Two and Three were titled ‘INTERMEDIAL SPACE’ and ‘INTERMEDIAL BODIES’ respectively. The various artists considered for these two rooms were scrutinised to identify work that dealt most intricately with reciprocity of conceptual and material processes. Thus Eksteen and Alborough’s work was selected

for focused analysis. The last room, titled 'INTERMEDIAL SYSTEMS', reconsiders methodological structures and reflects on my own creative research. Where the first three rooms contextualised the visual research in the discourses of narrativity, space and embodiment, the contextualisation of Room Four becomes an examination of the research objectives of *TRANSCODE*, bringing the strands of this thesis together.

As already indicated in the introduction of this thesis, I reflect on the characteristics of unconventional use of selected conventional material and how the combination of both traditional and new media is enriched by reciprocity. As proposed in Chapter one, this section compares the knowledge and the gaps revealed through the developing processes to reflect critically on how these artists think through the 'doubt or suspense' of their practice. This mediamatic thinking proves to be inventive and its transformative processes provide evidence of the validity of the three research questions.

4.1 ROOM ONE: INTERMEDIAL NARRATIVITY

THE JOURNEY PROJECTS

Room One concerns two multimedia projects which I initiated: *The Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) and *Synchronic Journey* (2011). *The Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) was included in *TRANSCODE* because it directly influenced the proposal for this research and was instrumental in the conceptual development of collaborative curatorial undertakings. *Synchronic Journey* (2011) was initiated later as a response to *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) project, with the specific aim of interrogating the impact of *reciprocity* on the practices of the embroidery and animation, and consequently increasing their contribution to the dialogues of *TRANSCODE*.

Journey to Freedom narratives (2003-2007) originally formed part of a collaborative interdisciplinary and multimedia project in response to a broader initiative to celebrate the twin milestones of ten years of democracy in South Africa and forty years since the passing of the Civil Rights Act in the United States of America. The project attempted to grapple with the complexity and multiplicity of those contexts.⁷² As initiator and director of the project, I included colleagues of the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Musicology at UNISA, who were also involved in its conceptual development and organisation. Other core participants in this process were the facilitators and embroiderers of Intuthuko, Boitumelo, a group of digital artists, and the UNISA Melodia Chorale (all the above individuals are credited in Appendix 9). The multiple cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural and logistical differences became a metaphoric reflection of the complexity of our national dynamic. Furthermore, the entire imbricated nature of this project initiated my practice-led research.

The processes involved were focused by a (somewhat idealistic) negotiation between the memory of the rigidity of apartheid politics and the cross-cultural conflict that is part of South African history, but were approached in a practical manner. Our strategy was to offset existing stereotypes with individual narratives. This provided a means of enacting a critical and sceptical “incredulity” to metanarratives of the universality of great belief systems (Lyotard 1992:999). There can be no ‘absolute’ truths, only local, temporary and pragmatic ones that work for a specific population in the here and now, and will have to be replaced/updated tomorrow. This approach led to the shift to micro-narratives as an

⁷² *Journey to Freedom narratives* was part of the broader *UNISA-Mississippi Project* (as set out in Appendix 9), which was sparked by a request from our then Vice-Chancellor to develop a celebratory project. Within this broader venture, I initiated the original idea of the multimedia project. The early outline of the link between music and image was set in the draft by Vokwana and me.

acknowledgement of the peripheral voices of ordinary people beyond the western doctrine of “truthful histories”. Through this project, notions of intermediality were situated in a historical, academic, social, and institutional context.

The images below provide a visual synopsis of our methodology. They show the development from the drawings to the embroidery (*Journey to Freedom narratives*) (fig 4.1.1 top) to the animation (*Journey to Freedom narratives*) (fig 4.1.1 bottom). The collation of selected embroideries developed into two large wall hangings, one of which was exhibited on *TRANSCODE* (fig 4.1.2).



Fig 4.1.1: Left top: Julie Mokoena, details from *The Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007), Bottom: Katty Vandenberghe, animation for *Strike a woman strike a rock*, *The Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).



Fig 4.1.3: Top: C&I, detail of *Synchronic Journey* (2011). Bottom: C&I, *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

I chose to work with De Villiers and the Intuthuko project (C&I) for pragmatic reasons. Our good working relationship and conceptual alignment provided the basis for critically reviewing the original project and creating the new embroidered *Synchronic Journey* (2011) from animation references, thus transcoding the narratives.

In response to my three research questions, the process of analysis is mapped out in the following manner:

- First research question: What are the characteristics of *intermediality* when mapped through an enacting *process of physical thinking* as well as by comparing discursive theories?

The unfolding processes of the project are outlined: events in time, which enact plots in the past and in the present moment (Ryan 2005), are identified⁷³ and narrative changes are analysed. To compare practice and discursive thinking, I define approaches to narratives, starting with Ryan's research, which defined narratology within the present convergent mediascape. Jenkins (2006) refers to the collective intelligence that comes with convergence culture, which he looks at from both the reality of a sociological perspective and its resulting technological innovations. The concept of transmedia, a story being told over several platforms, is central to convergence culture and particularly relevant in the projects analysed here. The complexity of processes is applied in the multi-modal⁷⁴ artworks of Room One. A range of personal signifiers is employed by the participants in the *Journey* projects, yet the overarching narrative is that of reconciliation as social and formal reflection. Meaning is sensed between the multiple small narratives used to construct the central narrative, which is revealed through the art processes.

- Second research question: What is the nature of intermediality as a construct of *different or opposing ends*?

A critical reflection is introduced within the differences highlighted by the comparison between traditional narrative structures and digital narratives.

- Third research question: Could processes as *established hybridity* provide an indication of reciprocity and transformation?

⁷³ As introduced in Chapter 1. The template is set out in the introduction to *Narratology beyond literary criticism: mediality, disciplinarily* (2005). This anthology, edited by Jan Christoph Meister, contains several essays of relevance to this chapter. Due to spacial limitations I cannot include all these voices.

⁷⁴ 'Multimodal' refers to a variety of 'codes' that artists/authors use to tell their stories, usually where visualisations embrace a mix of categories of intermediality (Hoffmann 2010).

The sense of instability or flux that can be read through the processes of Room One can be described as transformational intermediality (as defined by Schröter 2011).⁷⁵ This section considers a *destabilising* characteristic of transformational intermediality, namely its manner of representing one medium through another, and indicates its impact on remediated narrative structure. Synthetic intermediality will also be examined in relation to its appropriate distinction as a project of ‘totality’.

4.1.1 The intermediate narrative – a brief contextualisation

The narrative theme...speaks to the need to find your own point of connection, because at the heart of art and at the centre of research is human engagement and the ownership of stories that speak to us and for us (Sullivan 2010:xi).

As artists, we sense with and across material practices making use of the different potential inherent in diverse media to evoke and reflect on meaning. This meaning is found both in the world, in our own relationship to the world, and among ourselves. The production and reception of meaning, as both mental and physical “sensus”, is grasped with mind and through matter (Oosterling 2003:42). Its significance resonates in the space between life as stimulus and the artist’s imagination, an intersection where narrative is formed. Ryan (2005:7) writes that the artist/author “...finds a fit between what life offers and the cognitive pattern that we try to fill in”. In our attempt to make sense of the world we convert events into stories both through processes of conceptualisation and through intuitive experiential processes.

Historically, the telling of stories through visual media has shifted during the last two centuries from the grand renditions of history painting to a multitude of diverse approaches. With the increasing dominance of cybernetics, it may seem that these diverse approaches are again being homogenised. However, in this research narrativity is located within a convergence culture and an attempt to define it, as indicated by my first research question. Narrativity is normally understood as verbal and written. However, since the 1960s notions of narrative representation have been extended and redefined. The development of intermediality through the 1990s accelerated the redefinition of narrativity across disciplines,⁷⁶ with the result that narration is currently accepted as a cross-medial

⁷⁵ As described in Chapter 1 of this thesis, transformational and synthetic intermediality are two of the five categories of intermediality. Schröter (2011) describes the categories in *Discourses and models of intermediality*. Available at <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/3>

⁷⁶ See Gibbons (2010:284-286) for further reading on intermediality, plurimediality and multimodality.

phenomenon.⁷⁷ A parallel 'export' of terms and concepts to other fields of knowledge has become relatively commonplace and is still expanding.⁷⁸ Due to continual interdisciplinary and intertextual exchange, researchers continue to question and redefine the fluctuating concept of 'narrativity', and the related concepts of 'transmedia' and 'multimodality'.⁷⁹ It is to this questioning and redefinition that the unique reciprocity within the narratives of the *Synchronic Journey* (2011) contributes.

In this research, the various components of the *Journey* projects transmit narratives in concrete outcomes – through song, written personal stories, drawn images, collated embroidered panels, animations and, finally, the reconstituted embroideries. Due to the nature of the practical and theoretical interaction in line with my first research question, the transmission of narrative characteristics changes through intermedial negotiations. Changes do not have to 'include' or 'exclude' but, as Werner Wolf (2013:183) states, fit a "lesser or more" and therefore more inclusive outcome.

"Narrative representation consists of a world (setting) situated in time, populated by individuals (characters), who participate in actions and happenings (events, plot) and undergo change" (Ryan 2001a:2). Even though Ryan emphasises change, sometimes a narrative is 'just something that happens', without much change taking place. In both traditional and new media format, narratives *are formed* in the mind of the reader/viewer, which is an important aspect of the third component: action. "The most prominent reason for acting in life is problem-solving. It is therefore the most fundamental narrative pattern" (Ryan 2001a:2). The narratives in the *Journey* projects are not unified through a single linear narrative but by the theme of the journey, a period of historical development in South Africa (a setting), and find their coherence in the identity of both the artist groups and the recalled memories of persons and events (characters). The process set out in 4.1.2 (below) reveals the *acts* involved, which are diverse problem-solving approaches. As Ryan points out, such a lack of linearity does not necessarily destroy narrativity, since readers or viewers construct their own logic from independent sections (Ryan 2001a:3). This indicates the type of narrative logic available to the reader-viewer in the *Journey* projects. Although

⁷⁷ See Meister (2005:xiii).

⁷⁸ In *Narrative and narrativity: a narratological reconceptualization and its applicability to the visual arts* (2012) Wolf proposes a difference between narrative and narrativity and formulates a model that is intermedial and can be applied to any discipline of visual arts.

⁷⁹ Müller (2010:15) refers to intermediality as "work in progress". Evidence of the continual debate is the 2013 conference *Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age*, presented by ISIS (the International Society for Intermedial Studies) at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. <http://film.sapientia.ro/en/conferences/rethinking-intermediality-in-the-digital-age>. I presented a paper at this conference.

the text and images do contain narratives, other layers of additional narratives form as a result of the intermedial interaction.

Ryan (2001a, 2001b) argues that the qualifying characteristics of contemporary narrativity are not shaped immediately in the mind of the reader, but often *unfold* – or become amended – over time. This suggests that the reader's 'participation' in the work ensures that it is never 'complete' but changes continually. The *Journey* projects, as expressed by South African artists working from the perspective indicated above, created an unconventional dynamic interpretation of narrative. They *invoked* the narrative, but *undermined it* at the same time, denying it any simple coherence (Heartney 2008:123). The unconventional approaches and combinations of the *Journey* projects speak to unexpected changes that are enriched by the goal of reciprocity. The central point here is that the reflective process inherent in practice-led research creates the bringing together of two different experiences for art making. These may in turn be regarded as critical 'writing'.

4.1.2 Mapping intermediality via process in the *Journey* projects

In this research, it is taken as *a priori* that a reflective mapping of intermediality via process will offer new insights into the nature of the conversation between making and writing. This section sets out the thinking involved in art as research tool and emphasises the specific characteristics in intermediality in the *Journey* projects in this respect. As already indicated, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) started with a concern to create a formal artistic equivalent of social and political reconciliation. Our aim was to create a metaphoric process that evoked this reconciliation by remediating digital art-making strategies with the characteristics of traditional embroidery (and *vice versa*), where 'remediation'⁸⁰ indicates the ways in which certain media may draw on and incorporate others. Additionally, the conceptual space of intermedia practice highlights the influence of constructive interaction and responsiveness to unusual combinations of art forms, which are seen as the cornerstones of remediation as reflected in *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

In both the projects under discussion, the 'transformational intermediality-model adopted was "centered on the representation of one medium through another medium" (Schröter 2011). In *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007), the digital animations are informed by the embroideries, while in *Synchronic Journey* (2011), animation informs the

⁸⁰ 'Remediation' is a term coined by Bolter and Grusin in 1996 and is characterised as reform (Bolter & Grusin 1999:2). Bolter and Grusin emphasise the significant cross-pollination between traditional and new media. The tensions caused by an artist's efforts to affirm immediacy of meaning in an artwork sets the context for the notion of "remediation", which refers to the impact that interdisciplinary practice has on traditional art's relevance.

embroideries. The aim was to foster innovation within the transformation of techniques and practice-led thinking.

Within a setting of collective creative expression, we were able to embrace the idea that all groups could learn from one another. In this spirit the embroiderers of Boitumelo and Intuthuko were asked to write of their own experiences during the apartheid years in response to popular freedom songs, such as *The land act*, resulting in personal research (refer to fig 4.1.4).

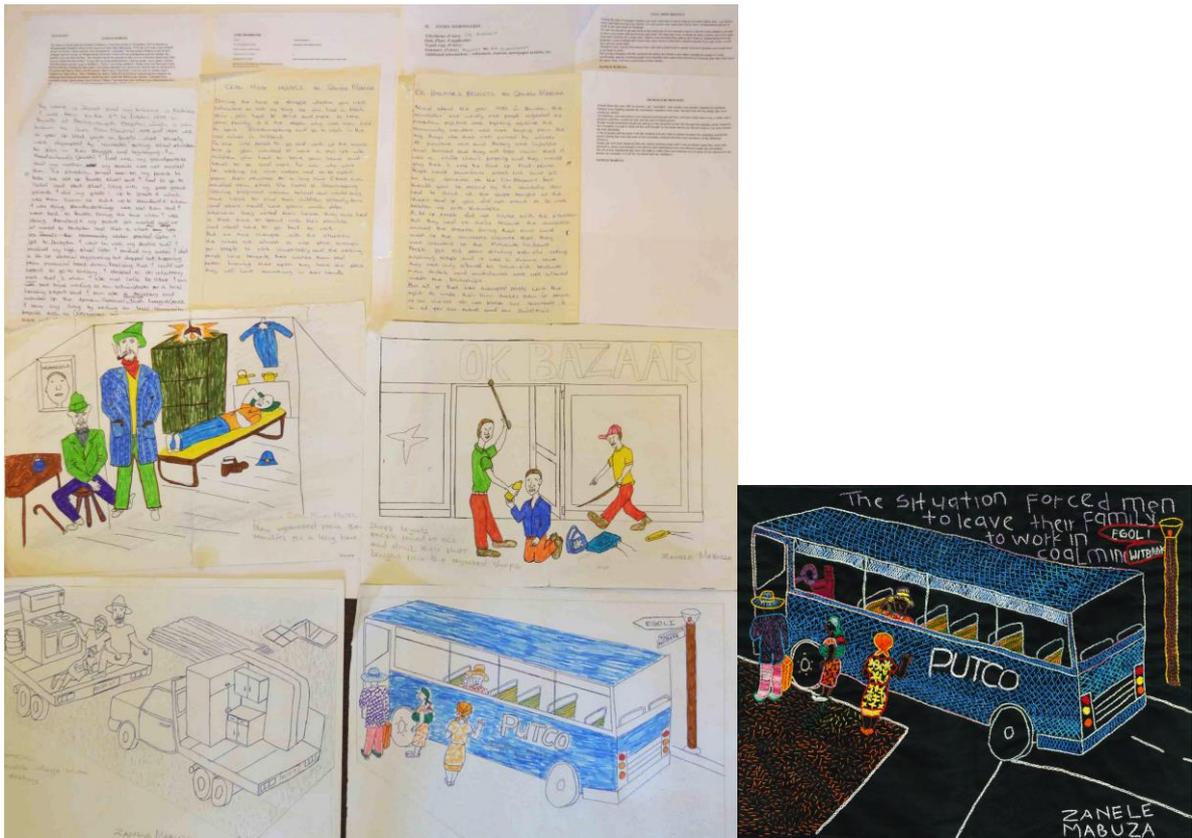


Fig 4.1.4: Zanele Mabuza, research and embroidery for *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

The approach adopted here follows Heartney (2008:123) in maintaining that the act of recalling events that reflect psychological trauma is fragmented and involves both the “remembered and misremembered” incidents. Narratives can be a construction of facts, or, at times, “misremembered fictions” of the past (Heartney 2008:123). When asked to write about the protests against apartheid, some individuals had experienced the Soweto uprisings directly and could relay aspects in ways they remembered, while others re-experienced it indirectly by speaking to older members of the community or researching in

newspaper archives (as example see fig 4.1.5). Remembering became an intermediate process of various realities captured from extracts of different time and place.⁸¹

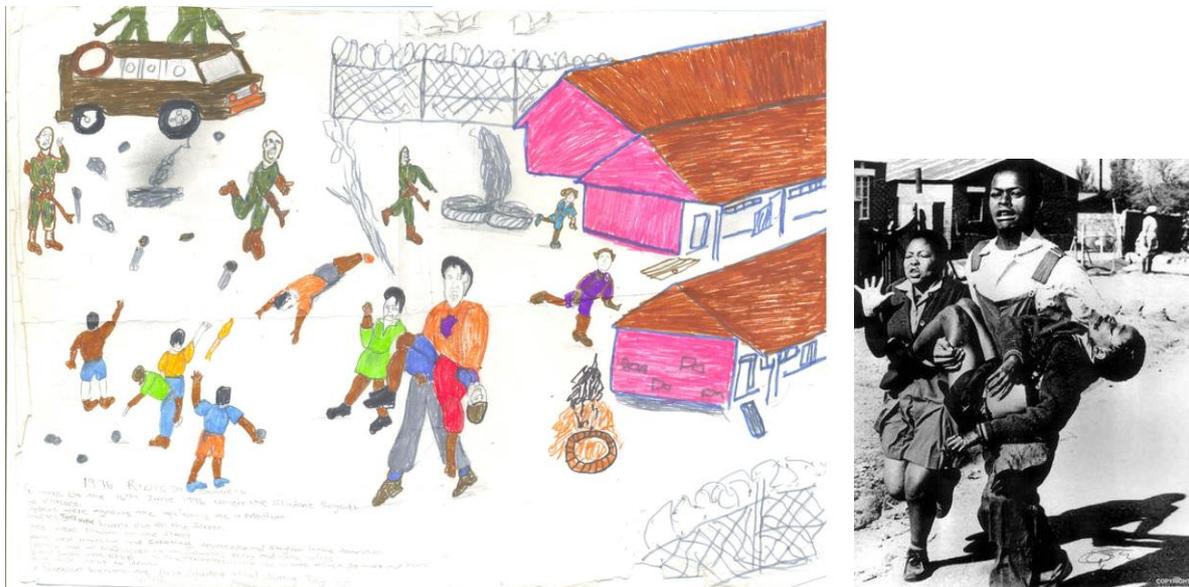


Fig 4.1.5: Thabitha Nare, drawing for *Journey to Freedom narratives* with reference to newspaper archives: *Hector Peterson* by Sam Nzima, taken during the 1976 Soweto uprising, has found its depiction in the drawing (2003).

A practice methodology developed organically as the digital artists visited and documented the embroidery groups, reflexively generating focal areas and strengthening insight through both interviews and less formal mutual interaction.⁸² By researching aspects of the music, the digital artists layered their own narratives, identifying patterns between their research and the tone, rhythm and stories identified in the embroideries.⁸³

An indicative example can be seen in figure 4.1.6, which focuses on unrest and the interaction of police and citizens. The small figure in red, which appears to be wearing gumboots, found his way into the animation of *Bawo Thixo Somandla* (2004). By plotting the songs, events and embroideries, the group analysed and decontextualised storylines and characters. For both the embroiderers and the animators it was the *reciprocation of insight* that led to innovation.

⁸¹ Several of these were published in Anderson (2007:84-99).

⁸² Three interviews were published in Anderson (2007:100,101).

⁸³ See research and interpretation by Motswasele published in Anderson (2007:70, 71).



Fig 4.1.6: Left: Nomsa Ndala, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2004). Right: Kai Lossgott, screen grab from the animation *Bawo Thixo Somandla* (2004).

The specificity of the language of the embroideries was both closely observed and respected in its enactment in digital language. For example, in figure 4.1.7, the stitched text unfolded over the screen of the animation, mimicking the stitching process. This is indicative of the model of *transformational* intermediation, where one medium seeks to ‘speak in’ the language of another. As Elleström (2010:12, 13) observes: “intermediality must be understood as a bridge between medial differences that is founded on medial *similarities*” (my emphasis). The conceptual underpinning of these art-making devices continually developed into the reciprocation of insight outlined above.



Fig 4.1.7: Kai Lossgott, Reboile Motswasele and Gwenneth Miller, animation for *Bawo Thixo Somandla* (2004). The policeman and woman with red skirt were embroidered by Salaminah Motlounge and the woman washing by Tabitha Nare.

This claim can be substantiated with reference to figure 4.1.8. Here the animator combined different elements to construct a moving image of passing time: at the opening of the

animation, texture was inserted under the cut-out of a map of South Africa and then, further in the animation, a “bulldozer” is replaced by a loaded truck (the story of removals) and a Putco bus (from research into coal mines) (fig 4.1.8). Such sourcing by the animators from different narrations of the embroideries links stories by freely adding the digital artists’ understanding and interpretation of narrative ties.⁸⁴ Consequently, the resulting narrative exists *in between* several layers of personal experiences, and is typical of transmedial narratives.

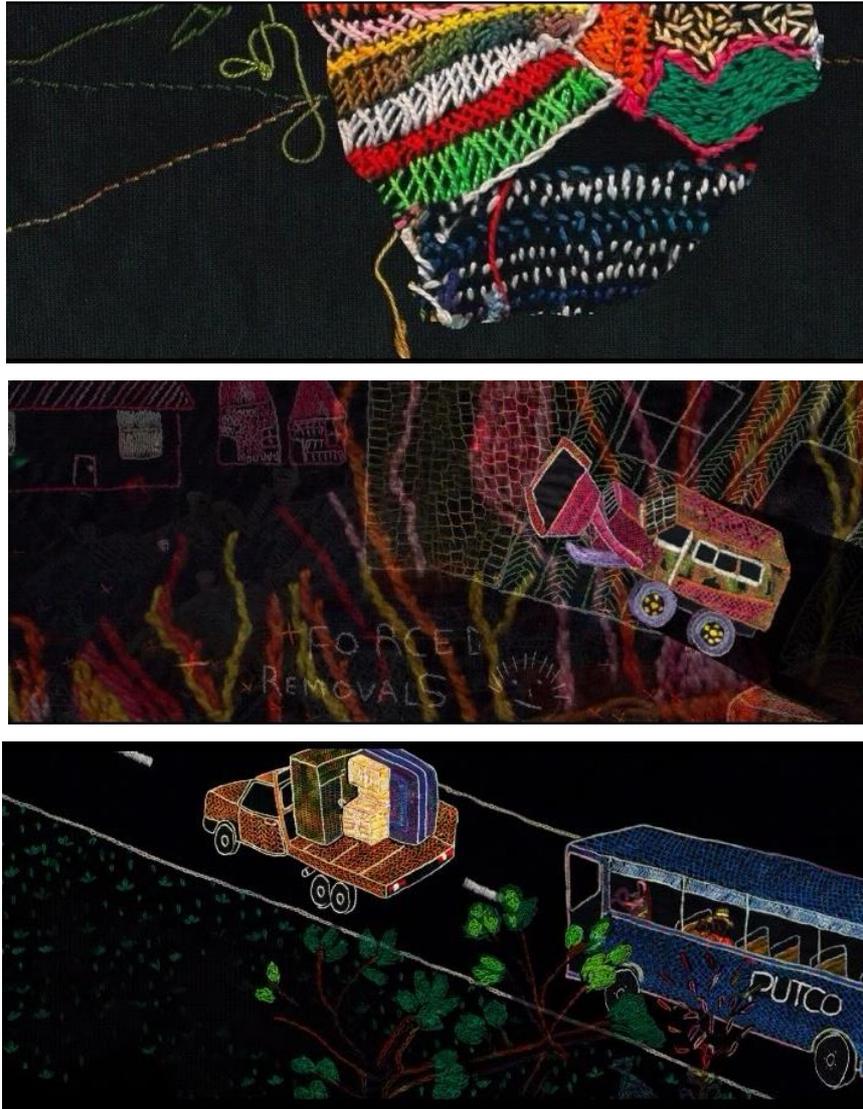


Fig 4.1.8: Sarah Fraser (animator), Lizzy Tsotetsi and Zanele Mabuza (embroiderers), animation for *The Land Act, Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

⁸⁴ Presentations by Ryan (2013/10/24) and Jenkins (2013/10/25) at an ISIS conference, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, emphasised the general trend to freely expand and reinterpret a narrative. Although this is characteristic of an oral tradition, it is in particular the industry around film, which develops games, graphic novels and advertising around the film, that brought the notion of transmedia narratives to the fore.

Implicit in reconciliation as a theme⁸⁵ is a requirement that it operates on various levels: the personal, interpersonal, intercultural and interdisciplinary. My argument is that each group (crafters, choristers and animators) retained their system of knowledge, while through the reciprocal process of negotiation they found a way to overlay their particular story, to evoke dimensions of history as interpreted by particular people. Furthermore, narrativity in the synthesis of the performance could not be illustrative and one-dimensional, but rather intermedially sensed, meaning that the practitioners from each discipline dealt with their storyline mediatically, to “think in and with their medium: enveloped in and by means of it” (Oosterling 2003:42).

In *Journey to Freedom narratives*, mediation occurred as a triangular relationship (fig 4.1.9, red arrows): as mentioned before, the music inspired the embroideries, who provided a source of translation for the animators, who in turn created the backdrop for the musical performance. In this way, all three groups of practitioners acted as mediators – or bridges – striving to produce an event of synthesis and ‘temporal order’.⁸⁶ A meaningful storyline developed according to Ryan’s (2001:2) requirement of a narrative, that it should be “held together in a sequence by relations of cause and effect”. Here also, remediation is shown to be a demonstrably functioning concept; and due to the integrity of individual artists and different disciplines, the ‘inter’ of *inter*-mediality remained intact and the tension between synthesis and multi-layered difference could be retained. The following diagram indicates the multimodal character of *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-8) and the later *Synchronic Journey* (2011):

⁸⁵ Ryan (2001:2) emphasises the thematic coherence as a requirement of a successful narrative and that “...the propositions of a narrative representation must be about a common set of referents...”.

⁸⁶ See argument for synthetic intermediality in the conclusion to this chapter.

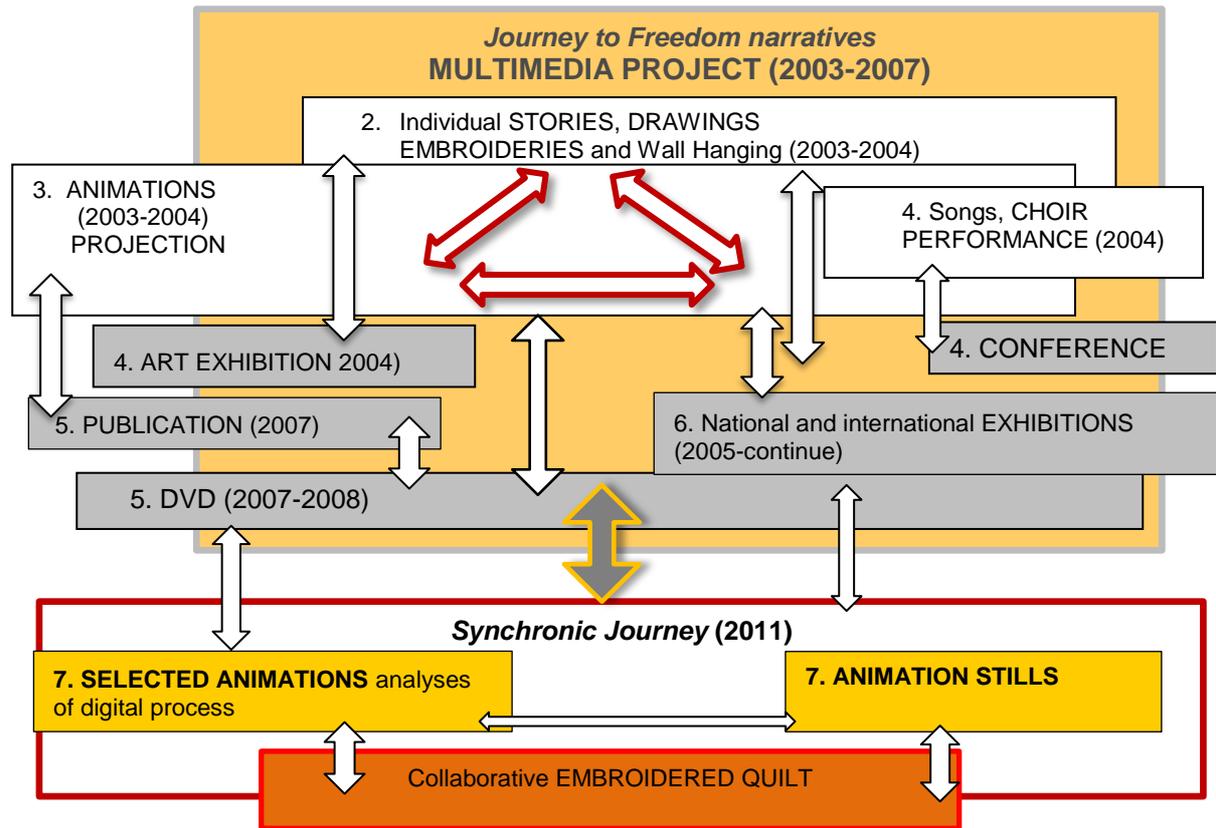


Fig 4.1.9: Gwenneth Miller, diagram (2012) of the transmedia event *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) and the secession project, *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

In this project, intermedia practice considered the collective composition of different media with inherently opposing intertextual references, while the intermedia process referred to the purposeful engagement of different media to create conceptually overlapping formal strategies. In the diagram above (fig 4.1.9) the attempt is to find visual equations to represent aspects of the project.

Journey to Freedom narratives aspires to an ideal of reconciliation that represents a productive in-between of traditional narrative characteristics and contemporary narrative styles within a digital culture. As a conversational model, this dialogue references a multiplicity of distinct languages but with “the promise of overcoming such differences” (Gallagher 2002:51). This position has been criticised for implying the imposition of prescriptive universals and erasing the right to be different.⁸⁷ However, I want to argue that the approach within the *Journey* projects ensured that narratives and conversations took place on multiple levels. In my curatorial role as both director and participating artist, I encouraged the participants to *both* acknowledge their formal and social contexts, *and* to

⁸⁷ Lyotard’s (1983) work *The differend* critiques Romantic perspectives of overcoming difference.

find ways of reciprocating with each other as artists. The plurality of conversations occasionally created overlaps and at other times maintained difference⁸⁸ whilst still working towards a collective expression.

To further address the first research question, which analyses the characteristics of intermediality and its multi-layered approach, several features can be identified as qualifying *Journey to Freedom narratives* as typical of the model of synthetic intermediality, a 'fusion' of different media into a qualified super-medium. Given its political connotations, this model can be said to be rooted in the concept of synthetic intermedia as *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Schröter 2011:3),⁸⁹ "...understood as the expression of a cultural-political project to present the reflective and synthesising powers of the arts as coherently and poignantly as possible in order to represent a collective identity" (Oosterling 1999:9). The cathartic borderline experience typical of synthetic intermediality, creates "...the 'intermedium' that supposedly is more than the sum of its parts" (Schröter 2011:2). In the following two sections (4.1.3 and 4.1.4), I will consider both alignment to and deviation from this model by highlighting the differences between the conventional and the unconventional, the analogue and the digital.

The limitations of the first *Journey project* were addressed in the second project.⁹⁰ Critical re-contextualisation evolved through the construction and documentation of the final work and the accompanying texts. This reflective process led on to the creation of *Synchronic Journey* (2011). Compared with the earlier project, *Synchronic Journey* (2011) embodies the aesthetic of greater and more clearly articulated fissure and disruption evident in contemporary digital culture. As such, it was able to shift the nature of the outcomes beyond the boundaries of the earlier approaches.

4.1.3 Delineating difference in narrative qualities between the stitched and the animated art work

Literary criticism provided me with ways to identify difference in the narrative quality of the artworks that extends into interdisciplinarity. Ryan's (2005:1) *Transmedia storytelling as a form of art* (presented at ISIS 2013/10/24) was particularly useful in opening up definitions to embrace various media, while-emphasising that not all media offer similar capacities for narrative and that each offers a unique supplement in terms of narrative potential. These

⁸⁸ Gallagher quotes Gadamer when he refers to the "unavoidability of the hermeneutic standpoint" (2002:52).

⁸⁹ Both Oosterling (2003) and Schröter (2011) outline a critical reflection of synthetic intermediality. Schröter (2011:3) calls it "a concretized utopia".

⁹⁰ Including the conventional format of narrating such as linear timeline.

insights specifically informed the *Journey* projects. Ryan also identifies certain characteristics of transmedia narratives, which were considered in the table below.⁹¹

Table 4.1: Comparison between traditional and non-traditional characteristics of narratives

Characteristics of traditional narratives:	Non-traditional (postmodern or influenced by digital culture):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains characters or/and objects (Ryan 2005:4) • a temporal sequence: order and time (Prince 1982:4) • characters and structure often dichotomous/binary (either good or bad, or left or right) (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5-7) • moral and order: motivation and goals (Ryan 2005:4) • a plot-centred group of causal events that have some relations between them (Ryan 2005:4; Deleuze & Guattari 2004:6) • a sense of unity with a clear beginning, middle and end (Werner Wolf 2013:180) • suspense and closure (Wolf 2005:85) • measurability in units (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:9) • all of these factors need to create a believable world in the reader’s mind (Ryan 2005:4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anti-narrative and non-linear, sometimes cyclical structures (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:6, 23)⁹² • the crossing of time in haphazard ways (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5-7) • often multifaceted through structure (ambiguous or fluid) (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5-7) • multimodal (Hoffmann 2010:1) • non-causal events (Hoffmann 2010:3) • circuitous (Heartney 2008:124) • developed within a metaphoric setting (Ryan 2001) • a shift from parody to pastiche reflecting a loss of coherence (Jameson 1983:115) • gradable: instead of the exclusionary view, the perspective is that narratives are gradable or “scalar”, allowing more flexibility than a binary of “in or out” ruling (Wolf 2003:181); therefore “narrativity is a matter of degree” (Ryan 2001) and varieties of measurement can be applied (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:9)

The traditional versus non-traditional comparison above is in itself structurally dichotomous – the practical experience of the *Journey* projects revealed that the divisions are far less rigid. Therefore the notion that ‘difference’ points to ‘dichotomies’ proved to be problematic as the *Journey* projects unfolded and is more fully resolved in *Synchronic Journey* (2011). In reference to research question two, this research considers the extent to which difference can be delineated to anticipate potential change. The experimental practice of the collaborative project further revisits possible grey areas and interweaves strands of theory. The lists collated above are not exclusive, for the nature of intermediality⁹³ implies

⁹¹ Note that the compilation of these lists was also an outcome led by the experience of the processes of the *Journey* projects, yet at the same time the articulation of these two lists is used as a basis to isolate differences within the *Journey* projects as reflexive consideration.

⁹² Deleuze and Guattari (2004:6, 23) formulated the rhizomatic structure as the nature of relations and movement, and state that text is always under construction with “neither beginning nor end, from which it grows and which it overflows”.

⁹³ Manovich (2001:56) indicates that new media is of a “liquid” nature.

diversified rather than standardised order. However, these compiled lists are a point of departure to construct an understanding of reciprocal exchange. As a deduction from the list of differences, five points are highlighted and discussed below:

4.1.3.1 *Multimodality and convergence: moving from monologue to group narratives.*

'Multimodality' relates to the character of medium (the substance through which something is created) and mode (a social context of material relating to meaning) (Kress 2010:114) whilst 'convergence' relates to the *process* of cross-cultural and cross-medial movement of both influence and dispersion. In the complex media-scape of this century, some narrative styles have shifted from the monologue to those of a participatory culture, producing a 'storytelling apparatus' that differs substantially from the conventions of the past.⁹⁴ The complexity can be found in an understanding of the present convergent culture. "A group in its whole can put together knowledge in a more complex way [than] any individual is capable of doing" (Jenkins 2013:[sp]).⁹⁵ As seen in the previous section, a similar multifaceted philosophy was applied to the *Journey* projects as the narratives are rearticulated by various people and through various media.

In the case of the *Journey* projects, a resulting embroidered panel is in itself multimodal, involving stories, drawings, influence of songs and embroidery. The project reflects convergence through the *process* of shifting the dynamic of the narrative to different groups to-enact in their own terms. The *Journey* stories speak about isolation *and* its reverse, integration, from the perspectives of different groups of South Africans. The range of platforms used in the *Journey* projects serves to connect alternating interpretations. In general, traditional narratives are told in one format – for example in a single artwork and with a single author/artist – whilst new media narratives are told over diverse platforms which ultimately involve practitioners from different disciplines (these could include an author, a scriptwriter, several animators, editors, researchers, and a director, amongst others).

The narrative threads evolve as the narrative migrates over different platforms (Miller 2007:78). For example, Nare's embroidery depicting the struggle of a working mother is

⁹⁴ The desire to illuminate difference between old and new media could be criticised as a dichotomous action that does not belong to contemporary thinking, yet classification is necessary before one can realise and articulate the grey areas. Manovich (2003:4) writes, "all artists now, regardless of their preferred media, also routinely use digital computers to create, modify and produce works". He concludes that it is vital to understand the "deeper conceptual, ideological or aesthetic issues".

⁹⁵ Jenkins' lecture on intermedia phenomena at the ISIS 2013 conference expanded on this perspective. Along with lectures by Ryan and Peach, Jenkins' perspective can be accessed on the conference website:<http://film.sapientia.ro/en/conferences/rethinking-intermediality-in-the-digital-age>. Even though this observation cannot be applied in all instances, the context of Jenkins' statement needs to be kept in mind as he refers specifically to the influence of internet and new media culture.

enclosed in a single frame (fig 4.1.10) and enlarged upon in the extended narrative animation *Bawo Thixo Somandla* by Lossgott (in collaboration with Miller and Motswasele) (fig 4.1.10). The opening frame introduced the image of a beating heart that symbolised the plight of the woman. The animation's narrative concluded with a woman crying, her heart completely filling the full screen (fig 4.1.11). The narrative has a cyclical complexity and unfolds in a convergence of several embroideries (Thabita Nare, Nomsa Ndala, Salaminah Motloun and Lindo Mnguni), the words and melody of the song *Bawo Thixo Somandla* (composed by AAM Matyila, arranged by MJ Khumalo) and the interpretation and digital rendering of the animators (Lossgott, Miller and Motswasele).

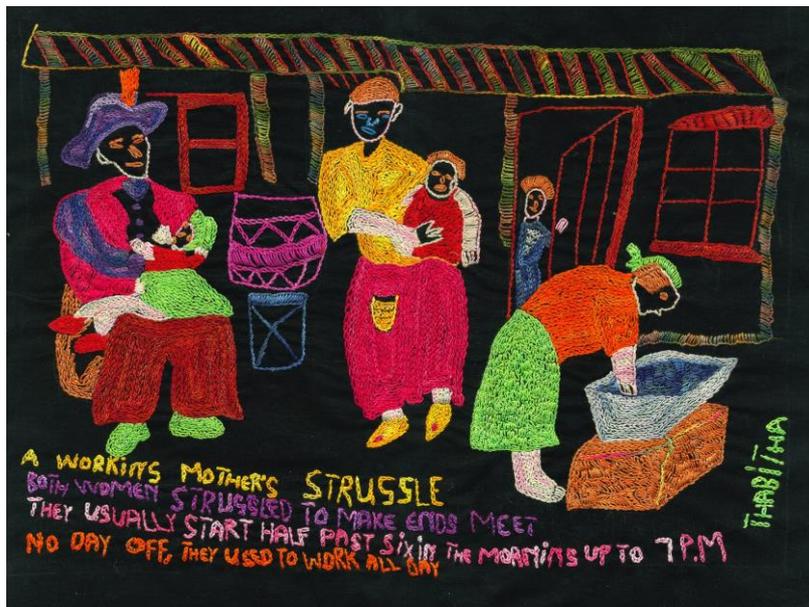


Fig 4.1.10: Thabita Nare, detail from *Journey to Freedom* narratives (2004).



Fig 4.1.11: Kai Lossgott, Gwenneth Miller and Reboile Motswasele, animation for *Bawo Thixo Somandla*, *Journey to Freedom* narratives (2003-2007).

Continual dialogues took place across the platforms of various groups since process and outcome were considered equally important, leading to characteristics of convergence (shifts due to multiple versions) in the narratives. Due to the differing objectives of the two projects, the narrative of *Journey to Freedom* displays more linearity in its collective nature. In response to the second research question that aims to delineate contrasts between digital and analogue forms, the emphasis in the example discussed above lies in the differences as singular (monologue of embroiderers) against collaborative (group narratives as manifested in the animations).

4.1.3.2 From specific to metaphoric setting

In an embroidered work by Boitumelo, a solitary figure lies on the ground, with a surrounding layer of red stitching suggesting blood (fig 4.1.12). This portrays a singular event, an outcome from a particular narrative. Although the embroideries and the animation *We shall overcome* contain the same subjects, these characters shift as they 'enter' the digital world. Once the figure becomes part of the animation, the image is rendered to begin filling the pictorial field with the red stitching or 'blood' (fig 4.1.12), which spreads out to a repetition in wave-like 'brush strokes' to the song's refrain, so emphasising the sorrow of suppression.⁹⁶ In the animation, text was introduced, sourced from a speech made by Nelson Mandela.⁹⁷ As a painter, my reading of this flow of densely layered and textured digitalised stitching was that the characteristics of both the stitch and the digital became translated into the motion and tactility of painting, where the 'fleshiness' of paint conceptually could become another encoding for the physical suffering of people. The single embroidered incident expands to become a metaphor for suffering in a larger sense. In this way, the animation creates two further conventions of narrative: the shift of the anecdotal into the universal and of the particular into the metaphoric.



⁹⁶ By applying Adobe Photoshop's rubber stamp tool, the sense of width of the brush is suggested. By applying the understanding of surface-directional motion one would apply in painting, the resulting effect is painterly.

⁹⁷ As part of the speech that Mandela made with the inauguration as president (De Jager 2010:105), the text used is: "I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination."



Fig 4.1.12: Top: Boitumelo, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2004). Bottom: Gwenneth Miller and Nicole Vinokur, animation for *We shall overcome, Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

Just as the song *We shall overcome*, although originating during the period of slavery in the American South, has subsequently become an international ‘anthem’ for people under suppression, so the moving images evoke this sense of universality.

In summary, the bold single frame narrative characteristic of the embroidered image that presents the death of an individual creates the visual formal foundation for the digital narrative to extend the narrative to a metaphor for universal suffering. The relationship between simplicity and ambiguity should not be read as hierarchical, but rather as based on a mutual respect and consideration of visual languages⁹⁸ that attempt to create a reciprocal relationship between valued perspectives.

4.1.3.3 *The body and the machine as process*

One aspect to be considered is the incommensurability of textile work and digital art, embroidery being a direct medium using thread and cloth, and animation being indirect and requiring software and computers. In craft, a bodily presence is implied in the linking of the hand with the material of the object. By comparison, the digital image is highly mediated through a process involving scanners, software programmes, the stylus pen and the computer mouse. As image it always remains a mediated code of pixels that come together only via the interface of the screen of the computer or the projected light of the data projector. The separation of data structures and the final display the viewer engages with contrasts with the processes of embroidery, where the time taken and the manual act

⁹⁸ “Visual Language” refers to the formal considerations of visual art: the fact that visual data has its own grammar in the elements and principles of art means that one can interpret principles such as composition, harmony, rhythm and sequential unfolding. For further reading see Feldman (1992) or Cohn (2007, 2013).

required creating each stitch is understood and evident. According to Walker (2006:118), the pace of making a traditional artwork could relate to an ‘agricultural’ slowness (which can be better expressed as pre-industrial slowness) in comparison to speed of layering in the animation process. However, this idea is highly flawed because technological techniques involve time-consuming processes. Walker sets up negative reflections of traditional art forms and assumes overt ease in digital art forms.

The difference is better articulated through the visibility of processes. The traces of the embroidery processes are clear, visible and tactile, as demonstrated in figure 4.1.13. By contrast, the processes involving software are invisible in the final outcome (fig 4.1.14). The viewer seldom understands whether the artist has worked with, for example, Adobe Premier or 3-DMax, or with filters and masks, in creating the animation.



Fig 4.1.13: Thembi Mabizela, drawing and embroidery detail of *Journey to Freedom* narratives (2003-2007).



Fig 4.1.14: Greg Miller, *When the Saints go marching in*, *Journey to Freedom* narratives (2003-2007).

The tactility of the textured embroidered cottons on fabric contrasts with the transparency of the animations, just as the experience of intimacy inherent in the stitching process contrasts with the removed working surfaces of the digital artist. With regard to the question of differences, the dissimilarity between embroidery and animation techniques emphasises the incommensurability of making and medium.

4.1.3.4 *Sequence: time and movement*

Discourse around narratives acknowledges that static images have a limited ability to deal with the passage of time (Wolf 2013:180). Whilst the single frame can imply a narrow window of time via the compositional devices of sequence, repetition and format, animation best captures a sense of temporal motion. The difference can be illustrated by referencing the embroidered image of graves by Julie Mokoena (fig 4.1.15). Formally, the repetition suggests the multitude and the vastness of the site and the event. Importantly though, the image seems frozen in time, both formally and psychologically.



Fig 4.1.15: Julie Mokoena, detail from *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2004).

The storyline inherent in *Journey to Freedom narratives* and the size of the project suggest duration of time. The sequential embroidered stills do not follow an entirely linear time narrative, as the events were not relayed to mimic an exact and real time frame, but rather to acknowledge the apartheid years as well as the freedom and positive qualities experienced after democracy. The grid of the wall hanging indicates linearity in its unfolding: it can be read left to right and top to bottom (fig 4.1.16 and fig 4.1.17).



Fig 4.1.16: *Journey to Freedom narratives collaborative*, detail from *Journey to Freedom narratives wall hanging* (2004).



Fig 4.1.17: *Journey to Freedom narratives collaborative*, detail from *Journey to Freedom narratives wall hanging* (2004).

Ryan (1999:122) suggests that two types of time play out in narratives: real-time and ‘map-in-time’.⁹⁹ The animations montage several of the embroidered frames into a more literal sense of time passing, as can be seen in Greg Miller’s animation *Nkosi Sikele’iAfrika* (a struggle song), where the collated images form a very long frame that “rolls” past to relay the motion (fig 4.1.18). As one of the early animations, it shows a strong influence of the simplistic structure of the embroideries, maintaining a linear storyline. However, a free association of the basic narratives becomes interwoven in true transmedia narrative mode.

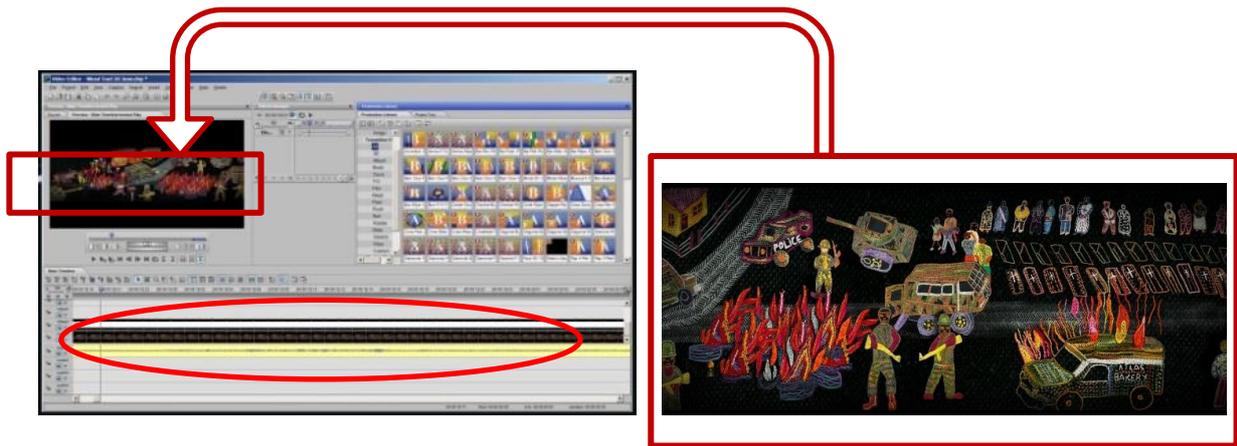


Fig 4.1.18: Greg Miller, screen shot showing the singular composed image (circled red) for the animation of *Nkosi Sikele’iAfrika*, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

A more complex representation of time and sequence is reflected in the twisting and turning of *Hymn to Freedom* (fig 4.1.19) animated by Greg Miller in 3DMax. The narrative metaphor takes place in 3-dimensional space and reflects the complexity of overcoming linearity to construct various dimensions.

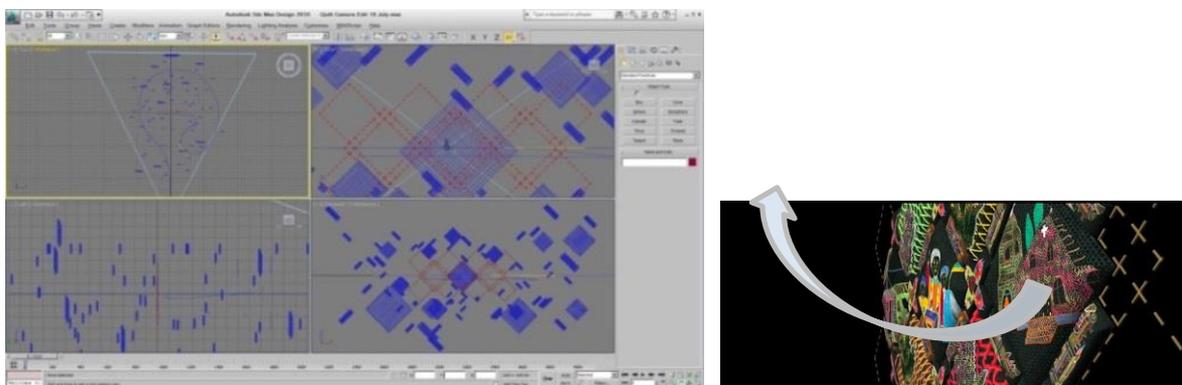


Fig 4.1.19: Left: Greg Miller, planning the angles and 3-D shifts (2004). Right: stills from *Hymn to Freedom*: the arrow is overlaid to indicate the movement of the turn of the image in space, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

⁹⁹ These could be the setting, the characters, the objects, the sound, the speech, etc.

4.1.3.5 Differing contexts

Once we acknowledge that technological mediation is a general condition of culture and we recognise that this mediation is not neutral, not to be understood under the sign of the tool, we are compelled to look seriously at the object as a material construct. (Poster 1996:[sp])

The reference above places differences between the two media as philosophically and contextually significant. The digital translation of the threads of the embroidery develops a narrative line that links different cultures and times. All art methodologies and content developments are built on the foundations of the art practices and social pre-judgements that preceded them, and so too are many of the inscribed techniques and cultural and political innuendos in the digital images shown here. For example, Afro-American quilting, and its associations with the era of slavery, has been used as a cross-reference, as in the digital animation of *The Hymn to Freedom* (fig 4.1.19) referred to above. A sense of flux is emphasised in the animation, and this could be interpreted as relating to a political turn of events for the better. The technical therefore becomes a layer of mediation for evoking and considering cultural implications. Poster (1995a:4, 2006:116) maintains that the “work of art is always mediated as are all cultural objects, a lesson that deconstruction has taught us well”. In this regard, the differences in the materiality, their socio-political associations, and the condition of their cultural impact on technology (old and new) need to be considered.

Journey to Freedom narratives (2003-2007) deals with a ‘given’ history, while, generally speaking, new media narratives allow open-ended and nonlinear approaches, so that Lunenfeld (1999:7) can refer to the “electronic times and places in which we live” as “an unfinished and unfinishable essay”. This contrasts with traditions of craftsmanship which not only carried over consistent traditions, but considered a well-made product to be resolved by an artist “who manually assembled textual, visual and/or audio elements into a particular composition or a sequence” captured in a specific material that remains constant (Manovich 1999:7).

By contrast, Manovich (2003) suggests that new media may be presented in any one of five categories (discussed in Chapter 2). In relation to the new terrain searched for in research question two, it needs to be pointed out that variability stimulates new associations in a variety of contexts. For example, in *Journey to Freedom narratives*, the animations were presented in the form of projections during the performance, in a DVD format inserted as part of the publication, and sections of it exist on the internet.¹⁰⁰ This possibility influences the way we tell our stories: with open-ended suspense and an understanding of process.

¹⁰⁰ Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwK_JuJla9o

This carefully considered project opened up the potential of innovative art making practices and contemporary narratives as the processes of writing and making unfolded. The constant testing and readjustment that is required came via the collaboration within and across group-mediated differences.

Intermedia analyses of *Journey to Freedom narratives* implied that these differences allowed the grey areas to appear. The dissimilar positions and characteristics brought new associations into existing media, which will be the focus of potential hybridity that led to *Synchronic Journey*.

4.1.4 Intermedia processes as *existing* hybridity of the narratives in *Synchronic Journey* (2011)

Evidence of reciprocity in process of intermedial narratives that reveal new contributions is at the heart of this exhibition room. This section therefore addresses my third research question: could processes as *established hybridity* provide an indication of reciprocity and transformation?

Critical reflection on the first *Journey* (2003-2007) project analysed hybridity in relation to the second initiative (2011) with a view to addressing the limitations of reciprocity in the traditional component of the *Journey* project. Discussion of hybridity here relates to Schröter's category of synthetic intermediality, namely a fusion that invigorates and regenerates borderline experiences to alter horizons (2011:2). For Schröter (2011:3), the hybrid results in a "cognitive assimilation", in other words, adjustment, whether by overcoming the numbness of ordinariness (associated with tradition), or breaking up habits of perception.

In this concluding part of this section, I will now reflect on the relationship between hybridity and transformation of intermedia narratives via a focus on *Synchronic Journey* (2011). Due to the understanding they gained, the embroiderers developed the narrative structure for *Synchronic Journey* (2011) (fig 4.1.20) and the seamless flow of multi-layered narratives in this complex work evokes repetitive rhythms.



Fig 4.1.20: C&I, *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

Synchronic Journey (2011) (fig 4.1.20) merges narratives in a new format, allowing open-ended interpretations yet presenting a loose structure to guide the viewer. The basic structure of the panel could be described in five circular designs, with links built into it. The metaphorical labyrinth suggests both dead ends and complex choices, thus:

- The outer circle contains merged images in a rendition of pain and brutality.
- The second circle's 'entrance' and 'exits' portray politicians responsible for change.
- The third circle contains conflicting actions of pain and hope.
- The fourth circle is a narrative of positive events.
- The inner circle depicts opportunities for culture, health and education.

CdV (2011) stated in the exhibition pamphlet:

The current collaboration engages with the theme of the labyrinth and knot. These are metaphors of rhythmic movement, continuous annulment and reconstruction. The stitch moves from the centre to the periphery and back, following the path of hand and heart. In a similar way, narrative construction is often circular instead of linear. The stitched anecdotes and characters in the artwork branch out and intersect forming an interdisciplinary cartographical structure depicting our recent South African history, iconography, disorientation and eventual mediated knowledge.

Although much of *Synchronic Journey's* (2011) power remains in the craftsmanship of its embroidery, I have argued that it features influences from new media traditions that indicate strong departures from the traditional model. This indicates that transformational intermediality became a part of innovation, which can be read in the context and dislocation. Deleuze and Guattari (2004:11) maintain that deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are always “caught up in one another” and *related* in their processes. The multiple dialogues that develop within these systems already contain elements of each other, but are not necessarily linearly linked. Throughout the processes of developing the multifaceted *Journey* projects, the principle of collaboration demanded ongoing flexibility – to leave the foundation of cultural and formal comfort for unpredictable reshaping of thinking and making. The project confronts participant and viewer with cultural and technical divergence.

The aesthetic of new software media involved here employs the compositional characteristics of “hot spots”. Manovich (2003:12-13) explains this phenomenon as occurring when: “an image retains its representational function while at the same time is treated as a set of hot spots (‘image-map’). This is the standard convention in interactive multimedia, computer games and Web pages”. *Synchronic Journey* (2011) (fig 4.1.20) takes on some of these qualities, as it enacts a multiple-event layout. It conceptually engages the viewer whose own associations cause potential alternative narratives to be brought to the works. These applications were innovative and can be regarded as a unique strategy in a South African tradition of embroidery, which speaks about an intermedial dialogue between old and new.

Linking form and concept, the narrative threads of history (stories over time) are suggested in the animations’ transparent layers, using visual repetition and horizontal movement as in *Vukani Mawethu* (fig 4.1.21). The walking figures included in the detail of *Synchronic Journey* (2011) (fig 4.1.22) include the horizontal movement. Thus, as the animations

reciprocated the embroidery processes, here the embroidery responds in including suggestions of motion and indicating depth in the smaller stitches. Walking figures are also repeated. For example in (fig 4.1.23): two figures now appear sporadically in places, not necessarily in logical order, but more in the sense of a continual presence of witnesses to a complex reality. Two characters: the woman in the red dress with green sleeves and the mother with baby wrapped in a blue blanket, appear repeatedly within the storyline of *Journey to Freedom narratives*. This application of repetition as motion from the animation *Vukani Mawethu* is applied in *Synchronic Journey* (2011) (fig 4.1.23). The traditional narrative structure of the earlier embroideries of *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) positioned characters clearly in singular narrative events (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5-7). The assimilated digital narrative style in *Synchronic Journey* (2011) reflects a hybrid narrative style with non-causal events (Hoffmann 2010:3) that is self-referential (Heartney 2008:124).

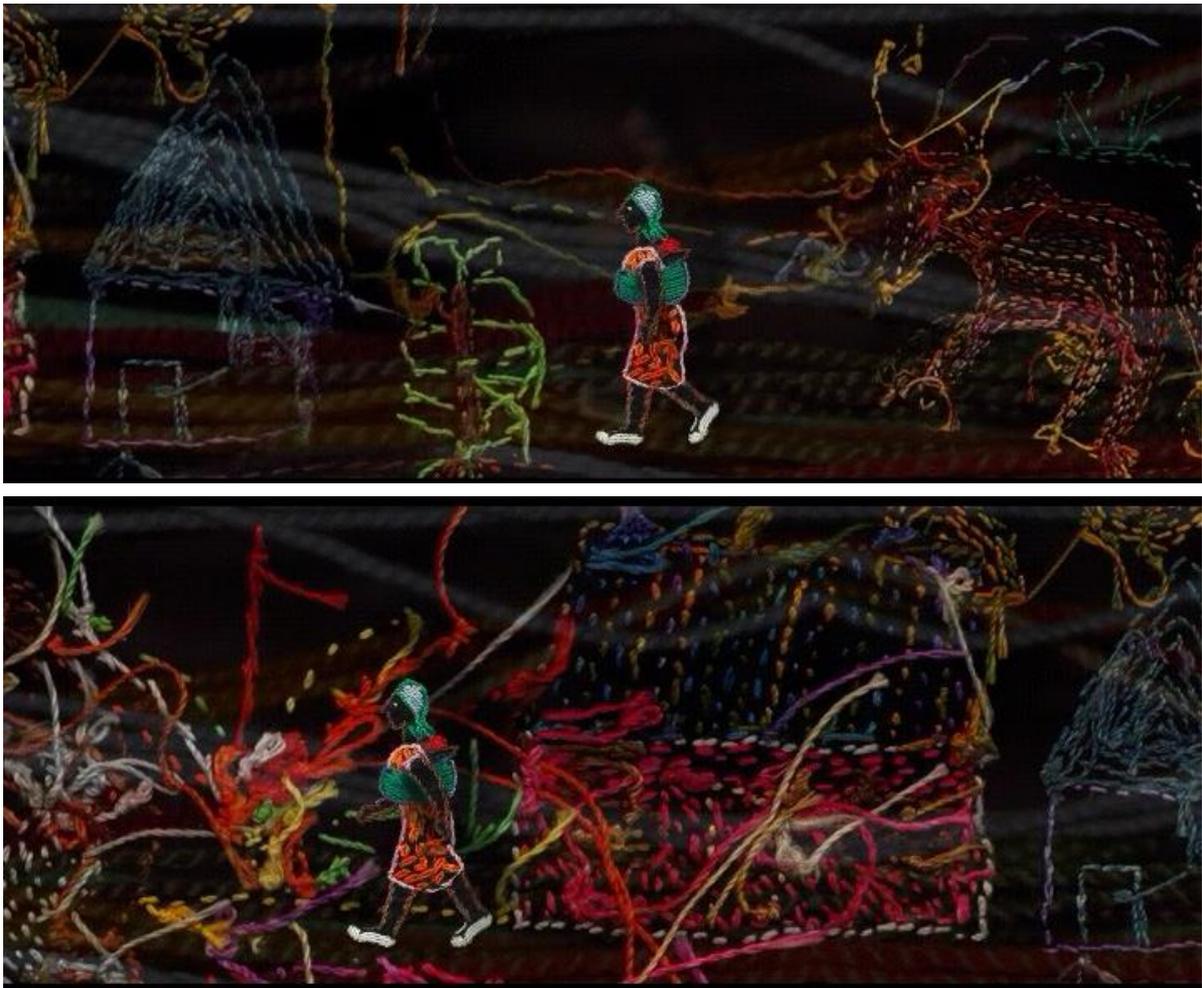


Fig 4.1.21: Sarah Fraser, animation for *Vukani Mawethu*, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

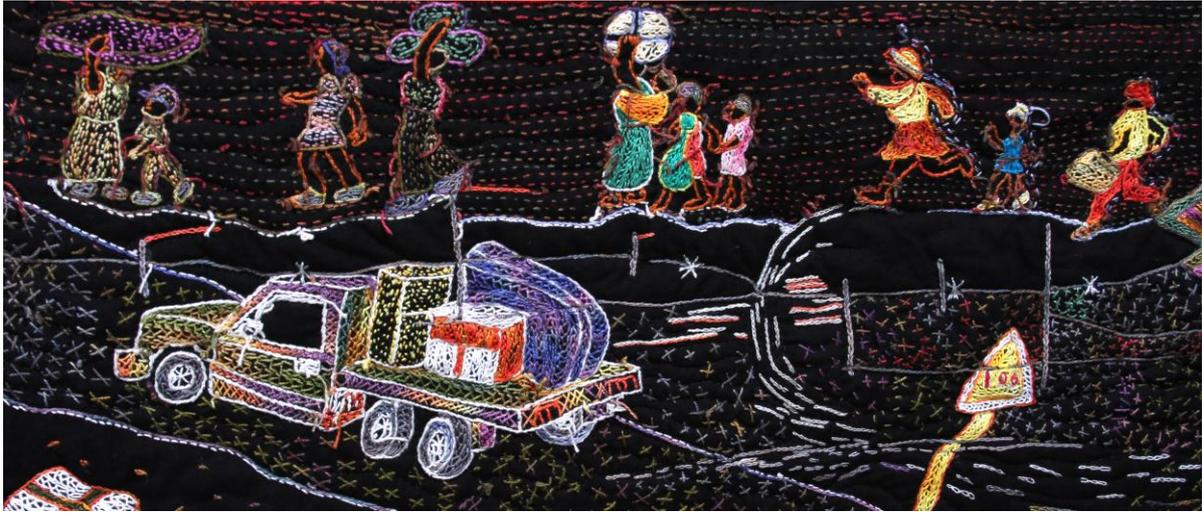


Fig 4.1.22: C&I, detail of *Synchronic Journey* (2011).



Fig 4.1.23: C&I, detail of *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

Overlaid stories are told through the formal qualities of the loose thread (scans of the back of embroideries) as evidence of chaos (fig 4.1.24) in the animations. Similarly, the layers of

merging in *Synchronic Journey* (2011) illustrate the complexity of multiple viewpoints that seldom tell a single story.



Fig 4.1.24: Top: Sarah Fraser, animation for *Vukani Mawethu / Wake up my countrymen, Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007). Bottom: C&I, details from *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

The metaphor of shadow implies a hidden dimension, and along with the illusion of depth, it evokes spacial complexity and movement in *Synchronic Journey* (2011) (fig 4.1.25). The application of these elements appears for the first time in Intuthuko's work and is a significant innovation for the embroiderers. This echoes the premise expressed that hybridity provides the productive context for new knowledge. The visual tensions evoked by the stitched shadows (fig 4.1.25) developed alongside the understanding of the more complex reality of freedom and change. Furthermore, in the embroidered works, forms and figures seem to fall out of themselves, disintegrating to evoke motion, as if involved in a mini-narrative of dynamic energy influenced by the animation.

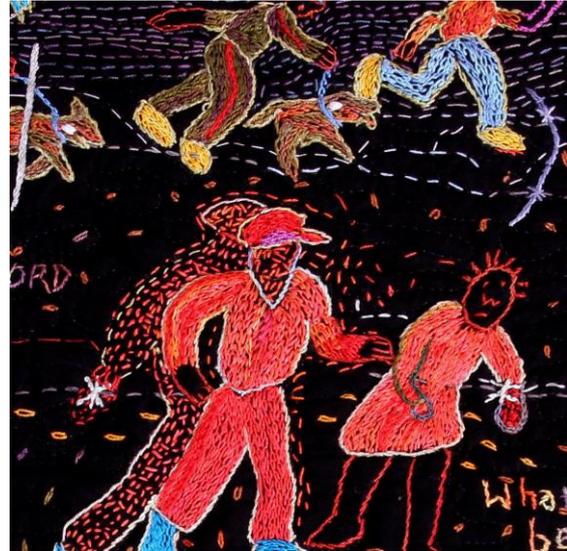
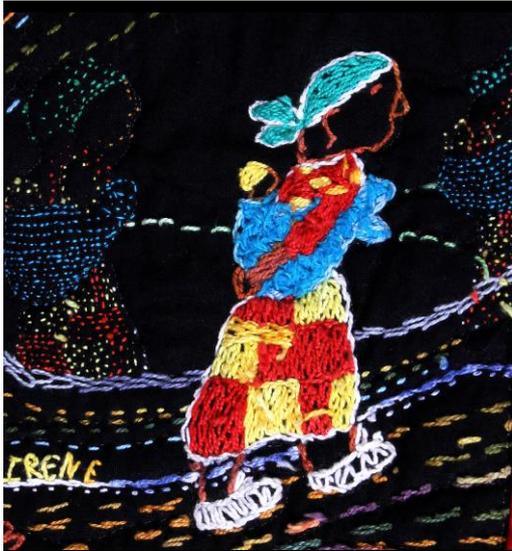


Fig 4.1.25: C&I, detail of *Synchronic Journey* (2011). Transparency suggested in finer stitches, outlines softened in areas.

The hybridised *Synchronic Journey* bird (fig 4.1.26) becomes an intermediary figure: somewhere between animation and embroidery, it occupies a space between the beauty of the symbolism of the bird and an awkward creature captured in between the time lines of the animation and the thread lines of the embroidery.

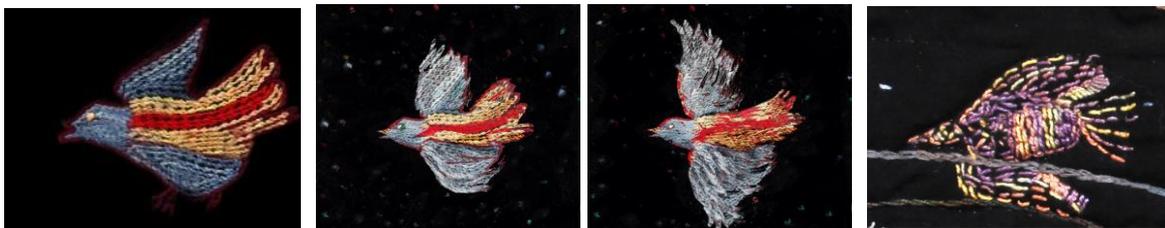


Fig 4.1.26: Left: Embroidered bird detail in *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007). Two central images: animated bird as screensaver by GM for the performance *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2004). Right: embroidered bird in *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

In figure 4.1.27, the twist in perspective is visually expedited by the representation of clashes, such as a car accident, or a woman stumbling over her feet, resulting in a change of orientation in the reading of the images. The unexpected spacial orientation of the animated *Hymn to Freedom* uses a similar disruption, invoking a sense of dramatic movement. The dynamism is increased substantially in *Synchronic Journey* (2011) and is a filmic hybrid, a device used to depict distorted time and space. As considered at the introduction of section 4.1.3 dealing with delineating difference, the traditional causal unfolding of time (Ryan 2005:4) is here merged with the narrative qualities of new media that tend to cross time in a more haphazard manner (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:5-7). This project, created specifically within the set curatorial parameters of *TRANSCODE*, represents an inversion of linear traditional approaches so as to embrace the non-linear,

cyclical structures “from which it grows and which it overflows”. (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:6, 23).

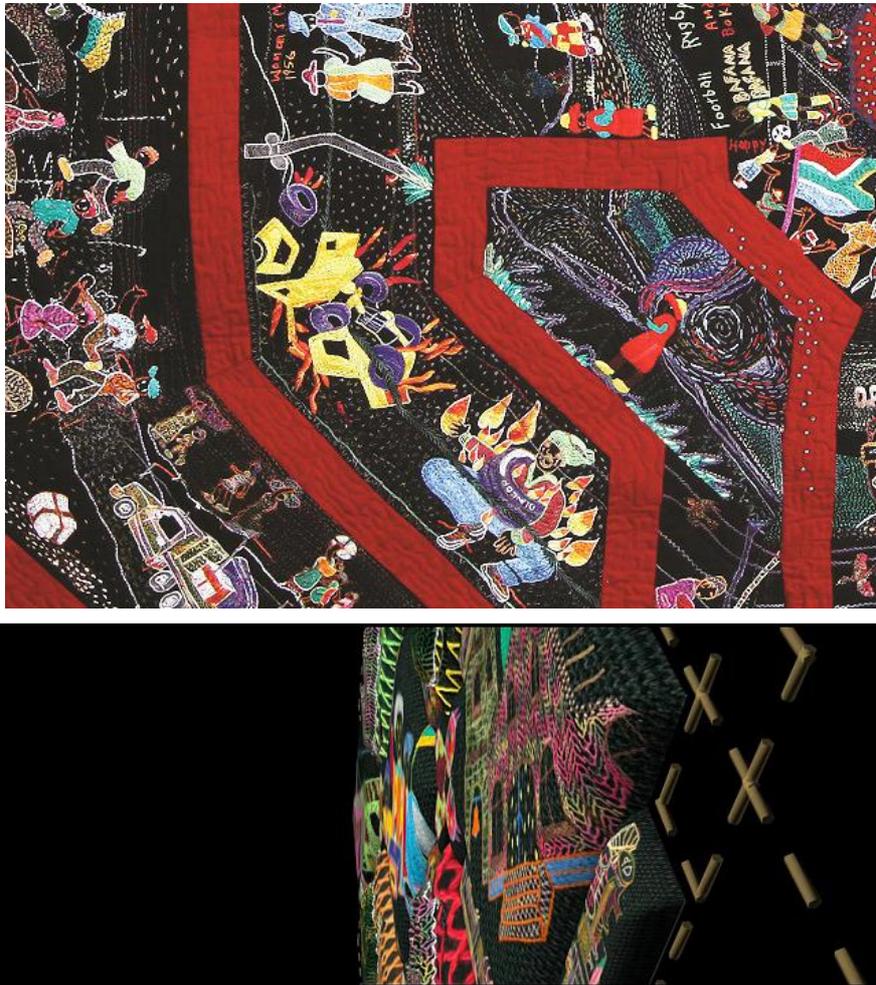


Fig 4.1.27: Top: C&I, Detail of *Synchronic Journey* (2011). Bottom: Screen grab from *Hymn to Freedom* animation, *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007).

To reflect on the processes and changes, CdV and I constructed a large over-simplified visual diagram to ‘mind map’ the relationship between the projects (fig 4.1.28 and fig 4.1.29). This revealed the conversation between the animations and the embroideries, and enhanced an understanding of the working processes and strata within the methodology. However, I am now critical of the structure of the mind map, since the rigid grid harks back to the format of *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) without cognisance of the shifts and flows suggested in *Synchronic Journey* (2011). Considered reflexively, even this auto-critique of the ‘rigid structure’ shows the creative process as incorporating re-evaluating/revising preliminary hypotheses and findings, which is also part of a dialectical process. The construction of the storyboard was in itself a way of thinking through the influences and flow of images and it indicates a flow of information towards the process of innovation. The first three rows contain details of the sketches, the front and the back of

embroideries from *Journey to Freedom narratives*; the three middle rows capture stills of animations from *Journey to Freedom narratives*; and the last two rows reveal hybrid qualities in *Synchronic Journey*. These are discussed in more detail further in this section. The free flow of stories into one another was a result of considering structural language of art and reconciling manipulation of medium. In the exhibition, the mind map was placed facing a screen that played a role in the selection of animations of *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) and next to *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) wall hanging.



Fig 4.1.28: CdV and GM, mind map of a selection of images from *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007) and *Synchronic Journey* (2011).

As discussed in this section, the animations presented alternative narrative structures and images to the embroiderers' traditional images and storylines. This led to the possibility of embroiderers gaining an understanding of a more flexible narrative structure in their work. The animations proposed that *Synchronic Journey* (2011) could uncover new meanings of

an already hybrid visuality: residual “leftovers” from the embroideries of the first *Journey* project could be re-interpreted. The word choice of “leftovers” is strategic for the following reasons: in general, older traditions are viewed to be in need of being ‘recovered’ and until recirculated and resurfaced, often lack the dynamics to compete with the latest developments in art.



Fig 4.1.29: CdV and GM, in the process of constructing and critically analysing the mind map from the *Journey projects* (2003-2011) in the Unisa Art Gallery (2011).

Reviewing the artist as researcher, it is our task to reinvigorate or reaffirm in order to present new knowledge. As a research project, *Synchronic Journey* reviews cultural and personal perspectives we bring to traditions. Through this, CdV and I attempt to reconstruct embroidery’s value anew, “whether to discard and leave behind or to bring it back into circulation” (Olalquiaga in Holly & Smith 2008:43).¹⁰¹ Manovich (2003:65) describes new media art as “mutable” and “liquid”, and it is these qualities that redefine the embroidery in *Synchronic Journey*. The discussion here indicates how individual embroiderers connected units by shifts, repetitive rhythms, layered embroidery and textured patterning to blend and unify their compositional structure and obtain a variety of perspectives. The perspectives of interruption challenge the earlier simplicity of the embroideries of *Journey to Freedom narratives*.

As a contribution to intermedia discourse, *Synchronic Journey* (2011) can be seen as original creative work stimulating a cross-pollination of narratives. Rich traditions of embroidery projects and textile work in South Africa are documented and debated in several sources (Lijnes 1999; Cook & MacDowell 2005; Schmahmann 2000 & 2006), yet

¹⁰¹ Olalquiaga (in Holly & Smith 2008:43) suggests that research leads us to these choices.

little research exists around the inter-relation of embroidery and digital work in South Africa. The *Journey* projects are unique and innovative in this respect, as through their re-contextualisation the interrelation of craft and animation is made tangible inside a conceptual, interdisciplinary arena into which few other embroidery projects have ventured.¹⁰² The relationship of art forms in *the Journey* projects is an engaging one, with interesting hybrids that opened new areas for creative exploration in *Synchronic Journey*. I was able to identify formal cross-influences between the animations and the embroideries. The double aim was to afford the outreach group tools to expand their language of expression in an innovative manner. In a sense, the process came full circle in its cycle of reflective consideration. I identified how these projects articulated the relationship between culture and technology, further explained by Jenkins as follows: “culture precedes technological change, but technology amplifies the trends in culture and makes them available to a much larger segment of the population” (Jenkins interviewed by Peter Zak).¹⁰³ So when ideas are expressed via different media platforms, their information becomes influenced from the various ‘ends’ – Jenkins speaks of top-down and bottom-up pressures of affect, but I prefer to articulate this rather as culturally and technologically dissimilar perspectives that impress upon one-another.

In the introduction (Chapter 1), I referred to the criticism levelled at the category of Synthetic Intermediality and its association with the politics of totality regarding the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This was an early concern for me around the *Journey to Freedom narratives*, due to the strong political aims of reconciliation. *Synchronic Journey* overcame this challenge as it reclaimed a much-valued openness, and the creative process celebrated a certain freedom from the initial prescriptive political story. *Synchronic Journey* does this by “literally playing out the self-destructiveness of metanarratives”, to quote Oosterling (2003:33).¹⁰⁴ Through their dialogue between opposites, and their acknowledgement of the everyday voice in constructing narrative, these projects ‘rewrote’ the margins of synthetic intermediality.

A marked difference occurs when the *Gesamtkunstwerk* aims to discard “mono-media” and create a new “intermedium” that is supposedly more than the sum of its parts (Schröter

¹⁰² To substantiate this claim: Mapula, Keiskamma and Amazwi Abesifazane focus solely on craft-related techniques including embroidering, craft-based beading, quilting, and appliqué (Lijnes 1999; Cook & MacDowell 2005; Schmahmann 2006).

¹⁰³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGVfJVde164>

¹⁰⁴ If measured by Oosterling’s (2003:33) criteria: “In the final analysis the *Gesamtkunstwerk* never was really successful. The subordination of art to other domains destroyed the openness, so characteristic for avant-garde art. In retrospect, it is not the result, but the ‘inclination towards’ that appeared to have been decisive....” He continues to indicate that successful intermedia works overcome the negative qualities of intermediation “By literally playing out the self-destructiveness of metanarratives...”

2011:2). The *Journey* projects conversely respect the integrity of different media and different platforms. Here the acknowledgement is to appreciate difference, yet absorb aspects of these differences for the sake of conversation.¹⁰⁵ One could postulate that the *Journey* projects set in action a new kind of synthetic intermediality, without the negative associations of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

In a system, there would be several narrative layers that need to be controlled, particularly in collaborative work or in multimedia or virtual reality work. This creates a need for “scenario control”. Ryan (1999:123) emphasises that in order to have “narratively meaningful structure” one must coordinate the viewer/s input. In *Synchronic Journey*, the original stories of Intuthuko exist in new configurations, and allow for open-ended narratives where viewers can complete stories in their own way. Reflecting on this open-ended character also recalls one of Wolf’s (2012:181) conclusions that “Narrativity hence emerges not as a categorical quality admitting only the binarism of a yes or a no, but as a multifactorial and gradable quality”. It is this reconceptualised idea of the narrative that the *Journey* projects explore: a quality that Wolf (2012:180, 181) sees as emerging only in recent years.

In an examination of the nature of the narrative, the metaphoric meaning should be seen not as a *discontinuation* of tradition but rather as a *disruption* of various traditions, to open the intrinsic social relations of reciprocal energies. The evidence of processes of mediation in Room One inevitably engaged with the rest of *TRANSCODE*, providing the transmedial platform of the overall exhibition as a broader systematic conversation on intermediality. The mediation between different ways of thinking about narrative strategies has demonstrated its capability to highlight shifts in contextual and technical perceptions, resulting in the reordering of conceptual structures. Consequently, these re-articulated tensions and conjunctions could impact conceptually and formally on the notions of time and space.

¹⁰⁵ As reflected in the conversational model of Gadamer (Gadamer 1992, Gallagher 2002).

4.2 ROOM TWO: INTERMEDIAL SPACE

FREDERIK EKSTEEN

This section probes the ways in which FE engages with the space of authority as a site to be subverted. Drawing from his critical view of the conventions of portraiture as established representation of hierarchies, this research sets out the intermedial tensions created through the transmedial conversations between the technologies of new media software and painting. My research constructs a personal interpretation of his processes to articulate innovative approaches to intermediality.

The contribution to intermediality by FE and my interpretation of his work are best contextualised in terms of the contemporary perception of unsettled space. With prevalent critique of centralised authority, a “multiplicity of centers” is a way of finding broader perspectives and the place of the artist “being on the edge rather than in the centre” (Sullivan 2010:26) is therefore valued for its contribution:

It is a conversation opened up by curators and artists who seek new ways to respond to issues that nowadays not only explore the human condition but also question the very design and function of the human body and mind in cultural and virtual space. This is moving visual arts to a more central place in our world of knowledge.

Access to knowledge of software has played a major role in the development of FE's processes and methodologies of mediamatic thinking (Oosterling 2003:42). It has been commonly acknowledged that the operational speed of new technologies, both digital and mechanical, profoundly affects our spatio-temporal understanding and consequently assists us to critically reassess intermedial sites.¹⁰⁶ This sense of negation and non-place becomes evident in the work of FE, where a digital sense of place is applied to probe at portrait painting. The multi-layered reciprocity between recoded space and manipulated time underlies the rationale for this section, echoing the general rationale of complexity as expressed at the start of this thesis (Chapter 1.1:1).

This section starts by identifying and briefly describing the relevant works of FE and the logic of their genealogy. Trained as a painter, FE does not see himself predominantly as a new media artist,¹⁰⁷ yet over the last two decades he has produced work that opened up the

¹⁰⁶ As Virilio (1986:133) writes: “The reduction of distance has become a strategic reality bearing incalculable economic and political consequences, since it corresponds to the negation of space. In fact, the strategic value of the non-place of speed has definitely supplanted that of place.”

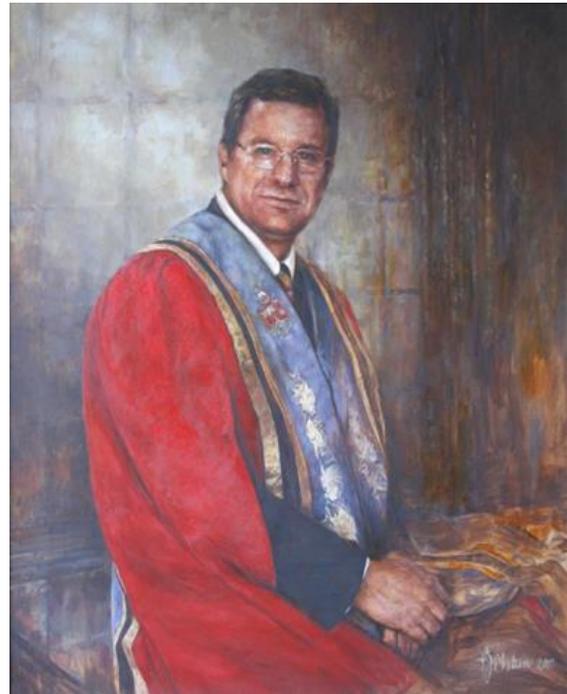
¹⁰⁷This was reiterated by Eksteen in an interview with me in his studio on 2 October 2013. He stated that he only uses software applications to meet specific needs, but he does not feel the need to explore all the possibilities of the selected software.

historically constructed margins between older fine art traditions and software driven art. FE's process links a series of experiments, which continually cross-reference earlier artworks. It is an on-going research project where the works become momentary conclusions, presenting themselves as prominent nodes within a growing system capable of accommodating several different trains of thought (Eksteen 2011). The structural relationship with a rhizomatic pattern (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:6, also as referenced in Chapter 2) is evident in this section, more so than in Room One of this research project. Every work turns out to be a threshold for the next, and is embedded in an imbricated system that generates both physical objects and new meanings: characteristics of intermediality, answering to the first research question (Chapter 1.4:6). Furthermore Eksteen's lecturing experience at various universities informs his "personal spacial extension" (Barfield 2006:108, 119) of the lifeworld of an artist who is also an academic.

In 2009, FE posed the following question regarding the portrait paintings of vice-chancellors of the University of Pretoria: "Can a painted face be a valid record of the complex events and decisions that shape a university?" (Catalogue of *Visuality/Commentary* 2008:58). This rhetorical question launched an expansive body of visual research captured in FE's *In Camera* (2008 - ongoing) series. He was closely involved with this formal tradition, having painted two of the portraits (fig 4.2.1) (Eksteen 2011; Schmahmann 2009:26). Further work was stimulated by a critical rethinking of this formal tradition.



Fig 4.2.1: Left: FE, *Prof Flip Smit* (1997).



Right: FE, *Prof Johan van Zyl* (2001).

The Ambassadors (2009) (fig 4.2.2) (a morphing of five of the formal portraits) and *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.3) (a layered morphing), were included in Room Two. In *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2), FE presented the original portrait paintings of the Vice-Chancellors in anamorphic perspective. *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011), however, is a single image where the eleven Vice-Chancellors (Eksteen 2011) that can be seen in *The Ambassadors* (2009) have been merged to create an archetypal, authoritative, figurehead. The curatorial decision to include these two works provided a starting point for the dialogue of difference between old and new.



Fig 4.2.2: FE, *The Ambassadors* (2009).



Fig 4.2.3: FE, *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011).

The development of the other characters and concepts in FE's works that featured in *TRANSCODE* all relate to a complex system of interbreeding digital and painterly stages. FE created a diagram, *A genealogy* (2011) (fig 4.2.4),¹⁰⁸ to map the connections between his artworks. The fictitious genealogy shows the spacial and temporal relationships between works, providing some idea of *the intricacy* of links. This diagram can also be read as a reflexive strategy in FE's method of thinking about the larger project. I have isolated specific works and details that related to *TRANSCODE* below, numbered in *A genealogy* (2011) (fig 4.2.4):

¹⁰⁸ The blog site frikkieeksteen.blogspot.co.za was also exhibited for viewers to interact with. The blog showed *The Ambassadors* (2009) from a number of its oblique viewing angles, assisting viewers with engaging with the work.

1. *The Ambassadors* (2009) (also fig 4.2.2)
2. *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (also fig 4.2.3)
3. *Stock Characters* series (only 5 of the 9 works were exhibited): *The Unsociable Man* (2011), *The Complaisant Man* (2011), *The Faultfinder* (2011) *The Flatterer* (2011) and *The Coward* (2011) (also fig 4.2.5)
4. *Cephalophore* (2011) (also fig 4.2.6)

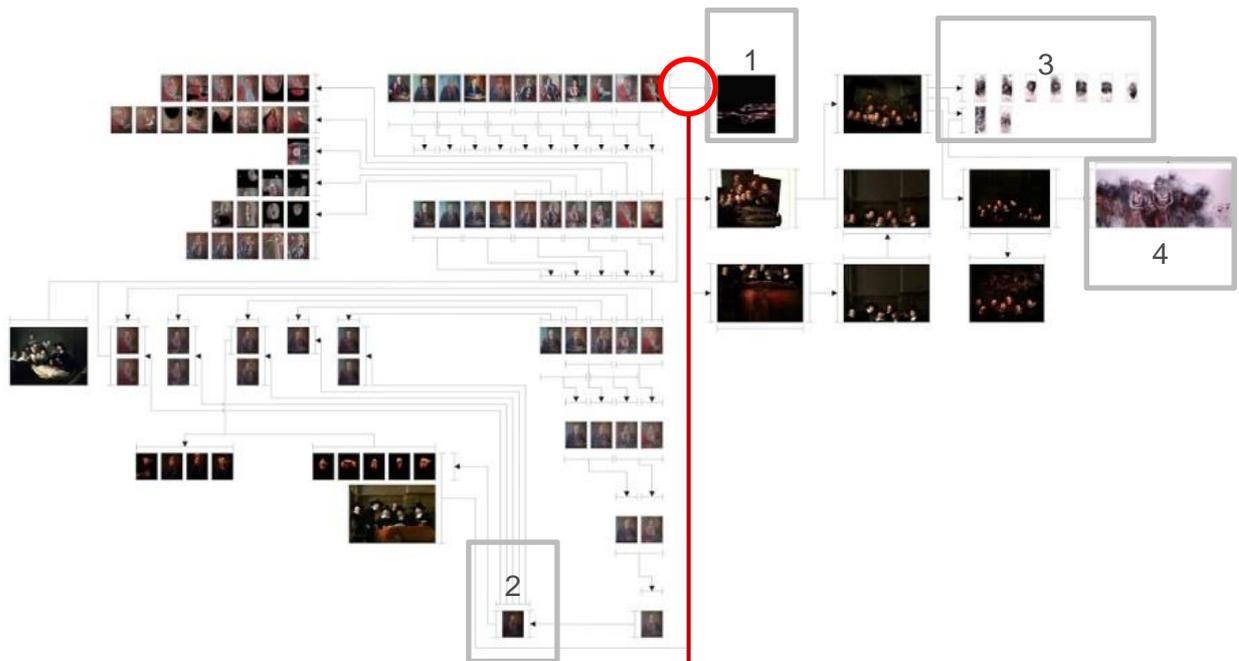


Fig 4.2.4: FE, *A genealogy* (2011).

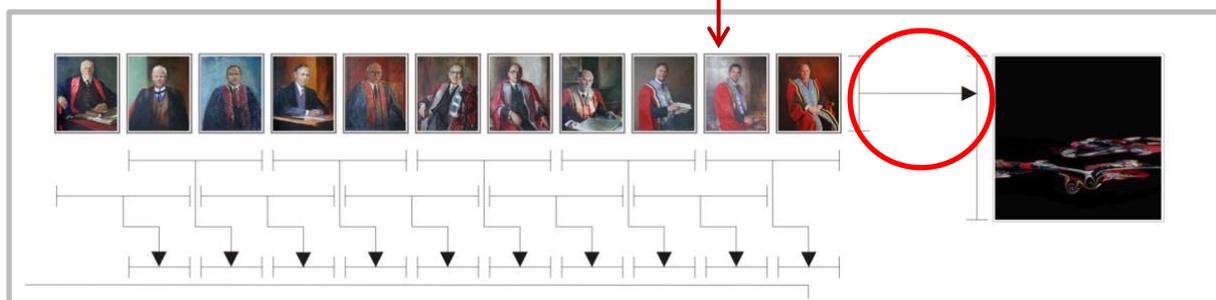


Fig 4.2.5: FE, enlarged detail of *A genealogy*: vice-chancellors morphed into *The Ambassadors* (2009) (2011).

The identification of individual works in this diagram is a simplification of a far more complex process. As an example, the detail (fig 4.2.5) only presents the surface of what the enacted process entails. To give some insight into the extent of this part of the project: the red circled gap stands in for over fifty preparatory images, which reflects the actual

experimentation that eventually led to *The Ambassadors* (2009).¹⁰⁹ *A genealogy* (2011) attempts to deal with relational development, but does not reflect the implication of *time* in the process or the multitude of trials and error. As in my reading of the selected model by Sullivan (Chapter 3.3), one must acknowledge both *multiplicity* of perspectives to read information and the *limited ability of a model to translate complexity*.¹¹⁰ I am therefore going to analyse further the *processes* in FE's working methodology in section 4.2.2.

As in Room One, *earlier works*¹¹¹ are used as a basis of evidence of development during the *TRANSCODE* project. By including this, the research responds to the secondary research questions regarding dichotomies or incommensurability of media in its search for grey areas in the anticipation of change (as articulated in Chapter 1.4:7). *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) and *Terminal Host, 1918–2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.3) are analysed in this regard.



Fig 4.2.6: FE, *Stock Characters* series Left to right: *The faultfinder* (2011), *The complaisant man* (2011), *The unsociable man* (2011), *The flatterer* (2011) and *The coward* (2011).

In a dramatic technical and aesthetic shift *Stock Characters* (2011) (fig 4.2.6) depicts a series of portraits of human weaknesses; where digitally rendered figures (in 3D Max) merge into a space where they are fragmenting and floating in a field of liquid or impasto paint and ink. These processes reflect a technical inquisitiveness, underscored by a conceptual strategy of exposing conventions used both for legitimising political power and

¹⁰⁹ FE indicated that he worked for an extensive period on this work and if individual hours were gauged, it accumulated to approximately six weeks or 144 hours of continuous involvement.

¹¹⁰ In the twenty-first century the language of painting can be compared to Deleuze and Guattari's (2004:6-9) rhizome model, 'never closed upon itself', it flows in unpredictable directions: "It evolves by subterranean stems and flows along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil."

¹¹¹ Works exhibited for analysis and context, but not made during the D project.

our perception of its depiction. This recoding of painterly processes (Eksteen 2011) presents a conceptual space for social critique.¹¹² These figures are representations of slippage in history, implying a shift away from a secure and simplistic understanding of hierarchical presentation.



Fig 4.2.7: FE, *Cephalophore* (2011).

Both the *Stock Characters* series (2011) (fig 4.2.6) and *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.7) developed complex *hybridity*, to address the third research question. The works and my analyses reflect on an assumed *established hybridity* to provide possible responses to reciprocity and transformation. *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.7) is a macabre group portrait of 10 individuals gathered around a severed head. The title “Cephalophore” is taken from the Greek word for “head carrier”, a saint who is decapitated and in the case of Saint Denis of Paris, his head continued to deliver a sermon to become a symbol of death overcome by faith. FE writes on his blog (<http://frikkieeksteen.blogspot.co.za/2011/12/cephalophore-2011.html>):

In my own interpretation of the cephalophore, portraiture is imagined to be in itself a kind of symbolic or ritualistic decapitation. As an object, a portrait is presumed capable of preserving the character of a person, yet it also assumes a life of its own that exists apart from, and even at the expense of the portrayed. In other words, a portrait attests both to the sitter's inevitable mortality and his transcendence of embodied existence. Here it takes the form of a self-referential narrative where portraiture is made to speak about portraiture.

The analysis and comparisons in this section aim to articulate how, through the mediating characteristics of digital art, FE's process provides an explicit model for reciprocal exchange between opposites. Yet, as the analysis below will indicate, it is seldom that the

¹¹² I believe the technical involvement in painting in the way I approach it doesn't really amount to simply copying it" (Eksteen 2011: interview).

works aim for pure fusion. Rather, the schisms between the languages of the digital and the painterly become *more* apparent even as they influence one another.

4.2.1 Intermediate space – a brief contextualisation

The processes of physical thinking that FE enacts are compared to discursive theories to enable an understanding of the *characteristics of intermediality* of space, thus addressing the first research question. In furthering the transmedial narrative, FE's works act as tangible platforms, repeatedly changing the trajectory of thinking and structuring of space. In contrast to Room One, this body of work does not reveal a clear trajectory of synthesis, but rather a complexity of enfolding, expanding and unfolding space.

The contextualisation of 'space' that follows does not aim to present a comprehensive overview of the very extensive contemporary theoretic discourse around space. Rather, it briefly sketches a relevant selection of views to invoke the conversation between theory and practice in FE's work. In order to situate FE's mediamatic thinking, theories about experienced, geometric and information space are referenced.¹¹³ These theories inform his practice and his practice invigorates the theories.

a. Geometric space

Art has long been associated with both geographic and abstract space, often reflecting abstract Cartesian¹¹⁴ notions of measurement: positive and negative space; height, width and length; and its reference to the context of site. In traditional oil paintings, such as the earlier portraits of Vice-Chancellors (fig 4.2.1) (1997, 2001), the controlled illusion of space, or its defiance, has been of significant concern throughout time.¹¹⁵ Cyberspace (information space), which exists as a construct of calculations, is both mathematical as well as being reliant on psychological perceptions connected to our visual history of *moving images* (Paul 2003:76). However, cyberculture is in many respects still underpinned by dualisms (Tofts 2003:9, Davis 2003:12).

Metric space overlaps with Deleuze and Guattari's (2004:523-551) "striated" space, seen as administered and controlled. The opposite of striated space is "smooth" space, which is

¹¹³These three types of space are isolated for their contextual differences as identified by Marks and Kelly (2007: <http://vectorsjournal.org/issues/4/unfoldingenfolding/>)

¹¹⁴ I refer here to the specific dualist conception that knowledge can be derived from innate ideas, which is mind alone, seen separate from the body and sense experience. This approach of thinking, rooted in René Descartes' concept that the mind (spirit or soul) is the essence of our understanding and matter (the extension) can only be known indirectly. Contemporary thinking in general "calls us to defend and affirm the body that Descartes rendered a machine, a soulless automation under our spiritual thumb" (Davis 2003:12; Walther 2007:10-11).

¹¹⁵ Further reading on notions of space and painting: Arnheim (1974), Gombrich (1959:204-244), Feldman (1992), Itten (1975), Smith (1987) and Schmahmann (2009).

heterogeneous in character. This space is varied, woven, entangled and amorphous (Marcussen 2008). Here structure is freely connected and fluid.¹¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari (2004:551) indicate that striated space can also produce smooth space, allowing various permutations of these ideas, although in reality these two distinct spaces exist only in combinations.

b. Experienced space: immersion and presence

Narratives around space are part of a system that is mediated by the position of the body and by time.¹¹⁷ Traversing space takes time, which assists in achieving depth. Traversing space does not necessarily imply expansion, as space and time could implode, be composited in layers, confuse and contort, as reflected in *Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) and *Terminal Host 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.3). New media techniques can bring together images from different origins, which may be computer generated, from archival footage or from paintings. This implies not only times shifts, but intertextual dialogues concerning space. Furthermore, the rendering time required by software impacts on spacial experience and the hard drive capacity affects the size of data space (Manovich 2001:152, Walther 2007).

Many of FE's digital techniques found their roots in visual arts' history of spacial presence. Traditional painting devices, such as perspective, diorama, panorama and mirrors suggest the spacial inclusion of the viewer due to the contingent spacial illusion. FE's *Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) engages with and shifts these choices (Eksteen 2011). This awareness of movement contrasts with the assumed fixed point of the eye of linear perspective as applied in the traditional portrait painting of Vice-Chancellors. *Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) is influenced by the bodily immersion of the viewer within a space in digital art and virtual reality (Paul 2003:67-138) which demands action on the part of the viewer to experience the work. This action is further discussed in section 4.2.3.

While this short description seems to suggest a culmination, a trajectory towards *intensification* is not inevitable. Ryan (1999:112) points out that interactive space is not necessarily *more immersive* than, for example, reading a novel or looking at a painting.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ De Certeau (1984:95, 96) mentions fluid or exploding spaces of social action of the ordinary person that ultimately contributes to form and shape space.

¹¹⁷ "Temporalization is that which donates a certain dynamics to space...time is that which ensures a trajectory through space" (Walther 2007:10).

¹¹⁸ Ryan (1999:114) differentiates between immersion and interactivity in an article about virtual reality and literary theory. Ryan points out that the computer must become invisible, 'disappear', for the medium to become transparent and the created world to become real and fully immersive. The ideal of such presence will be to arrive at immediacy. This links with Bolter and Grusin's (1999) theory of remediation, mentioned earlier in this thesis.

Ryan's (1999:112) reference to the role of the illusion of three-dimensional space is relevant for the discussion of FE's work in the following sections, where his experiments with illusion and perspective, and the suggested placement of the viewer inside a composition by means of linear perspective or suggested motion, are questioned.

However, the possibilities of our presence in different kinds of space dislocate traditional perceptions and lead to a redefinition of space. Virilio (1997:64) considers the 'collapsing' of distance as another spacial effect of our time. Our desire to experience presence via web space, to be both "here" and "there" is described in Bolter and Grusin's (1999:5) formulation of remediation: "Both new and old media are invoking the twin logics of immediacy and hypermediacy in their efforts to remake themselves and each other." Immediacy strives to make the viewer as unaware as possible of the media that produces emotion or experience. Hypermediacy uses as many media developments as possible to achieve this.

The conversation implicit in the term 'remake' is that a measure of elimination of mediation becomes referenced as a continuation of the "erasure of Western painting" (Bolter & Grusin 1999:27). FE's body of work challenges the assumed death of painting; his art also contributes to its revival in a remediated space (Eksteen 2011). I argue that by delineating differences in the geographies of painterly and digital spaces, he mediates between conventions associated with presence and mediated space. This is discussed in *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.3) amongst others.

Phrasing dialectical strategies within contemporary theories about space, Henri Lefebvre (1991) writes:

Space is marked out, explored, discovered and rediscovered on a colossal scale. Its potential for being occupied, filled, peopled and transformed from top to bottom is continually on the increase: the prospect, in short, is of a space being produced whose nature is nothing more than raw materials suffering gradual destruction by the techniques of production (Lefebvre 1991:331).¹¹⁹

Remediation and the *active engagement with processes* is the experience that defines how we reciprocate spacial understanding in artwork.

c. Information space: multiple connections as non-hierarchy in database culture

¹¹⁹ Lefebvre (1991:331) also points out: "The appropriate method, however, is no longer that of Hegel, nor is it that of Marx, which was based on an analysis of historical time, of temporality. If we find ourselves obliged to accept the idea of a dialectical centrality, or of a dialectic of centrality, this is because there is a connection between space and the dialectic."

Manovich (2001:37, 2005:408-427) claims that the database is a cultural form, and in particular, that the web as database represents a paradigm shift for thinking about space in the digital age (Dalgaard 2007:22). As a result, a dimensional understanding of cyberspace intrudes in an inconspicuous manner on conventional ways of conceiving and structuring the world. The difference between the web as a structure or order of information and a traditional hierarchical order of known databases, such as the library, prompted Manovich (2001:221) to comment that the importance of “multiple thematic connections” as model for spacial order. New media ‘objects’ are complex structures that inherit various forms of hierarchies and “appear as collections of items on which the user can perform various operations” (Manovich 2005:408). The varying levels of the complexity of and dialogue *between* spacial dynamics are reflected in FE’s engagement with the cultural traditions of painting and their equivalent in cyber portraits. To achieve this, he often employs dualistic contrasts such as the creating of a “false world” to exist in parallel to a real world so as to induce critical reflection.

Cyber art’s history of debating dematerialisation and notions of non-materiality through digitisation reflect a kind of *placeless-ness* (Graham & Cook 2010:51). This ‘space’, with its emphasis on fluid processes and distributed, networked data, is constructed by information and contains associations with the infinite in its vastness.¹²⁰ Interestingly, although this focus on variable and mutable space in a digital ‘world’ (Manovich 2001:36) suggests a cultural shift away from fixed objects, artists still construct experiences and objects for an embodied viewer to interact with. In FE’s work the multiplicity of ‘cloned’ figures developed in digital format (in *placeless-ness*), are printed and painted (fixed objects) as in *the Stock Characters* series (2011) (fig 4.2.6) and *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.7).

d. Space authored by the body and action

The idea of a human space or space authored by *the body* picks up on the theories of Lefebvre and De Certeau. Lefebvre (1991:169-228) writes that an understanding of space can only be meaningful when the experience of a place is perceived through the sensory qualities of the body.¹²¹ He also emphasises that the body is a point of departure and a destination in the production of space. This locates the human body in a prominent position of ‘authoring’ space, becoming a social agent that *narrates* experience.

¹²⁰Regarding vastness and the sublime see Shaw (2006), Lyotard (1982) and Miller (1997).

¹²¹ Although Lefebvre writes primarily within architectural discourse, his theories are applicable in the philosophy of visual art. Lefebvre wrote the chapter “Spacial architectonics” in *The production of space* (1991) in which he follows a lengthy argument on the role of the body in the production of space.

In this thesis and its practical component, the transmedia narrative constructed over different platforms systematises space in organic twists and turns: consequently the artists' production defines the "conflictual programs" (De Certeau 1984:117)¹²² through their conceptual and sensual thinking. FE's processes and his determined effort to exploit conflict in his work form a unique system of recoding and reordering the space of the 'official' storyline. FE refers to the line-up of idealised portraits of chancellors as well as the portrayal in a specific style and in oil painting, as the 'official story', rendered as order, reason and leadership. This is a space that is both metaphorical and physical in its impact: De Certeau (1984:115,116) points out that the story is a "means of mass transportation" (from the Greek "metaphorai"). FE's processes and the visualisation of relationships between his works is a more personalised syntax¹²³ of relation, growth, collapse and expansion (De Certeau's 1984:117) unfolding another aspect of this transmedial space.

The artist's understanding of being-in-the-world,¹²⁴ in relation to his/her work, deals with a "self-conscious personal spacial extension, possibly in relation to external spacial phenomena or cues" (Barfield 2006:108,119). The artist's relationship with the physical reality of their work, whether hands-on or mediated through digital technology – is bound up with questions of space, place and location. With regard to an artist's subjective position in a cultural and mutable social system, self-consciousness expressed via spacial devices is shaped by experience. It is a space characterised by "both temporal and dimensional instability" (Barfield 2006:118).

The artist's position in time conveys narratives of a political and bureaucratic nature, yet it is also an account of painting in the present time. After a century of being declared repeatedly dead, painting is seen as being in a liminal space,¹²⁵ described as rising and resurrecting itself repeatedly (Fogle 2001:13-18). In light of installation art and new media culture, painting could be seen to be playing an interdisciplinary or negotiating role as demonstrated by FE's work.

Whether considered in terms of mathematical or information space, or experienced via the body, the fluidity of spacial consideration implies constant recoding in thinking through

¹²²De Certeau (1984:117) distinguishes between "space" and "place".

¹²³As mentioned earlier, in visual art the term 'syntax' best translates as visual grammar and compositional arrangement. De Certeau (1984:115,116) emphasises that "narrative structures have the status of spacial syntaxes".

¹²⁴"Being-in-the-world" and *Dasein* mean *existence* and always being engaged with the world. See Heidegger (1962) for further reading on hermeneutics. Due to the constraints of this paper I will not expand on Heidegger's notion of *being-in*.

¹²⁵Also see Thomas McEvelley (1993) *The exile's return. Towards a redefinition of painting for the post-modern era*.

theory and art making. Our understanding of structured space and the power relations functioning in specific institutions is influenced by the *multi-layered translations* of the artist, the viewer and the artwork's spacial context in a dynamic world. "(T)o *transcode* is to translate it into another format" (Manovich 2001:47), and in accordance with the practice-led focus of this thesis, *translation* can only be considered partial (Hay 2006:58). Therefore, both the structural and programmable logic of *transcoding* suggests fluid interpretations, which allow for nuanced reflection.

4.2.2 Mapping intermediality via process in FE's work

The personal expression of social critique and formal reflection of imploding and exploding space contextualises creative research towards intermediality. Unexpected subversions of space is analysed to reveal the art processes. FE is motivated by a shared conceptual interest in the porosity of the definitions of painting, and the desire to explore tensions at these margins. To critique top-down hierarchical systems, he articulates in-between-ness, delay and the compounding of time.

FE refers to his multi-disciplinary permutation of traditional and digital practices as the "computer thinking about the handmade", where an abstract mental space interacts with the physical, bodily space of painting. His work develops in a compounded exchange of readings and replies between handmade oil painting and software manipulation – processes that are not necessarily linear or repeated in the same order or configuration from one work to the next. Of this process, FE explains: "Apart from oil paint I used *Winmorph, Anamorph Me, Faceshop, Photoshop and 3DS Max*. It is a process where I paint or start with someone else's painting, digitise the painted image, manipulate it on the computer and then paint it again. There are several intermittent steps that alternate and I do not always follow the same pattern" (Appendix 5: interview with Eksteen 2013).

He elaborates on this idea: "In my work I see the computational component as being at the service of painting. When I work digitally, most decisions are made with the idea of a painterly translation in mind" (Eksteen 2013). This conversation is inextricably entangled with various mediamatic voices depending on each other in the processes that unfold in the works, resulting in a continuously evolving system that aims to rethink representation. By mediating lived space in digital media, the artist is afforded some valuable distance – one can postulate that a measure of objectivity is gained by swapping the smooth space (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:523-551) of the organic brush stroke with the striated space of computer software. One's medium allows only a particular spacial negotiation and therefore this change of 'systems' (FE's phrase) assists with revealing new paradigms.

In an early interview with FE (2009), we spoke about understanding the in-between and how morphing techniques can play a role in defining “imperfect moments” in the interaction between digital and painterly art. Whilst my question suggested an invigoration that comes about from this cross-pollination, FE replied that in working with both ‘systems’ he becomes more aware of the *limitations* rather than of the strengths of each medium, and that it is perhaps their flaws that are most meaningful. Whilst it was his initial intention to create an ‘in-between person’ that would be a perfect merge of two people, FE’s engagement with the process changed the planned outcome. To some degree, the ‘errors’ of a presumed seamless process became “more human”:

The crux of his argument was that where the morphing appeared to go “wrong” and created distortions that were not anticipated, it was often thematically and formally more appropriate than the planned precisely merged elements. Furthermore, there are similar allowances for process dialogue in the translation of his digital images into oil paintings. FE (2013) spoke about the painterly process during a studio visit:

I could very easily copy the images created on the computer in paint but that is no longer satisfying to me. Sometimes I will randomly destroy an image to get beyond copying by making sweeping painterly gestures over a part of the composition – to bring energy back into the paint and to create an obstacle I can respond to.

FE is receptive to the *quirks inherent in his processes*, seeing them as a resource that can be exploited for their formal and conceptual potential. This has become vital in the development of his artworks (Van Eeden 2008:58), showing the artist’s ability to facilitate reciprocity in his processes. The medium itself, and by implication his intuitive decisions, reveal aspects which the rational mind (without digital or painterly actions) cannot ‘work out’. By creating in a pictorial space, which is both information space (via digital morphing) and image space (tactile and physical), different dimensions come to play. Elkins (1999:2) speaks of how “the pull of paint on their fingers” is part of the artists’ way of thinking, something the art historian does not experience.¹²⁶ The artist’s activity of “pushing paint” and working with matter that offers resistance is part of the material memories for the painter (Elkins 1999:2, 3), a mediamatic thinking that *senses* solutions and accentuates an exchange between the language of practice and theory.

Through digital processing, FE creates unique reference material *for*, and derived *from*, painting. In the original series, history was framed in the likeness of the flawless and

¹²⁶ Elkins compares art historians to alchemists that like to live antiseptically, thinking about art but not touching it. The artist, however, pursues the battle with “mindless matter” at the same moment as contemplating the images.

composed sitter. No ambiguity, turbulence or uncertainty disturbs their composure and the dynamic interaction of academic life is not revealed. By exploring a tacit space beyond the rational and idealised perspective, FE articulates a *unforme*, which suggests hidden chaos.¹²⁷ The process's unfolding becomes a retelling of academic spaces, spaces where the priority is management and control of knowledge. FE interrupts this order by allowing the terrifying and undefined, expressed by him as a "delightful horror," the irrationality of the sublime (Kant 1952:495, Burke 1990:36, Miller 1997:11, 34).

The subliminal interconnections that new technology opens up, are suggested by FE's preparatory work, which generates unused images offering potential new inputs that will affect the development of the overall system if re-introduced. The process of extending the conceptual possibilities of images allows for the idea of 'technogenesis'¹²⁸ or an assembled life in another reality: "Information culture is not a culture of computers but a culture of unfolding...whose goal is the entire unfoldment (sic) of Experience. This abyssal task can never be completed, for Experience is infinitely enfolded" (Marks & Kelly 2007). The extended possibilities that FE's processes can give rise to, coupled with the interchange of various spacial properties, could create an intermediate world as a place of refuge for the discarded. This could be those flawed cases that do not have a place in official genealogies, that being either politically represented or the creative end-product of the artist. 'Process' can also be seen as a non-place of the in-between.

The aspects of digital and painterly thought in FE's work reflect a *researcher's* attitude to the reconstruction of intermedial findings. This section's analysis of FE's working methodology brings to light the inherent entanglement of sensuous and conceptual thinking (Biggs 2006:2), but, just as important, one sees a researcher's mind that critically investigates practices, uncovering new ways of thinking. Berger (1969) wrote "criticism is always a form of intervention" and FE's processes explore formal methodologies to intervene in both paintings and digital work and informed choices.

Exhibition practice via his participation in *TRANSCODE* (2011) advanced his experiential development, for example his working through trial runs with the installation; and the transformation undergone during the application of changes due to reciprocity between

¹²⁷Sublimity depends on "*unforme*", the formless or the limitless. In Kant's (1952:495) words: "The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of the object, and this consists in limitation, whereas the sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately invokes, or else by its presence provokes a representation of limitlessness, yet with a superadded thought of its totality." Also see Kant (1981), Rosenblum (1961), Lyotard (1982, 1984, 1994), Crowther (1988, 1989) and the MVA dissertation of Miller (1997) for readings around the sublime aesthetic.

¹²⁸The concept is located in cyberculture discourse. For further reading see Jonson and Tofts (in Tofts, Jonson & Cavallaro 2003:9).

media, the curatorial aims and conversations with fellow artists and during walk-about. The reality of critical reflection, and the re-grouping, re-imagining and re-structuring of data, creates ongoing processes that feed back and forth in a complex model. Through this analysis, I assert that transcoding works in multiple directions by decoding aspects of culture from familiar into freshly interpreted forms but also feeding back into and transforming visual culture. The evidence of FE's feedback, where the output of the process often becomes a new and unpredictable input, will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.3 Delineating differences in the geographies of space and time in painterly and digital art

I propose here that FE's earlier paintings on *TRANSCODE* were mostly predicated on fusion characteristic of synthetic intermediality, whilst the later works on *TRANSCODE* were characterised by transmedial (or formal) intermediality. Before this classification can be expanded, it is necessary to identify contrasting qualities at play in FE's work.

This section proposes that FE's reflection on differences responds to a contemporary social context where hierarchy is questioned. Changes in technological communication have an impact on the way people live and think about themselves, which in turn influences their demand from technology (Tofts, Jonson & Cavallaro 2003:2). Therefore, FE's critical comment on hierarchy in this day and age is informed by his view of the changing perceptions of representation as it is swayed both by established culture and evolving cyberculture.¹²⁹ The section that follows considers the differences between these contrasting artistic cultures by looking at the use of space in *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2), and *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.3).

4.2.3.1 The Ambassadors (2009): spacial flux and fusion

FE's negotiations between software media and painterly processes open a flexible intervention between different kinds of spaces: geometric, experienced and information space (as referred to in section 4.2.1). This fusion enables a social critique of institutional power relations and their representation. In *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) this is mediated through the distortion of portraits and their particular spacial positioning.

His conceptual strategy of anamorphic perspective is to find ways to complicate the viewing process, without the intention to mock or damn (Schmahmann 2009:28). FE states:

¹²⁹Cyberculture is an emergence of "a new conception of human life, a redefined ontology that goes by a number of different, complementary names, posthuman, cyborg, informatic. While the inflections of these terms suggest important differences, they are nonetheless cultural indices of change and variation, ways of thinking about and defining what we are becoming" (Tofts, Jonson & Cavallaro 2003:2).

[C]ontrary to caricature ... is not about exaggerating and enhancing the unique traits of the model, and instead chips away at idiosyncrasies to free the practice from its dependence on likeness. This disconnect between portrait and model creates room for an unbounded portraiture of fantasy. Approached in these terms, I am more concerned with investigating the depiction of power and the formal trappings that go with it, than with the exact nature of that power <http://frikkieeksteen.blogspot.co.za/>

The processes of anamorphic distortion and morphing underscores a conceptual strategy of exposing the conventions assumed to legitimise representations of political power and portrait painting as its tool. The reference to the artist Hans Holbein the Younger's, *The Ambassadors* (1533), creates an academic framework for the use of anamorphic perspective. Regarding his approach, FE (Interview October 2013) says:

To create the anamorphic perspectives that have to be viewed from various angles, I used a simple software application called *Anamorph Me*, which enabled me, like Holbein's distortion of the skull, to disrupt the illusion of pictorial depth in the painting. Holbein's ambassadors are shown standing in a convincing 3-D space but the abstract shape of the anamorphic skull flattens the entire thing. The anamorphic space of the skull therefore denies conventional picture space. The oddity of the skull, which only becomes recognisable when viewed on its own terms, disrupts one's blindness to convention.

It is the criticality of Holbein's articulation of space that FE references in his work, but the standard perspective applied in the portraits, like in the portraits of Vice-Chancellors, presents traditional painterly space against which the critical enquiry takes place. To highlight the difference between rigid conventional pictorial reality and digital conventions, FE's spacial topography includes additional viewpoints of digital space and extended distortions via *Anamorph Me*. His processes use disconnection of recognition of pictorial depth. Rather than suggesting the illusion that our reality continues in the picture plane, FE brings a playful dimension into the work, opening up a space for the artist and the viewer's participation.



Fig 4.2.8: FE, detail of the preparatory digital distortions via *Anamorph Me* for *The Ambassadors* (2011).

I propose that by the digital means of distortion FE emphasises contrast of the conceptual space of hierarchy in traditional portraiture against the reality of *new social values* of databased culture, conditioned by the freedom of choice experience in information space. It is therefore with specific intent that the viewer is made conscious of accepted artistic conventions. Through this mechanism, FE (Interview October 2013) wants the viewer to become aware that “what and how we see cannot be taken for granted. Seeing is informed by conditioning”.

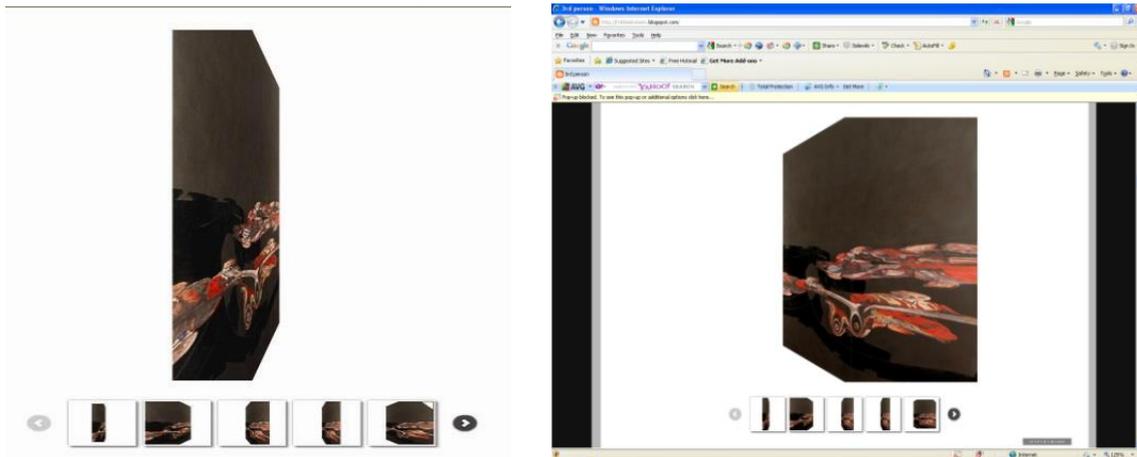


Fig 4.2.9: FE. details from *The Ambassadors* (2009) on <http://frikkieeksteen.blogspot.co.za/>

The Ambassadors (2009) (fig 4.2.9) is also explained on FE's web page as morphed portraits in a configuration that draws the viewer into a more active viewing experience and manipulates how they may engage with the work. This requires the viewer to take up eleven different viewpoints oblique to the picture plane to recognise the abstractions as portraits. As one portrait comes into perspective from a particular vantage point, all others become distorted, as often happens in an institution when power shifts from one leader to another. The sense of tension and drama is heightened when the viewer realises that there are different visual perspectives from which to engage with the work, yet the order of this interactive viewing process needs to be individually intuitive, and is not dictated by the artist. The work is intended to be experienced over time and is revealed by moving in and through real physical space.

This strategy also reveals FE's work as being a transmedia narrative, since narratives unfold *over time*, becoming duly amended (Ryan 2001:[sp]). Throughout the duration of *TRANSCODE* (2011), a computer was set up in FE's exhibiting space so that his blog could be available to viewers to have additional contextual information on hand, as well as to allow other forms of engagement, such as animated and interactive viewing options. The

incorporation of informational space along with the space of experience was a curatorial decision to highlight the concepts discussed here.

In line with the liminal positioning of contemporary discourse around painting, I make the deduction that *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) reconsiders the inherent conceptual parameters of mathematical, experienced and information space. The notion of the freezing of a moment reflects a traditional pictorial approach to space and time. There is a very *clear understanding* about the divided spacial relationship between viewer and artwork. In the spacial presence of the artwork, like the sitter, the viewer is 'absent'. The traditional portrait becomes enfolded in a silence¹³⁰ in the limited participation between the artwork's sitter and the viewer, quietly staring at each other from across an abstract space.

FE delays and disrupts the sense of immersion and its spacial boundaries in *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2), as the movements of the viewer contribute to the completion of the work. The controlled viewpoints shift the *stability* of painting's associations with truth and value. Lefebvre (1991:169-228) writes that an understanding of space can only be meaningful when the experience of a place is perceived through the body. In this way, the human body contributes in the 'authoring' of space, a characteristic that is typical of interactive new media but in this artwork has become incorporated in painting. The elusive presence of FE's subjects, framed within a carefully considered context, enables the work to both inhabit and bridge the confines of mathematical pictorial space and experienced space. Its contradictory liquid state,¹³¹ where painting is digitally encoded, manipulated, and plugged back into experienced space, also bridges pictorial and information spaces.

4.2.3.2 *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011)¹³²: *Spacial collapse and metaphorical becoming*

Here creative exploration of the acceleration and deceleration of time is investigated. Whilst this strategy is evident in *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2), I will address synthetic intermediality further here.

¹³⁰ In Walker's (2006:118) comparison between traditional painting and digital painting, he claims that the two belong in different worlds: "painting is slow, silent and by comparison agricultural in its timescale".

¹³¹ Also see Graham and Cook (2010:51).

¹³² Note that other literature (such as Schmahmann 2009) concerning the artwork *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) refers to the date simply as "2009" whilst I refer to the date as "2009-2011." Both are correct: Eksteen reworked the painting during *TRANSCODE* and therefore the additional date of 2011 applies. The reader should therefore be aware of these differences between sources.



Fig 4.2.10: FE, *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011).

Terminal Host, 1918-2008 (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.10) is a single image where the eleven Vice-Chancellors that can be seen in *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2) have been merged to create a single figurehead. In the case of *The Ambassadors* (2009) (fig 4.2.2), anamorphic distortion was applied with software *Anamorph Me*, whereas with *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.10) portraits were merged with the software *Winmorph*. The character that emerged seems to speak about universal hegemony, both ideological dominance of social and mediamatic cultures, including, but more than, the political space of authority of a university. A conceptual by-product of this process is that space and time also collapse¹³³ into a single ambiguous form, where a 'historical archive' of nearly a century (Eksteen 2011), captured in a single countenance, becomes a failure of time.

Terminal Host, 1918-2008 (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.11) presents a monstrous father figure, both an ominous and strangely melancholic patriarch, who holds the eye of the viewer, and

¹³³ Virilio's (1997:64) reference to the impact of technology on our understanding of disrupted space as a "reduction of distance" and a "negation of space" becomes reified in the body of *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.10).

feigns the psychological gravity of conventional portraiture (Schmahmann 2009:29). FE states:

The image's return to the lofty medium from which it was sourced completes the paradoxical circuit. Repainting becomes at once an act of authenticating and commemorating the fiction that has been performed upon the series. By not only merging identities, but also technologies, the artworks question the fidelity of image transcription and history writing as we know it. <http://frikkieeksteen.blogspot.co.za/>

This mediamatic rendering of shifting perceptions over historical time accentuates the ability of applying alternating differences between the painting and digital renderings as a thinking tool. Typical of transformational intermediality, as described by Schröter (2011:5), a displacement of identity, time and space is in process in *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.11). One medium refers to the other and critically comments in response to the reference, but in the process 're-mediate' itself.¹³⁴

Apart from these intermediate perceptions, the work pursues subtle differences in painterly ambiguity. The work is not only a synthesis of digital overlays of multiple portraits, but also consists of a similarly layered alkyd gel-based paint application. FE over-painted the face during the installation of *TRANSCODE* after he created *The Flatterer* (2011) (fig 4.2.6), *The Coward* (2011) (fig 4.2.6) and *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.7 & fig 4.2.) incorporating new insight of approach (to be expanded on in 4.2.4). The resulting effect captures shimmering highlights against the predominantly dark and sombre tones surrounding the figure. This dazzling effect of light makes it appear as if the head protrudes from the surrounding surface of the picture plane and contributes to a sense of spacial ambiguity.¹³⁵ As a spacial disturbance that disrupts both the coherence of the figure and the picture surface, it can be noted that the over-painting of the face of *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.10 & fig 4.2.11) was a reciprocal response to the decapitation of its 'kin' in *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.7 & fig 4.2.11).

¹³⁴ In Bolter and Grusin's (1999) concept of remediation the new medium is always already present in the older medium, supporting the historical referentiality of media, both past and present.

¹³⁵ This impression of a shifting space was also applied in *The Ambassadors* (2009). Eksteen (interview 2013) spoke about his desire to create a painterly reality that goes beyond and supplements his digitally generated reference material.



Fig 4.2.11: FE, left: detail of *Terminal Host, 1918-2008* (2009-2011), right: detail of the severed head in *Cephalophore* (2011).

Terminal Host 1918-2008 (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.10) also conveys a sense of *becoming* that speaks of the artist's role in this process. The portrait radiates an evolutionary energy, like a Darwinian creature that has inflicted his own theories upon himself (fig 4.2.11). The fleshiness of the paint disguises yet mediates its cybercultural origins. FE has also referred to his images as deliberately "flawed by digital artefacts", as if information space, like a virus, infected the 'natural' space of the body (Blais & Ippolito 2006; Fogle 2001:15). The title of the artwork could suggest that the debate between mathematical space and real space brings forth the concepts of a body being infected digitally and painterly. The artist, who is also the protagonist in enabling this evolving space, in turn becomes 'infected' with new possibilities of painterly thinking.

Although the word 'terminal' has reference to the notion of mortality, the term, 'terminal host', is also applied in computing, where it denotes a central server (Schmahmann 2009:29). The dialogue between *transience* – as the real space of the body – and the parallel existence of its *genesis* in cyberspace is implied in the double meaning of 'terminal host'. FE's process – digitising the portraits to encode paintings to become information – developed as the digital *reincarnated* as paint matter.¹³⁶ This unfolding narrative is process-driven, which is verified conceptually by the metaphorical myth of the computer being able to direct a changing humanity through its recoding abilities.

¹³⁶ In this technological becoming, the "soul-as-information" suggests an immortal presence in the spirit of those portrayed (Hayles 1999:75)

4.2.4 Intermedial processes as *established* hybridity in FE's *Stock Characters* (2011) and *Cephalophore* (2011)

In the following works, a radical narrative change between the media in FE's painterly approach becomes evident. When I spoke to him about the notion of dialogue in his work, I proposed the idea of *fissure*, stating that it could be an on-going conversation wherein both parties do not necessarily have to agree. FE (interview 2013) replied: "It is as if the one wants to complete the other but they never quite find one another". In the following artworks, I outline some of the tensions in FE's work.

In the *Stock Characters* (fig 4.2.6 & fig 4.2.12) which he extended specifically for *TRANSCODE*, the idea of *dissimilarity* (or disagreement) is significant. In this portrait series, as mentioned before, the character traits identified in the titles can be linked with human flaws, such as complaisance, fault-finding, flattery and antisocial behaviour. Within the *Stock Characters* (fig 4.2.6) series as a whole, the transparency and fragmentation of his paint application aligns conceptually with the revelation of human weakness. This technical decision represents a shift away from working with carefully controlled paint media as seen in *The Ambassadors* (2009) (4.2.2), since the medium itself now becomes a code for chaos – spilling, staining and clotting. FE's re-coding of painting searches for a way where re-enacted conventions can become part of the "logistics" of the actuality of convergence culture (Oosterling 2003:41; Jenkins 2013).¹³⁷ To think through media *is to act* and this mediamatic gathering of references becomes an awareness of being connected with the world (Oosterling 2003:41). I interpret the capture of code (the imprint from other bodies) as producing ourselves (through our work as artists) in a reciprocal relationship to structures of thinking that surround us.

¹³⁷ Oosterling (2003:41) explains: "The etymology of 'logo(s)' is instructive: originating from the Greek verb 'legein' it does not only mean 'thinking' or 'reading' but also 'gathering'."



Fig 4.2.12: FE, *The Faultfinder* from the *Stock Characters* series with enlarged detail (2011).

In the *Stock Characters* (2011) (fig 4.2.6 & fig 4.2.12), FE's approach to oil painting changes significantly with experiments with turpentine dilutions that affect the medium's retention of pigment particles. This reticulated paint application shows up in *The Faultfinder* (2011) (fig 4.2.12) as a kind of fragmentation that matches the complexity of the printed wireframe model of the figure behind it. FE's painterly language becomes remediated, not by exercising tight control, but by emphasising unexpected material analogies that bring attention to the boundaries, the differences and the similarities between new and old representational modes. His 'over-painting' of digital prints is not simply intended to 'complete' or 'skin' the image, but rather meant to contrast with its geometrical precision. The work reflects the definition of *intermediality* as it "...occurs when there is an interrelation of various – distinctly recognised – arts and media within one object but the interaction is such that they transform each other and a new form of art, or mediation, emerges" (Verstraete 2010:10).¹³⁸ Here *matter* is impacted, questioned and inverted, possibly moving beyond Schröter's (2011:5) transformational intermediality to a sense of ontological intermediality. Schröter (2011:5) explains ontological intermediality by stating that the realisation of the transformation was already in both the *represented* medium and the *representing* medium. One could read this fragmentation in *Faultfinder* (2011) (fig 4.2.12) as being beyond the "media-specific materialities" where one medium replaces

¹³⁸ Verstraete (2010:10) discusses this quality as the crux of differentiating between intermediality and multimodality. In the latter instance the co-existence of media does not structurally impact on one another.

another, but rather that media searches to be positioned in different ways, “attributing” to one another (Schröter 2011:5).

The discussion of material can be expanded by considering scientist Robert Disalle’s (2008:1-2) view that our knowledge and understanding of matter influence our ideas of space and time. The physical properties of paint, the geography of where it is sourced, its chemistry and even its toxic composition reflect the substance and the *bodyliness* of its tactility.¹³⁹ Manovich’s characterisation of the digital mark as inherently modular contrasts with the inevitable singularity of brush strokes in painting. Painting transmits the faults and the idiosyncrasies of the human body (Eksteen 2011, 2013). This contrast can also be seen in *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.13 and fig 4.2.14) where the bodies of the figures and their anatomical facets appear cloned, repeated as units, yet the paint application varies significantly. In FE’s work from 2011, it is clear that these differences enter into a reciprocal relationship with each other, not becoming each other but responding to one another – like a build-up of strata where the individual layers remain distinct and significant.



Fig 4.2.13: FE, details from screen grabs of the process of creating *Cephalophore* (2011).

The relational exchange as independent interaction can be conceptually aligned with the multiplicity of modular images. FE refers to the modularity in his work as intrinsic to his “breeding system”:

A family resemblance between the characters is fairly obvious and is the by-product of the genealogy they are part of. My art is a kind of breeding system, which can be seen as agricultural...

However, the offspring of these images represent a new genus in its own right. As portraits they do not answer to anything or anyone, and a challenging prospect would be to

¹³⁹ As expanded on by Elkins (1999): on the inherent characteristics of paint in his publication *What painting is*.

introduce new and varied stock into the existing genealogy. As an art practice, this would mean that new characters, compositions and familial relationships can be “bred” from a vast database of images” <http://frikkieeksteen.blogspot.co.za/>

With *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.14), an entire generation of FE’s cyborg offspring has congregated around a severed head. Not that this spells out death – rather this head, which is a digital descendant of *Terminal Host 1918-2008* (2009-2011) (fig 4.2.10), continues to speak from a liminal place between life and death, like an old mind-set refusing to be silenced. FE’s back-and-forth cross-referencing also creates uncanny interrelations with earlier ‘ancestors’: In 2011, the *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.14) group portrait is reminiscent of a ritualistic act. The repetitive clone also reflects the characteristic “of logic of programmability” (Manovich 2001:64-65) – in the general principle of transcoding: “cultural categories and concepts are substituted...by new ones which derive from computer’s ontology”. In this work, the modularity of digital processes impacts on the rupture of space where one body represents a space again and again. Possible interpretations could find a critique against dominance, which repeats itself.



Fig 4.2.14: FE, detail of *Cephalophore* (2011).

Significantly, the digital aspect of the work, most prominently seen in the 3D wireframe models, is not simply completed in paint, but is both obscured and revealed in intuitive, often volatile, painterly responses (fig 4.2.15 & 4.2.16). The underlying digital armature is highly ordered. Variability can be seen in the way a single body can be repeated, but posed in subtly different positions to carry various heads. The three-dimensional figures allow for

diversity; FE describes them as “actors” becoming involved in his creation. In figure 4.2.16 the scanned ‘skin’ of *Terminal Host* is pulled over a prepared wireframe (3DS Max), resulting in the character of the severed head (Eksteen 2011). It is noteworthy that although criticised, patriarchy and paradigms with dualistic visions still continue to ‘speak’ in a contemporary society. These works present an open-ended conversation about the physical matter of painting, the thinking-faulting human¹⁴⁰ that engages with lived space, and the analytical topography of the computer with its strict mathematical rules.

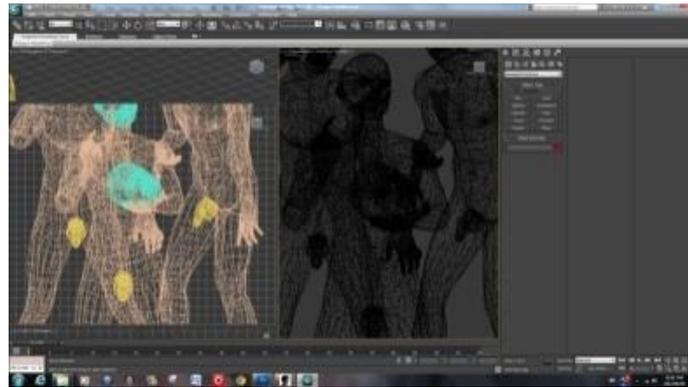


Fig 4.2.15: FE, *Cephalophore* in process: the digital wire drawing in which FE composed the figures. It is only one body that has been repeated and posed in 3-D cyberspace, whilst the heads have individualised identities and features (2011).

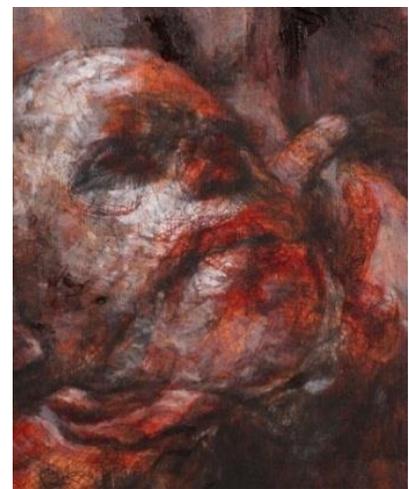


Fig 4.2.16: FE, selected images of the development of the severed head in *Cephalophore* (2011).

FE's reflection in these works, as previously stated, reciprocates strategic differences, which I read as additions that are meant to extend conventions. This is particularly evident when placing details from *The Ambassadors* (2011) next to *Cephalophore* (2011) (fig 4.2.17). Of note is the careful painting of the distortion in the first image (restructuring space) against the fragmentation of contextual space in the second detail. The

¹⁴⁰ Rory du Plessis (opening address to “Designs of nature” on 5 May 2011) remarked that Eksteen’s oil painted figure is “messy”, ‘full of contagion’ and abject as it lacks the [sic] borders, precision and demarcations”.

development was possible due to FE's critical reflection of the painterly response and his relentless research into software to be able to manipulate his cyber offspring.

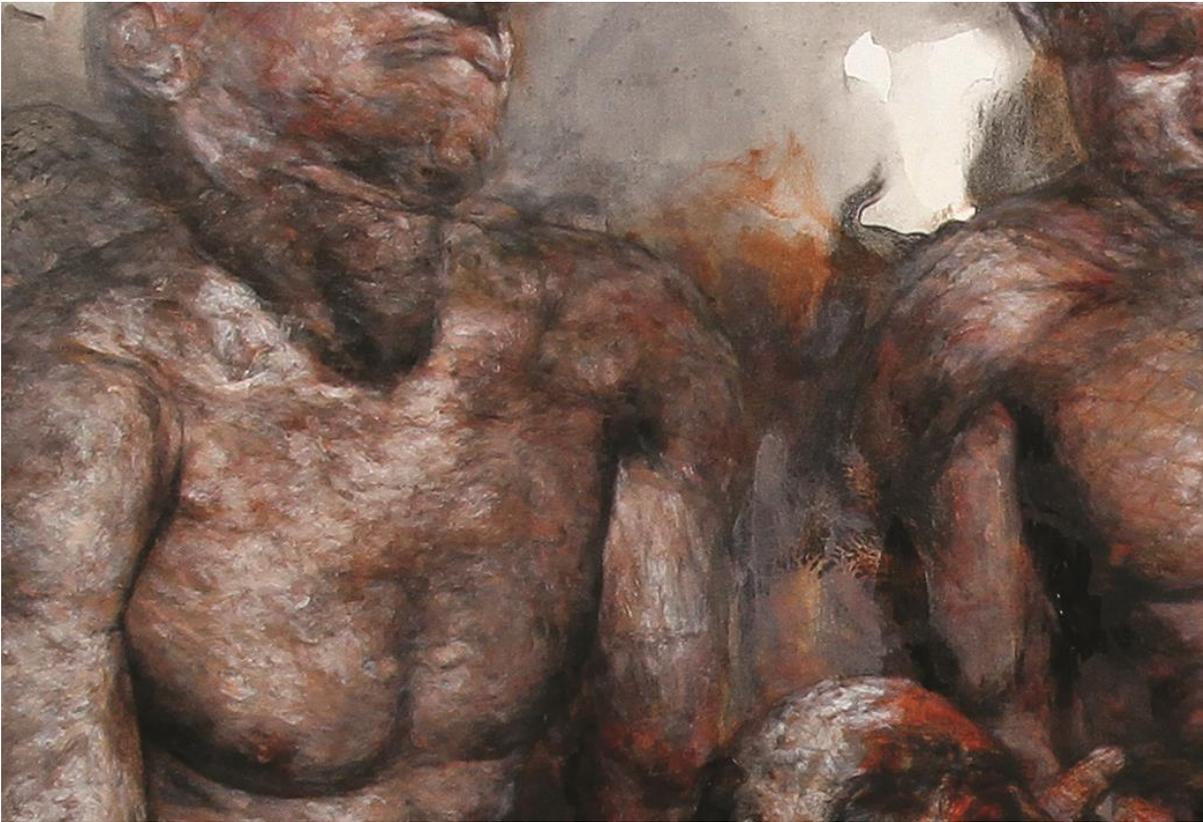


Fig 4.2.17: Top: FE detail of *Ambassadors* (2009) Bottom: FE, detail of *Cephalophore* (2011)



Fig 4.2.18: Left: FE, detail of a morph of *Ambassadors* (2009) Right: FE. detail of the grid of *Cephalophore* (2011)

In the visual comparison of figures 4.2.17 and 4.2.18, it is noticeable that the shift is not only in the painterly details but in the digital flexibility as well. It is the reciprocal exchange that developed between the layered interactions and the consideration of a process of transcoding as theoretically set out by Manovich (2001:27-48). These tensions between the geographies of digital and physical space become a form of manipulation to explore the distinctions between detached calculation and emotional involvement: mechanical mapping versus lived articulation. In this way, specific shifts affect our thinking about time, place and history. Framed against the culture of contemporary image making, which is increasingly dependent on multi-layered processing, FE presents digitally mediated painting as something capable of reifying the intertextual and conceptual meanings of these methods. It is both the importance and the invisibility of processes operating *around* visible media in an artwork that is a typical characteristic of new media.¹⁴¹

FE's art making processes are perforated, multi-layered strata. Deleuze and Guattari (2004:551) refer to "holey space": models of space that have openings, allowing both gaps and connections with other models. By also considering Virilio's technological collapse of space, one can see a matching spacial contraction and interruption in FE's art, which restructures the map of painting to include new territories while also animating the digital template with lived experience. This also effects direction and chronology where the intermedia relation between analogue and digital has flattened the historical perspective

¹⁴¹ Graham and Cook (2010: 5) used the term *postmedia*.

(Walker 2006:18), yet the reciprocity between complex spacial representations is on-going.¹⁴²

As identified and compared in this exhibition room, FE mediates via tension, familiarity and its subversion. The curation and production of FE's work reflects an interstitium that makes visible the invisible to *contaminate* another. Oosterling's (2003:42) expression of being "intermedially sensational" finds its match in FE's processes. This analysis of FE's working methodology reveals the inherent conceptual entanglement of sensuous and conceptual thinking, which does not always sit comfortably in the institutional definitions of knowledge.¹⁴³ The alignment of mediamatic thinking with descriptions of the liminal space in-between painting and digital art suggests that intermediary processes do not designate separate places for sensuous or conceptual ways of thinking, but rather create a hybrid terrain that allows for the existence of various kinds of knowledge. "Hybrid, sensuous and critically reflective in equal parts, it is at best a subversive response to a university system that requires that the traditional role of the artist/pedagogue be adapted to the new, hybrid role of artist / pedagogue / researcher" (Biggs 2006:2). This hybrid character is reflected by FE in his recoding of painting by cyberspace, his manipulation of perspective in real or lived space, as well as his remediation of digital and physical excess. Each of these lines of thought searches for multiple, reversible spaces of abstract and geographical dimensions.

Hegemonic culture is positioned both as cultural control of a group and as an ideological dominance of media in various settings. FE's critique of hegemonic culture via mediamatic thinking not only *unsettles* our assumptions about cultural interrelations, but also *revitalises* them by framing the conventions of painting in unexpected semantic spaces.

¹⁴² See Bolter and Grusin (1999) on remediation.

¹⁴³ According to Biggs (2006:2) the "...world of conceptual knowledge privileged by university..." institutions are seen to contrast with sensuous thinking.

4.3 ROOM THREE: INTERMEDIAL BODIES

COLLEEN ALBOROUGH

CA's work deals with her personal experience of Johannesburg. More specifically, in questioning the relationship between real and imagined fear, she engages with an *interstice* of the corporeal and the immaterial as a theme. CA's development of processes brings an exchange between the tactile print on paper, bulging waste material, three-dimensional installation and the 'immateriality' of digital technologies: animation, digital sound and computing software. I analyse intermediality not only as innovative interactions between media but also as *equations* for the tensions of representing specific realities. The conceptual interrogation of processes linked to psychological tensions as applied in CA's work questions simplistic divisions. The intricacy of the grey area between the concepts of the presumed absence of materiality (disembodiment) and the assumption of the authentic moment (embodiment) underlies the rationale of complexity (Chapter 1.1:1) for this section.

In curating *TRANSCODE* I selected works from CA's 2010 exhibition *Balance*.¹⁴⁴ *Trial and error* (2010) (fig 4.3.1) and the triptych *Descent I, II, III* (2010) (fig 4.3.2 and fig 4.3.3) are monoprints. These prints were created in the development of the animation *Balance* (2010) (fig 4.3.4).

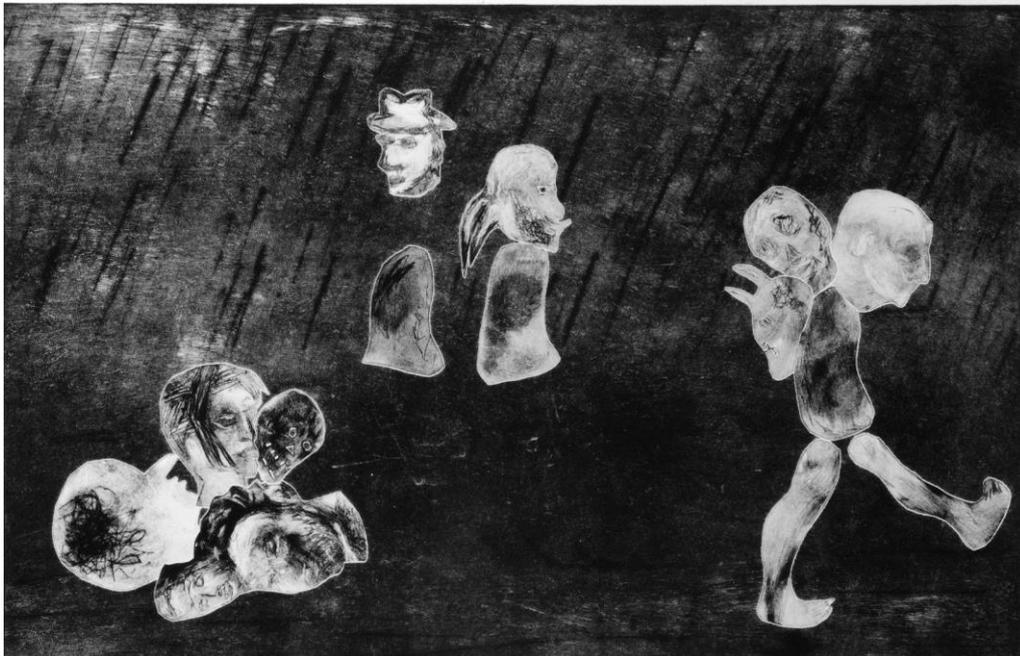


Fig 4.3.1: CA, *Trial and error* (2010).

¹⁴⁴ The animation *Balance* (2010) can be viewed on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/25814587>

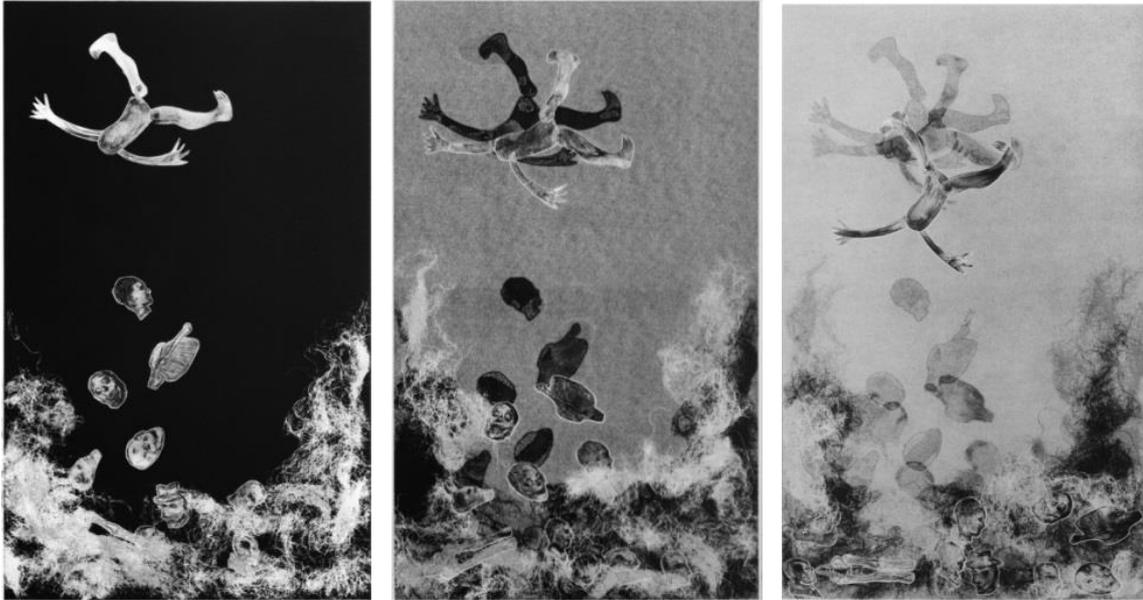


Fig 4.3.2: CA, *Descent I, II, III* (2010).



Fig 4.3.3: CA, as exhibited on *TRANSCODE* (2011): *Trial and error* (2010) and *Descent I, II & III* (2010).



Fig 4.3.4: CA, animation stills from *Balance* (2010).

Inspired by Edward Albee's play *A delicate balance*, CA conceptualised a narration that evokes the amorphous strata of suburban fear. CA identified with the couple fleeing the "unknown terror" in Albee's play "because they are fleeing the unknowable itself" (Buys 2010: arthro review). Searching to find narrative equivalents to express her experience of

anxiety (CA 2010:interview)¹⁴⁵ embraces a reflective process, intuitively responding to her own body's reaction to site and evolving media. Materials such as ink, paper and waste retained the presence in the video (fig 4.3.4), where the constructed landscape includes the silhouette of the city and an isolated figure lying in the landscape: deceased, but haunting in its presence (fig 4.3.4). The protagonist's actions are frantic in the search for a suitable head and after falling into the underworld he surfaces again, just to repeat his futile ritual. These earlier works (fig 4.3.1 to fig 4.3.4) are discussed to identify *differences* and address research question two that aims to describe the nature of intermediality to articulate contrast, anticipate potential change, or revisit possible grey areas.



Fig 4.3.5: CA, *Fear and Trembling* (2011).

In response to my invitation to research intermediality for *TRANSCODE*, CA created the installation *Fear and Trembling* (2011) (fig 4.3.5) by reconstructing the context of the animation, now itself part of a landscape that includes the city on the horizon and an intricate web of moving components built into the mound of waste. The processes of *Fear and Trembling* (2011) (fig 4.3.5) respond to research question three that searches to identify, analyse and compare established *hybridity and transformation* towards modelling an innovative approach to intermediality.

4.3.1 Immateriality and embodiment – a brief contextualisation

The research objective of articulating reciprocity between *physical thinking* in the art practice of CA and discursive theories of embodiment, articulates focused issues to be considered in the context of intermediation. Thus, this section responds to the first research question, which aims to identify *characteristics of intermediality*.

¹⁴⁵ Appendix 6.

The backbone of electronic media exists not as the image of an artwork, but composited as information that *results* in images on a screen or in a projection. The immateriality of information has been articulated through various metaphors in academic discourse – such as being “intangible” (Levinson 1997:xi), and a “mathematical binary of discrete digits” (Rush 1999:170, 183), amongst others.¹⁴⁶ Analogue art is clearly positioned for its embodied presence as “tangible” (Belting 2002:2), as “thing” (Lechte 2011:354-357) and as “evidence” (Newell 2012:287,288).

a. The virtual and the concrete

The general emphasis in the relevant literature on ‘virtuality’ in new media art is on cyberspace and software art (Paul 2003, Corcoran 1998, Hayles 1999). In discussing the previous room, I referred to the abstract mathematical nature¹⁴⁷ of cyberspace that is dependent on our *mental visualisation* and association of movement (Paul 2003:76). Its extension into Room Three is taken up by outlining further characteristics of cyberspace from perspectives defining it as the *absence of physicality*. “It is a virtual space, like a state of mind, a place simultaneously real and artificial, and thus by definition not a physical location...cyberspace can be considered as a digital complement of our atomic world” (Corcoran 1998:11, 22). The virtual here is defined as “acting without agency of matter” (Friedberg 2007), with the interface as mediator between the user and coded data.

With the relationship between “digital objects and actual artefacts” being widely debated¹⁴⁸ the pros and cons are still inconclusive. As we are still being shaped by the tools of our cyberspace,¹⁴⁹ the constant need to engage critically with generalised conceptions prevails. For example, in classical artificial intelligence (AI) visualisation the mind is envisioned as a “disembodied symbolic processor” that structures information to interact with the world (Davis 2003:13). Whilst Davis suggests we position technology as superior to our bodies, as the Cartesian *mind-above-matter*, current thinking rejects such hierarchical thinking.¹⁵⁰

Our relations to the world are predicated on the concreteness of our bodies, yet are also entangled with the technologies of our time. I adopt Jean-Luc Nancy’s (2008:83) definition

¹⁴⁶ Also see Cook 2008:27, Hayles 1999:69-70, Belting 2002:3 and Kirby 1999:19.

¹⁴⁷ In 4.2.1.2 Intermediate space, a. Geometric space.

¹⁴⁸ In articles such as “Old objects, new media: historical collections, digitization and affect” by Jenny Newell (2012:287-306).

¹⁴⁹ From McLuhan’s (1994) well-known expression, “we shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us”.

¹⁵⁰ The idea of a mind that can be downloaded often features in techno-pop fantasies, along with the possible breakdown between virtual reality (VR) and real life (Davis 2003:12, 13). Davis (2003:12, 13) refers to “techno cogito” and amongst many examples points out that “technical” is seen as Cartesian as “the operating assumption that the mathematical recoding of reality is the golden road to the mastery of nature”. Amongst a chorus of postmodern thinkers, Hayles (1999:70, 72), Davis (2003:12, 13) and Deleuze and Guattari (2004:3-28) expand on the problematic nature of such separation and hierarchical thinking.

of the 'technical', as "a world whose cosmos, nature, gods, entire system is, in its inner joints, exposed as 'technical': the world of the ecotechnical". The linking of our bodies to this complex system renders our bodies "more visible, more proliferating, more polymorphic, more compressed...than ever before". Therefore, we come to know our bodies or the embodiment of our ideas via the technologies of our world. Whilst the body is a physical biological entity, embodiment is a theoretical field "defined by perceptual experience and the mode of presence and engagement in the world...experienced as activity and production" (Barthes 1986:56-68).

Concerning the virtual, Belting (2005:3) defines 'medium' as an *artificial body* through which images need to become embodied to become visible. In Belting's sense of mediated images, all fabricated images¹⁵¹ are *virtual*; both analogue and digital: "images are present in their media, but they *perform* as absence, which they make visible" (Belting 2005:313). Image (the virtual) is therefore a substitute for something else (that is concrete). Belting (2005:305) suggests that it is only by "disembodying the images from its original media that we are able to re-embody them in our brain". In other words, one needs to overcome the medium and become immersed in the artwork.

I draw on several observations from Belting in this regard: firstly, that he seems to suggest that medium is subordinate to image and secondly he refers to the singular moment of observing the final artwork as a completed object. These observations can be critically interrogated by arguing that determining the 'original medium' of an image could be a difficult task in specific artworks, such as CA's installation. Furthermore, this suggestion of hierarchical order is contested in the arguments through this thesis and art positioned as mediamatic thinking involving *multiple media*. Therefore, my second observation is that Belting's idea of an artwork as the final outcome is contested in this thesis by the articulation of art works as continuum in an *integrative process*.¹⁵² A third observation from Belting (2005:305) is that one could *clearly* distinguish between image and medium. I would argue for the *complexity* of differentiation between image and medium in CA's art making. Belting (2005:304) also clearly suggests that new media does not reflect materiality in the same way *medium* produces physicality of images in analogue art. In the analysis of CA's processes, I argue that the concrete material proves to be layered with the mental mediality of the digital image.

¹⁵¹ In Belting's (2002:3) focus on images, he points out that "the act of *fabrication* and the act of *perception*" are two symbolic acts involving our physical bodies for the purpose of understanding images.

¹⁵² As articulated earlier in this thesis, I position this as the perspective of the artist that differs from the theorist/historian.

b. Technogenesis and the unrepresentable

From Frankenstein to biomedicine, technology can appear to create life in what is described as “technogenesis” (Waldby 2003:28).¹⁵³ This divorce from nature (the body) is further intensified by literature that posits technology as acting with *autonomy*, exceeding its status as tool; consequently we have moved from the age of human to ‘posthuman’ (Hayles 1999, Keating 2000:1, Du Preez 2010). The relationship between a mechanistic conception and the real of the organic body reveal the prioritising of the virtual as an escape from “the prison” of flesh (Davis 2003:19). My analysis in the section on process comes to argue that it is this problematic view that CA’s art contests (as is also contested in Davis 2003:19, 20).¹⁵⁴

In sublime aesthetics the *unrepresentable*¹⁵⁵ is found in the awe and incomprehensibility we have for that which is beyond understanding (Burke 1990:55, 57, 65; Rosenblum 1975:10, 11; Lyotard 1982:66, 68). Lyotard (1982:68) also refers to “the infinity of the plastic experiment” in describing the experimental approach of artists. Therefore artists’ search to cross the established boundaries, to reinvent knowledge that acknowledges an *unrepresentable*, for example in CA’s thematic concern with fear and in her shifts of margins of embodiment.

In the context of experimental art we struggle to figure out the technology¹⁵⁶ of our computer-mediated everyday life with emotions which vary from frustration to fear and create art to think through this, as CA does in her animations and installation in Room Three. Between the search to understand, we alter between certainty, possibility and simply moving on because we know we cannot comprehend it all. Today’s new media readily engages with the tension between believability and doubt in an intermedial space that, at times, is quasi-transcendental (Oosterling 2003:41). It is in CA’s sound and physical computing that the *independence of technology* becomes a consideration and poses questions. Also, it is my reading (4.3.4) that CA’s installation finds a *sensible* understanding, both in its suggestion of mechanistic technogenesis and its contemplation of sublime in-between-ness.

¹⁵³ This refers to life that can be created outside of nature.

¹⁵⁴ The link with a new ‘malevolent’ creative force that is both feared and revered calls up a lineage from religion (Christian spirituality of spirit vs body, good vs evil) to philosophy (nature vs culture; Cartesian mind vs body; language vs experience).

¹⁵⁵ Lyotard (1996:436) defines representation of real in relation to the *unrepresentable*, described as an “intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain: the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept. See the aesthetics of the sublime in Burke (1990), Kant (1952), Crowther (1988, 1989) and my MVA thesis: Miller (1997, 2007b).

¹⁵⁶ We sense in-between by “playfully configuring the great scheme of things” (Oosterling 2003:40).

c. Remediation

A similar unattainability is found in the concept of 'remediation'. Bolter and Grusin (1999:5) state: "Our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally, it wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them". Bolter (1999:5) demonstrates the double logic of this statement, in the trend for live television, which requires so much more technology to produce a 'real' experience. One finds this tendency of multiplication of media in CA's highly complex installation, where, through her processes, media were multiplied from her first installation of *Balance* (2010) towards an escalating immersion in the final installation of *Fear and Trembling* (2010-2011). The sense of presence is increased, due to the addition of sound and movement through physical computing¹⁵⁷ (discussed in 4.4.4).

We recognise that the mechanistic body is an idealised version that wants to overcome the pitfalls of decay. The artist deals with social and personal situations within this negotiation. It becomes particularly evident in CA's characters constructed before and during *TRANSCODE*, which negotiate between the authentic and the simulated, encouraging our willingness to suspend disbelief.¹⁵⁸ CA's negotiation of the digital and analogue remediates embodiment of the authentic and the simulated.

d. Information immortality

Hayles (1999:73-75) outlines the seductive appeal of a mind-set that embraces "soul-as-information",¹⁵⁹ free from the body, which is mortal: "The great dream and promise of information is that it can be free from the material constraints that govern the mortal world. If we can become information we have constructed, we too, can soar free, immortal like the gods." Therefore, the fear of death – absence – is in part an underlying motivation for constructing a theory where technologies become mystified (Hayles 1999:73). In negotiating impossible contrasts, CA's animation contributes several factors to the thematic terrain of death, fear and an underworld of unseen or absence, and I argue that this is strengthened by the general perceptions of digitisation and animation.

Outlining the information/mathematical duality, Hayles (1999:69-70) makes the historical link with molecular biology: "In the contemporary view, the body is said to 'express' information encoded in the genes. The content is provided by the genetic pattern; the

¹⁵⁷ Via Arduino software.

¹⁵⁸ This suspension of disbelief is discussed by Ryan (2001b), also in relation to narratives, immersion and interactivity.

¹⁵⁹ A similar criticality regarding prioritising information/data is also found in Kirby (1999, 2002), Keating (2000) and Davis (2003). Freedom of digital information is an illusion due to its dependence on materiality.

body's materiality articulates a pre-existing semantic structure." The crux for Hayles (1999:70) is that "control resides in the pattern". In scientific discourse the coding in the DNA produces the way the body looks and functions, yet Hayles (1999:70, 72) points out that this is not possible to achieve through experiments – it is a rhetorical inversion, in the same order that mind is privileged over body. I interpret nuances of control and chaos and the interrelationship of the presence of immortality (a dead figure) and mortality (the mobilised figure) in the animation *Balance* (2010).

e. Becoming recalibrates physicality

The emphasis on *processes* (Lunenfeld 1999, Weibel in Rush 1999:170; Levinson 1997:xi) is characterised as "unfinished"¹⁶⁰ and "mental correspondences for physical locales". In traditional art, the unfinished artwork is seen as being unrealised, whilst computer culture *embraces* the principle of continuity of process, often using deliberately unfinished storylines. By defining the digital as a counterpart to the physical and the immersive qualities of a mental state, Lunenfeld (1999:10) writes that the digital is not a physical location of an urban environment (psychogeography), but rather *liquid architecture of constant change*. Lunenfeld (1999:7) also highlights the association of the unfinished with death – leaving "unfinished business" behind. Lunenfeld (1999:8) suggests instead: "To celebrate the unfinished in this era of digital ubiquity is to laud process rather than goal" and in this, a "state of suspension" is evoked. The theory is that activity and engagement is replacing interest in the tangible.

In intermedia practice the understanding of layers of object presence and material absence needs to be "discontinuously sensed", rather than "grasped" (Oosterling 2003:41). Applying the phrasing of "*the thinking body*" when he outlines that "*Sensus* as an experience is both mental and physical, i.e. mind and matter, production and reception", Oosterling (2003:42) describes this thinking as "non-conceptual" but emphasises the *ability to judge* in-between. The *action or motion of processes* is the intermediate understanding, a critical reflection via art making. It is therefore not only the artwork as becoming entity that I highlight, but also the *becoming* of understanding.¹⁶¹

f. Experience as embodiment: thinking and feeling

The dualist divide between corporeal experience and intellectualised constructs does not consider the complexity of experience and its "refusal" to be translated into a simple code:

¹⁶⁰ The concept of the unfinished is not a new concept: an example is the writing of Bakhtin (Haynes 2002) where "unfinalizability" is positioned as core to creativity and innovation.

¹⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari (2004:256-341), write extensively about becoming, of which several issues are very relevant, yet due to the scope of the thesis I do not expand on this aspect of the philosophy.

The ineffable nature of affective knowledge seems to imperfectly survive its formal representation, persuading us that there must be two quite different domains of sense in operation; one corporealised, immediate, and intimately given, and the other intellectualised, mediated, and constructively reinterpreted. Language appears to fall short of experience then because it cannot equate these two quite incommensurable ways of 'making sense' (Kirby 1999:19).

Kirby (1999:19-20) therefore considers experience as affect, as intimate but complex, and states that a mediated 'coded' interpretation is restricted. Therefore, even though literature clearly distinguishes between the virtual and the real, the tensional relationship suggests intermedial positions. In the dualism between thinking and feeling, thinking is always positioned as being in a higher order. However, it can be argued that the mind informs the body as much as the body informs the mind, and this reciprocity is essential in CA's work. "[M]atter has its own intelligence and 'making sense' does not belong solely to language as 'mode of production'" (Kirby 1999:19).¹⁶²

Previously, the need to make the world understandable in conceptual/discursive terms produced a simplified and abstracted version of experience. Yet contemporary thinking acknowledges the complexity of thought itself and the limitation of abstract symbols (Anderson 2003:91). In "Embodied cognition" Anderson (2003:91) writes:

...this new approach focuses attention on the fact that most real-world thinking occurs in very particular (and often very complex) environments, is employed for very practical ends, and exploits the possibility of interaction with and manipulation of external props. It thereby foregrounds the fact that cognition is a highly *embodied* or *situated activity* – emphasis intentionally on all three – and suggests that thinking beings ought therefore [to] be considered first and foremost as acting beings.

In a similar vein, Stern (2013:2) writes "moving and thinking and feeling...are all part of the same process...When we move and think and feel, we are of course a body." Emphasising the ever-changing nature of the body due to relationships, Stern (2013:2) notes that "*embodiment* as incipient activity" is not a thing/body but an active relation. The discussion of CA's conceptual and process development underscores this perception, for her environment of inner city Johannesburg and the choices of materials were active instruments of thought.

¹⁶² Furthermore, the expressive intensities of matter can be seen as an affirmation of life, described through Deleuze and Guattari's morphogenesis (DeLanda, M. 2007. The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze: European Graduate School Video Lectures 2/5 on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ut_raI8WmzA (Accessed on 5 August 2012).

4.3.2 Mapping intermediality via process in CA's work

Research question one also aims to chart a multi-layered formulation of intermediality by structuring new understandings of the relationship between digital and analogue art-making processes. As intermediality is determined through *particular* material and media-relations (Müller 2010:15), I start by analysing CA's individual research processes to identify her mediamatic thinking.

The description of CA's processes aims to articulate intermediality via consideration of her enactment of mediamatic thinking and practice as a "nexus of activity" (Schatzki 2001b:48). This section considers how intermittent sketches and physical making moulded CA's storyline and it analyses aspects of the animation that could have influenced and extended processes of making prints. Furthermore, it discusses some parallels between processes involved and selected issues within embodiment discourse, based on what are perceived as significant points of connection. This section unpacks the extent to which layered reflections in art are strategies to open up ambiguous space and tension. "Creative and critical inquiry responds to research demands by exploring the unknown and this presents an essential vantage point in critiquing the known" (Sullivan 2010:xiii). CA's processes as experience that reveals new insight are an acknowledged application in practice-led research.

CA's studio (fig 4.3.6) is reminiscent of embodied brainstorming – of an engagement between the intuitive artist and the physicality of her materials, the evolving but incomplete concepts and conflicting techniques. Yet the contrary of *seemingly random* covered walls of notes and images is that her processes are well structured, disciplined and methodically applied visual thinking in flux.



Fig 4.3.6: CA, art practice processes on studio walls (2010).

On CA's studio walls notes, sketches, and window viewfinders map out areas of interest on the test prints, combining or aligning details of various works. These physical 'tracings' of thoughts follow a path that is both intuitive and ordered. However, it does not follow a predetermined trajectory, but searches for a new 'unknowability.' The emphasis of my observations is, then, that pages and details are grouped revealing particular considerations and links. This evidence of CA's making processes collected over the last few years for *TRANSCODE* (2011) shows the oscillation of haptic, visual and conceptual elements. CA drives her embodied enquiry about specific aspects of her life in the city through her processes. Several areas on the studio walls specifically map her actions in the space, her dedication to her work and her negotiation of a threatening city, evident of a self-reflection of enacting bodily movement and practice. The methodology based on the practice turn defines 'practice' as "arrays of human activity" and emphasises that this

activity is embodied (Schatzki 2001a:2). By paying close attention to the grouping of CA's material, one can observe the transformation of her subject matter of dealing with the unknowability of interacting with the city.

The thinking processes of CA, where the outcome is not known beforehand, can be partially read on the walls of her studio (fig 4.3.7), is articulated in interviews (Appendix 6), and is found in the material of her installations. In her article about CA, Italian critic Elisa Del Prete (2010:118) considers CA's investigation as an "artistic urgency" that is "an inner cry of a state of mind that struggles every day against tensions and contradictions, between fear and uncertainty". CA's personal experience of being in physical danger is being translated into the thematically personified work. In an interview (2010) she spoke about her context in Johannesburg and the relationship between real and imagined fear (Appendix 6):

Arts on Main isn't quite in the city, it is just on the edge, and the move from the suburb to the city, evoked to me quite a sense of fear of the unknown and moving into the unknown. From my own experiences of hijacking and smash-and-grab, whenever I started coming into the city, I started feeling really very nervous and that is why I had the city in the background of my work.



Fig 4.3.7: CA, research of the Johannesburg skyline pinned onto her studio wall (2011).



Fig 4.3.8: CA, details of the skyline as constructed for the development of *Balance* (2011).

In the documentation above (fig 4.3.7) the presence of the city as captured in CA's photographs on the studio wall is reflected in the graphic printing (fig 4.3.8) and construction of the set for the animation. These images, taken by the artist, speak of

snapshots of looking at an environment in varying light and times of the day, such as early in the morning when she would be on her way to her studio. The twisted and turned assemblage¹⁶³ of prints (fig 4.3.8) responded to the photographic interpretation: I propose not only the single frame, but also the multiplicity of the stacking of several photographs next to one another. There is something immediate, something direct about the way the images are tacked together. The etchings assimilated the photographic research, whilst later on the animation assimilated the etchings.¹⁶⁴ This crossing of media, which is characterised by a measurement against another, not only took place in her studio, but became evident later again when CA worked in the space of the Unisa Art Gallery in 2011. CA's strategy of 'problem-solving' (Ryan 2001a:2) is situated both in her physical presence in the city, her practical processes of mapping on the studio walls and the psychological mind-space she found herself in.

CA (2010: interview) described that over the previous three years she used printmaking to story-board her ideas and unfold her storylines for her animations: "I just started cutting out little figures and various heads and I liked that idea of just creating these many personas and different bodies. Then started to play on the plates." To start off, she had a vague storyline of a character with little heads and different legs walking in an isolated landscape. Through a process of trial and error, she created intaglio prints, dry point on old lithographic plates (fig 4.3.1) and in acetate, often cutting out characters (fig 4.3.2). CA inked the lithographic plate as background and then wiped the ink to selectively reveal marks she made. Onto this she laid inked acetate 'body parts' with multiple heads and bits of cotton waste. She then printed these compositions with her hand press (fig 4.3.9). The inking process carefully manipulated tone and texture in the manner of a monoprint until she achieved the particular atmosphere required.

¹⁶³ Due to the prints being staggered in a three-dimensional space the construction is characteristic of an assemblage rather than a collage.

¹⁶⁴ This reminds one of Belting's (2002:151) words when he wrote about the relationship between painting and photography: "As photography assimilated painting, painting later was shaped by photography."



Fig 4.3.9: CA, Litho plate with random parts on her press bed (2013).

With emphasis on the “tangible” CA (2010: interview)¹⁶⁵ emphasised the *unfolding* process as she pointed to one after another print in a conversation in front of her work:

I think this middle one was quite a definite idea that I wanted to do and then the next one was that one, and then once I got to that one, I realised well this little guy can be carrying all these heads but then, and then from there I thought well what if he is trying on different heads and by the time I got to this one, I was so excited because there was this real process of animating on the plate.

The significance of the last statement lies on two levels: the *successive* nature of the description – one action/image that led to the next – and also in the inappropriateness of words to grasp the immersive narrative in this situation – an artist taken up in an unfolding materialised process, she states: “so it became this whole little world for me” (CA 2010: interview). The act of cleaning, printing, cutting, ordering is the *thinking* with the *process of progression* – an immersive physical exploration. At this stage, the prints are structurally independent, whilst the play with individual images starts to reveal the storyline.

The *evidence* of the exploration was placed on her studio walls to continue speaking back to her about the processes. It is necessary to emphasise that the ‘logic’ of this stratification is sensed in-between and at times has *seemingly* no direct relation to a storyline. Importantly, it is not only the ‘final’ prints (fig 4.3.1, 4.3.2), but the embodied ordering and cleaning that evoke a line of thinking (4.3.10).

¹⁶⁵ Appendix 6.

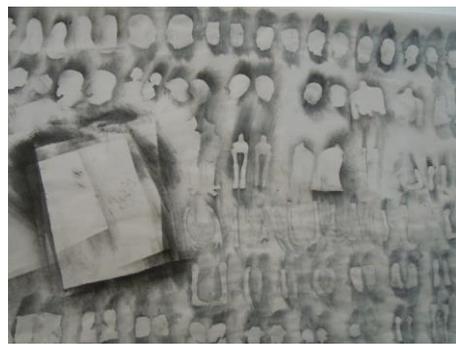


Fig 4.3.10: CA, Top: make-shift 'filing system' or archive for body parts, tacked onto soft boards mounted onto her studio wall (2010), bottom: sheets of tracings of the paper cut-outs and the left-overs of rubbings of the prints on her studio walls (2010).

Pinned up on the studio walls are outlines of 'body parts' – neatly ordered to categorise shapes: arms, legs, heads and bodies. Another sheet of paper systematically captured shapes as the individual parts were inked up and prepared for printing. These 'performing archives' (fig 4.3.10), in a space seemingly devoid of meaning, are created by the artist to open possible in-between paths. In themselves, these sheets are progressing into the animation with suggested motion in the small shifts of scale.

In preparing the site for her stop-frame animation *Balance* (2010), CA constructed a *theatre-like box* (fig 4.3.11), which she populated with an "undulating and barren landscape" (Buys 2010: Artthrob review) of cotton waste with the cityscape on the periphery. The 'earth' of the scene therefore consisted of the very material used in the printing process. CA deliberately chose materials such as cotton waste, gauze bandage and felting wool because it is the 'stuff' that she uses in printing processes: it is at once the *natural body of*

the process and the object (the discarded). The material of printing became the generative world for the actors (figures) to become 'alive' in the three-dimensional world.



Fig 4.3.11: CA, (left) a wad of cotton gauze, (right) animation set containing waste cloth.



Fig 4.3.12: CA, (left) dry-point print, (right) the cut-outs of the print on cotton waste (2010).

The main character, created from printed details, is accompanied by a host of body parts as fragments of paper and gradually becomes entangled in the threads of the landscape (fig 4.3.12). The rudimentary cut-out figure generated from *Trial and error* (2010) (fig 4.3.1) negotiated his way in the animation in this landscape of waste and chaos. The struggle to control the waste cloth due to its being shapeless and getting entangled, found its reflection in the narrative: “So even in that moment I have extreme frustration because I can’t control it and then I have to surrender to the process” (CA 2010: interview). The materials *became the embodied threat* that constricted and nearly overwhelmed the main character in his frantic quest. As an initially headless character, he searches through the discarded heads and greedily gathers as many as he can, causing him to fall and disappear into the waste. The print in *Trial and error* (2010) (fig 4.3.1) echoes and informs this moment in the animation, but it is in the cleaning sheet (fig 4.3.13) that one finds the action that follows the loss of balance.



Fig 4.3.13: CA, process image with traces of the inking process (2010).

These processes of cutting, inking, cleaning, printing and constructing the set then influence both the materials and the techniques and so alter the storylines as she allows for the unfolding process to be included. The story continues with the figure falling into an underworld. These prints become the tactile copy of what takes place in the animation, where movement forms the core of the rendering of the narration. Interestingly, it is the reverse of the definition of cyberspace by Corcoran (1998:11, 22) provided earlier in this chapter: “In this way, cyberspace can be considered as a digital complement of our atomic world.” The animation’s motion gave rise to the three physical prints *Descent series: I, II, III* (2010) (fig 4.3.2) leading to innovative use of shadow prints (discussed in Section 4.3.3). The reciprocity between the prints and the animation deals with the figure’s descent.

The second set (fig 4.3.14) depicts an *underworld* with a supporting cast of spindly characters, which developed from experiments with gauze and wire. The depiction of two worlds opens the metaphorical tension between life and death, day and night, presence and absence, supporting the theme of fear and death. The tumbling main character falls into this nether land, and after an altercation with the ghostlike characters, crawls his way back to the higher strata. The cycle starts again.



Fig 4.3.14: CA. (left) fragments of material, (middle) model on the studio wall, (right) animation still (2010).

It is clear that CA's physical processes of cutting, inking, cleaning, printing and constructing the set were not simply steps in a technical execution of an image, but a continuous process of perception and intuition leading to new forms and concepts. This might be taken to support Elleström's (2010:15) preference for the phrase "modalities of media" as signifying an integration of materiality, perception and cognition. The liminal processes of thinking in-between destinations of prints and animations, between a working process and a storyline, reciprocate energy and understanding intermedially. CA's art values process of thinking as clearly as specific outcomes. From the perspective of the art maker, thinking and material *becoming* remediates another.

Whilst CA was printing, she had sound artist João Orecchia recording her actions of working in the studio – moving and turning the wheel of the printer's press.

I showed him video and explained my concept of working with a sense of trying to find a balance and I also explained to him my processes and how I like to show my working processes. He came to my studio with contact microphones and attached them to the press and so that clack, clack you've heard is the printing press, which I love, which brings a relationship back to the prints and then my camera that I was shooting with the animation, the zooming in and zooming out. He recorded that and this *kr kr* is the CPU: so all of the sounds are from the studio.

CA (2011: interview) describes her intention with the sound was to achieve the sense of a "headless state". The choices of material and her allowance for process therefore took place in the close relationship with concept and fostered the reciprocal understanding between the making process and the storyline. Her processes allow her to find the resolve, not via logic and theory, but through that in-between '*sensible*' knowing (Oosterling 2003:40, 44) the intermedial space that allows the unspeakable body to find the narrative.

4.3.3 Delineating differences between features of embodiment between printing and animation

The important role of research is to specify the characteristics and boundaries of concepts, which is emphasised when difference is identified, analysed and compared. It is in understanding boundaries that one can also clearly observe their porosity.¹⁶⁶ In outlining the differences, I analyse the print qualities involved in CA's *Descent series: I, II, III* (2010)

¹⁶⁶ Michael Holquist (2003:379) acknowledges the persistent importance of "sharply" distinguished differences and in relation to this the battering of the walls of difference.

in comparison to the animation *Balance*.¹⁶⁷ This section searches to identify how the differences become strengths in feeding back into one another. CA used the physicality of printing to generate a process that culminated in the digital language of animation. In this section, I discuss how the animation in its turn reciprocated complexity of suggested motion and virtual enhancement in printing.

4.3.3.1 *Descent series: I, II, III* (2010)

The saturated dark ground contrasts with bright white images in *Descent I* (fig 4.3.15), forming a starkly two-dimensional result. The suggested motion of a figure is frozen in mid-air, in the density of the tone and in the limited depth. The following two experimental monotypes, *Descent II & III* (2010), are significant for they were directly influenced by the animation, which was developing simultaneously. In *Descent II* the fragments used in *Descent I* were lifted and placed in a slightly shifted position, resulting in the dark ink being exposed, the background now translucent due to loss of ink and the newly inked acetate being printed next to the trace of its previous position. A similar action was repeated with the cotton waste. As the individual fragments were lifted, decalcomania¹⁶⁸ marks left traces of the lifting process (fig 4.3.15). The third print repeated the process. Both of these last prints created shadow prints, referred to as 'ghost prints' by CA (interview 2010).

The repetitive use of the figure is reminiscent of the processes of taking several shots for a stop-frame animation, as CA explained, with the small movements of her paper figure equating the motion in the animation. In other words, the prints were speaking about the ephemeral motion of animation, in the language of prints. This is an innovative way of using monoprints, both for the relationship to the stop-frame animation, and for the sense of depth. *Descent III* seems to exist in-between the density of *Descent I* and the animation *Balance*, as it both loses its material density and acquires translucency and suggested motion.

¹⁶⁷ This research does not discuss the *installation* of *Balance* (2010) at the Standard Bank Art Gallery, as it did not become part of *TRANSCODE*: an entirely new installation was conceptualised. However, the animation and selected prints that influenced the animation (and were included in *TRANSCODE*) are analysed and compared.

¹⁶⁸ Decalcomania marks are found when two surfaces that have wet paint or ink between them are pulled apart and the media leave vein-like patterns on the surfaces. The technique was used by Surrealists for its value of 'automatic' mark making, since the marks render a pattern which is controlled by chance. The sense of a subconscious rendering comes to life.

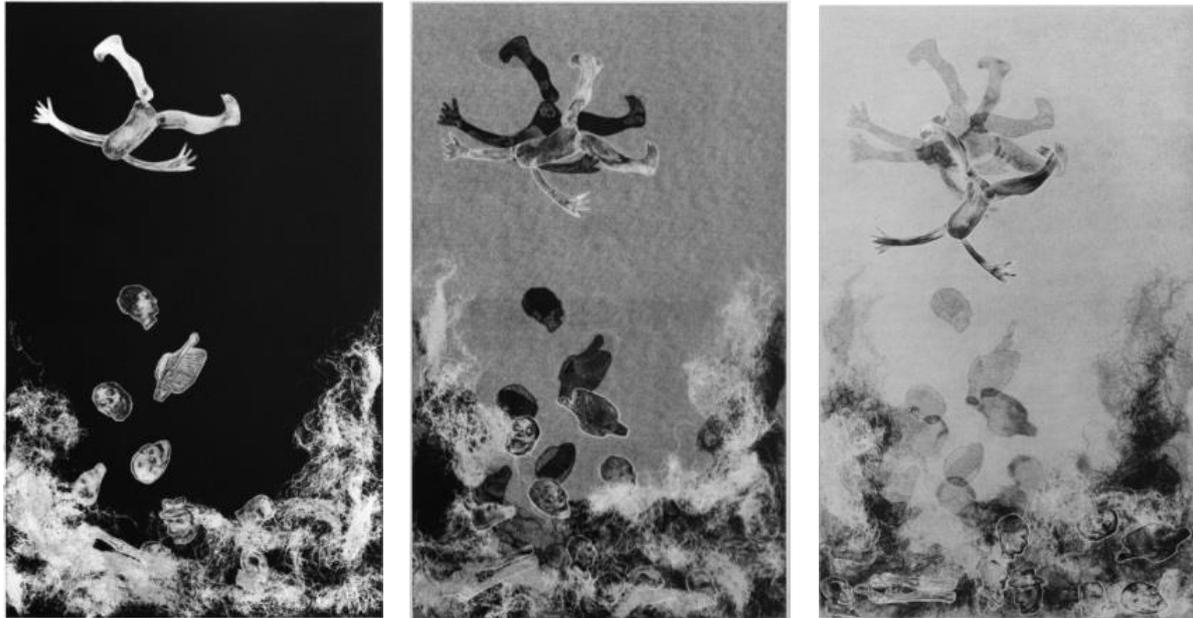


Fig 4.3.15: CA, *Descent I, II, III* (2010).

Therefore, the making of the animation germinated the strategies for the monotypes, creating a remedial exchange within the analogue-digital-analogue characteristics of disembodied vs embodied material. Where the monotype is characterised by a once-off, CA has invented a triple print as monotype. Before expanding on further reciprocity, I analyse the *prevailing differences* that exist between the prints and the animation.

For all its suggested motion, the print remains tangible and set; statically frozen and unchanged in format. *Descent I* in particular reverberates the opacity of traditional printing that acknowledges the *material* density of ink layered on the paper base: a *completed object*.

4.3.3.2 *Balance* (2010): *change and variability*

In contrast with the monoprinted triptych, the crux of animation is motion: the ever-changing suggestion of movement of characters, light and progression within time. In the animation the software translates the string of images into a numerical representation,¹⁶⁹ which is exported to be viewed as motion. Animation brings the illusion of a magical and separate world as the artist emulates transparency of action to bring an object to life. CA (interview 2010) remarks: “It is quite an unforgiving medium as well, because it records your mistakes.” It is in the *liquid or mutable* character that animation *recalibrates physicality* (Lunenfeld 1999:10): CA’s ‘mistakes’ can be altered, reworked, re-timed until she finds the desired streaming of frames. The advantage of the digitisation, or “numeric representation”

¹⁶⁹ Manovich’s (2001:49) primary principal of new media: numerical representation means that the new media object can be described mathematically, which can then be programmed.

(Manovich 2001:49) is that CA could evolve her animation after her 2010 exhibition at Standard Bank Art Gallery to present a slightly altered version on *TRANSCODE*. The source of the animation, which is the tangible material of the theatre-like stage, loses its 'real' (haptic) quality to some extent in the digital realm, yet its motion rejuvenates a newly enacted life.

As the digital image changes the continuous information of an analogue image into a discrete image,¹⁷⁰ it is quantified, which allows different systems to communicate with one another. All visuals therefore become data: the world and its meaning and contrasts become measured by the same instrument in pixels, accessed via the screen as interface. The quantifiable dimension of this is not lost on artists: CA (interview 2010) says "I always feel that there is a clinical aspect to a lot of digital work, so what I try and do is search for a tactility", thereby introducing the materials and 'errors'.

The association with change can be linked to another of Manovich's (2001:27-48) principles of new media mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis: in particular, the concept of *variability*. The changing life of the digital artwork appears in several formats: the animation *Balance* (2010) appears on a monitor in the installation in 2010, projected onto a small screen in *Fear and Trembling* (2011),¹⁷¹ changing size, resolution, context and site. The variable format of the digital artwork distinguishes itself from the traditional print that remains unchanged in format, each being 600 x 790mm. *Descent I, II & III* exists as a single set of prints.

However, I am not arguing that motion and variability render *Balance* disembodied. We understand motion and evoked fluidity through our own bodies. CA's body expresses thinking and emotions that gave rise to and came from the artwork, and the viewers bring to the artwork their own social and political baggage (Bakhtin 1990:266-267). The state of flux of the human body relates to the moving image as an unfolding event. CA (interview 2010) specifically relates her condition of fear with movement, for it is the movement through the city of Johannesburg that evokes the fear. Therefore, motion is experienced as embodied. The simplistic division of digital art being 'disembodied' is further troubled by the fact that

¹⁷⁰ Manovich explains (2001:49-50):

Digitization consists from two steps: sampling and quantization. First, data is sampled, most often at regular intervals, such as the grid of pixels used to represent a digital image. Technically, a sample is defined as "a measurement made at a particular instant in space and time, according to a specified procedure." The frequency of sampling is referred to as resolution. Sampling turns continuous data into discrete data. This is data occurring in distinct units: people, pages of a book, pixels. Second, each sample is quantified, i.e. assigned a numerical value drawn from a defined range (such as 0-255 in the case of an 8-bit greyscale image).

¹⁷¹ on websites <http://www.joaorecchia.com/non-music.html> and YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMq8eq83080>

new media specialists often refer to 'new media objects' (Manovich 2001:40)¹⁷² which can be bought and sold. In this regard, CA's animation was bought as new media object by the UNISA Art Collection, albeit with the entire installation.

One of the advantages of new media is that it is a "means to store and access enormous amount of media material" (Manovich 2001:54). To create *Balance*, CA captured thousands of images that were ordered in sets of actions. In the structuring of the narrative, actions are created with trial and error: the making requires that specific series must be reshot at times. This complexity of image data is made possible by storage capacity. The images do not need to exist as print-outs, freeing the image manipulation from physical constraints.

As discussed previously (in 4.3.1), Hayles (1999:69-94) suggested that the rhetoric of disembodiment is linked to the sense of immortality, which is associated with the appealing nature of digital art. The traditional role of collections and museums involves the *legitimisation and dissemination* of artists' work and reputation: apart from holding power of who will be written into history, these official spaces and their political agendas control the "truth" with which work is viewed (Jordan-Haladyn 2014:48). The internet, though, presents the work on a public forum without the need for hierarchical approval. Furthermore, the fact that cyberspace allows for *Balance* to be viewed in distinctly varied sites expands the experience of the work via different bodies.

In the discussion so far, embodiment has been understood in relation to its physical materiality (concreteness), its fleetingness and motion (digital encoding), which includes the idea of overcoming physical constraints via its non-matter characteristics. Furthermore, the multiplicity of existence (variability, infinity) and embodiment *via viewer experience* was also identified in CA's animation. Taking the idea of experience further, I will now revisit processes as being part of the embodied work. That is, I will assert that the body of the artwork exists beyond the 'object'. I stress process as centrally part of the work. The experimentation in her processes of printing expresses more than a figure falling. It captures the sensation of loss of control in the action of her process. There may be a *representation* of a falling figure, but its *presentation* is the tension of her actions. The engagement between the differences in the processes of printing and animation materialised the abstract sense of tension. In comparing a specific dimension of the two processes, the digital process involves the layered processes of extensive documentation,

¹⁷² "A new media object" has different qualities than the analogue object, for it can be integrated in another digital work and remain intact to be easily removed: Manovich (2001: 51) uses the example of inserting an image into a word document, which can be easily edited. This is the principle of modularity.

image import and export; whilst software programmes turn continuous data into discrete data.¹⁷³ In comparison, the analogue process is uncomplicated and, despite involving a layered process, there is in this instance a clear comparison between the image transferred (the inked acetate) and the print made on paper. CA (interview 2010) comments on how the simplicity of the printing process enables a freedom she does not experience in the technological processes of the animation: “I’ve been really trying to push that in my own practice that there is more of this sense of play and spontaneity.”

CA reads her material *in action*, to inform the concept when she started with the stop-frame animation. It is in the making of the animation that the complexities of processes also come through in the manual movement of the figure. CA (interview 2010) states in her interview that her choices of materials had conceptual gravity and relate to the *complexities* of the body: “I specifically choose materials like cotton waste, threads and gauze bandage, and wool from particular felting wool, specifically because I cannot control it.”

The focused processes of being restricted by working within particular light (time of day) also added pressure to her process: speed was of the essence to get consistency along with a multitude of small movements to be captured. The urgency of her process is corporeal. The fragmented images of the headless figure and the incomplete figures of the underworld are CA’s frailty in Johannesburg. Her bodily experience, the related expression in material, and the making strategies differ substantially between analogue and digital processes, yet the direct interaction and reciprocity between the artist’s life-world and her process does not favour one over the other.



Fig 4.3.16: CA, animation stills from *Balance* (2010).

Belting’s (2005:304) suggestion that it is the *medium* that defines the physicality (the concrete existence) of images and that present technologies cannot be described by physical media or materiality (2005:304) does not hold. His accent on the physicality of analogue mediality and the abstraction or mental mediality of the digital image does not

¹⁷³ The digital translations and encoding are also discussed in 4.3.3.2.

match. CA's processes, described above, suggest that his theoretical outline of physicality versus mental mediality is overly reductive. CA's art is not only an evocation of the world of fragility and chaos, but also a *presentation* of both materiality and enacted thinking.

I want to argue then that the artist's body as an erring operator – noisy, clumsy and fearful – finds its way into the digital narrative.¹⁷⁴ Just as fear is the unspeakable, disruption is the unpredictable in our planning. CA invigorates the machinic perception with the stumbling body, refuting the concept that the “way to transcend the limitations of the flesh ...is to augment the capabilities of the human body with machines”.¹⁷⁵ This unfolding body (Jordan-Haladyn 2014:10) introduces fault lines into the video, not as error but as an affirmation of the body. The sound track most clearly demonstrates this point by incorporating “errors” of sound: “microphones that pick up electric signals and magnetic fields and so it is picking up sounds and things that we can't see, but that maybe we can feel on a bodily level” (CA 2010: interview). The sound track of *Balance* is a combination of the working body and its technology. This post-human expression finds itself as a mutant between information/data and the body of the artist. It can be positioned as an intermedial carrier of meaning in CA's work.

In Belting's (2002:151) discussions of “crossing media”, he emphasises that media is always defined against each other “so as to pursue not merely reproduction but also the production of a gaze that both symbolised and shaped the perception of a given period”. Applied to my analysis of CA's processes, then media and images are used in her thinking as both production of animation, but also as the production of a way of understanding. Therefore, the understanding of embodiment or disembodiment in analogue and digital art can only be measured in comparison to another: not as separate but as layered with insight unfolding through process. The documentation of CA's *processes* presents the “evidence” (Newell 2012:287,288) of both the materiality of her creation of the animation and the intangibility of a mental mediality. The processes also present the cues that both concept forming and understanding is imbricated within its unfolding.

4.3.4 Intermedia processes as *existing* hybridity in *Fear and Trembling*

In this last section on this room I will identify and interpret reciprocity in the installation *Fear and Trembling* (2011), focusing particularly on aspects of the recalibration of the physical

¹⁷⁴ This attempts to achieve immediacy or the presence of materiality.

¹⁷⁵ Online: *The cyborg of the main battle tank: a tool of human engineering enculturation*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1997. Further reading research of the cyborg is warranted for developing theories around the work of CA: J.D Bernal. Bernal, a Nobel prize-winning scientist, foresees the 'post-human' and imagines the future in terms of radically evolved ecological, biological/genetic and psychological development in 1929. Also see Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) and Doug Engelbart's *Augmentation (of the human intellect) Project*.

and metaphorical aspects of the 2011 installation and the implications of adding the physical computing.

Initially CA's installation (2011) in the UNISA Art gallery resembled three sites:

- a. The site of a *working space or a studio* (fig 4.3.17). Artworks produced during a week in the gallery.
- b. The installation of *Fear and Trembling* (2011) resembled a large recreation of the theatre-like box constructed for *Balance* (2010) (fig 4.3.18). Walls and shade netting created an immersive experience enclosure.¹⁷⁶
- c. As a result of (b), the installation also echoed the animation.

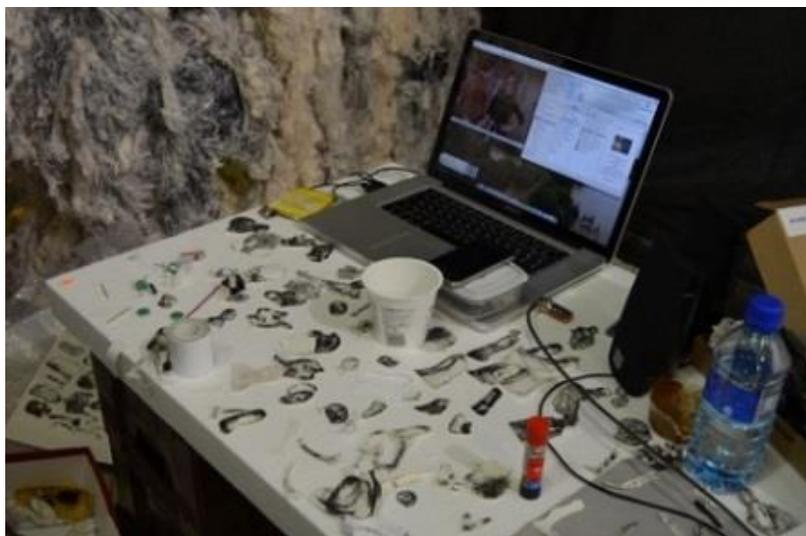


Fig 4.3.17: CA, the gallery operating as a studio for the installation of *Fear and Trembling* (2011).



Fig 4.3.18: CA, (left) animation set for *Balance* (2010), (middle) *Fear and Trembling* (2011), (right) two constructed walls isolate the installation of *Fear and Trembling*. The prints at the entrance to the installation perform the role of a prefix or an introduction to the experience.

¹⁷⁶ The installation was subsequently acquired to form part of the UNISA Art collection. For the work to be 'collectable', Alborough constructed a wooden container of similar dimensions as the installation on *TRANSCODE*. Furthermore a detailed instruction manual was written by Alborough (2011-2012) in order for anyone to update technological adjustments if needed in future. The context of *TRANSCODE* stimulated this innovative document. The implication is also that the installation still exists, albeit not in situ.

The indication that the installation was a 'full-size' exploration of previously trial-and-error sketches and assemblages run in the studio created a hybrid meeting point of all previous efforts in a synthetic intermediality. However, construction of the installation for *Fear and Trembling* (2011) brought with it new demands, dimensions and the introduction of technology. These interruptions, both real and metaphorical, prevented any simplistic identification with Schröter's characterisation of synthetic intermediality (2011:2, 3).¹⁷⁷



Fig 4.3.19: CA, detail from *Fear and Trembling* (2010-2011).

The marquette CA built in generating the animation *Balance* (2010) was reminiscent of the contained space of a small stage, which became reconstructed as the life-size immersive installation, *Fear and Trembling* (2011) (fig 4.3.18), a constructive cross-referencing process of intermedial thinking. The animation *Balance* (2010) (fig 4.3.17) was back-projected on a small screen within *Fear and Trembling* (2011) (fig 4.3.17 and fig 4.3.18), becoming monumental in the suggested landscape,¹⁷⁸ as in old-world drive-in theatres. *Balance* (fig 4.3.19) becomes remediated as a mind-space for the viewer to be immersed within the mysterious landscape. Deleuze and Guattari's (2004:345) description of transcoding (as referenced earlier) affirms CA's working method in *Fear and Trembling* (2011) (fig 4.3.18 and fig 4.3.19): "Transcoding or transduction is the manner in which one

¹⁷⁷ Also see Chapter 2 where Schröter's categories are listed: "Synthetic intermediality: a 'fusion' of different media to super-media, a model with roots in the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* with political connotations."

¹⁷⁸ A panoramic illusion of immersive space (Manovich 2001:41).

milieu serves as the basis for another.” CA’s project is an on-going mission that embodies unexpected growth via transcoding.

This play with scale mentioned in the previous paragraph also evokes a larger ‘landscape’. *Fear and Trembling* (2011) (fig 4.3.18) is both the reflection of the mining city of Johannesburg, buzzing with movement and sound, and a simple mound of waste. Metaphorically, it also evokes a subconscious world of discarded ghostlike workers, taking on an “oneiric” or dreamlike presence (Del Prete 2010:118). Both the subjective and deliberate choices in CA’s installation tell a story of mutation, as an unfolding consciousness that is part of a psycho-social reality. Apart from the main character in the animation who mutates from headless creature to a multi-headed, imbalanced being, the subconscious is suggested by his¹⁷⁹ fall into another world. This psychological drama in the narrative finds a submersion in material equivalents. The evocative 2010 sound track (of the animation) with its unique ‘blurry’ undertones in acknowledging the labouring body of the artist and the 2011 sound track (additional to the sound track in the animation) form part of the newly added physical computing.¹⁸⁰ In turn, it forms stratifying layers (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:24, 25) with the labouring figure in the animation and with the scattered figures embedded in the heaped physical landscape of *Fear and Trembling* (2011); a geography more multi-layered than in the animation. Like the mining landscape of Johannesburg, the wires of the physical interactive artwork lay their cables through the dense waste material (fig 4.3.20) to activate fragile creatures to sporadic activity, thus forming a psychological context and subversion of fixity.



Fig 4.3.20: CA, details on the inside of the installation *Fear and Trembling* (2010-2011).

The creatures are mobilised paper cut-outs, an extension of the figure that CA introduced in the animation *Balance* (2010), now performing as three-dimensional objects (fig 4.3.21). In *Balance* (2010) the playful nature of these figures was due to the relative simplicity of their

¹⁷⁹ The figure seems to be male as suggested in his genesis in figure 4.3.5 *The state of heads series*, where he is contrasted with a female with long hair.

¹⁸⁰ It is also the digital sound track for *Balance* (2010) that germinated the physical motion components in *Fear and Trembling* (2011).

etched linear quality, but in *Fear and Trembling* (2011) a more sinister atmosphere is evoked. The presence of the oppressive 'landscape', the interrupted motion and the hidden structure all contribute to the darker tone (fig 4.3.21).



Fig 4.3.21: CA, details from *Fear and Trembling* (2011).

CA (2014: e-mail) writes about the physical computing,¹⁸¹ used to bring motion and sound to the small figures buried in the mound (fig 4.3.21 and fig 4.3.22):

I used Arduino to activate the servo motors and solenoids. The servo motors make the cut-out animation characters and objects move, and the solenoids produced the drilling sound... The soundtrack of the animation then adds to the installation, as both sounds from motors and solenoids driven by Arduino and then Joao's soundtrack are quite "mechanical" in character.



Fig 4.3.22: CA, details of the Arduino software and wiring for *Fear and Trembling* (2011).

The way CA expanded the animation narrative into the motion on the physical computing can be argued to reciprocate both the physicality of the struggle to work with the waste material and the jerky motion that is characteristic of stop-frame animation.¹⁸² Transferring

¹⁸¹ More information regarding the process can be found on <http://www.codedmatters.nl/event/unfolding-space/>

¹⁸² Transmedial intermediality (Schröter 2011:2) can be identified in this regard, for the physical computing reciprocated the language of animation. However, for the sake of consistency I will not expand here.

storylines from one medium to the next does not simply inject new aesthetic material, it also involves creating an ontological and psychological depth that speaks of new relationships (Popper 2007:[sv]).

The immersive¹⁸³ strategy of the installation creates a heightened tension between physical realness and the constructed narrative that brings the viewer into the presence of a viscerally embodied media. Here sound and contained space assist in drawing the viewer into the imaginary world. The success of this approach depended on several areas functioning together. As viewers enter the space, two things strike them – the massive heap of white-grey waste cloth and a screen with animation positioned on top of this heap. The animation holds your attention; as it plays, an environment emerges: a landscape, the fringes of the cityscape, where hidden figures come to life and interrupting sound alerts the viewer to the sense of a world becoming. By recognising the characters tucked away in this landscape of waste the viewer is informed about the nature of their making. Their size, the inked paper and the intermittent motion become real: one reads the involvement of artist in the manual making of the stop-frame animation as presence, so that: “The unfinished and open body...is not separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with objects” (Bakhtin 1984:26-27).

In immersive art of this nature, the porosity of boundaries is markedly intensified. Sound plays an important part in the structural guiding of one’s perception of the work, because it is not continuous, but provides the viewer time to ‘drift’ visually from one accent to another in the work. When starting in another location in the space, it becomes a marker to remind the viewer to explore another corner or association. Physical computing in this installation brings the reality of movement (fig 4.3.23) and sound into the presence of the viewer in a revised way (remediated from the animation).

¹⁸³ “The possibilities for video installation art to cause an immersive, embodied sensation in the viewer became an area of major interest for me, influencing my own artwork” (Alborough 2010:iii).



Fig 4.3.23: CA, details of the motion of the wheels, *Fear and Trembling* (2011).

Whilst this experience of being pulled into a fantasy world rings partially true to the world of Belting (2005:305) where we “re-embody them in our brain”, I suggest that CA does not ‘push’ the viewer to forget the artifice of her construction. The installation purposefully uses the ‘naive’ construction of the figures. Thus the intermedial play between the disembodied and the embodied becomes enacted in CA’s work. CA’s narratives of the *body in space* turn digitisation into gesture.¹⁸⁴ Instead of telling the story in a linear manner she creates layers of metaphors that hybridise printing, digitalises imagery, morphs sound, freezes movement, and expands installation to physical computing, all evidence of CA’s reciprocal processes. The installation shifted the occulecentric experience closer to a haptic experience for its emphasis on affect (Kirby 1999:19, 20). Furthermore, the porosity of margins becomes expressed as the artist’s body becomes the artwork (in a Bakhtinian sense).

In response to categorising art according to software and hardware, Stern (2013:8-10) describes this as “a flawed priority: an emphasis on the computer, sensor or projection, on the tools we use rather than the situations they create”. He shifts the focus to what the art work does and what the spectator or participant enacts. Stern’s publication emphasises “moving-acting-feeling” as an act to “re-member” to embody art. Stern has influenced CA’s

¹⁸⁴ This nature of mediation of time and space echoes Lefebvre (1991:175): “space and time appear and manifest themselves as different yet inseparable”.

perspectives as he was her lecturer early on in her career and they worked closely on projects later on. Stern's (2013:8-10) emphasis of the cross-modal nature of interactive art and problematic assumptions around the disembodied nature of digital art becomes embodied in *Fear and Trembling* (2010-2011).

CA's work can also be read as mediating theoretical positions, which see the clear divide between image and object: for example her enacted discomfort with sound does not represent or only stand in for something else that is absent (Lechte 2011:357, Belting 2011); it is immediately present for and by the immersed viewer, embodied in experience (Bakhtin 1984:26-27). The emphasis in my analysis on CA's mediamatic thinking in her processes further shifts from theorists' analysis of end-products, to speak of a *becoming of layered relations* of culture, concepts, contexts and materiality. As DNA is dependent on the body to exist, information always needs a medium to be conveyed, stored and accessed. For information to be effective at all, it "depends on a highly articulate material base" (Hayles 1999: 73) as is clear in the complexity of hardware necessary for physical computing. The intermedial tension between CA's order and chaos, digital encoding and bodily experience has proved to be both innovative and critical of theorists that write from positions other than the artist's understanding of process.

It is in the making and remaking where the reciprocity becomes meaningful, for it becomes embodied in its complex variations. When Deleuze (161) writes: "The eternal truth of the event is grasped only if the event is also inscribed in the flesh", I read its reflection in CA's repeated re-enactment of thinking in material. The abstract of the internally experienced fear and threat becomes reframed in external art (re-embodied), but also remediated in a multiplicity of media for the viewer's body to become immersed. The artist contemplating the context of suburban fear, is intuitively played out in action and material of mark in plate, smudge of ink and cutting of acetate in *Trial and error* 2010. This is explored and brainstormed in printing as animation in *Balance* (2010). Animation was gestated printing in the *Descent* series (2010). The action of printing echoed in the sound of *Balance* (2010) and the auditory energy inspired the physical motion in the final installation of *Fear and Trembling* (2011). The assemblage of material 'thing' therefore not only reciprocated between digital and analogue, but between theory and practice, and the lived bodies of artist and viewer, and the artwork's extended being. This artist's inquiry engaged with the notion of transmedial interstice, thinking with and through material.

The personal politic of a crumbling world in a once industrial landscape, turned now into a landscape of fear, could read into the political margin of synthetic intermediality. However,

instead of plunging this political dimension into the critical review of homogeneity, I propose that the individuality of experience of the artist drives this project along a different trajectory than mega politics (with agendas of dominance), rather into an experienced reality that asks ontological questions. I recognise Oosterling's (2003:31) definition of ontological and existential intermediality, which "deals with the specific quality of the experience of the 'inter' that is enhanced in intermedial art practices". However, Oosterling (2003:31-45) focuses on post-structuralist analysis, whilst my research aims at an analysis through art practice. Furthermore, Schröter's ontological intermediality (2011:2) proposes "a model suggesting that media always already exist in relation to other media. Thus...there are no single media but that intermedial relations take place ubiquitously". With regard to Schröter, my research rather suggests that differences clearly do exist but that the reciprocal dialogic is the site of meaning for the practising artist.

4.4 ROOM FOUR: INTERMEDIAL SYSTEMS

GWENNETH MILLER

This final section reports on my own systems of production of practice-led research. Evidence is presented for how the *construction* of individualised archives of objects and images enact mediamatic thinking about my geo-cultural context. The fascination with complexity in systems and possible relatedness motivates me to collect material/objects, decipher the visual language that they contain and figure out how they can become mediators for narratives contained within them. The visual language that objects and material communicate can be interpreted via formal and iconographic analysis, which includes not only the elements and principals of the object, but also the imagined meaning of each part. Furthermore, through handling¹⁸⁵ objects and materials, knowledge and methods emerge to facilitate understanding of inherent organisational and physical characteristics. The structural relationship within a work and a body of works has a curatorial dimension. By contextualising, organising and researching information, curation aims to bring new understanding to light, invigorating objects and how they speak about contextual relations. This section reflects on how these qualities converge in the rural dimension¹⁸⁶ (Biggs 2014:262) of my work. This encapsulates the multifarious complexity of fulfilling different roles.

The practice created and observed includes the production and re-working of art and text specifically during the years 2008-2015 to analyse innovative approaches towards intermediality around the *TRANSCODE* experience. My research pursues transformation as an organic process that functions reciprocally across the tensions and contradictions within my lifeworld (also see Chapter 1.1). The overarching approach is that art making, writing and teaching all mutually inform evolving structures and methodologies. My art searches for working order by creating systems, as can be seen in the earliest work that was included in *TRANSCODE: Holy relics* (2008) (fig 4.4.1).

I collected the laboratory glass of my late father-in-law, Leonard Miller, who was a scientist in chemistry.¹⁸⁷ This section identifies and analyses the actions and experience around the composition and reasons for re-contextualising the objects. *Holy relics* (2008) (fig 4.4.1)

¹⁸⁵ Barbara Bolt's (2007:29) essay *The magic is in the handling*, states that "a knowing that arises through handling materials in practice," and emphasises material thinking: "The concept of material thinking offers us a way of considering the relations that take place within the very processor tissue of making."

¹⁸⁶ As mentioned earlier Biggs (2014:262) defines "rural lifeworlds as directly experienced by individuals, subjectively, in and through their everyday life and work".

¹⁸⁷ He worked in laboratories in Germany (Max Planck Institute, Göttingen) and in South Africa (CSIR, Pretoria).

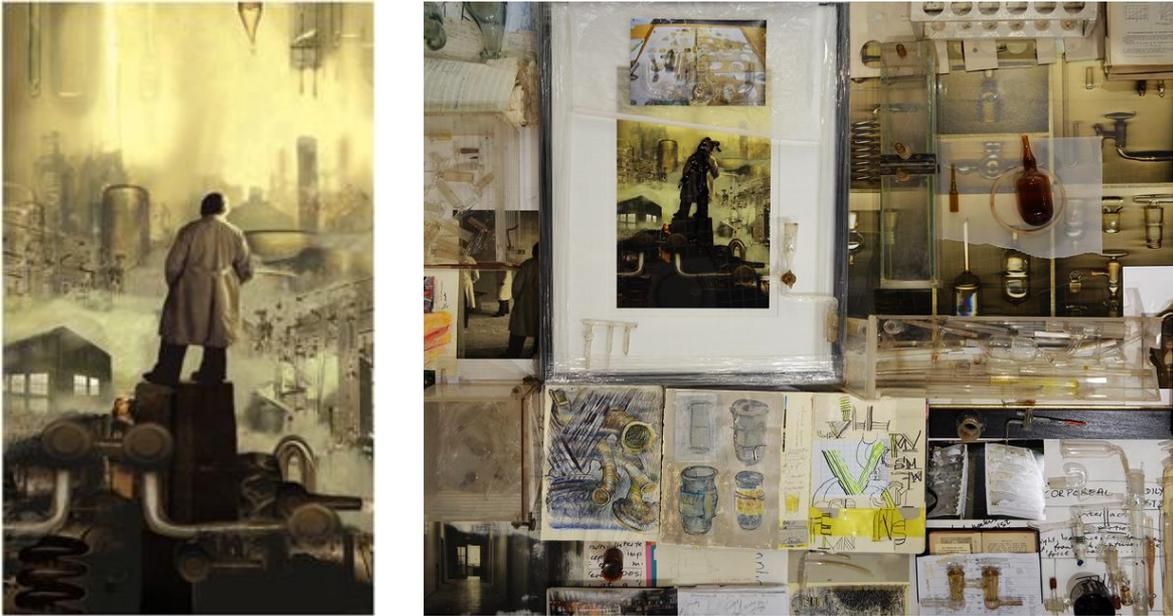


Fig 4.4.2: GM, *Homo Viator* (2010), detail of *Thinkbox* (2011)



Fig 4.4.3: GM, *Thinkbox* (2011)

Although I worked predominantly as a painter before, the collection of my works presented on *TRANSCODE* ranged in media application and specifically brought in digital manipulation to consider tensions between different media. This also spoke to the research problem of developing an innovative approach of intermediality by working *between and beyond* the traditional and new media boundaries. The inherited laboratory glass presented visual metaphors of containing and filtering (a form of order), contemplated in the *TRANSCODE* works. The industrious site of the scientist relates to the function and

dysfunction of a society at work, as contemplated in *Urban night* (2008) (fig 4.4.4) and *Continuum system* (2009-2011) (fig 4.4.5).



Fig 4.4.4: GM, *Urban night* (2008).

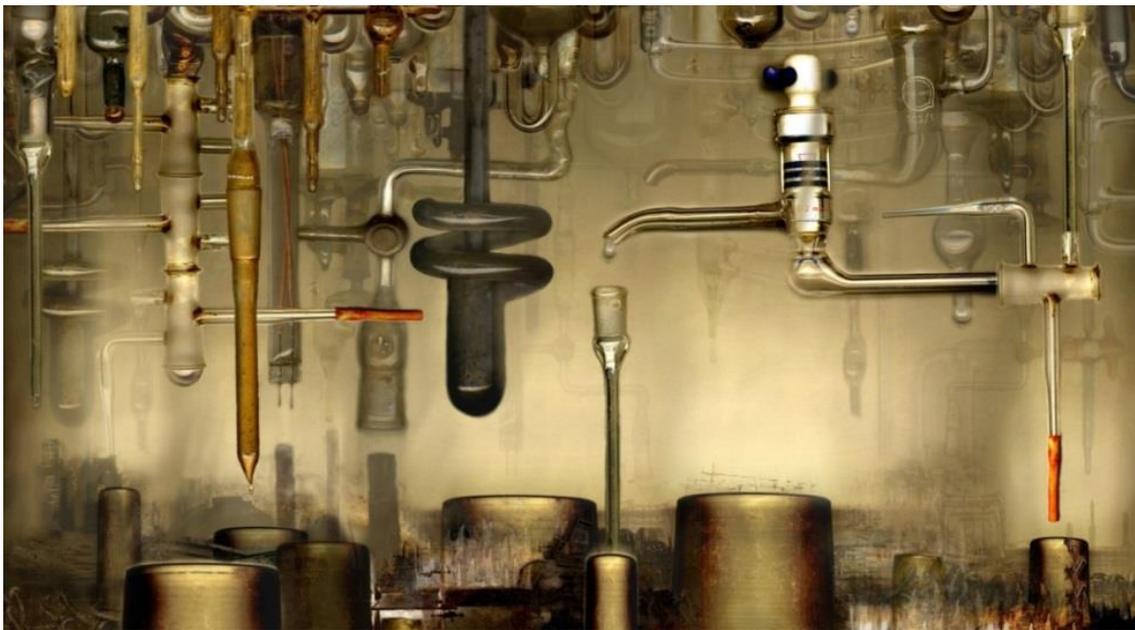


Fig 4.4.5: GM, *Continuum system* (2009-2011).

My research exists within the interrelational influence of both ‘work’ (the multi-layered dialogue with the discussed artists within an academic framework) and home (family relations). As loose ‘markers’ I will refer to these as the rural contexts of ‘the professional system’ and ‘the family system’. The discussions in this section will identify how individual works are formed by integral ways of thinking about professional and family order/disorder.

Both order and disorder constitute social and visually embodied systems. The system of family has become a site of both obsession and observation: the actions of care and mothering twin sons and the consideration of inherent traces of parents and grandparents. The structures have been explored in the works *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) and *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011).



Fig 4.4.6: GM, *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011)



Fig 4.4.7: GM, and *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011)

These works can be interpreted as a sense of understanding and connectivity, or as stated in the research objectives: identifying grey areas (some agreement) or complete hybridity (merging). Apart from this apparent fusion, the fissures within a complex reality are a creative energy that generates response in the mediamatic articulation of reciprocity.

Apparatus Exchange (2011) (fig 4.4.8) and *Expanding city* (2011) (fig 4.4.9) were responses to the earlier works (as mentioned above).



Fig 4.4.8: GM, *Apparatus Exchange* (2011).



Fig 4.4.9: GM, *Expanding city* (2011).

The interpretation of intermediality as continuous change due to mediations between digital and analogue approaches considers personalised mechanisms of fusion and fissure. To create image systems and highlight nodes of connection continually causes shifts and layers (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:345, Sullivan 2010:104). The section concludes with brief discussion of a selection of works that developed since *TRANSCODE* as visual thinking through the concepts of this research: *Studio* (2015), *Sketchbook* (2015) and *Lab* (2015) (fig 4.4.10).



Fig 4.4.10: GM, *The System Series*: left: *Studio* (2015), middle: *Sketchbook* (2015), right: *Lab* (2015)

4.4.1 Intermediality as a system – a brief contextualisation

The previous rooms primarily focused on *interpretation enacted* via close working together and conversations around intermediality. This room makes a subtle shift. It entails similar analyses, but also personal experience of how the *action* of making has rendered thinking as much as the medium has. The subjective nature of discursive thinking in engaging with my practice, leads to stronger reflexive thought in striving to articulate the tacit knowledge. As acknowledged throughout this thesis, art making as a practice has its own visual language of structured or sequential order¹⁸⁹, which is only partially, unfolded through writing. Rolling (2013:1) argues that “theory is a representation of experience so that others may also acknowledge and understand”. In addition to Rolling’s argument I emphasise that discursive thinking in relation to practice also enriches a *personal* understanding of tacit knowledge feeding back simplicity (order) into the complexity of practice-led research. As art professionals, our practice is *as seminal* to our teaching, research and the broader art world as are the theories that practice engages with. This section revisits the polyverse dimension (Biggs 2014:273) discussed in Chapter 3 around Sullivan, Deleuze and Guattari

¹⁸⁹ Cohn, N. 2007. A visual lexicon. *Public Journal of Semiotics*. 1(1): 35-56.

to take forward a methodological model from the art practitioner's perspective. Furthermore, the impact of this on Schröter's formulation of intermediality is analysed.

Resolving the issues that constituted the primary problem, namely "unconventional use of conventional material or a combination of both traditional and new media" (Chapter 1.1), through reflexive thinking offered me innovative strategies for creative gestation regarding my own work. My practice as artist-academic became contextually more layered and nuanced through the process of reciprocity. Consequently I find Sullivan's (2010:115) metaphor of the braid representing the interrelational nature of visual arts research relevant for the practice in *TRANSCODE*: "the braid as an infolding and unfolding form...disengages and reconnects with core themes while continually moving in new spaces [capturing] the complexity and simplicity of art practice as research". However, this metaphor is limited in its containment and order where all strands are neatly 'tucked in'. The image of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:3-10) as a concept of multiplicity, which I substantiate as a model in this research, validates entanglements beyond any 'mother strand'. The rhizome structure resists chronological causality of the braid. This thesis has established that the most appropriate model combines aspects of the rhizome with those of the immersed metaphor of the mycelial (Ingold 2011:86, 125, Biggs 2014:269).

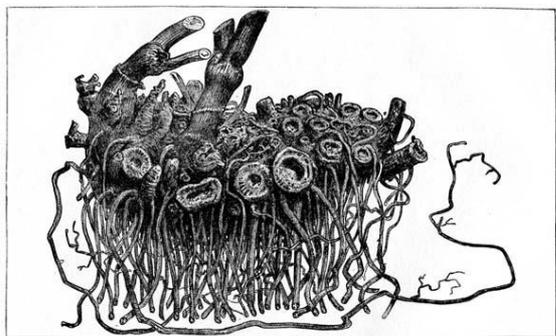


Fig 4.4.11: Left: Rhizome root.



Right: Mycelium of mycorrhizal fungi.

A mycelial understanding presents the possibility for unconventional unfolding and infolding of space, sequence and embodied mediation across a loosely 'braided' meshwork (Sullivan 2010:115, Ingold 2011:63-88). The rhizomatic model allows for the intuitive, the interrupted and unexpected nature of art making: a nature I consider essential for renewal and transformation. The rhizome metaphor is *extended* by the mycelial in an art academic environment where the complex interactions of different types of knowledge extend an individual's capabilities:

The mycorrhizal fungi attach to the surface of the root and penetrate in or around the inside of the root cells. Then they send their filaments (called mycelium) into the surrounding soil, effectively extending the plant's roots and root absorbing capacity from ten to several thousand times – *far beyond what the plant can do alone* (Amaranthus [Sa]) (my italics).

To expand on this ecological description, Timothy K Choy and Shiho Satsuka (Anthropologists under pen name of Mogu Mogu) published *Mycorrhizal translations, a mushroom manifesto* (Mogu Mogu in Robben & Sluka 2012:414), where mycelia are described as an appropriate image for social theory, for it acts as a mesh to connect different roots of a mycorrhizal mushroom (like Shitake) and materials (like wood) to nourish one another. Similarly, the intermedial nature can be appropriated as a mycelial mesh within my research. Cultural anthropologists write that collaboration may be equated to mycelia as it acts in-between root and host, in an action where “it collaborates and diversifies itself into different strands” (Tsing 2012:416).

Transformation is positioned as a process to uncover new knowledge and in this research and exhibition, *transcoding* is the structuring process through which transformation transpires. Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004:345) description of transcoding as one location of thought functioning as foundation for another, either to dislodge its meaning or to cultivate it further, has been referenced several times.¹⁹⁰ In the context of ‘transduction’, Deleuze and Guattari (2004:345) present transcoding as an orientation that expands insight with multiple connections between settings. I have also taken cognisance (see Chapter 2.1) of Manovich’s notion of transcoding described as the translation into another format, which usefully describes my search for format and material adaptations.

As the key term across all aspects of my research project, ‘transcode’ has been pivotal and, specifically, grounds the entire curation of *TRANSCODE* in terms of a structuring of *processes* as the site for intermediality. In the context of a discussion of social order but relevant here, Schatzki (2001a:4) writes that order reflects “the explanatory and analytic concerns of social science”. Interdependent functioning is one of the features of order in social affairs due to the numerous individuals involved (Schatzki 2001a:4), and therefore specifically relevant in relation to the multiplicity of *this exhibition*, which is also visualised in the sketches created to think through synergy of concepts of the various artists (fig 4.4.12).

¹⁹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari (2004:345) as quoted before: “Transcoding or transduction is the manner in which one milieu serves as the basis for another, or conversely is the establishment atop another milieu, dissipates in it or is constituted in it.”



Fig 4.4.12 (i-iii): GM, Schematic sketches, mind maps or diagram: links (2011).

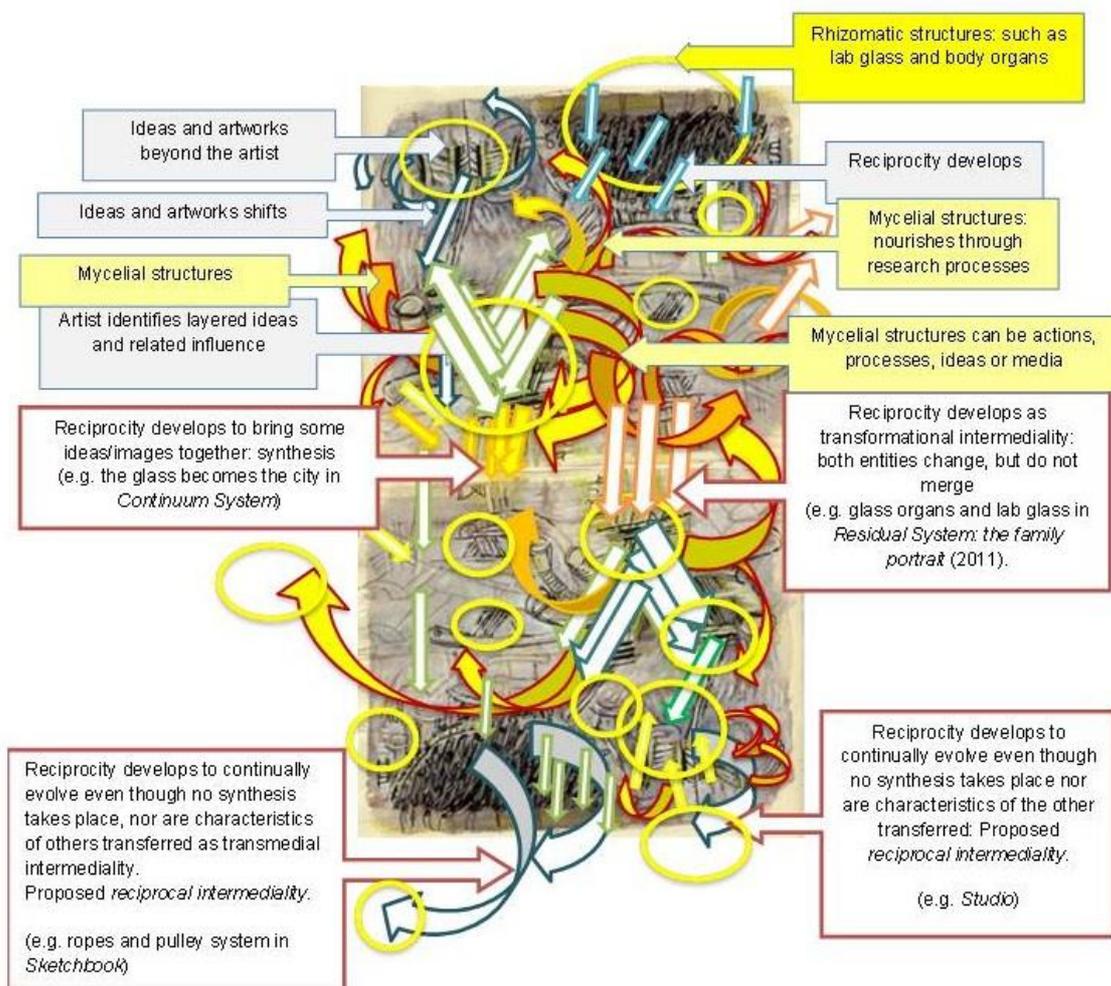


Fig 4.4.12 (iv): GM, Mediamatic contemplation of modelling reciprocal intermediality, interpretation of fig 4.4.12 (iii) (2015).

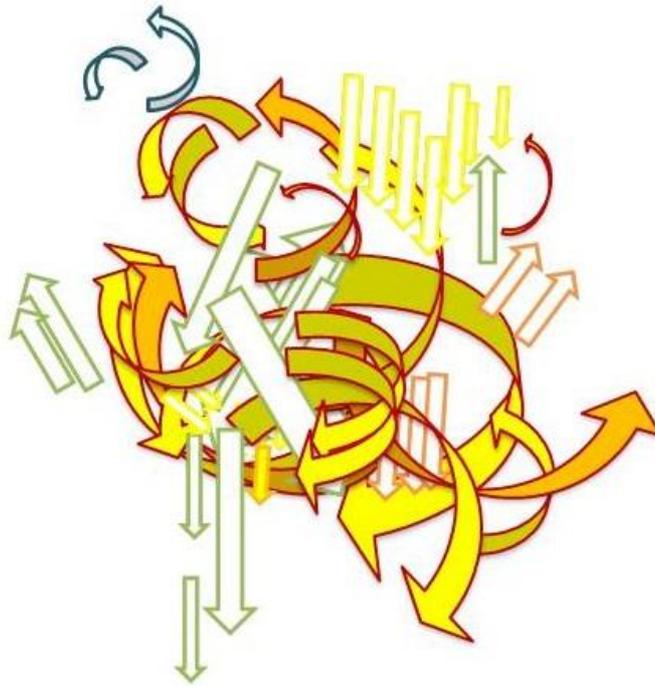


Fig 4.4.12 (v): GM, Mediamatic contemplation of modelling reciprocal intermediality as dynamic, complex but inherently structured with logic driven via practice, detail of overlay of (v) extracted (2015).

These visual maps were done in 2010 and 2011 in the process of understanding the links between artists. Emphasis is placed on linking and feeding into/from organic conduits, lines, growths, laboratory tubes and alignment. In reflection, these images relate to the in-between character of mycelia. The way we think between solving problems through research and making art is also referred to as “interactive coping” (Anderson 2003:91); much like the diversified strands of the mycelium, I envisage this ‘inter’ as the growth sprout. One could consider Schröter’s (2011:2) synthetic intermediality to fit as a fusion of different entities, but in contrast to this particular model of intermediality, the mycelium retains the ‘inter’ and does not *fuse* all in a new ‘super-medium’ (much like sketch iii in figure 4.4.12). In these diagrams I presented the research, or emergent body of ‘evidence’, as the “V”, which I associate with a channel. The organic ‘veins’ were experienced as tubes, which both seek out sustenance but at the same time become leaking conduits that drain. As in transmedia intermediality, the inherent formal qualities of these early sketches find an overlap with the mycelial nature. In the growing understanding towards modelling intermediality, figure 4.4.13 became influential as a step towards visualising this process.

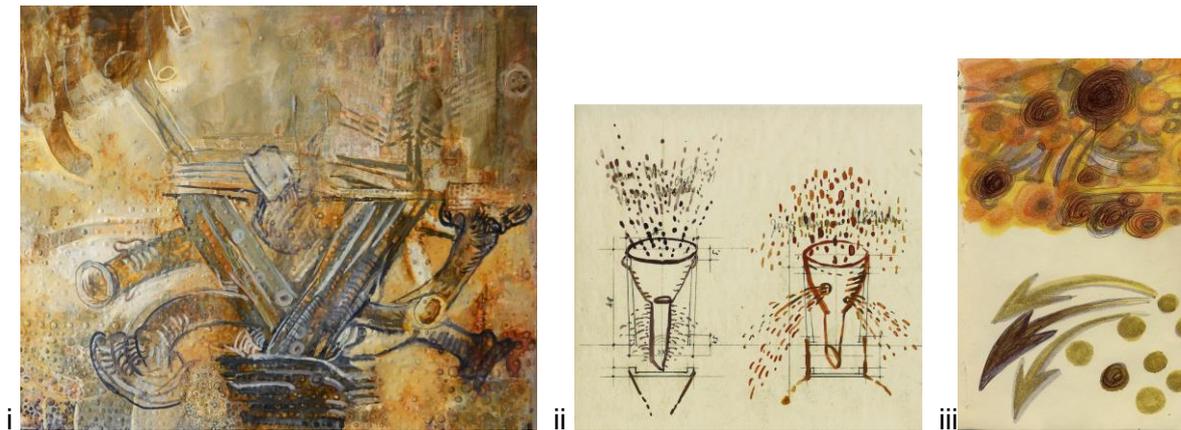


Fig 4.4.13: GM, Schematic sketches, mind maps or diagrams: motion (2012).

Process sketches through 2011 and 2012 (fig 4.4.13) continuously considered the movement and shifts to think through the *energy* that is generated in creating systems for artworks and for relations between entities.

In *TRANSCODE* it was important to present a wide group of artists to allow for flexibility in response, in the attempt to achieve an open model of curation. In 3.1.3 I referred to Richter's (2013) proposed model with an open narrative structure "corresponding to the diverse critical contents". I could not foresee which individual exhibitions and working relations would develop most suitably for the research.

My analysis, understood as situated knowledge (Anderson 2003:91), deals with the community of practice within *TRANSCODE*: situated knowledge relates to specific problems, actions and places, in contrast to theoretical knowledge. It is understood in combination with my studio practice, my personal lifeworld and my professionally situated work as a teacher. This mycelial mesh reflects a relational understanding of practice as 'real life thinking'.¹⁹¹ I consistently present the *evidence of the experimentation of TRANSCODE* as reflecting complexity of embodied thinking.

TRANSCODE as an intermedial system is a model that fluidly analyses the representation of one medium through another medium. In this section, by identifying the structure of mycelial growth between the rhizomatic nodes and finding parallels between my mediamatic thinking diagrams that developed over the research period of this study, a transformational model of intermediality (Schröter 2011:2) has been applied.

¹⁹¹ Sullivan (2010:103-105, 110-112) describes various approaches of art practice as relational research (between practice and theory) and of self-reflexive and reflexive research (as transformative research).

4.4.2 Mapping intermediality via creative process and theory

As consideration of the creative processes in my exhibition as a whole, I expand on my applied practice-led methodology (Chapter 3.1, Table 3.1 repeated here for clarity), as it is reflected directly in the stages of the development of the work:

Table 3.1: Comparison between creative art development processes and accepted research principles.

Column A: Formal stages in creative methodologies UNISA	Column B: Principles of scholarly knowledge (Kapp 2006, Mouton 2006)
<p>PHASE 1: Reading and written research – accessing information and ideas.</p> <p>PHASE 2: Exploration of ideas; experimentation of techniques and media, development of new processes. Record and analyse.</p> <p>PHASE 3: Reflection – consideration of formal, technical and conceptual results from the exploratory phases 1 and 2. Comparison</p> <p>PHASE 4: Artworks based on processes in Phases 1 – 3. Synthesis</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification and definition 2. Delimit the area of inquiry: e.g. must be knowledgeable about classical literature. 3. Observation, field note 4. Description, collect data 5. Analysis 6. Comparison 7. Interpretation 8. Reflection and immersion into topic 9. Synthesis: speak with authority and clarity

As a transdisciplinary investigation, a critical perspective interrogates existing systems, structures and practices to enact changes (Sullivan 2010:111). A curator can construct and reconstruct archives for reflection which, in the context of this research, takes place in the onsite event of the *TRANSCODE* exhibition, its catalogue and in this thesis. The intermedial processes discussed below are therefore seen as a form of archiving. Due to the nature of intermediality to be formed and defined around its context,¹⁹² intermediality is positioned as a research instrument to reflexively observe ourselves in process (Müller 2010:17). As a written and visual essay, this section also expands on the processes introduced in Chapter 3 (the applied methodology) in affiliation with stages of scholarly activity. These reflections are applied to my own processes below as far as possible, but their lack of complexity makes it difficult to shoehorn my own experience into these formal phases.

¹⁹² In acknowledging that intermediality is “a work in progress” we need to keep the “specific social and historical context” of work in mind (Müller 2010:16). Furthermore, consider that “Bakhtin identified theoretism, his name for all kinds of theories isolated from action, as the enemy” (Haynes 2002: Blackwell reference online).

PHASE 1: Reading and written research – accessing information and ideas.

During this period I was primarily reading Bourriaud's *Relational aesthetics* and collecting and ordering physical material for artworks. I collected the clippings of my twin boys' hair over 13 years (their age at the time of the exhibition) (fig 4.4.14), as personal evidence of a relationship of nurturing. These were placed in individual plastic sandwich bags and labelled with name, date and age of the haircut: a tactile preservation of the age of a child. Stephan M Finn¹⁹³ (2012:60) drew attention to this in a review on *TRANSCODE* where he commented on the function of hair in my artwork as: "remembering not faces but feelings as she...reveals a desperate attempt to retain memory". Since hair samples are often analysed for DNA evidence in general, it also suggests archiving the body as both code and memory. When I started the collection, I knew that I would include the hair samples in a work sometime in the future, without knowing how the process of collection itself was meaningful.



Fig 4.4.14: GM, labelled parcels of hair of Oliver Stefan and Thomas Edmund Miller from 1998-2011.

¹⁹³ Finn is Professor Emeritus at the University of Pretoria, in the Department of English.

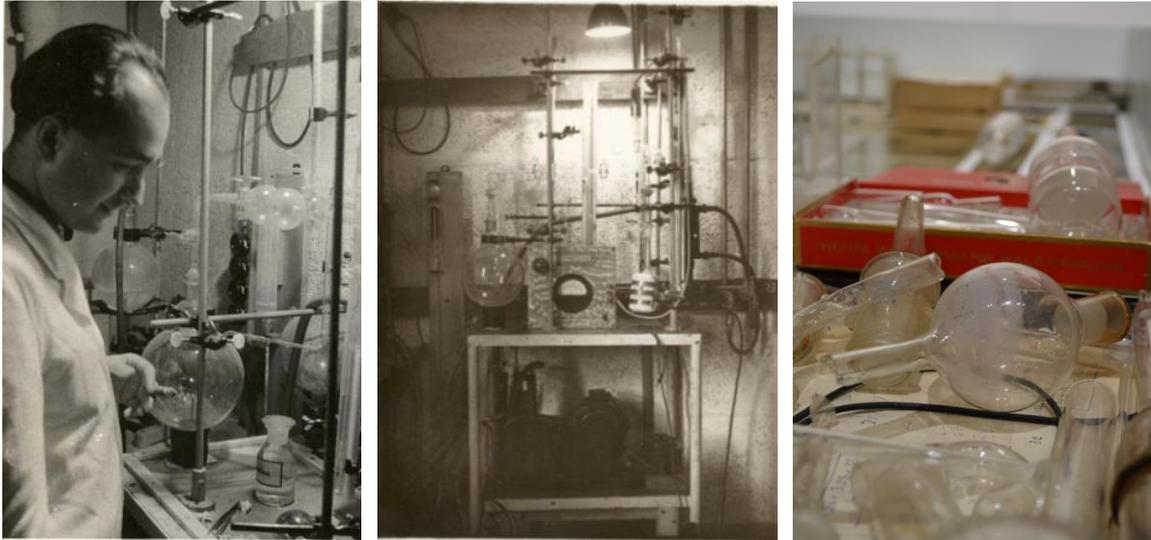


Fig 4.4.15: Left and middle: Data collected from Leonard Miller's research library: photographs from his laboratory in Göttingen, Germany (1950's). Right: laboratory glass (1998-2011).

I also collected Dr Leonard Miller's (the twins' grandfather) photographs, notes, diagrams and reference books used in his research (fig 4.4.15). The glass laboratory objects still contain traces of chemicals and show scrapes and marks of use: they possess the presence of the specific time and action. The presence of the used object has energy that a digital capture does not have (Newell 2012:294-296). "The effect of objects in this sense is culturally specific, and once digitised, their effect will change in ways that are also related to different cultural values" (Newell 2012:297). My action of documenting the objects therefore kept in mind that new associations would influence the way they are interpreted. The context of the hair or the objects within a family represent a system and the collection of data surrounding specific aspects refocus specific relationships. Therefore, the meaning and significance of data collection contains potential for intermedial readings.

PHASE 2: Exploration of ideas; experimentation of techniques and media, development of new processes. Record and analyse.

I try to 'understand' the samples and data collected through ordering, documenting and structuring the material. For example, the data from the hair samples was placed in a table (fig 4.4.16), and the typing of data (top to bottom) influenced the final composition, with the youngest age at the top (1998) and the oldest (2011) at the bottom.

				First Cut Oliver	1998	First Cut Thomas			
	Oliver ±2 years 6/11/99	1y9m			1999	Thomas 1½years 2nd cut	1y9ms	Thomas ± 2 years 6/11/99	
	Oliver 2y8 m July 2000	Oliver 2½ years May 2000	Oliver 2y1½m		2000	Thomas 2y1½m	Thomas 2½ years May 2000	Thomas Sep 2000 2y10 m	
	Oliver 3j10m 2001 Sept	Oliver 3½j May 2001	Oliver 3j2 m		2001	Thomas 3j2 m	Thomas 3½j May 2001	Thomas 3j10m Sept 2001	
	Oliver Nov 2002	Oliver 4y4m 18 May 2002			2002	Thomas 4j2m	Thomas 4j4m 18 May 2002	Thomas 4y11½m Nov 2002	
Oliver 6y Nov/Dec 2003	Oliver 5y9m August 2003	Oliver 5y5m June 2002	Oliver March 2003	Oliver 5y3m	2003			Thomas 5½years May 2003	Thomas 5y9m August 2003
	Oliver Nov 04 Nearly 7	Oliver 6j July 2004		6y4m nth	2004		April 04 Thomas 6½ July 2004	Thomas 6y July 2004	Thomas 7 Dec 2004
	Oliver 7y10m September 2005	Oliver 7½ July 2005	Oliver 7y2 m 2005		2005	Thomas 7y2m 2005	Thomas 7y4m 1 April 2005	Thomas 7½ July 2005	Thomas 27 Oct 05 7 years 11 months
	Oliver July 2006 8y8 months		Oliver 8y1½m 2006 Jan		2006		Thomas 23 April 2006 8y5months	Thomas July 2006 8y8 m	
	Oliver (9y) July 2007	Oliver 17 April 2007 9y5m	Oliver 9 y 1 m 9 January 2007		2007	Thomas 9y1m 9 Jan 2007	Thomas 17 April 2007 9y5m	Thomas (9y) July 2007	
Oliver 3 Oct 2008 10y10 months	Oliver 10y7 m 10 July 2008	Oliver 10y3 m March 2008	Oliver 10 years 2 Jan 2008		2008	Thomas 10 years 2 Jan 2008	Thomas 10y3 m March 2008	Thomas 10y7 m 10 July 2008	Thomas 3 Oct 2008 10y10m
	Oliver July 09 11y7m	Oliver 11y4m April 2009	Oliver 6 Jan 2009		2009	Thomas 6 Jan 2009	Thomas 11y4m April 2009	Thomas July 09 11y7m	
	Oliver 12y8m July 2010	Oliver April 2010			2010	Thomas 12y 10/01/10		Thomas 12y8m July 2010	
	Oliver 13y7m 19/06/2011	Oliver 13y4m	Oliver 13 11/01/2011		2011		Thomas 13y.4m April 2011	Thomas 13y7m 19/06/2011	

Fig 4.4.16: GM, information from samples of cuttings with labels, archived in a table (2011).

Following the documentation style of singular objects in Dr Miller's photographs, I documented the laboratory glasses by scanning at 600 dpi against a light background (fig 4.4.17). By handling the objects I could observe their original functions (whether they could contain, let through, purify or extract matter) whilst finding my own incongruous interpretations in these unfamiliar instruments. I started interfering with the tone and contrasts, because many of these objects are obsolete and their interpreter, Dr Miller, is no longer present. This grouping led to *Holy relics* (2008) (fig 4.4.1).



Fig 4.4.17: Left: photograph from an album of Leonard Miller (late 1950's). Middle and right: GM, digital scans of the laboratory glass

Using Photoshop, I cut the laboratory glass from the background, often in smaller segments with the potential to be 'reassembled' (fig 4.4.18). This became a focused analysis of particular qualities and an understanding of the idea of liquid came to the fore (fig 4.4.19). The laboratory glass being isolated or de-contextualised from the laboratory as site helped me to observe and recognise new associations. Digital collages of individual items developed.

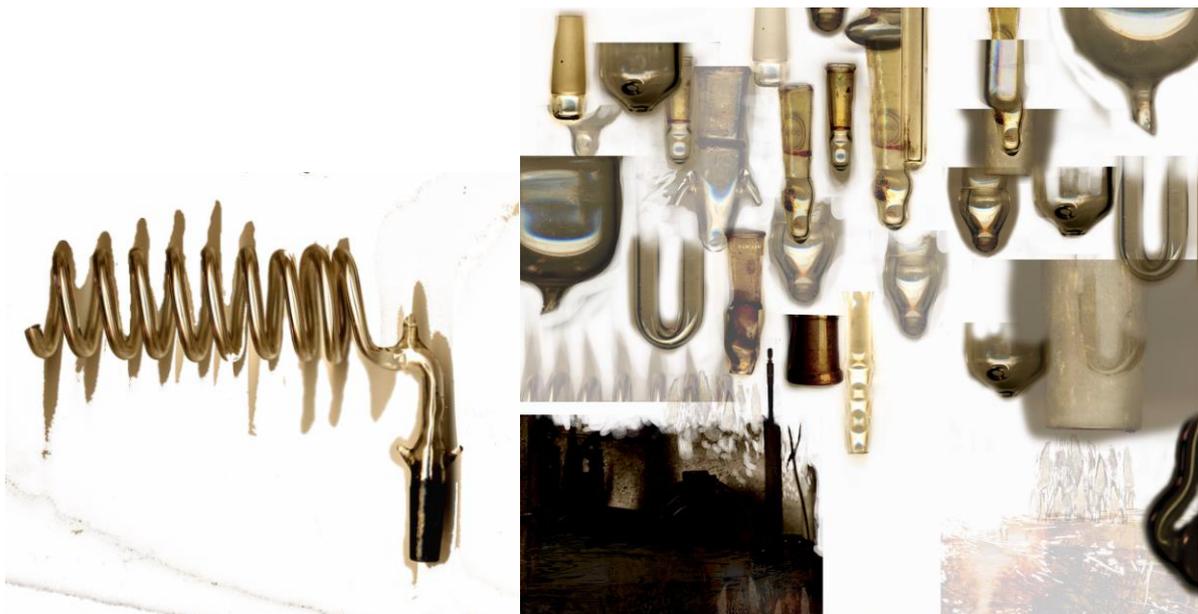


Fig 4.4.18: GM, one of the laboratory glasses isolated from its ground but incorporating some of its shadows (2008) and a layer in Urban night (2008) in progress.



Fig 4.4.19: GM, detail from *Urban night* (2008).



Fig 4.4.20: GM, containers with hair (2011).

Another experimental exploration was to place hair samples in various containers to think through associations (fig 4.4.20) influenced by my early reading of Sullivan's diagrammatic model of knowledge (fig 3.5). The transformation in narratives of a family system became written in the energy of the material and the activity of visual experimentation. This experimentation was in itself reflective, illustrating the difficulty of formally separating a creative process in steps.

PHASE 3: Reflection – consideration of formal, technical and conceptual results from the exploratory phases 1 and 2. Comparison.

In contrast to the formal model in Table 3.1, my experience was that art works were emerging during all the phases of this process, as illustrated below. The grouping of digital layers resulted in *Urban night* (2008) (fig 4.4.4 and fig 4.4.21, left), a composition that seeks to evoke the anticipation of an unconventional form of rain or blessing predicated on tension between a world of perfection (top) and a world of grime (bottom). The tensional divide is therefore a pregnant space for gestation.

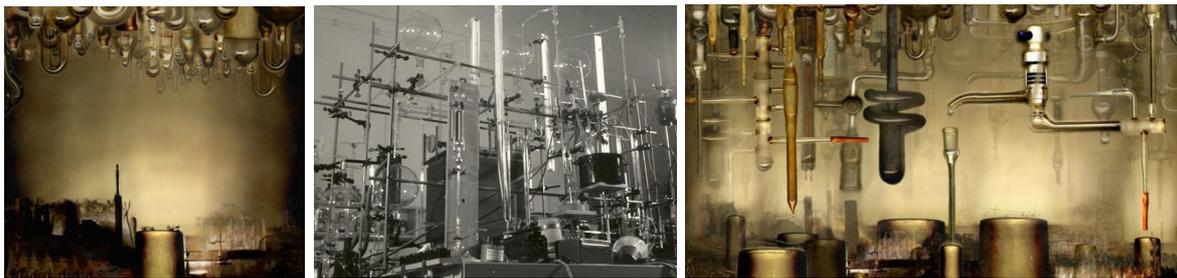


Fig 4.4.21: Left: GM, *Urban night* (2008), middle: Leonard Miller, laboratory experiments on diffusion in Göttingen, Germany (1950s), right: GM, *Continuum System* (2009-2011).

The identification of the central image in figure 4.4.21 (referring back to phase 1) fed into the creation of *Continuum system* (2009-2011) (fig 4.4.5 and fig 4.4.21, right), which deals with the sense of being immersed into a system, whether the institution of a university, or an industrial factory. The angle of this photograph (fig 4.4.21, middle) lends monumentality to the image, linking the structure to architectural constructions or industrial factories. A further conceptual system is through the action of making art, which is how I am related to most of the people that I know. It is in action that a family lives together and performs daily rituals. It is through the action of teaching art that I am associated with everyone I work with.

Visual comparisons also led to the images below. They were constructed to cross-reference several layers of identity, which, in this case, includes the system of the body and the disrupted body. As various images and materials were re-ordered, such as the laboratory glass, the hand-made glass, and images of organs sourced from old anatomy pamphlets and the Internet (fig 4.4.22), new connections between media emerged. Photoshop layering was applied to extend and rethink potential relations (fig 4.4.22). The images formed visual mind maps that existed in reciprocal relationship with the cursive mind maps (as discussed in Chapter 3). Reading Hayles' (2012) critical reflections on technogenesis influenced the reciprocal development of lab glass into organic shapes (fig 4.4.22). A vital act of creative

decision making at this stage included the culling of images for the purpose of conceptual framing.

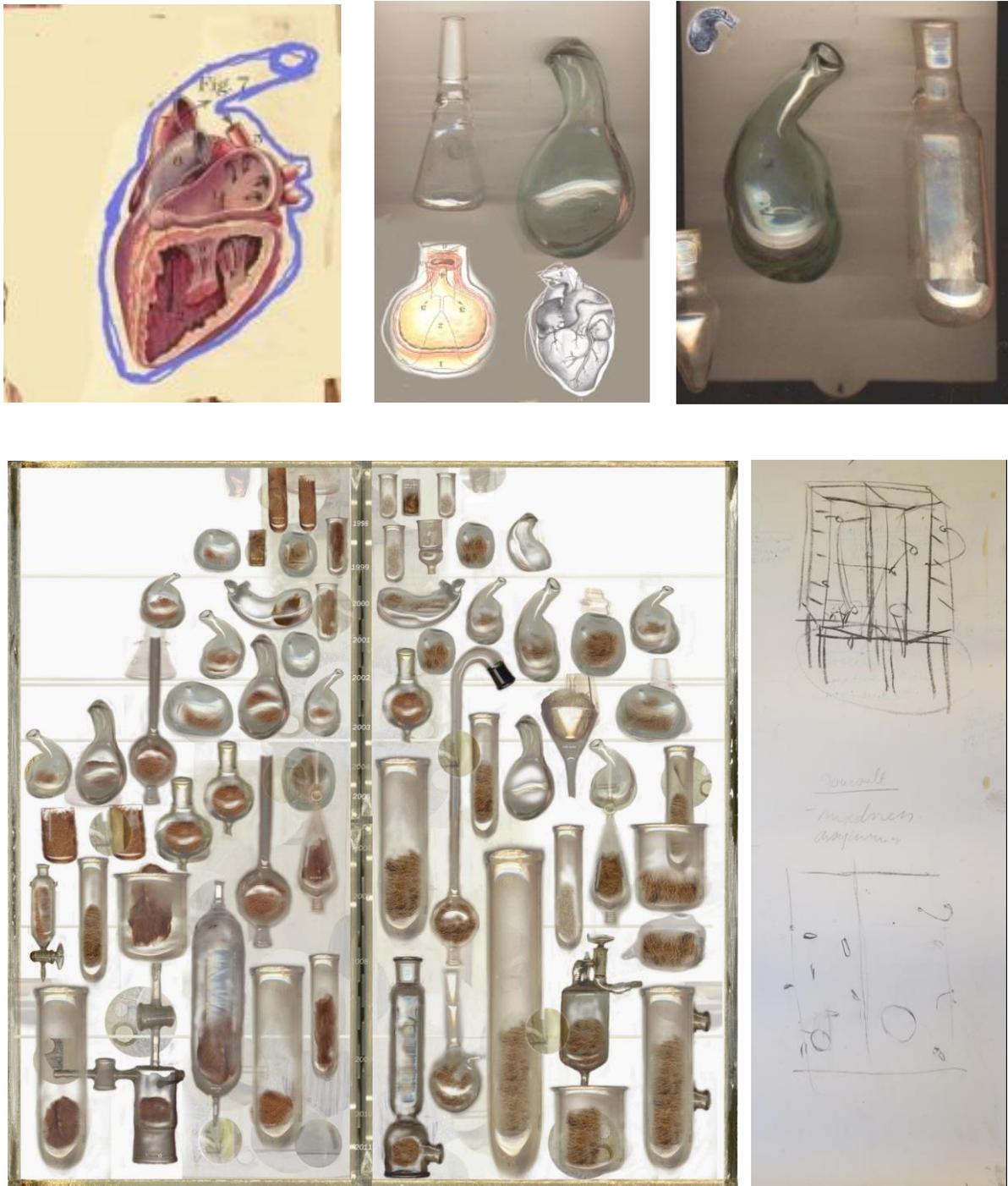


Fig 4.4.22: GM, top: digital sketch on scan, composition including hand-blown glass by Ivan van Berk according to sketches by GM, bottom: GM, process sketches (2011).

As a result of the editing stage the various sub-themes or topics were re-examined. An example of this was that the alignment of the *liquid-ness* associated with the laboratory glass meant that I should keep the glass and the hair separate. It was at this stage that the

necessity of two 'containers' was conceptualised and thought through by means of more digital sketches (fig 4.4.23) to determine other options for re-grouping. To extend exploration, earlier works such as *Continuum system* (2011) (fig 4.4.5 and 4.4.21) were reconfigured: The urban-scape was digitally pulled apart, resulting in the print that became the base for *Apparatus Exchange* (2011) (fig 4.4.8, 4.4.23 and 4.4.24). The experimental re-use of cardboard shelf templates referenced the digital layering. Earlier work therefore became decontextualised and extended through experimentation, developing new themes by cross-verification. Typical of a process of induction, even though as analyst one has a concept as a guide, much is revealed via the process. This leads to re-collecting information and a new assimilation of data (fig 4.4.23). Intermedial understanding and reconsideration is essential for the complexity of reaching original outcomes. This becomes a reflection of the discussion of intermediality in Chapter 2.2, where I referenced Müller's (2010:16) musing that to define and extend intermediality, the complexity of relations must receive attention.

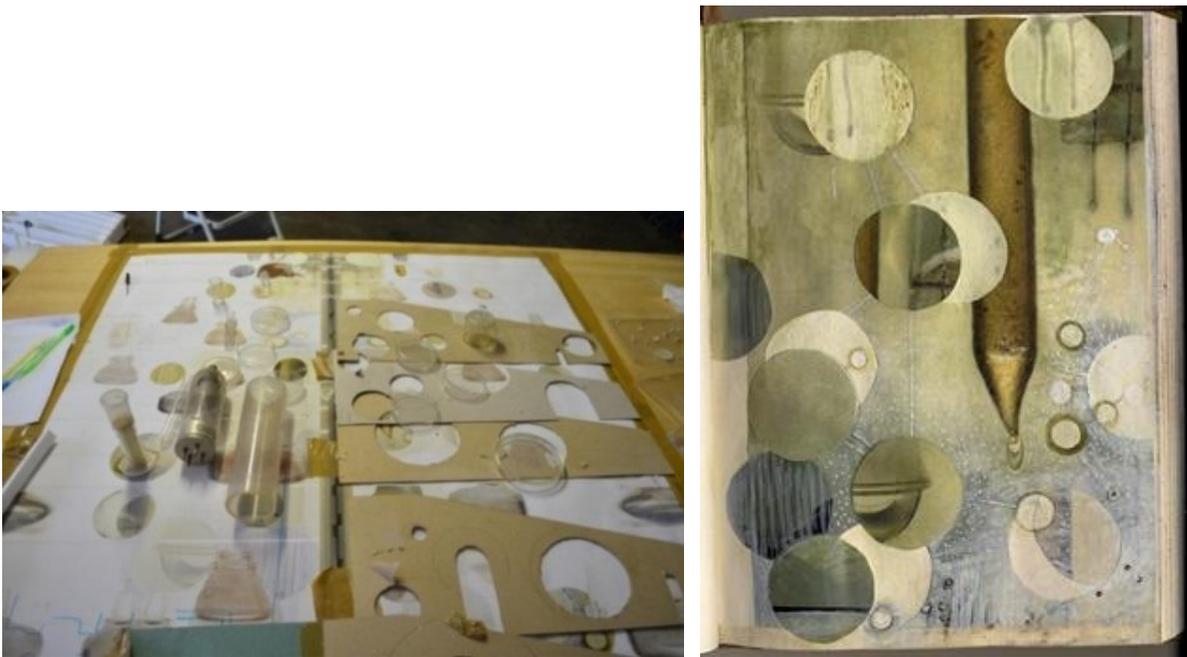


Fig 4.4.23: GM, process work and sketch book (2011).



Fig 4.4.24: GM, development of collage in relation to templates.

PHASE 4: Artworks based on processes in Phases 1 – 3. Synthesis.

The Residual System: the family portrait (2011), *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) and *Apparatus Exchange* (2011) (fig 4.4.25) were the result of the synthesis and critical re-contextualisation of the full process. However, in my working model these cannot be described as the ‘final’ art works, for each image is the springboard for the next consideration. Reflection is a continual process that takes place in every phase, from the first identification of interests to the documentation and post-exhibition ‘life’ of works. Of particular interest was the reflection on process during the installation and during exhibition walk-about, where discussions between artists, and artists with public, proved productive.

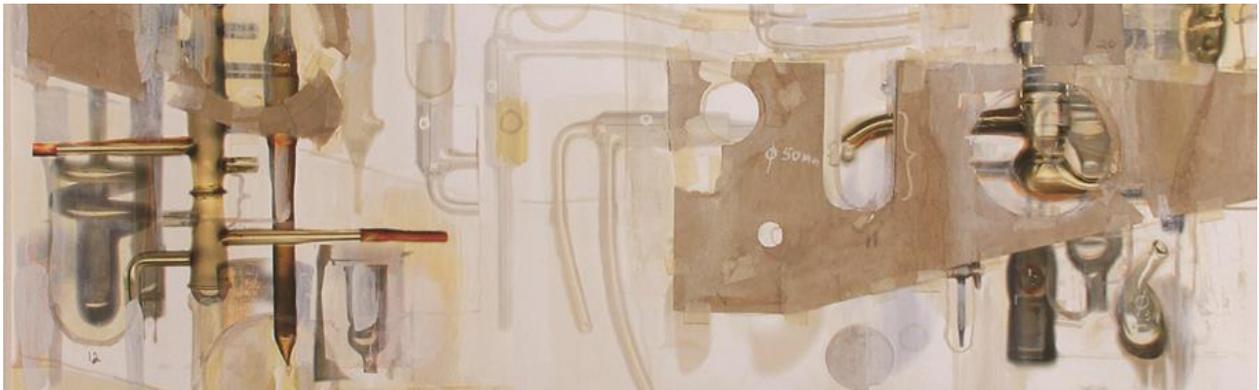


Fig 4.4.25: GM, Top, left: detail of *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011)
 Top, right: detail of *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011),
 Bottom: detail of *Apparatus Exchange* (2011).

During the installation the precedence of *process* for the artist was crystallised in *Thinkbox* (2011) (4.4.3), created in the gallery. Insights gained in this intermedial nature of structured research were filtered into the thesis and catalogue, and have impacted on post-*TRANSCODE* processes, such as the Systems series: *Studio, Sketchbook and Lab* (2015) (fig 4.4.10) currently featured on the online *outoftheCUBE* exhibition:
<http://www.outofthecube.co.za/transcode.aspx>

The installation of work in the gallery extends the creative rethinking, editing and reconsideration of relations between works. The time dedicated to this phase consistently became creating via curatorial process before, during and after *TRANSCODE*. As this phase took place in intense interaction with the rest of the artists, the considerations discussed in 4.4.1 came into play as well. The site of the gallery became an active

component in the consideration: for example, the energy and visual movement of tile patterns were considered and angles were shifted in order to facilitate reading.

Documentation itself is also a consistent and active process. It is in documentation that I see dynamics with new eyes: it is a form of looking and a form of thinking that enables verification and new gestation. Crucially, documentation becomes archiving and systematic reflection archiving, which from the perspective of a practising academic artist takes on a core place in research.

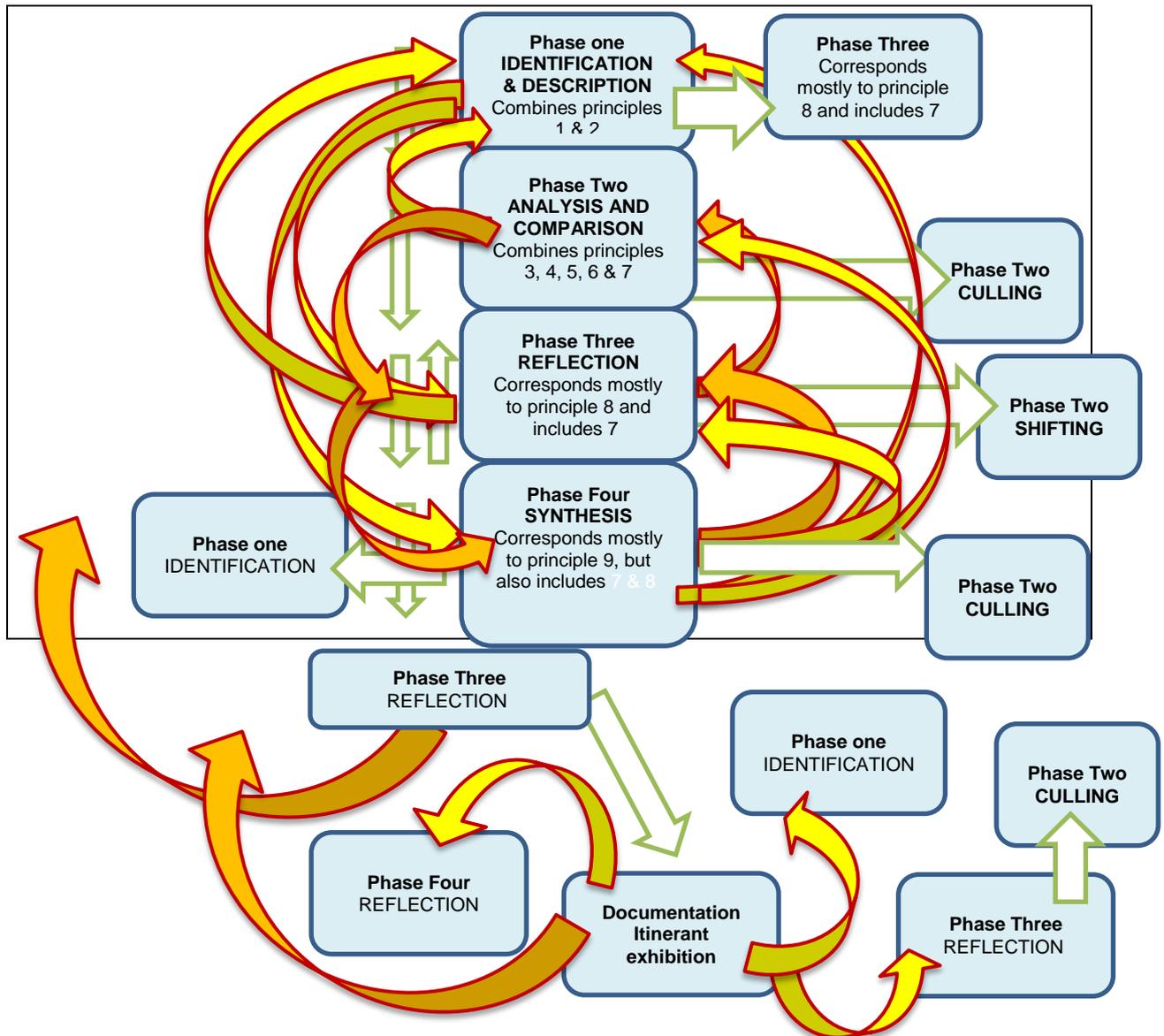


Fig 4.4.26: GM, Reflection and expansion of Fig 3.1: model of methodological development (2015).

The table above reflects on information previously set out in figure 3.1, but attempts to visualise a reinvigorated order due to insight gained via analysis of practice. The information flow in figure 3.1 applied in the Visual Art syllabus of UNISA with much success,

for its clarity forms an excellent basis for undergraduate study. In analyses of my practice process, it is clear that as artists progress in their understanding, it becomes a springboard for a more complex working process, as suggested in the expanded model above (fig 4.4.26). This model also evokes the flow of energy that was suggested by figure 3.2, *repeated* below for clarity, yet is more specific in its details.

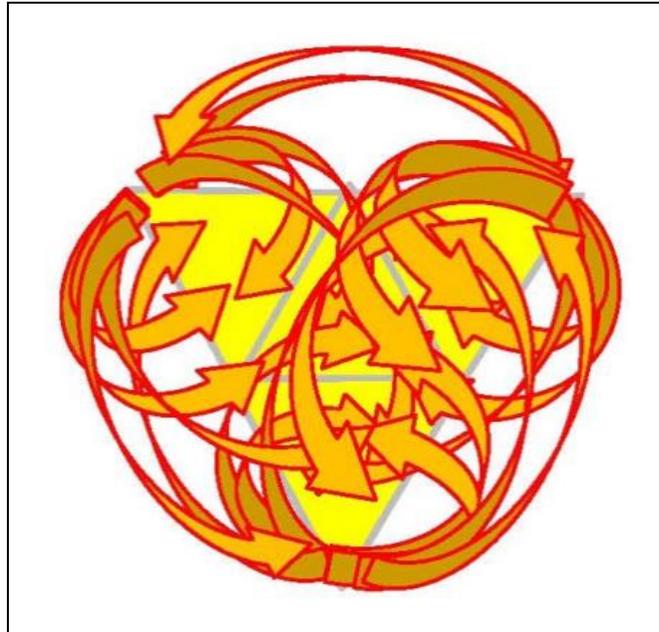


Fig 3.2: Gwenneth Miller, An emergent method of tacit thinking.

4.4.3 Delineating differences in visual systems of technological and organic order.

In addressing difference of visual systems, I refer back to Manovich’s distinctions between digital and analogue, which were outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Modularity and variability also serve as a point of departure for discussing difference in this section.

Describing modularity, Manovich (2001:51) states:

This principle can be called "fractal structure of new media." Just as a fractal has the same structure on different scales, a new media object has the same modular structure throughout. Media elements, be it images, sounds, shapes, or behaviors, are represented as collections of discrete samples (pixels, polygons, voxels, characters, scripts). These elements are assembled into larger-scale objects but they continue to maintain their separate identity. The objects themselves can be combined into even larger objects – again, without losing their independence.

Manovich articulates the characteristics of variability as follows: “A new media object is not something fixed once and for all but can exist in different, potentially infinite versions.” Other terms which are often used in relation to new media and which would be appropriate instead of ‘variable’ are ‘mutable’ and ‘liquid.’ He contrasts this with analogue media: “Old

media involved a human creator who manually assembled textual, visual and/or audio elements into a particular composition or a sequence. This sequence was stored in some material, its order determined once and for all” (2001:56).

I analysed the impact of modularity and variability in the layering of *Continuum system* (2011) (fig 4.4.5) and its difference with the analogue actions of drawing and collage. In older analogue work, collage and at times assemblage were often ways of making and thinking through ideas (fig 4.4.27). These material entities were crafted as merged unities and as one layer was integrated into the next, it became irrevocably fixed in its physical relationship: either wax melting through layers or inks dissolving into one another (fig 4.4.27). Photoshop presented the opportunity for flexible working and reconsideration, for integration of earlier work details into the newly digitised layers (fig 4.4.27).



Fig 4.4.27: GM, top: details of wax in an earlier work, bottom left: detail of a layer, bottom right: detail in *Continuum system* (2010).

Photoshop allows radical scaling of size and focus; the dramatic impact was explored in *Continuum system*. Note that details that appear to be large reservoirs (fig 4.4.28), were very small tips of laboratory glass objects, whilst details placed above these reservoirs are taken from the large-scale construction of experimental constructions in my father-in-law's laboratory. This fluidity of scale brings in meaning and liquid possibilities that enhanced the re-conceptualisation of *Residual system* with its potential to drip (discussed in section 4.5).

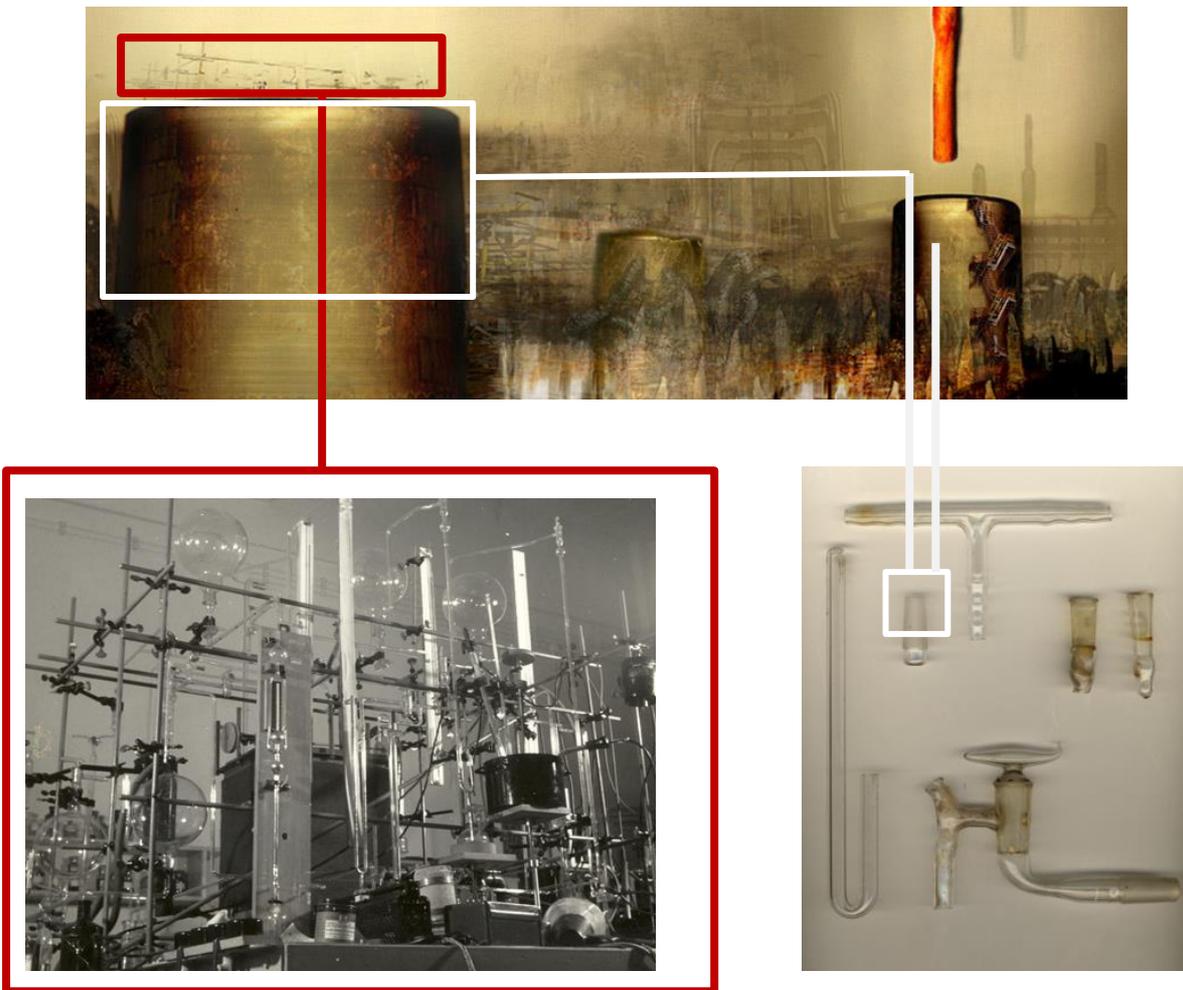


Fig 4.4.28: GM, detail of *Continuum system* (2010) showing the play of scale.

As *Continuum system's* (2011) (fig 4.4.5) Photoshop layers are pulled apart in *Apparatus Exchange* (2011) (fig 4.4.29), the negotiation of space is reconsidered. Where the first-mentioned searches for the illusion of depth, the last-mentioned deconstructs the illusion of a negotiable environment. The unity and complexity in *Continuum* urban scape is understandable as space, due to our *experience* of negotiating an industrial landscape.

In *Apparatus Exchange* (2011), I apply a reading of Sullivan (2010:95) as the collage is also a “ theoretical system where the *visual structural analysis* clearly describes how the vehicle

can be taken apart and put back together again". Collage has a sense of being adrift, something taken from one place to another: but its placing acknowledges its over-gluing and not quite belonging. Both the cut/tear of the collage and the scanned image (laboratory glass as analogue medium) in Photoshop have in common its *eclectic* nature (Bolter & Grusin 1999:133). The dramatic difference between the two is the hypermediated illusion of smooth transitions and striving to unity in *Continuum system's* (2009-2011) (fig 4.4.5) Photoshop image, whilst the collage in *Apparatus Exchange* (2011) (fig 4.4.29) re-acknowledges the fragment. As rethinking of the processes of *Continuum system*, this unfolding became a thinking stage between *Continuum system* (2009-2011) (fig 4.4.5) and *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) (fig 4.4.6).



Fig 4.4.29: GM, detail of *Apparatus Exchange* (2011).

The crux of the methodology of thinking is that a critical capacity is invoked and new connections can be made. "These kinds of visualizing processes are at the heart of what it is we do when we create and respond to art and serve as the basis upon which visual arts can be seen as a research practice" (Sullivan 2010:95). The mediamatic thinking from analogue to digital is reciprocated in the reworking of glass, developing the glass organs to think about the difference between body and mechanistic form (fig 4.4 30).



Fig 4.4.30: (left) detail of laboratory glass, (right) hand blown glass forms by Ivan van Blerk according to my drawings based on bodily organs (2011).

The last point of difference to raise here is the windows one finds in the interface of the computer. In the work *Expanding city* (2011) (fig 4.4.31), I deliberately constructed a very experimental and incomplete system of planes that I intended to be shifted around and interrupted in response to the artists working around me. This aim was only partially achieved during the exhibition of *TRANSCODE* and I took the concept further in the *Terra pericolosa* (2012) (fig 4.4.32) exhibition.¹⁹⁴ The images below show some of the shifts taking place:



Fig 4.4.31: GM, experiments and interruptions as part of *Expanding city* (2011)

¹⁹⁴ This exhibition was held at Fried Contemporary Art Gallery in Pretoria.



Fig 4.4.32: GM, *Spill I, II & III* (2011–2012)

Art understood as a modular approach to making (Manovich 2001:51-52) can be linked to Oosterling's (2003: 41) description of discontinually sensing meaning, which leads to finding unprescribed interpretations. The depth (creating illusions of space) and complexity (scale, associations, illusion, multiple stacking) achieved in Photoshop presented a way of understanding, reading and interpreting a digital language of thinking. The layering became translated in *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* and *Residual system: Family Portrait*, working in a physical stacking, narrating time in a diagrammatical and mechanical manner. Earlier (4.3) I referenced Lechte's (2011:355-358) theoretical argument that in contrast to the living body pictures are only placeholders or "substitutes for the body", "the image is not the material thing".

4.4.4 Intermedia processes as existing hybridity in *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* and *Residual system: Family Portrait*

This section demands that material and processes *as such, enact* the body. Relational consideration and the reflection of material as data in *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) (fig 4.4.33, 4.4.35) form a critical site for analysis. For such an interpretation, I contextualise by quoting from a review of Unisa 'Staff/Stuff' art exhibition (where the work was also exhibited), where South African art critic Rory du Plessis (2013:62-63) writes:¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Du Plessis interviewed me in 2012. His review brings together several strands of thought discussed earlier in this section of my thesis, but I find his links to health and nourishment (food) of particular interest for it is an appropriate interpretation that I have not considered. This tool of measurement holds potential for future works and offers me creative stimulation. Within this relationship, there is the ideal reciprocity between theorist and artist.

Miller's use of hair as an interchangeable and fluctuating symbol for memory and loss is exemplarily executed, but further readings based on the physical properties of hair are also implied. Hair, through chemical or microscopic analysis, can offer an account of an individual's state of health and also records the presence of exposure to any toxic substances. In this regard, hair holds a history of an individual's nourishment and environmental context. Owing to the fact that the hair in the artwork comes from children, their sustenance and sheltered environment are primarily dependent on the mother.

The hybridity within this work brings together the site of the personal, the 'family system', the site of the scientific, the public and the 'academic system' (also referenced in 4.4.2). The work combines the everyday action of grooming (Sullivan's *agency* in fig 3.5), the meticulous archiving (Sullivan's *action* in fig 3.5) and ages in pseudo-scientific processes, and the conceptual intentions of the artist (Sullivan's *structure* in fig 3.5) (fig 4.4.33). To extend the reflexive methodologies with my own exhibition, one found the consideration of belonging within a system revised and adopted. Once a structure was created (*Continuum system* 2009), it was digitally dismantled (*Apparatus Exchange* 2011), then reconstructed (*Residual System: the family portrait* 2011). The tearing apart and rebuilding found its metaphor and method of working in collage and assemblage. Collage also had the nature of interweaving and merging, albeit in a very organic manner.

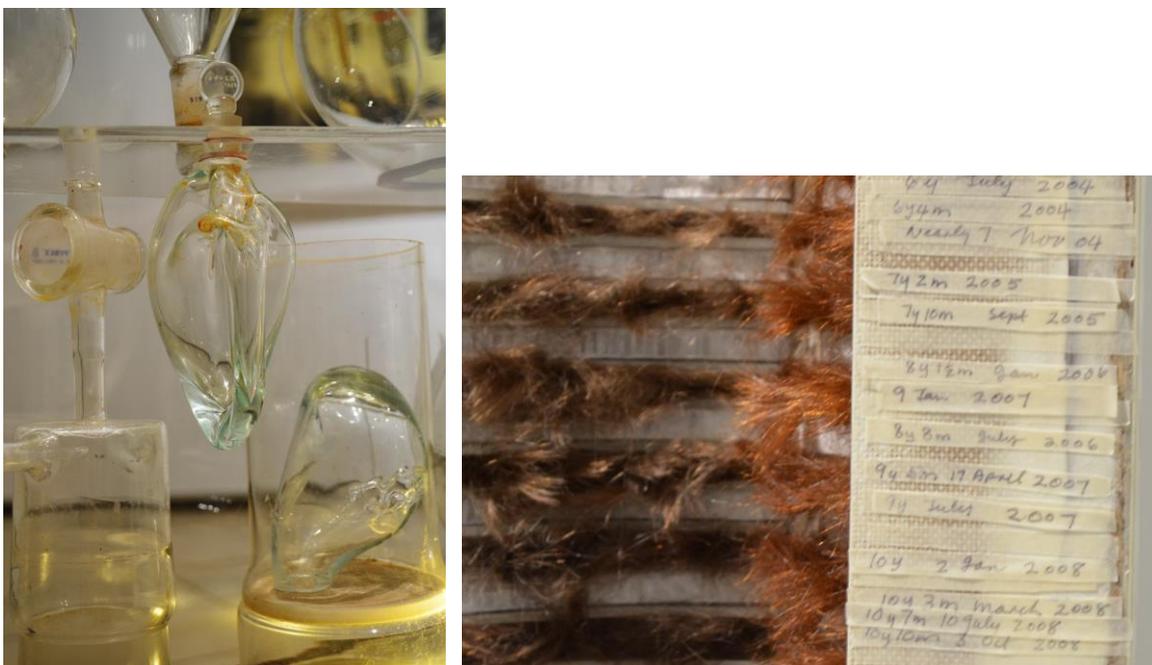


Fig 4.4.33: GM, detail of *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011), detail of dates, copied in the exact format as originally noted in *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011).

The interrelation between *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) and *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) (fig 4.4.34) can be considered in various

contexts. The interpretation looks at the formal relationship of affecting, and being affected by, another (Massumi 2004:xvii). The centrality of the body in this visual exchange is reflected in more than glass organs and the hair (fig 4.4.33): in both of the works the sense of unity and relationship of twins is reflected in their symmetry (fig 4.4.34). In both cases, the works suggest the body of each child: Thomas on the left and Oliver on the right. In *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) (fig 4.4.33) it is clear in the labelling and the hair of individuals, yet in *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) (fig 4.4.35) it is not made obvious. However, the body is implied due to the two units and the one-to-one proportions of the size of a body to the size of the unit (fig. 4.4.34). The addition of the steel table in *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) (fig 4.4.35) also considered the height and width of the figure, lifting the ‘box’ to head-height as a ‘portrait’.



Fig 4.4.34 GM, left and middle: detail of *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011), right: GM & Adelle van Zyl, digital planning drawings for *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011)

Whilst the hinged box of *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) (fig 4.4.35) suggests closure of this contained unit and contracting spatiality, the opposite, an unfolding and expanding spatiality is suggested in *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011). *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) also emphasises this aspect through the cuts into the outer planes through which tubes protrude. The hinged box of *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) becomes a metaphor for private space of a mother’s memory of her children in its hypothetic potential to be closed, but also in its non-transparent materials. In contrast, *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) (fig 4.4.35) is transparent and large, and visually quotes the display cabinet found in many homes (and in my parent’s home). Therefore, the public-ness of the family portrait as a display item and the narrative of children as an extension of the family further emphasise the expanding space.



Fig 4.4.35: GM, details of *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011).

It is in the material that these narratives were extended. This was not *anticipated* in the making of *Continuum* but made possible through thinking via process. The physicality of my works was altered and became increasingly tactile. Initially the hinged box was intended to be a marquette for a work containing both hair and glass. However, through the simultaneous development of sketches and collages the development of two separate works emerged. Overlapping but different narratives then developed, resulting in the hair the glass becoming two separate works. Interrelational influences were only possible through my working on *Apparatus Exchange* (2011), *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) and *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011) simultaneously. This constructively *disrupted* process of reflection is analogous to memory interrupting our daily functioning in the world. Therefore, understanding time and space (and self) as a *split* where *inherited past* is interjected into the *present*, becomes sensed between the levels of process, material, formal structure and conceptual underpinning.

In the discussion of the tactile, I relate aspects of touch with the concept of 'haptic'. As haptic vision refers to a *close looking* it links to being so close that one can touch something. Whilst the artist created the work by enacting with the media, the viewer can only sense the artist's making intermedially. As artist, one is both maker and viewer in the

creative process, for this process involves a continual experience of sometimes losing oneself in the work and at other times stepping back. *The fluctuating distances are vital for the understanding of broader links and contextualising.* This act of contemplating structured links was later reflected in *The Systems series*, for example *Studio* (fig 4.4.36) (2015).



Fig 4.4.36: GM Studio (2015).

The conceptual reciprocity was sensed intermediality, with one work reflecting on the other but not becoming absorbed or synthesised. Rather the metaphor of mycelial feeding into and off each other to enable a constructive movement of thought can be observed. The body of works as a collective thinking through systems within a system formed defines art practice. For the art practitioner, the relatedness between works on the one hand and the critical reaction of works against one another on the other are pivotal for conceptual innovation. The artist offers a unique insight into this research mechanism as encompassing 'art work' and practice-led research develops such strengths via intermediality.

Thus, apart from the formal judging of an artwork when making the work, the system of thinking-making refers to the complex structure of the intermedial. *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011) (fig 4.4.37) differs from the digital and calculated plotting that was involved in the making of *Residual System* (2011) and the mechanistic aesthetic that it radiates. The experience for the viewer has similar experiences for the association with warmth (hair and wood) and coldness (glass and Perspex) (fig 4.4.37).



Fig 4.4.37: GM, left: detail of *Key to the family: Thomas and Oliver 1997 – 2011* (2011), right: detail of *Residual System: the family portrait* (2011).

This hybrid process reflects a system of thought that is both systematic and random; it grows and develops and has the potential to break out of the confines of thought. When combined with the metaphor of the body with its strengths and potential for weakness and illness (biological organism), the image of a pseudo-scientific fascination of technology (machinic organism¹⁹⁶) (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:I, 4) contrasts with the concept of a transcendental entity that is beyond control. Furthermore, its opposite is the relative simplicity of understanding the coded 'units' of analysis (or technological system) that is all about control. This layer of associations does not form a rigid 'grid' order, but rather becomes attached in a multiple network.

¹⁹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari write, "there is a collective assemblage of enunciation, a machinic assemblage of desire, one inside the other and both plugged into an immense outside that is a multiplicity in any case."

Sullivan (2010:115) writes: “It is not so much an evolutionary move from simple to complex that holds promise, but rather it is the capacity to embrace both the simple and the complex at the same time”, an intermedial characteristic of the mycelial (Ingold 2011:86).

Whilst these personal mechanisms are systems that reflect strategies of order and disorder, the structures and formulation of thinking remain idiosyncratic. It reflects an expression of complexly mediamatic thinking as a small archive of memory and demonstrates the potential of material to tell stories and to transform these narratives in open-ended and hybrid meaning-making strategies.

The infolding of interrelational influence from artists in *TRANSCODE* and its unfolding in formal and conceptual exploration of my art works constitute an ongoing remediation of layers of meaning. Reviewing the series *Spill I, II & III* (2011–2012) (fig 4.4.38), Du Plessis (2013:61-62) writes:

representations of the technologically interfaced metropolis (Gandy 2005:38) come at the expense of signifying the tangible, physical reality of the city – its underbelly of entwined piping and conduits. In this regard, Miller’s portrayal of pipes as oozing, inorganic orifices provides a critical reflection of the trope of the technologised city as a luminous metropolis of screens, interfaces and simulacra. In this way she provides a counter-narrative to the trope, and figures it rather as a ‘flawed system through which contamination and degeneration develop’ (Miller 2012).

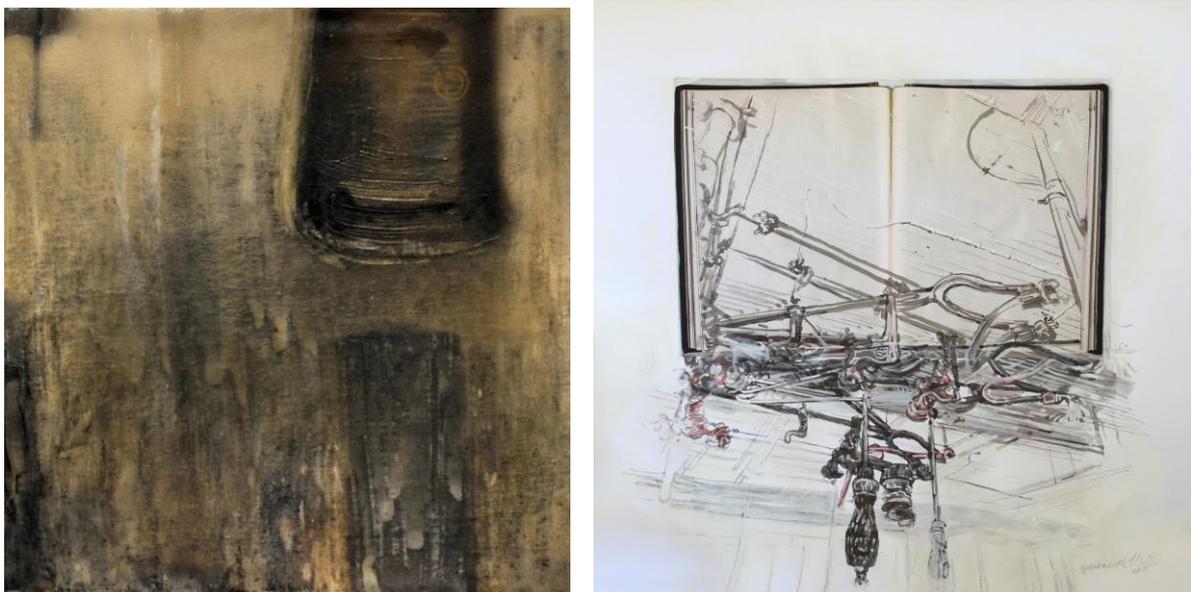


Fig 4.4.38: GM, left: detail of *Spill III* (2011–2012), right: GM, *Sketchbook* (2015).

Similar to the spill series, I considered the relationship between structures in *Sketchbook* (2015) (fig 4.4.38). Here one operational system as a traction device moves from the pages

of a sketchbook into a seemingly three-dimensional space. It also seems as though the ink drawing 'falls' out of the printed book, in which various layers of meaning can be drawn, though it is not the purpose of the analysis. The aim is here to present the evidence of tacit reflection on the nature of systems and that a sense of reciprocity is taking place between the digital and analogue artwork. Whilst some hybridity ensures the unity of visual space, the digital (inkjet print of a scanned sketchbook) and the analogue (watercolour ink) drawing remains identifiably separate. It is only a conceptual sense of energy in an understanding of the book (as collection of codes /lines/words on paper) and a version of a traction system (as a collection of pulleys and ropes) that reciprocates another. They are given a capacity to 'sit' together for the sake of mediamatically contemplating an idea of response. Thus the work is neither synthetic, nor transformational in its sense of intermediality: I propose to describe this as a *reciprocal intermediality*. This type of intermediality acknowledges the differences that find their shared conceptual interest in the grey area between them.

Clearly even the 'perfect' system of control is evidently and always prone to leaking and becoming 'polluted' – theoretically, ideologically and in practice – and as an artist, I welcome this, even inviting it through group collaboration. These fissures proved to be the source of innovation. The state of flux and motion, the ambiguity and the reciprocal reconsideration of processes, can all be seen both as reflection of doubt and as research strategy; not doubt in the knowledge and commitment of the artist, but rather the confidence to allow disorder of process to find new ways of resolving and reinventing the body of work. It is in this space that intermediate knowing between randomness and pattern, or absence and presence takes place. Modelling reciprocal intermediality is a dynamic, complex but inherently structured action with logic driven via practice with a strong emphasis on process. Art making as research process encompasses a wide range of strategies comparable to a scientific research rigour.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

This research project led to newly enacted artworks, which in themselves generated innovation via unconventional use of media and the mediamatic thinking they embraced. By building on the rationale of complexity, perspectives of intermediality were structured by curating *TRANSCODE* as a *system* for setting up the productive tensions between analogue and digital art making. This was a direct response to the research problem, namely to develop an approach of intermediality within a particular visual art geo-cultural context. The reflection on selected artists within the various rooms transpired in a modelling of knowledge as an intermedial understanding of specific structures, those now articulated in this study. The intermediality – seen from an academic's/artist's perspective in the space of embodied, lived and interacted processes – becomes the space of the cultural domain developing new knowledge. A definition of art research as process was presented in chapter 2, which reflects an apt expression of my research experience. This definition argued that the content and expression of the research process as a whole forms a unit to gestate and imbricate the constituents of new knowledge. The unit is fluid, flexible and unstable by nature, which from the creative perspective is a positive characteristic that presents possibilities for innovative work.

5.1 Validating the impact of reciprocity through intermediality in art practice

As part of the stated research problem, intermediality was constructed and observed within the thinking and practice of artists who participated in *TRANSCODE* exhibition. The groundwork for this exhibition enabled me to explore and interrogate the theories of Deleuze and Guattari with regard to the concept of transcoding where one milieu 'functions as a foundation for another, implying an intermedial tension'. The researcher's polyverse lifeworld was articulated to encapsulate the in-between of mediamatic and discursive thinking as a constant exchange of action and contemplation.

The objectives of this research have consistently articulated areas of contention in the comparison between tensional layers of *difference and hybridity*. The thesis underscores the situation that media exist in relation to one another, contextualising intermediality in art works and methodologies of specific artists. Definitions of intermediality from other disciplines, such as Literature and Media Studies (Schröter, Rajewsky; Wolf, Ryan, Müller, Oosterling), were a foundation for engagement with visual arts. The thesis outlined a layered collaboration between artists and a systematic sourcing and transformation of images via stages of research processes to respond to the primary research question, namely to identify *characteristics of intermediality* within *TRANSCODE*. Furthermore, this

charting formed a multi-layered approach, articulated by using Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor of the rhizome, towards developing a new understanding of the imbricated relationship between digital and analogue art making processes. Later in the research I introduced the metaphor of the mycelium (Mogu Mogu, Ingold) to strengthen the function of transcoding in rendering more porous boundaries. The mycelium semblance also acknowledges the constructive interdependence on geo-cultural context and artworks feeding one another in a manner of reciprocation.

Therefore, in identifying intermediality's characteristics of the detailed terrain, this study acknowledges that art engages with a transformative and contextual reality that is physical and relational. As part of the main objectives, the four rooms set out to identify reciprocity in the processes between the artists' mediamatic thinking. Trans-interdisciplinary knowledge was used to encapsulate intermediality theories using practice-led methodology (Sullivan, Elkins, Biggs, Jones, Hay), meeting the primary aim of modelling an innovative approach to intermediality in the arts.

The research questions became clearer as the study emerged with new meaning:

- The first research question asked: What are the characteristics of *intermediality* when mapped through an enacting *process of physical thinking* as well as by comparing discursive theories? Furthermore, could this charting form a multi-layered approach towards a new understanding of the relationship between digital and analogue art-making processes?
- The two secondary questions addressed the nature of intermediality as a construct of different or opposing ends: To what extent can difference be delineated to articulate contrast, anticipate potential change, or revisit possible grey areas? Does difference embrace dichotomy / dualism, or does it emphasise the incommensurability of certain media, such as embroidery and animation?
- The *tertiary research question* posited the issue of new knowledge: Could processes as *established hybridity* provide an indication of reciprocity and transformation?

Each room in *TRANSCODE* narrated intermediality from a specific individualised art context and in keeping with the perspective of multiplicity and transmedial layers. The research objective is addressed by comparing intermedial conversations in the rooms and is set up in

the *structure* of this thesis as an embodied argument. Thus the formal dimension of the thesis also reciprocates the research questions.

5.2 Emergent knowledge with new meaning

In Room One, I outlined how the thinking mechanisms, the ways of working together and intermedial ideals of *Journey to Freedom narratives* (2003-2007), established avenues of transformation. The thesis substantiated how the remedial ambitions of this initial project directly led to *Synchronic Journey* (2011). The *differences* between the narrative strategies in embroidery and animation were outlined by reference to the earlier project in order to capture the grey areas and highlight the hybridity in the latter project. Through a search for reciprocity between the narrative qualities of animation and the transformed embroidery in *Synchronic Journey* (2011), hybridity and innovation were established from the entire process of discovering new meaning. The process sought to consider whether the *Journey* projects shared characteristics of *transformational intermediality* (Schröter), of one medium being represented through another medium. Yet, the political nuances of reconciliation of both *Journey projects* suggested a *fusion* of embroidery and animation that could lead to a new “intermedium”, therefore the overall project also contained characteristics of *synthetic intermediality*. The ‘enriched’ embroidery that came together in *Synchronic Journey* (2011) merged animation thinking strategies with traditional embroidery approaches, finding unconventional ways of working with conventional media.

The idealistic overtone in concluding that *Synchronic Journey* (2011) is an example of synthetic intermediality is however too simplistic to reflect the complexities of mediamatic thinking. Synthesis is a concept of unification. Unity is only achieved with selection, which naturally excludes some and emphasises other views. Balance was achieved by providing sufficient space for artists to create independently at times. I observed and experienced that the benefits of these collaborative projects have innovative attributes. Its innovation can be found in the way one artwork developed out of another. Considering the project reflexively, the collaborative format provided reciprocal energy and a mycelial structure of *interdependence* on one hand; and on the other, the processes can be linked to *independent* nodes as imaged by the rhizome metaphor. The intervention has therefore materialised through intermedial functioning between a mycelial and rhizomatic understanding. Whilst I indicated in Room One that the *destabilising* characteristic of *transformational intermediality* (Müller 2010:18) brought constructive change in *Synchronic Journey* (2011), working through my research brought further insight. Transformational intermediality, as one medium representing another, still contains the idea of a medium being dominated by another, thus transformational intermediality should be extended to

include nourished reciprocity across media. Considering the nature of the *Journey* project as *process* oriented, *Synchronic Journey* is not the 'end' but an integral part of a reciprocal process that is 'non-hierarchical' in structure. As an intermedial interpretation of the strengths and shortfalls of synthetic and transformational models of intermediality gleaned from literature, I suggest 'reciprocal intermediality' as descriptor.

In Room Two of *TRANSCODE*, the association of oil painting with notions of portraiture as elevating the sitter was unsettled via intermedial displacement by means of reflecting on digital art modalities. The innovation of FE's work in its transformational power and my analysis highlighted how the conceptual space of painting was shifted. FE transcoded painterly authority, by disrupting it through digital morphing and then reinstated the hybridised portrait as an oil painting. By mediamatically thinking about the tensional differences, one medium enacts another, attempting to assimilate its modes of presentation. It was when the artist's processes were analysed for the transformation of his personal articulation of painterly media in response to continued digital mediation, that painting became accentuated in its difference to digital characteristics. The exact place of difference between digital and analogue is however not easily recognised; for example, *Terminal Host 1918-2008* (2009-2011) absorbed the digital layering, but then became the painted surface of the decapitated head in *Cephalophore* (2011). I considered the reciprocal relationship between theory (role of the academic/ researcher), practice (role of the artist/ researcher) and perception (viewer/ artist) in the media-politic of FE. Therefore, in Room Two the manipulation of space discussed not only rearticulated analogue and digital media; it evoked the *abstract* idea of order and disorder, construction and collapse of the concrete reality of space and time.

The mapping of FE's *process* was pivotal for this research, as it pointed out that reciprocating energies of media do not suggest a synthesis of differences, but a continual subversion. Here the processes of exploring intermedial space between interrupting, expanding or contracting distance and layers were exposed. In the digital realm of the computer, space can be manipulated, extracted, compacted or stratified in ways our reality (physical matter/paint) cannot. A layer of paint as 'skin' for *Terminal Host 1918-2008* (2009-2011) could be pulled over the wire frames in cyberspace of *Cephalophore* (2011). Thus hybridity was addressed by the intermedial flux (moving between), reflecting a sense of understanding becoming and being (ontology) in a time of pervasive technology. One could postulate that spacial fluidity of an in-between is reflecting *ontological intermediality* (Schröter 2011:2). By analysing the perforated multi-layered strata of FE's art I reflect on the mentioned "holey space" (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:551), where the openings between

models of space allow for gaps and connections with other models. In FE's working methodology the sense of ubiquitous intermedial relations deviates from *ontological intermediality*, for contra to the definition, individual media behave subversively in response to another.

In Room Three, the interstice of corporeal and immaterial understanding of the digital and analogue art of CA was interrogated for meaningful tensions between printing, animation and installation. In the contextualisation of a broader discourse of embodiment, intermediality is identified in the complexity of defining material as separate to image. Adding a layer to the accepted articulation of historians (Belting 2005:302-305, Lechte 2011:354-357) that image is not material; I proposed that for the artist, material can be both image and matter at the same time. This was substantiated by carefully analysing the processes and personal archives of CA, which demonstrated her mediamatic thinking.

If the artwork includes the process for the artist, the body of the viewer, and the haptic experience, then its articulation cannot be phrased in terms of the dominance of images or pictures (*Fear and Trembling*). Rather, the intermedial complexity of body and immateriality did not exist in clear binaries, but as processes in making art. This questions the construct of differences within the nature of intermediality. The ephemeral motion in the animation in new printing processes became represented in the shadow prints. In *Fear and Trembling* (2010-2011) the materiality contained both the sense of image and the material in the mind of the viewer, proposing a layered engagement. This contribution argues that the perspective from the artist's experience adds layers to the perspectives of philosophers and historians. CA engages with materiality for both its sense of presence and signified meaning. This 'thinking through' the material engagement stimulates innovative ideas as signifier in itself. In the mind of the artist 'art' is mostly a process of integrative mediamatic thinking. The transformational intermediality of CA was revealed as she recalibrated intangibility and the physical presentation of one medium within another. Furthermore, the give-and-take between animation and printing allowed reciprocal energy to exist next to one another in mutual contribution to the multi-layered meanings.

The intermediality of Rooms Two and Three is located in the process of transmediality. FE subverted both painting and digital mediation in the critical contemplation of representation. The media push each other's boundaries and like mycelial perforation remediate and invent new meaning in-between. As a consistent subversion, the artist finds his intermediality as located in the process. In comparison, CA contributes to the reconsideration of embodiment in the manner in which visceral materiality invokes animation and physical computing. The

processes of CA seem less subversive than FE; rather, her processes are more a reciprocal imbrication of digital and analogue art, which evokes Sullivan's braided metaphor. The fundamental questioning of Belting's articulation of image as art in relation to the practicing artist-researcher who sees process as part of art is original in its analysis and comparison. This is substantiated through the analysis of rooms two and three. As opposed to Room One, where multiple artists enriched each other's media through collaborative reciprocity, Rooms Two and Three focused on the dynamics of transmediality invoking the grey areas in the works of individuals between media to revitalise and innovate processes.

Room Four analysed and compared my art practice as an intricate system analogous to academic research process. Here the dialogues between artist's works and the strata of scholarly processes were accentuated, reading the one as overlay and imprint onto the other, fulfilling one of the aims of *TRANSCODE: dialogues around intermedia practice*. Research methodologies of collecting evidence and data, cross-referencing and questioning conventions were found echoed in the artistic processes of mediation, comparing practice and discursive thinking. Through internalising of the methodology of *TRANSCODE* and the development of the entire research project parallel to making of the artworks as system, individual pieces became stratified and reflective of one another.

The study identified and scrutinised processes as interstratic systems (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:553), where theories over-laid practical constructions and vice versa. Practice-led research has been substantiated as knowledge generating methodology constructed through intermedial reciprocity and that it is synonymous with the academic research objectives. The major difficulty faced, and consequently result obtained, by the research, is in devising methodologies, framing research questions, creating and curating artworks and flexibly theorising the complexity of the subject with its manifold fields of inquiry and multiple participants.

5.3 Recommendation from this study

The practice and focus of this research was the *overall process* which was more than end-products, or 'the artwork' as traditionally prescribed by the theorist/art historian. The complexity of this construct encapsulated a broad domain of processes that was part and parcel of the 'artwork'. This is an important debate that needs to be taken beyond this study, not only as discursive consideration, but as *practice-led research enacted* by artistic creation. The notion of research practice as a more extensive activity than the concept of "art" as exhibited in galleries should be challenged in the public domain. To qualify this further – whilst professionals and authors other than the artists themselves write about the

artists' activity, artists seldom make visible their tangible research processes via exhibition platforms. Therefore the embodied research narratives of research-as-practice are proposed to be an important site for the artist, specifically the academic artist. Thus the artifact as an end product should not be considered as a holistic presentation of artists' intention and expression, but rather part of an all-inclusive process. In hindsight, juggling the parameters of this study to fit both the scope of a DLitt et Phil in Art History and a new emphasis on practice-led research was a momentous task which necessitated the broad scope. It is my recommendation that a separate degree be designed to facilitate the specific niche for artist academics in order to fully allow for conceptual projects with artistic making as focus. Although my critics commented on the fact that I handled the constraints well, the value of 'ticking all the boxes' is not only unjust toward the practitioner-maker, but restrictive towards the time dedicated to material production and thus the potential of art making's greater contribution. The focus of this thesis developed to be exegetical and process-orientated. In the interest of future research doctoral projects with a practice-led methodology a constructive contribution of this focus must be acknowledged as has been done by the critical readers and examiners of this thesis. Furthermore, the pivotal importance of the (physical) presentation of the exhibition demands that the practice is evaluated first-hand to fully grasp the dimension of the practice.

The places where practice-led research occurs have been proven to be beyond the confined boundaries of *studios*. This further suggests a possible reconsideration of the traditional reference to art practice as 'studio practice'. This study suggests *art practice research* as opposed to 'studio practice' as more appropriate, for it highlighted that contemporary art is practised between and beyond conventional expectations. These sites include community halls, seminar rooms, galleries, the open road and the transformed conception of space of the computer, to mention a few. Although 'studio practice' could be a metaphorical expression of *location* by practice-led researchers, its limitations and outmoded association should be debated and expanded beyond the peripheral attention it received in this study.

This study also proposes that *TRANSCODE* as a physical exhibition in an art gallery could be showcased in cyber space to encapsulate a constantly changing format thereby expanding the viewer's platform world-wide. The platform "transcode" (in lower case) has been created as cyber response in keeping with ongoing scholarly debates around artistic practice. The link on outoftheCUBE: <http://www.outofthecube.co.za/transcode.aspx>, which is curated in collaboration with Conidaris, aims to build on the enriching research environment and to stimulate further research, both as practice and theoretical reflection.

Planned to expand in post-doctoral research, the site includes both a selection of *TRANSCODE* artists and new artists with an interest in furthering visual research in intermediality. The aim to expand a mycelial approach is embodied by the collective nature of this as online community to activate productive visual research for practising artist academics. Furthermore, a research around the reciprocal intermediality of artist communities regularly contributing to internet platforms, such as *outoftheCUBE* virtual platform, is a rich ground for debate and critical enquiry into intermediality.

The unique contribution offered by the artist with insight into making and via discursive research in regard to the practice-led doctoral degree contributes to and expands the rich history articulated in writing by art critics and art historians. This practice-led research has argued comprehensively for the acknowledgment of art as research and as scientific in its methodological development.

5.4 *TRANSCODE* as innovative model and contribution to new knowledge

Proposing the mycelium as an image of entanglement and metaphor of porosity and constructive support echoes the character of tacit and cerebral knowledge. In line with Barrett and Bolt (2007) my research re-emphasised that the general opposition of tacit and explicit knowledge is problematic, for thinking processes are implicitly entangled. The academic structures demand complex concepts that generate innovation. Academic research seeks to generate an innovative methodology that suggests revitalisation of the art industry. Most practice-led research in visual arts (particularly in South Africa) focuses on the art of the researcher as single artist. *TRANSCODE* however has combined curatorial strategies as collective thinking integral to the practice of the individual artist's processes. This is a possibility of complexification that dares to ask what will happen if the artist allows a more entangled scenario than one's own creative efforts. Simplicity and clarity are the traditional credo of elucidating research, yet the very spirit of innovation is to go against convention, against accepted wisdom. The model of *TRANSCODE* that embraces a multifarious character of artist, curator, art historian, teacher, and theorist thus battled with academic structures to push the boundaries. Whilst the 'flaw' of complexity is its inability to explore all avenues to conclusion, it also seeks out options through its porous nature. The characteristics of reciprocal intermediality hinge on the ongoing processes that contain both the independence of entities and the hybridity that results from fusion of artistic practice. By including artists that influenced my thinking and asking them to make art along with me, this process embodied the contextualisation of artistic academic research. This model allows for a cross feeding, a mycelial metaphor of multi-stranded reciprocity. Between the complexity of difference and hybridity, and an insistence on the materialising practices being enacted

TRANSCODE has demonstrated scholarly foundations in practice-led research. The reflexive formulation of *reciprocal intermediality* through mediamatic contemplation is an important contribution to knowledge and presents possibilities for debate and further application.

Beyond graphic proposals, foundational principles point to the soundest way forward: *TRANSCODE* as a model for generating new knowledge is not a diagrammatic sketch but a significant expansion on the concepts of transcoding built on the foundations of the descriptors from Manovich, Deleuze and Guattari. *TRANSCODE* as embodied *proof of qualifiers* is a model for practice-led research production.

TRANSCODE was built on

- the rationale of complexity inviting multiplicity;
- the principle of transcoding enabling transformational processes;
- the ethic of reciprocity embracing a mycelial metaphor; and
- the innovative construction of intermediality via mediamatic thinking.

Transcoding brought about *transformation* and developed knowledge in a layered approach of research. The analysis of *mediamatic processes* provided the aperture for the enquiry into intermedia dialogues, by *methodologically* considering the evidence of artists' methods. Critical reflection of this study's findings presents potential for postdoctoral research via practice. Beyond the acceptance that theory is a representation of experience so that others may also acknowledge and understand, the artist develops a different insight into their *own tacit* knowledge so that it *can feed back into practice research*. For the artist, theory is a vital tool, yet I differ from theorists such as Rolling and Sullivan in the sense that theory is neither the starting point nor the end aim for the artist. Rather, it is an intermittent part of a continuous and evolving process. From the point of view of an art lecturer, this insight of transcoding informs the educational terrain of professional artists, where the re-articulation of boundaries is a constant aim. Postdoctoral research will aim to invest on the foundation of transcoding as developed via *TRANSCODE*, and to apply its ground principles as model into educational methodology for art students.

Previous academic publication of the artists analysed in this study was marginal, therefore capturing these artists' processes and interrogating aspects of their thinking constituted an important contribution to knowledge. My research project not only prompted structured collective thinking through practice, but also captured the specific case studies for the first time as methodological analysis/interpretation. These processes were further benchmarked

against scholarly principles. The tables and diagrammes developed in this study created possibilities for examining action (making it happen) as pivotal to art discourse. They also documented emergent methods of tacit thinking and fundamentally questioned art as unstructured thinking. They also presented the nature of art research as an interactive act of coping with complex lives. The reciprocal nature of visual arts processes as scholarly knowledge existing within the rich context of multiple knowledges, further captures specific insight of art makers as complex, but *dynamically* directed enquirers. The multiplicity of tensional grey areas between analogue-digital art were the source of individual strands within revised theoretical and practice systems which emphasise that the porosity of boundaries is individually negotiated by artists. Whilst other models of intermediality seem to accentuate outcome (syntheses or transformation), this study's contribution of reciprocal intermediality emphasises *processes* as an experience of practice research uniquely positioned by academic artists.

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