



The Gesture of Thinking: Embodied cognition in creative practice

"It is not pictures as objects of perception, that can teach us about perceiving: rather, it is making pictures – that is, the skilful construction of pictures – that can illuminate experience, or rather the making or enacting of experience."
Alva Noë

This installation explores processes of embodied cognition through painting. It aims to understand creative practice as an agential, corporeal activity performed by a body moving through its environment. Through gesture, materiality and the use of tools, visual knowledge emerges in a process of artistic labour. Painting, in this laborious process, is thinking - "in that instant when (...) vision becomes gesture, when, in Cézanne's words, he 'thinks in painting'". Merleau-Ponty

The art[work] explores the possibility of self-as-ecology. The ways in which we see ourselves as agents inform our relationships with the 'world'. Is it possible to perform a transformation in perspective through the labour of art making? In The Question Concerning Technology, Martin Heidegger asks how humans came to be compelled to use technology to draw out the resources of the earth and set them into store as 'reserves'. This tendency, he suggests, extends to humans themselves who have become 'human resources'. He suggests one way to answer this question is through the fine arts as *techné*: "Technology ... is no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing (...) the word *techné* is linked with the word *episteme*. Both words are names for knowing ..." Martin Heidegger.

Video: *Warehouse Hands* (1:52) and *Looking* (5:05)

Painting: *Warehouse* (Oil and collage on paper)

Video: *Exploring Surface* (2:25)

Painting: *Polar Bear Pool* (Oil and collage on board)

Paintings: from *Conjoined* series (Oil on board)

Video: *Wordless Fragments* (8:15)

Video: *Explore through Collage* (3:25)

Painting: *SUV Net* (Oil and collage on board)

Video: *Preparation* (5:40)

Painting: *Polar Bear Net* (Oil on canvas on board)

Video: *Torn Fabric* (4:14)

Video: *Reflecting out loud* (2:50)

List of Works: From entrance, turn to your right and anti-clockwise.

The installation contains artworks from two series: (i) *Climate snapshots* combines fragments from family snapshots with climate-change affected landscapes. (ii) *Conjoined* juxtaposes paintings from childhood snapshots of myself and the young Diana Spencer, evoking questions of identity development, identification, and celebrity.

[This practice-led PhD aims to develop a situated account of creative practice (art 'work') that connects the agential, material, extended corporeal, social and environmental through an ecological view of human cognition. This installation represents the first phase.]

Carole Kirk, May 2013

<http://dancingwithpaint.wordpress.com>