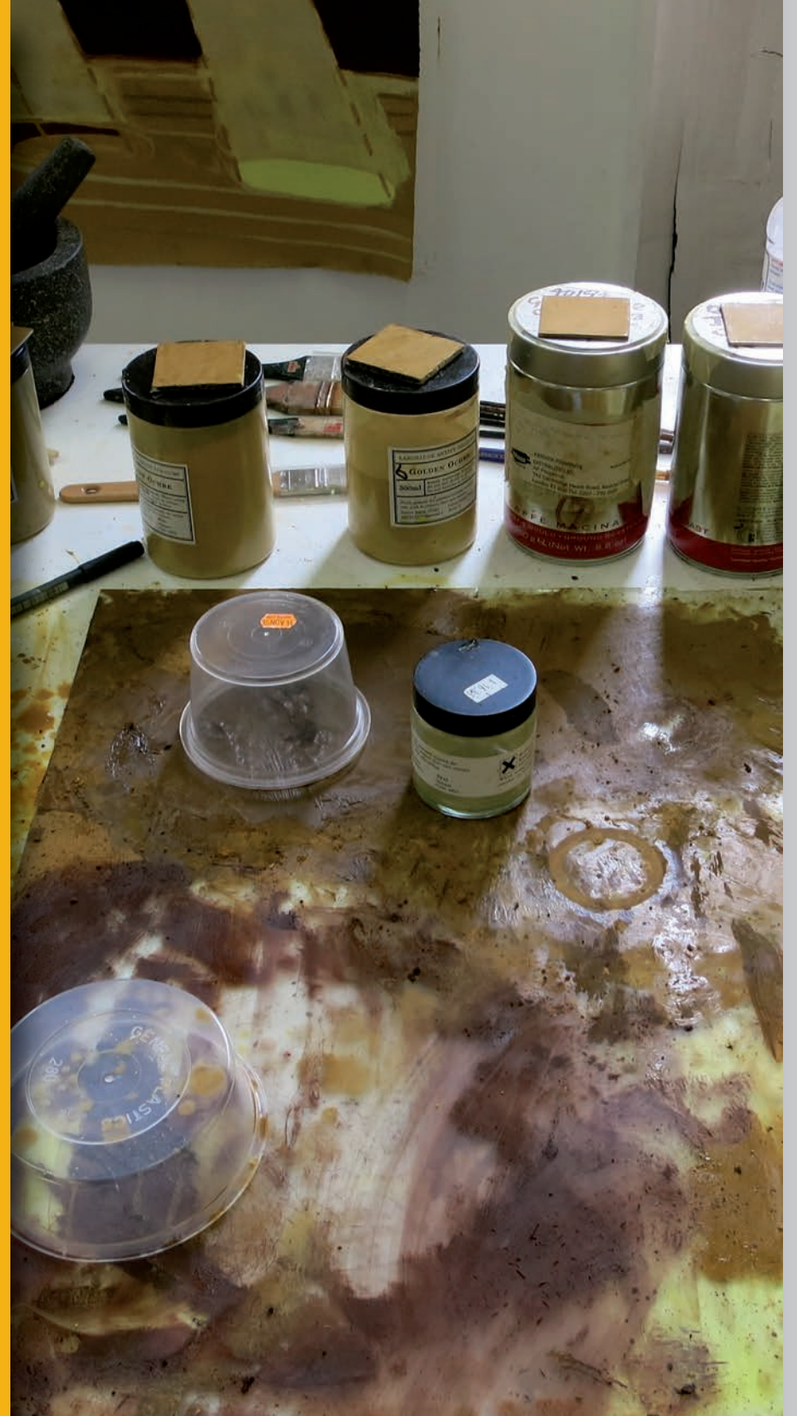


RICHARD KENTON WEBB

THE LANDSCAPE AS DIS-COURSE

FACTS BECOMING ART THROUGH...

Richard Kenton Webb spent two months in the autumn of 2014 as LARQ's international artist in residence. He left his UK home and his many students at the University of the West of England, Bristol to research the concept of 'yellow' in the mountains of the mineralised and sulphured zone known as the Mt Read Volcanics within Western Tasmania. Richard was the last of a total of 16 international artists who have participated in LARQ's program and the resultant exhibition of his work in March 2015 with the support of Ten Day's Tasmanian International Arts Festival brings closure to a process that has unfolded for over a decade.

Richard was a suitable artist to highlight such an event being a man of great energy and fittingly a traveller. Twenty three YouTube films tell part of the story of the 2014 residency. Thirty one paintings and over 50 drawings tell most of the rest. This catalogue will bookend his antipodean journey.

I have a volume in my library titled *A Private View*. It's a large publication about English art and has been an influence in my world for nearly 50 years. It was published in 1965 during a time of great social change in the UK and charts the generational shift between post-war artists such as Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland and the younger painters emerging out of the 'swinging sixties' such as David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj. It's telling that the imperious Sir Kenneth Clark appears in the first photograph of the many Lord Snowdon images in the book.

I'm 'launching' a vessel with a complicated 'crew' into this introduction for Richard's catalogue. I have a lot of territory to cover with a few words. I want to establish a type of back story to the accompanying essays by Jill Davis, Richard Kenton Webb and Rory Wary McCann. Jill is a painter and Rory a miner. Those humble descriptors or labels foreground characters of great complexity and LARQ is privileged to have them contributing to this catalogue.

I began studying art in the late 1960s as a 19-year-old in Melbourne. My teachers were a mix of 'arts and crafts' devotees and high modernists. Most were following a well trodden path established in Europe. Indeed in keeping with most serious young Australian artists at the time they were likely to have experienced that milieu first hand. In this context *A Private View* became a type of handbook for the study of art and a spiritual guide for 'making one's way' as an artist.

The Marxist writer/critic John Berger was to eventually rub much of the gloss off Sir Kenneth Clark's shiny aura, in particular, but the English Art School tradition with it's emphasis on the study of art history and the primacy of drawing as conceptual tools remained bright and central to a world of art making both in the UK and as I have emphasised across the world. The Americans would 'bust up' the influence of the single-mindedness of this practice with their post Duchampian strategies through the later 70s but essentially it carries on to this day.

Sir Kenneth Clark's book *Landscape into Art* first published in 1949 has chapters with titles such as 'The Landscape of Symbols', 'The Landscape of Fact' and 'The Landscape of Fantasy' all sewn together with beautiful phrases such as this: 'Facts become art through love, which unifies them and lifts them to a higher plane of reality; and, in landscape, this all-embracing love is expressed by light'.

This faceting of landscape response echoes other fractures in attitudes to landscape. Here in Tasmania, in particular, attitudes are essentially polarised around the political ie. conservation or development.

Some of this analysis is appropriate to Richard's quest in making pictures in Tasmania especially in terms of one's relative view of that landscape space and its retinal impact. 'Landscape is a discourse' is a phrase from Richard Kenton Webb's own critical lexicon and although more open-ended than Clark's prescriptive orthodoxy it also has its roots in that English sensibility.

I thank Richard Kenton Webb for his generosity of spirit and his contribution to the LARQ program. I also acknowledge his role in both introducing me to new concepts and reconnecting me to long held 'prejudices' in regard to, and this is to paraphrase the aforementioned John Berger, 'ways of seeing' landscape!

Raymond Arnold

A BEAUTIFUL PROCESS: THE BION FACTOR

Paintings which affect us profoundly set up something like a live voltage field. The experience is first of all visceral. We are caught unawares, stripped back to wonder and puzzlement. Such paintings seem complete in themselves. They suggest a world that is simultaneously familiar yet strange. They touch an emotional chord. Where do they come from?

In *The Landscape as Discourse* Richard Kenton Webb gives us not only the gift of his very original paintings but the gift also of a generous account of the process of their making. This detailed account of his creative process forms the subject matter of his webcasts, his writing, and the informal dialogue he sets up wherever he goes. He takes us with him on his odyssey. It is this process which enables him to see the Queenstown landscape anew. To the extent that he brings years of working, travelling, studying and teaching, as well as a post-Cezanne view of the world and its painterly possibilities, his is a sophisticated vision we, the viewers, are unlikely to emulate. But because of what he achieved and how he interacted with a world that was new yet alive to him, we can learn to see this landscape differently. We can experience it more keenly in its inherent mystery. It can become, not more familiar, but more completely other: a presence.

When Richard arrived last March for the intense alchemical eight weeks of his LARQ residency, walking by first light the slag heaps and drowning lakes, by night drawing in the draughty high rooms of the old Commonwealth bank, he brought with him one instructive guide: a book by the eminent psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion.

Richard Kenton Webb
in his LARQ artist-in-residence
studio, Queenstown,
Tasmania 2014

The landscape as discourse
2014
handmade oil paint with
Queenstown pigment on linen
200 x 200cm

Bion represents a rare high point of European culture and psychological understanding in that cauldron of the dispossessed who flooded into London during and after the Holocaust. Scarred himself by what he witnessed in both Great Wars, a pragmatist and fearless thinker, he reorientated the approaches of Freud and Melanie Klein away from a focus on the mind's internal dynamics (although he remained foremost a therapist throughout his life) towards the greater human imperative: freeing up our deep hunger for truth.

Perhaps Bion's most significant contribution was his demonstration of how we can access our inner world so that paradoxically this experience in itself connects us to a wider cosmos – a cosmos that quickens in ways that defy language. We can, he taught, break the seal of the narcissistic self. The core – for Bion believed in the power of experiential learning – is the encounter, whether this be with a patient, an event, a landscape. Experiences are the laboratories where we open ourselves up to 'the other', where we test and expand our reach towards that ultimate reality we intuit as the touchstone of meaning. In a leap of the imagination we become the other; its essence reverberates within us. As an important precondition for this psychological transformation he set down a detailed disciplined process of personal transparency and self-insight. There is a map.

This is the Bion factor at work in this exhibition. The process he articulated requires as a first step a surrender of the self and the ego. For the painter working in an unknown environment this entails an initial emptying out of personal memory, desire, and preconception. It requires relinquishing all efforts to take control. It means sharpening the senses to a point of almost painful acuity. Drawing and sketching become the tools for discovery, tuning forks in a new universe of colour, texture light and movement. Then, when the signals from a particular landscape have been etched into consciousness, fully digested, the artist can allow the internal transformation of this material to begin. It is a moment of sustained tension and split vision. Associations and reverberations flood in from one's inner world while the volume of sense-data needs to be turned down. Success in holding these two 'realities' in suspension is the disciplined skill (and the fear of submersion very real). Providing us with a concept as elegant as the Tao, Bion describes the psychic mechanism that enables this feat to occur. It is the calling into being within the personality of a container that shields us from chaos. Our first experience of being thus contained is as an infant when frightening fears and emotional storms are calmed and mirrored back to us by our parents as acceptance and love. Parental love becomes a container. We then learn to nurture this capacity to bear anxiety and dread within ourselves as we mature. Artists deploy it as of necessity. Keats called it 'negative capability'. It is the genesis of all great art.

Richard calls what follows the 'spilling out'. In his case it was a prodigious outpouring of drawings and paintings and visual experiments in form, composition, colour and subject matter, flowing for the duration of the residency across the walls of the bank. The evidence is before our eyes in this exhibition. Paintings such as *The landscape as discourse* and *Full moon over Queenstown* vibrate with a powerful personal inner vision.

Intrinsic to this vision is the search for specific visual equivalents to internal states of being. The container becomes not just a mental construct but a precise visual metaphor – a rectangle for instance that becomes a museum cabinet – that holds suspended the floating world of Queenstown under its pale yellow moon or the drowned town beneath the Crotty Dam. The chaos of the world is contained. The capability of paintings to so contain and transfigure can be seen at work in great masters such as Poussin. In *Landscape with the ashes of Phocion* (1648), for instance, the stoic belief system Poussin embraced and his Miltonic conception of the world are translated by means of intricate geometries – beautiful orchestrations as Kenneth

Clark describes these of the interplay between horizontals and verticals – into landscapes of resolved peace. Perhaps, as the eminent art critic and poet Donald Kuspit proclaims, it is painting's ability to provide such visual resolutions that will be its saving grace in the 21st century.

In an analogous fashion Richard's paintings thus move seamlessly between inner realities and the visual expressions of these: the texture of the unconscious we inhabit in dreams and which wraps around experience like the double helix of DNA is condensed into cones which whirl through space; the shape of the symbolic world becomes a room that we enter; yellow and the rich purple pigment extracted from the surrounding earth transpose us to a felt space that the artist would say resembles memory.

For Richard the work which emerged from his immersion in the Queenstown landscape has been the culmination of a quest that has taken him to many countries to research and work. It has informed his study of literature and psychology and his detailed experiments into the elements of painting: colour, line, drawing, how we see. Yet none of these activities quite explains what happened during this residency, the leap the work took. He himself has said it took him by surprise. It was as if a long gestation of ideas and images triggered by the strangeness and immensity of the minutely observed West Coast landscape 'crystallised'. Thought became visible.

To witness a creative process such as this unfolding in the pressure cooker context of a brief residency is to be freshly alerted to the possibilities of creative freedom and the power of the imagination. There is also a deeply subversive message being communicated by thinkers such as Wilfred Bion. It shakes to the core our illusion that we mould and manage an apparently inanimate world of rock, sky and sea. The creative process teaches a different story. The evolution of the human spirit teaches a different story. The circle completes itself. We can approach painters such as those of the Western Desert and the experiences they report of being gripped by the presence of a place, its psychic reality, its history, the resonating flow of images and voices, as fellow travellers.

This is the rich strand of contemporary thought Richard Kenton Webb has brought with him to Tasmania from his home in the UK. The result, *Code Yellow*, is a series of visual poems by an artist working at full strength and in full knowledge of the store of cultural resources he has to draw on. And invigorating it all, less obvious to the naked eye, is a profound respect for the dictates of a creative process that requires a surrender of the ego and a belief in a reality and intelligible mystery beyond ourselves.

It is an intriguing and radical thought that such a reconfigured 'landscape art' might in our sceptical age become a vehicle for the visionary in art, that the spiritual, once so strongly domiciled in abstraction, may have taken root elsewhere. Yet the work of a growing band of contemporary artists adds to the persuasiveness of such an idea: Anselm Kiefer originally in Germany now in France, Gregory Amenoff in the USA, John Wolseley in Australia, to name just a few. Sometimes it requires for its free expression, as exemplified in this exhibition here at LARQ in Queenstown, a psychologically potent landscape and a point of genesis at the margin of the major urban art centres.

Jill Davis

Let sleeping dogs lie
2014
handmade oil paint with
Queenstown pigment on linen
57 x 76.5cm

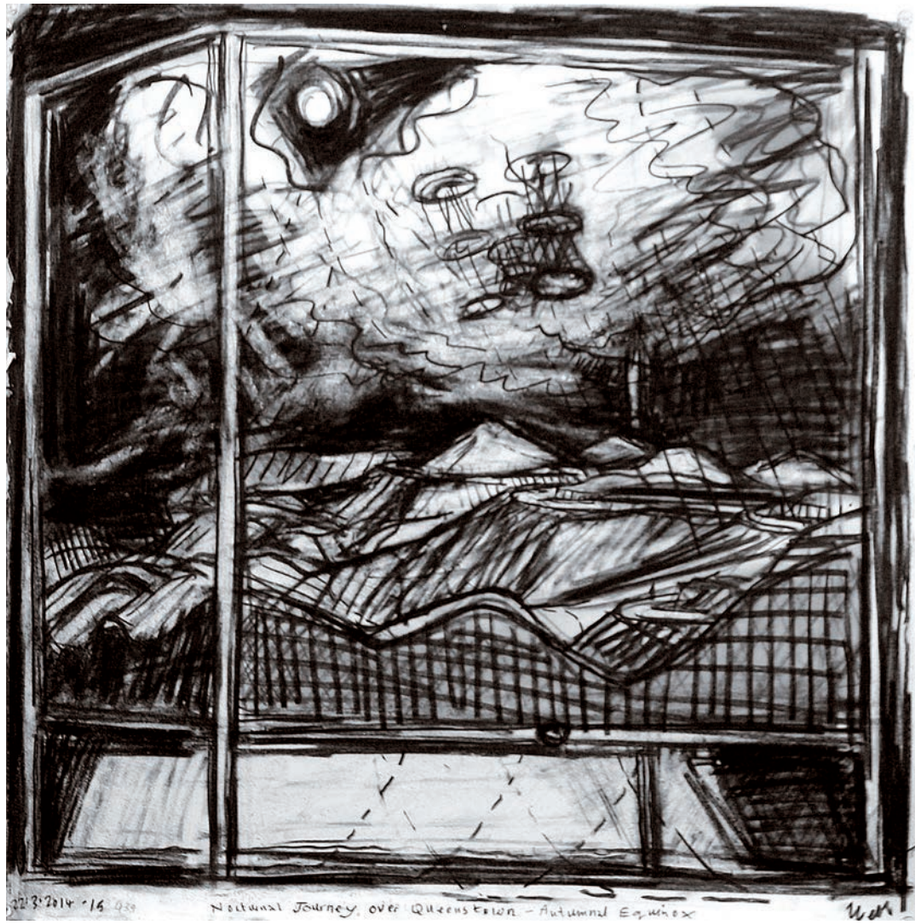
'What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man'
T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

I have always considered drawing as a way of thinking. It is the way I make my thought-life visible. The way I give my unconscious life a voice. It is the way I enable the unconscious to become manifest and how I start to make some sense of the world in which we live. We all have sleeping histories and concerns that we carry with us from the various stages of our lives and, for me, it is the act of spilling these onto the page, through drawing, that allows these elements to rise up and become conscious, and to be seen. Through this thinking-drawing, I can sense the state of my own wellbeing, know what my subconscious preoccupations really are, as well as those issues that I had thought I had dealt with, but actually had not. I can realise what it is that I am really concerned about, reveal my hidden fears and see more clearly what looms ahead.

So, is this therapy? No, it's more about finding exactly what has marinated in my unconscious over time, and now needs to be voiced and brought out into the living air. It is all those images, thoughts, memories, conversations that we have heard and those that we ourselves have had; all of which we have stowed and which have needed to be digested. It is the world forever within us, the sum of our very being that I am in dialogue with. But the question is: what do we do with these thoughts and memories once they surface? Can we, should we, attempt to make sense of them, like dreams? I am not suggesting here that we should subject them to inspection or some sort of cold-blooded analysis, rather only that we look at what comes readily to the surface when we allow spillage to occur.

DRAWING AS A WAY OF THINKING

Richard Kenton Webb
working on
The unconscious
2014



Nocturnal journey over
Queenstown – Autumnal equinox
2014
charcoal on paper
57.5 x 56.5cm

The visual poet makes thought visible differently from the word poet or the sound poet, and the outcomes are different for the reader, listener or looker. Three writers in their various ways have helped me to explore this.

First, Wilfred Bion postulated in *Second Thoughts* that thoughts themselves can be in search of a thinker. Also, that thoughts can exist without a thinker, and then, equally, that a thinker can be in search of thoughts. This beautiful concept where 'the idea of infinitude is prior to any idea of the finite' is very captivating. For 'the finite' is 'won from the dark and formless infinite'. This expresses so very well for me exactly *how* in my 55 years of living, painting, sculpting, printing and drawing my work comes into being from all the infinite *stuff* in my life. It is processed through my brain and senses and out into and through the stuff of materials and their qualities and personalities. In fact, the experience and therefore knowledge of the sensuality of appropriate materials for this language-making is key (see Webb, 'Lost in translation', 2012). It is essential to finding the right translation, the right fit of the felt thought to the materials to be used.

Secondly, Jacques Lacan proposed that the unconscious is structured like a language. So the 'unconscious must be apprehended in its experience of rupture between perception and consciousness in that non-temporal locus… Freud calls… another scene'. The unconscious manifests itself precisely at those moments when our conscious defence mechanisms are at their weakest: when we are asleep; in those accidental slips of the tongue when we say something that we did not really intend to say, but often mean; through jokes that frequently reveal more about us than we think. When we make such Freudian slips, at times when language fails and stumbles, the unconscious reveals itself. We are, in effect, fishing out of ourselves our 'thing-presentations', as opposed to our word-presentations. This is part of the act of being a visual poet, assembling the marinated caught thoughts that have swum in our minds for many years, and then, as we draw, to start giving these form, shape and meaning, and finally making.

Yet, if the subconscious is a language, then surely this signifies that it has a form; and if that is so, that this form is potentially knowable and readable. Becoming literate in this hidden inner form, realising it and bringing it into my consciousness and giving it substance, a materiality, is crucial to my creative practice and well-being as an artist. With the tools of drawing I can disclose the hidden aspects of my lived-life, use drawings as markers to accumulate a kind of map that shows a risen inner world. On reflection, this chart can inform and steer us to see the 'importants' of our interior life, as opposed to those urgent distractions that can cloud the direction of the course of one's work.

Thirdly, D.W. Winnicott in *Playing & Reality* calls the place where cultural experience is located the 'potential space'. The space between the individual and their environment, the 'Third Area' is where through drawing, painting and sculpture thought becomes visible. Where our internal world meets the external world; where the world of our invisible thought becomes manifest through our making. Marks, scribbles, paint or clay, it is in this 'Third Area' that it becomes. So, we behave like a creator, where there was nothing, now, into this nihil something appears: thought has started to solidify.

The transitional object

Our drawings and makings are extensions of ourselves as we mould and form them into what we want from them. So, to begin with, what we create is ours, it is 'us', because we have transformed the materials into a particular something. But soon, because the work will be separated from us, and stand apart from us, it will become itself. Of course the artist is responsible for the work and in general artists sign their work claiming authorship and ownership of copyright. But because the artwork exists on its own, whether well

composed or not, whether succeeding or failing in its creation, we then move on to another kind of discussion. We talk about aesthetics, taste, fashion, aspect-sightedness (see Wittgenstein), audience amongst other things, all equally interesting and worthy of great debate but not part of this essay.

There is a codicil to this though. When we, the makers, are creating the work, perhaps doing so with all sorts of particular intentions, and loading it with meanings that we want it to say and do, does it really do so? And when we exhibit it, or it is simply independent from us, so that we are not there with the work to act as its spokesperson and to explain its true meaning or what we intended with it, does it work? Even if we have written down our thoughts on how the work should be read or listened to or looked at – observations that may well become lost, the title notes or label mislaid – the work of art itself is naked, just an object, a thing, trying to be itself, with no name as such. So the question is, does it work?

There it is then, the work of art, all alone. It will have to stand alone, to answer for itself all on its own. Without the essays and all the critics' thoughts, without even the artist's words, without the packaging or any other information on how to read it and understand it. When we, the viewer, approach a work of art, interpretation of its meaning is down to us alone. It rests with our ability to read art and culture as to whether it works or not. Does it do what it was made to do, and fulfil the intentions of its creator? After all, it is only a 'thing', paint on canvas or wood, or a construction of plaster, bronze, etc. If we're not really careful we may slip into a not dissimilar crisis of the image to that which erupted in 8th- and 9th-century Europe (see Brown; Cameron). That saw the rise of the image as a symbol of power and magic reacted against by iconoclasm. Then the motivation was a theological one whose argument lay in the Old Testament's interpretation of the Ten Commandments which forbade the making and worshipping of 'graven images'. Now there are other (or additional, or are they the same?) accusations and games being played out and the critiques are against over-arching consumerism and high investments, with the suggestion that the art we are being presented with has a touch of the 'emperor's new clothes'. Value is a strange thing, as are fashion and taste. There may be many reasons why one work is given more value and worth than another and thus becomes a commercial success, as opposed to simply a creative success. Perhaps the motivation of its making and how it came into being in the artist's mind is a profounder question to ask: as an artist, that is the question I continually ask of any of my works.

Risk, sacrifice and curiosity

Sometimes where a work began and where it ends up are miles away from each other, as an acorn appears totally different from the grown oak tree.

The long journey from concept to finished object is a good place to start our enquiry. Where is the freedom and slack in the journey? Will we accept any? Are we allowing the piece of work to grow up and be itself? This all depends on the openness of the artist and the constraints they put upon the play and opportunities for what Beckett called the 'suffering of being' (as opposed to the habit of what we know and what we can and what we do, in fact crank out day after day with little fuss at all).

We need to ask of ourselves how vulnerable we are really willing to be in our creative process by not knowing if our work will succeed or fail, or even what the outcome might be. Because we all know there is more of our inner lives that we can express, but we can't as yet quite reach this or know just what this is. An artist's work is not about being satisfied with what we know or becoming complacent with those tricks that we pull out to solve our problems, so that a kind of mediocrity creeps into our creativity. What it

Submerged thought
2014
handmade oil paint on linen
200 x 200cm

The unconscious
2014
handmade oil paint on linen
200 x 172cm

really boils down to is this: how much are we willing to sacrifice? How willing are we to take risks? These are the big questions in the growing up of the work. It is about the commitment to remain curious, to be open to change.

All this sounds like parenting children into adults, but the similarity is fitting and the questions it raises for the artist are similar, especially over areas of control and ambiguity in the work. Because we need to ask ourselves, where are we making space in our work to surprise ourselves with our own abilities and what we are making? We would be foolish to think we know ourselves so well as not to accept new possibilities of thinking to materialise. But whether this occurs is down, I believe, to the balance we allow between instinct and reason. Do we tend to reason everything out and apply logic to the outcomes or do we trust more to instinct and gut feeling?

Place: Where are you coming from? Where are you going?

The world we live in is an extraordinary place. Encountering our own culture and society is an incredible experience and journey for each one of us, whether for better or worse, because it will deeply inform us. It is from our continuing engagement with the world and with everything that is among and around us that we start to make sense of it, and to build up a worldview. We begin to do so from the many places that we live in, then take in the different places we holiday in and visit. So our worldview, physically, mentally and metaphysically, derives from all that we witness in different places, cultures, lands, climates, foods, sounds, music, literature, thinking, art and poetry, and so on.

As we move away from our familiar starting-points, we develop our own personal histories, making our own connections with new places, and creating affinities and links with them. Sometimes these are quite specific: a smell, a taste, sounds. Where the place talks back, it may suggest other associations, often surprisingly different ones. Places may sing songs of other senses, people, emotions and happenings. They may suggest other things, perhaps the histories that we carry (for better or worse) of other areas or circumstances, which affect how we view the present as much as the past. These histories may colour our worldview, perhaps even prejudice or blind us. Places are imbued with memories, residues and the echoes of events, conversations, events that occurred there and have now become part of their fabric. They are like an embossed print, but it takes sensitivity and time and the willingness to be open to such possibilities to experience them.

As human beings we are complex, so very much more than mere one-dimensional beings seeing life through the single lens of a one-eyed camera. We have our taste, smell, touch, sound, emotion, well-being, balance, memory, intellect, etc., all of which continuously impact on how and what we look at, whether consciously or unconsciously. Yet how do we develop awareness of the physicality of *being* in a place? How receptive and sensitive are we to its qualities? How vulnerable are we to the play of our emotions and senses on what we see? The act and art of seeing is also affected by our aspect-blindness and aspect-sightedness to various parts of our visual language. This influences how we look and read, let alone how we translate visual experience into the coherence of a drawing. Just as remembering is knowing exactly what we *want* to recall of a particular moment, so we need to be aware of *which particular aspects* of any experience in life it is that we want to reconsider, something complicated by the fact that so much of our sensory life is invisible. The land itself, the landscape, can be seen as a place of discourse, a place of conversation. This is one of my concerns. That where we allow it, a place can talk to us (not literally, but perhaps metaphorically, allegorically or metaphysically) of meaning, tell of residues, echoes of the past and future. In order to listen, however, we must be vulnerable and open; choose, in Beckett's words, 'the suffering of being', be awake to

new things. We need to be curious, to move away from our old habits and to perceive the world with fresh eyes. Where emotional essays are encouraged and allowed, we can translate our feelings into made images.

To begin with, it is good to examine our motives and behaviour. Do we go out of our way to find places or seek out potential spaces that offer or harbour a translation of our feelings, where those little sensations start to add up to something else? This can be for many different reasons. Sometimes it's because we feel safe in a place or we can think really clearly when we are there. Or perhaps something has happened for us there, or for our family, so that to make a drawing in that exact place in effect makes it an altar, a touchstone, a witness to what happened. It is, then, by drawing and attempting to make sense in the 'Third Area' through our scribbles and marks that we hard-wire an understanding of how our 3D looking translates into 2D.

Observational drawing

Observational drawing is a wonderful tool to help us make sense of what is in front of our eyes, of comprehending how the things that we see fit together. It is all about composition. Looking from a single viewpoint we can start to see the way in which small shapes, both negative and positive, interact with each other, like the pieces of a jigsaw, and then become a whole, defining where the picture begins and ends. It is only when we stop to question ourselves about all that is before us, in an intense disciplined way, that we wake up to the fact that this is hard work with no short cuts. But the rewards are huge. The more the artist connects and commits time to this way of translating 3D looking onto a 2D sheet of paper then the deeper their reservoir of knowledge is. And all that remembered looking becomes available to us. Available for us to improvise from and invent, enabling us to communicate our interior world and ideas into some kind of ordered composition.

Picture-making – limiting your languages

The flat surface of a drawing, print or painting holds huge potential. Not least the compositional act of 'making a picture'.

As an artist, the music of the picture, its rhythms and repetitions, its shaped lines and forms are the heart of the work, of the thought trying to be made visible. But the picture must then work. Within the rectangle or square (or oval or round) of this world being made, within its boundary, is its worldview and world picture. It's got to work, succeed, add up, as an independent picture.

Limiting the languages one uses is one way of getting the hidden in your head out, and getting the composition to work as a whole. We need to understand and be aware as artists that neurologically the five visual languages of Tone, Shape, Space, Colour and Movement have their own separate areas in the brain. Thus we need to exercise and use them each of them independently in order to understand how they work, with all their functions and possibilities, so that we can become literate in their use and conscious of their peculiarities and nuances. For instance, by using only pure tone with no colour and no line we can see complications that are always there but now suddenly become apparent so that we can untangle them. Likewise, with pure line with no tone or colour, the absence makes us invent equivalents for what is missing. There is nothing more than the absence of colour to suggest colour. How do you do this? Well, posed with this conundrum or puzzle, we invent, we jump to alternatives or equivalences. This is the genius of limitation. After all, it's not only quicker but, hopefully, it will enable you to get the idea or emotion or feeling out of you in the first place. To turn this kind of stuff inside you into some form of order and sense is hard. So anything that can help is invaluable.

Full moon over Penghana
2014
handmade oil paint with
Queenstown pigment on linen
200 x 200cm

Thoughts looking for a thinker
2014
handmade oil paint on linen
200 x 200cm

To someone looking over your shoulder, your doddles, as you make them, might look like complete nonsense. But to you, the translator, it is about finding a good likeness of subject: its colour, its rhythm, its space, its sounds, its touch, its emotion, etc. Because you are attempting to grasp that which is invisible, it is important to ask yourself, despite the urgency of getting the image and all the many possible ideas and solutions you have for its true representation on paper, what is the critical essence of what I am looking at.

Creative types

One much overlooked fact is that visually we are of two creative types, by nature either haptic-sighted or visual-sighted (Lowenfeld). The differences are of degree and not of kind. This hugely affects the way we perceive the world and make our representations of it. Are we making equivalents of touch or sight? The principal concern of the visual-sighted artist is to depict the things around him/her, to bring them closer; colour is more about giving an impression. To the haptic it is not about what something looks like but more what it feels like, the differences of surface, the textures and temperature. Colour for the haptic is more about expression and symbolism than realistic colour correspondence. It is about depicting the effect of the looking experience on him/herself. It is the projection of his/her inner world out into the picture. The haptic approximates his impressions because everything springs from his or her bodily experience.

All of us are somewhere on the visual-haptic continuum, and some artists are both. But like so much in creativity, awareness of where you sit (and your relative strength) can be balanced and remedied by practice and exercises where you are not (with its corresponding relative weakness). We must consciously and actively use our perception to become more sensitive to our haptic or visual orientation. My students on the Drawing and Print degree, which I lead at the University of West of England (UWE) often complain that they cannot draw, but what they mean is that their drawing is not an accurate rendering of exactly what lies before them, as with a photograph.

Which leads us on to the age-old discussion: what *is* a good drawing? And your answer to that question will give away how you naturally perceive the world. For the way we experience vision is so much more than merely the receiving of physical images from our eyes, we see as complex thinking, feeling human beings who live both inside and outside the body.

The stuff of paint

Drawing and painting, then, is much more than just the production of a visual image, a composition, which holds a story or narrative and which can be figurative or purely abstract. There is the haptic transference of emotional likeness through the materiality of different substances. Pigments may be applied to the different surfaces of wood, cloth and paper, with their various colours and tones, or transformed into 'the stuff' of paint, or dirt, each with their own expressive language possibilities. Physical gestures or movements may be captured through the mark-making and the substance of the 'stuff'. A punctured or stitched surface may resonate with a certain lived experience, felt like a glance or a smile beside the spoken phrase, evocative as the scent of mushrooms in the early dawn or the crack of submerged ice for the sailor. Similarly, the ability of the texture and substance of surface and paint to capture what is unseen and wryly hidden can be compared with the way in which the deep, sweet fragrance of primrose in the dark may call to mind other days and circumstances. What must not be forgotten is that there is a certain alchemy in the making of pictures and materials, because a painting is so much more than the simple transfer of pigment to paper. There is the transference of our humanity onto the flat surface, the exposing of the 'Third Area' in a picture.

Colour

Colour is so huge as to be a language in itself, its perception occupying a separate area of the visual cortex (Sacks; Zeki). There are other visual languages – Tone, Line, Form, Movement, Space – all of which are heavy with associations and intensely subjective, as well as being loaded with cultural meanings and histories. So as we start a drawing, the question is which of these languages do we put aside, because it is much easier to work with one or two visual areas at a time to find and make a subject's particular dynamic 'equivalent'.

Thus we limit ourselves to stimulating only one or two of our visual languages and use them to find the vocabulary to translate our ideas and make them visible. It is important to choose the right language for the task. I find, for instance, that using just pure shaped line drawing with a charcoal pencil on off-white paper is how I can make forms, shapes and rhythms that help me to 'hallucinate', to envision the colour I need. Through line I can find certain rhythms, the likenesses for sounds, for the personalities of the colours. I am thinking here about synaesthesia, the mixed associations of the senses. So, line drawing becomes a shorthand for Colour where there is no colour. It is like the word 'vinegar' for vinegar. Though no vinegar exists on this page already you can anticipate and taste it in your mouth. The word itself conveys taste, smell, sound and colour, as also it does particular emotions or feelings.

I believe colour is much more complex and important to us as human beings than we understand it to be at present. There are aspects to colour that go beyond what we feel or intuit. I think there is 'other' in the language of colour.

What I mean by this is that just as Plato suggested 'perfect forms' lie behind every form on Earth, so what we see on Earth are just physical copies of the perfect forms that lie beyond the created universe, in a metaphysical sphere. I believe that every colour has a specific form or dynamic shape that resonates inside it, and that this can be intuited or felt, but perhaps only obliquely. We know too that Colour for us resonates with emotional memories as well as all the cultural meanings and associations of the time in which we live. Colour facility can be lost too, so that a person then may only see in black and white (Sacks).

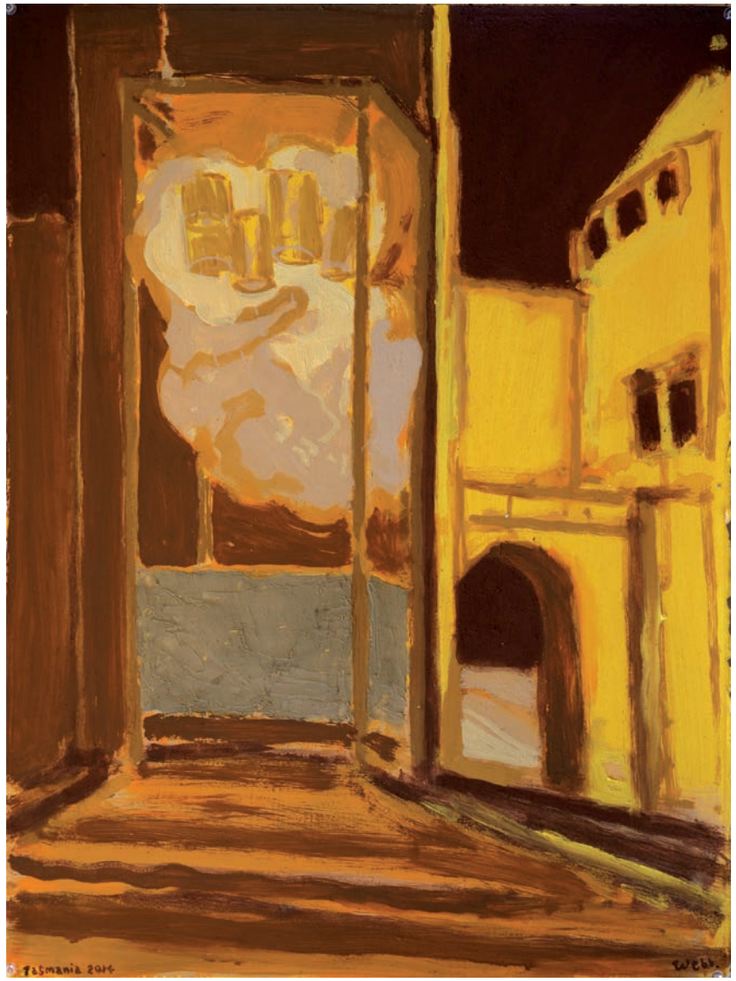
While we have all, of course, grown up with Colour, whether simply through naming the different ones or looking at them and their names with more intensity, what I have found as an artist and educator is that most people do not have a very deep internal knowledge of colour, it's all rather superficial and vague. Even artists' understanding may be limited, or even fearful, such that they use colour tonally, as light and dark paint, rather than in sympathy with their personalities as a contrast or emotional value or resonance.

So Colour is both complex and simple, depending on how much we want to engage in its language. All the five (and other) visual languages are teachable, and so I attempt as a teacher to facilitate students first to see the different aspects of it, then to read it, and finally, the hardest of all, to use it to express themselves.

What we need to understand about Colour from the beginning is the profound truth that it only exists as a constant in our own heads. Outside us, it is all just the confusion and array of light. Thus, the notion of 'a' colour is only in our heads. Neurologically, we simplify light into colour constants in order to grapple with it, to name it and utilise it. This is similar to what the artist does with Colour (for better or worse) and it is intensely subjective (Zeki).

It is through this act of simplifying that we limit ourselves, and in drawing I try to hunt down equivalents for the deeply complicated and delicate mysteries that I know lie deep inside my being. It is how I stalk those thoughts I have caught when I am out and about – because thinkers certainly do find thoughts. Thinkers go looking for thoughts, as Wilfred Bion suggested, just as thoughts seem to go looking for and find thinkers. However ludicrous and ridiculous this all sounds, there is I believe a deep truth in it.

Two worlds
2014
handmade oil paint with
Queenstown pigment on linen
168 x 80cm



Thoughts calling out in the market place 2014
handmade oil paint with Queenstown pigment on paper
76.5 x 57cm

As an artist I am highly intuitive and I like to make space and time to 'play' in my work. So I can allow the ideas I am carrying to surface, to leak out, all and anything that I have been pondering. So that I can spill my thinking out as if onto blotting-paper, to be soaked up. The work of other artists, musicians, poets or composers also stimulates me to feel and think differently, it opens me up to new thoughts, new experiences, and I recognise similarities with my own journey.

The land as discourse

In 2014 I had a residency in Queenstown, Tasmania, and I found the environment and landscape of the area extraordinary. It is the kind of place that the (6th-century) Columba would have called a 'thin place', somewhere thought comes easily (as opposed to a 'thick place' where you cannot think). Where slippage between things is easy and possible, where there are glitches in our understandings. It is what I would call a metaphysical place.

This returns us to our discussion of the land as discourse. It is when I wander close to the very edge of the sea that I sense an almost physical relationship, like the sand upon a beach, or when climbing over the rocks facing the ocean that the land speaks to me most eloquently and most profoundly. This kind of landscape on the edge becomes for me a 'thin' place. It is where associations readily surface and I find I catch ideas easily. It is where I go to think, where I can begin to grasp an understanding of complex differences: masculine and feminine; chaos and order; consciousness and sub-consciousness; mothering and fathering; the personalities of colours; the different gravities of tones; to name but a few. Here, analogies, resemblances, associations, surface easily, helping me to define these great mysteries through the equivalents and likenesses that they seem to suggest.

Being physically present on an edge, poised between fields of opposition, draws me into the 'Third Area', that space between the abstract and the concrete where anything can happen because it is available to be filled. When specifics begin to attach to a place, it starts to yield and to become comprehensible. The untranslatable mysteries start to become visible. We may start to find a form for them: though the mysteries remain invisible, somehow through another medium they become graspable. In such a place, what (normally) confounds us and appears nonsensical, becomes reasonable, it starts to make sense. And this sense is suddenly knowable, its order finite, it solidifies in the twinkling of an eye to reveal itself like the architecture of a cloud. But perhaps because it is so 'other' to our conscious languages, it is only through association or by suggesting a likeness that translation can it be attempted. (Just as in the act of love, it is when you and your partner are joined in profound union that a wholeness, a sense of being centred in oneness, is given.)

Other types of places such as barren wildernesses, moors or deserts can also act as catalysts for profound insights because of the very absence of people and their inability to sustain continuous human life. The same is true of the highest mountains and isolated islands. These offer associations and metaphors by their very difference to our normal understanding of what constitutes daily life. But it is not only the absence of human life that provokes thought, but the difference of scale. In Norfolk, for instance, the flatness of the fenland makes the sky enormous, its weight noticeably pressing down onto the surface of the earth and creating a perspective of immense dome-like curvature where mankind is but a small reference point.

All these conversations with the landscape cause thoughts to take hold of us, such that metaphysical ideas attach to forms. The grandeur of the night sky and the heavens in all their bewildering glory of pattern and complexity of structure ask questions of becoming, of the peculiar order of things. Those moments when we peer into the hidden depths of the universe, pondering the invisible

world, this is the stuff that makes its way back into artists' creations. And what has been perceived, unintelligibly, beyond our reason and comprehension, yet powerfully read, surfaces in the potential space of a drawing.

We do not know why, as I propose, a colour can have an inherent form, a 'colour-form' that is beyond a simply subjective synaesthesia. Yet while we cannot as yet wholly enter this other language-world, we may still push at the door and sometimes perceive it fragmentally and grasp its possibilities. Savants (see Sacks) have been able to see the numbers, structures and dimensions of the universe, which though invisible to us are to them an open book. So perhaps this means an 'other' reading of the world lies dormant within us, that while we are now blind to it, we once had sight. Is it like synaesthesia (see Harrison), that we are all born with this facility but that most of us loose it or it diminishes as we grow older? Or, finally, like dyslexia, where neural pathways are unusually structured yet produce some of the most creative of individuals.

We must remain open to perceive differently. We must allow our education system to be broader, embrace different learning styles and methods of understanding the world in which we live, and how we make sense of the world through making.

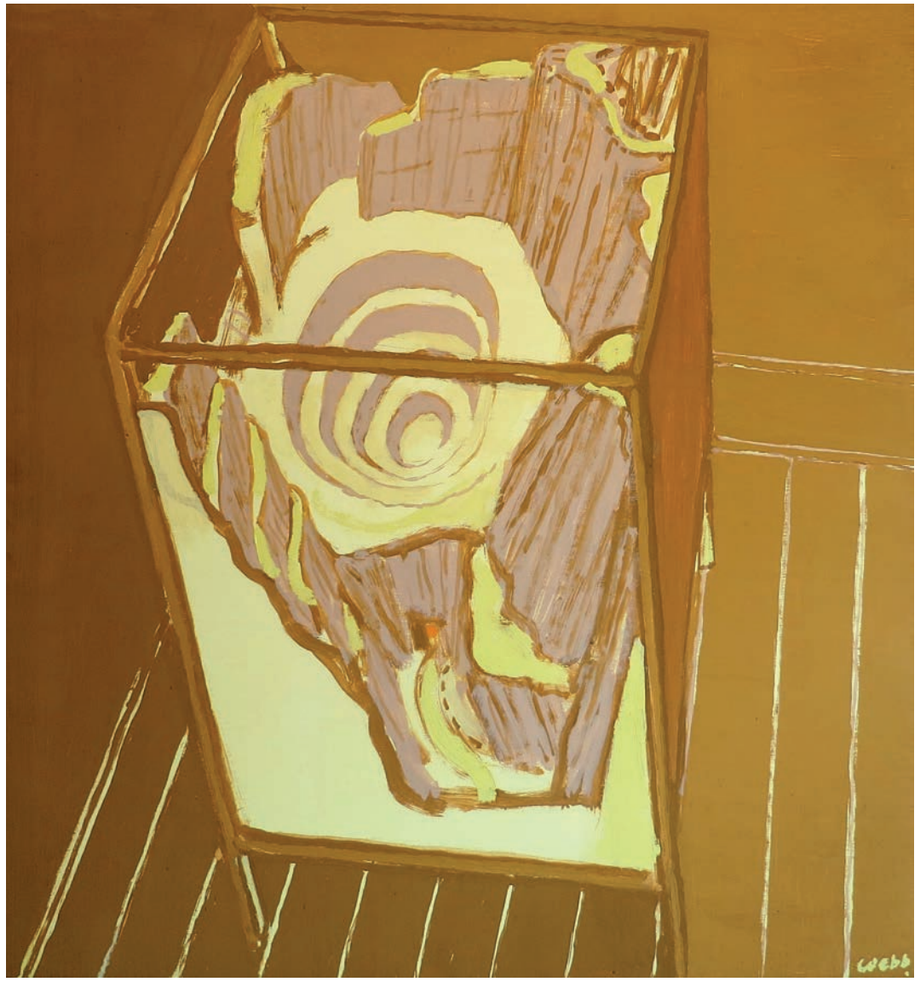
Triggers

Lastly, I want to discuss the idea that place can act as a trigger, a trigger of the unconscious. In my own practice, I always take sketchbooks with me when I travel, so as to be ready to catch whatever surfaces. In my series of 60 multi-pigmented linocuts called 'Thoughts in search of a thinker' each section was a response to being in a different part of Europe. The places were as diverse as Iceland, Brittany, Normandy, Regensburg, south-eastern Spain, the English Channel, as well as my home in the Cotswolds, England.

The idea I had been pondering was quite simple, but one which I found hugely difficult to comprehend. It is from a text that I have been dazzled by for most of my adult life and of which I have constantly tried to make sense. It is the first few chapters in the book of Ezekiel, where the prophet witnesses a theophany. The language is rich, dense and noisy, yet totally 'other'. To my knowledge no one has ever really succeeded in making sense of the passage in any pictorial form, except perhaps the French Composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-92) in his 1.36-minute organ piece *Les Yeaux dans les roués*, which is as near to how I imagined the description of the scene when I read it.

In 2010 when I was completing the Orange series of linocuts in the 'Colour Form' series, I thought that before I started Yellow I should think about the first complementary of Orange and Blue, which is a hot-cold contrast. When I was attempting to doodle what this might look like, I realised I was on old ground, the ground of Ezekiel's vision, which I had last attempted in a series of huge paintings for my last London show with Benjamin Rhodes in 1994. In these paintings extraordinary goings-on are witnessed in the sky, where things not normally visible are seen, where the very architecture of the 'other' is glimpsed.

However, as I visited these countries and different locations over the two years 2010-12, the drawings took on a very different feel. Long-forgotten but deep musings appeared. In Iceland, for instance, the sea as a subject surfaced. Two places I have known, the Solent and Chichester harbour (where my parents were keen sailors) and the coast of Northumbria and Lindisfarne (which I visited and where I had an exhibition a number of years ago), seemed to dominate my thinking. Suddenly I was able to make some sense of the mud flats and shallow waters populated by markers and strange sounds that always seem to me to equate with constellations and journeying. I was truly not prepared for their entrance into my work, it was quite a surprise, but yet a great relief to get the subject, its weight, out of my memories and into some kind of sense at last.



Freudian slip No. 3
2014
handmade oil paint on linen
62 x 66cms

Boundary
2014
handmade oil paint with
Queenstown pigment on linen
64 x 65cms

Between the series of 60 'Thoughts in search of a thinker' and going to Tasmania, I travelled to Belgium with my Drawing and Print degree students from UWE. Over the week in the evenings in my hotel I made a series of 15 drawings. (This became the series 'Still Life with Black Birds'.) By drawing number three, the work had taken on a distinct narrative quality with a murder mystery flavour. So on my return to England, I photocopied all 15 and sent them to an old friend, the crime writer Dr Joanne Reardon Lloyd. I wanted to see if I might tempt her to turn them into a story in response. This series of works, like its companion piece 'The Problem of Evil' (which is a conversation with Milton's great epic poem *Paradise Lost*), is concerned with the second two of the complementary colours, the light-dark contrast of Yellow and Violet. As with the first contrast of Orange and Blue in the 'Thoughts' series, the work had become much more figurative as I tried to make sense of the colours' dynamic.

Joanne did respond but mixed up the order I had given the drawings and created a new one. So goodies became baddies and the whole meaning was turned inside out. What was interesting was that because my drawings had no titles and the numbering had become confused, the original order was then lost and so the drawings were free to be reshuffled. The rather wonderful truth was that in fact the sequence of drawings could become many different stories, depending on the individual viewer.

What this then suggests regarding a series of drawings or paintings or prints is that multiple images can lend themselves to numerous narratives external to the creator who made them (depending, of course, on how much opportunity there is for ambiguity in the images and how enigmatic they are in interpretation). Where the viewer can never quite get to the bottom of what is happening or what the pieces are really all about, they can be read or finished in many different ways. It is about keeping images open so that even the makers themselves can be surprised by the seemingly hidden content revealed. The images are, however, never simply illustrations; they are illuminations using forms of language that lie beyond the written word, in that 'Third Area' where words falter and stumble. Yet while in one writer's hands the images can be translated into something fixed, at the same time in the hands of another they may become something entirely different. It is all about the art of the enigma, and the enigmatic quality of the reading.

Queenstown: LARQ residency, 2014

My two-month residency at LARQ* was to be centred around the exploration and investigation of the behaviour and qualities of the pigments of the colour yellow, a colour that is in particular abundance in the town and landscape of Queenstown in western Tasmania, Australia. The idea of this filled me with great excitement because I had no clue at all as to what might turn up in the work other than that it would be seen through the medium of the colour yellow.

The first drawings and paintings to surface had the appearance of a culmination or conclusion, or even a resolution, to the 60 prints 'Thoughts in search of a thinker'. But there is a crucial difference: these new works deal with the subject of thought rather than any reference to Ezekiel. Like this essay, they deal with the artist, me, finding or looking for thoughts; trying to understand or make plain how I make sense of the world.

So, at the beginning of March 2014, I found myself all on my own sitting in a huge empty studio in the old bank, Queenstown, wondering where to begin in such a new and foreign land. And then out poured all this stuff, 31 paintings and over 50 drawings (see Webb, 'The Artist's Vlog'). All the work I made in Tasmania is psychoanalytical in nature, about thought process and how we deal with thinking. It is like a statement of intent of who I am and how I function.

The next thing I began was 'The Submerged Town' series,

* Landscape Art Research Queenstown: <http://landscapeartresearchqueenstown.wordpress.com>

which stems from a picnic I was taken on during my first week of the residency. We canoed out to an island on a lake where I was told about an old mining town called Crotty that lay beneath the waters. This immediately reminded me of Ladybower Reservoir in Derbyshire which I had visited as a boy from school. The villages of Ashopton and Derwent had been submerged as a result of flooding caused by a dam built in the early 1940s, but at low water the church tower stood proud. I used to believe I had actually seen this, but have recently read that the church was demolished in 1959 – though in very dry summers some remnants of the village may perhaps still be viewed. This shocking and haunting piece of history was soon after compounded by hearing Claude Debussy's *La Cathédrale engloutie* (The Sunken Cathedral for solo piano), which has been a favourite ever since. So as I again encountered the idea of a lost world, a lifetime of conscious and unconscious thoughts on this powerful subject surfaced. How our hidden histories and that which cannot be seen still affects and infects the present; how it may lie dormant, like a sleeping giant; the analogies are plenty.

The work that followed was *Full moon over Queenstown* and *The landscape as discourse*. These two large paintings and subsequent smaller pieces came out of a failed trip to the north to visit the artist Bea Maddock, who had been my grandmother's lodger way back in the 1960s (the trip was cancelled because one of my hosts Raymond and Helena's four whippets, Jack, was injured). I returned to the studio, cleared space and because the trip was to have been a few days and I had therefore taken the current work to a certain stage and was willing to let it rest, I wasn't sure what to do or where to pick up painting.

I started to draw, to see what was important in my thoughts. What surfaced was a musing on the early morning walks I took daily with Raymond, Helena and the four whippets. During the walks the three of us would start long conversations on art, making and creativity. We would set out in the pitch dark of the early morning when the moon was still out, throwing light onto the oddly barren contours of the paths so that they appeared even more extraordinary than usual. The desolate hills in this area, with their extraordinary hues of yellow and orange ochre, were covered in the stumps of old trees lying just as they had been felled by miners in the late 19th century. What was truly incredible was that the stumps hadn't rotted as the wood was very oily. It was at these times that the strange, unique song of the place started to make sense, as I began to realise that it was the particular and different that was important in everything that I was looking at.

At around the same time I found, dug up and made into pigment an extraordinary purple earth from the very pathway of the walk. I decided to use this as the ground for the painting, so it really was a painting about Queenstown on the very earth of Queenstown.

This led on to a series about the narrative of walking and how it reminds me of other places and memories back in England. The device of a museum display stand came to signify and contain the specificity and particularity of the location of the walk. This idea had originated a number of years before with my 'Colour Form' sculptures and the attempt to make sense of the idea of the finite as opposed to the infiniteness of existence in drawings for Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Finally, Queenstown mine and the quarrying there warranted a fifth series. I had responded to this subject immediately on my arrival after seeing the Iron Blow mine and then descending into the world below of Queenstown. The terraces below the mine, dotted with ancient tree stumps, brought to mind Dante's depiction of the journey into the underworld in *Devine Comedy*, his great allegorical poem of the introspection of the self. It is not surprising that during my residency I found myself preoccupied with images of thoughts and thinking processes, psychoanalysis and journeying. The extraordinary rupturing of the earth at the mine made for a continuing stream of thought slips and associations.

My worldview as a visual poet is no more important than anyone else's, but it is certainly different and unique, because it is mine. What value these thoughts have for the world, their success or failure, is not determined by the fickleness of fashion or taste. It is determined by their existence, the fact that they are now visible, and that I am answerable to them and for them. My thoughts have found form as works of art, they are out in the world, speaking of something in particular, doing their business as thoughts looking for a thinker to see and think and respond to them.

All of which brings me to my pursuit as an artist, as one who tries to make sense of the world through making, through creating poetical equivalents that bring meaning and value to the wonderful truth of being (alive).

Richard Kenton Webb

THE COLOUR OF WIND

We see them nearly every day, us local inhabitants of the ends of *Terra Australis*... the deep lilacs, purples, oranges, greens and yellows... the classic sensurround colours of Queenstown Tasmania.

Having sponged off the land thereabouts for 25 years I thought I knew a little about the famous colours of Queenie... I'd seen the riveting dawns and I'd watched the crimson shadows draw down the blazing mountain tops over thousands of stunning evening sunsets... a natural techni-colour palette of phenomenal colour to nightly soak up.

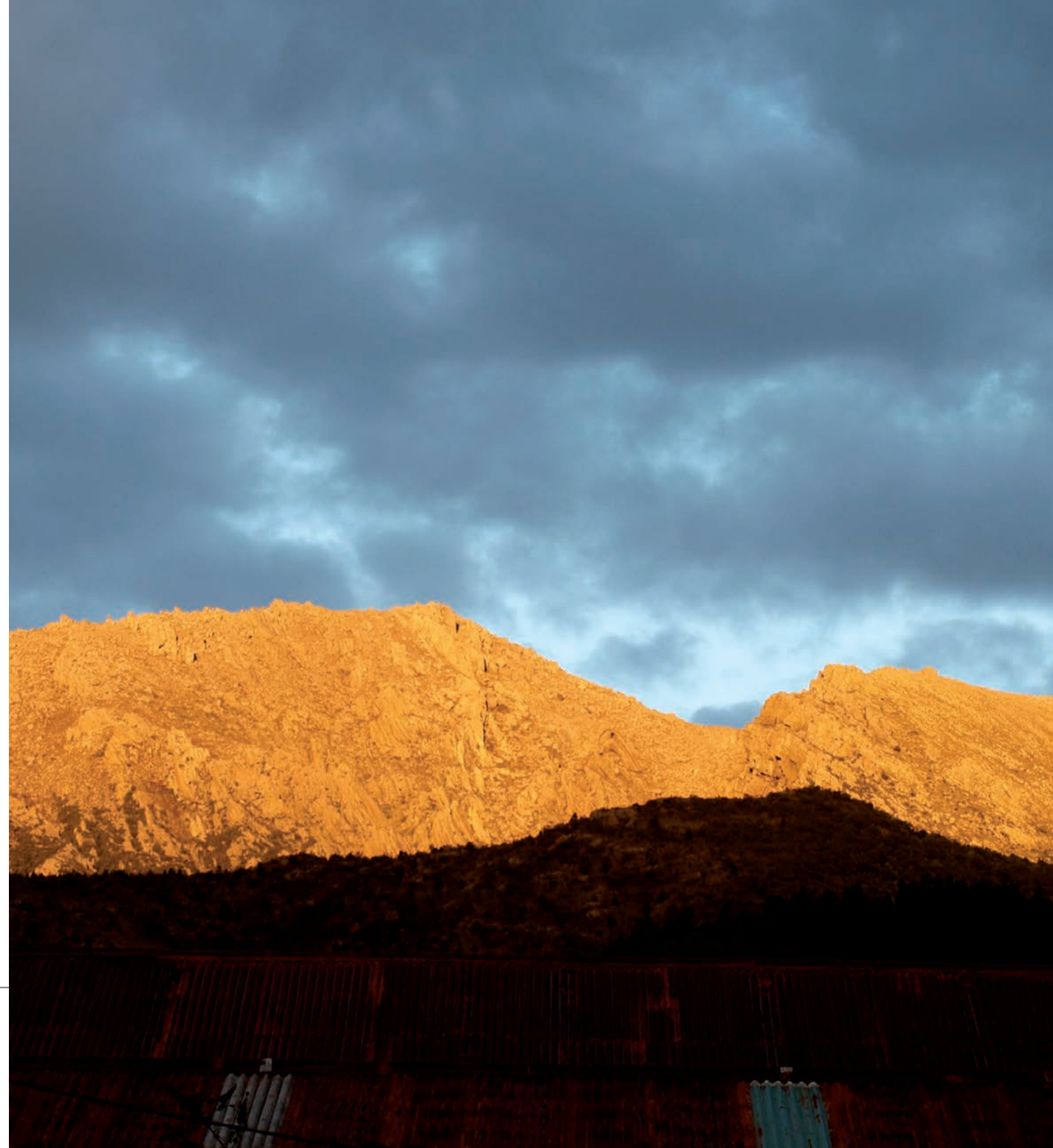
As the eyes would have it too much of a good thing is often much better than no good thing, but it was certainly the case that my eyes were getting a bit bleary with monumental familiarity all those inexplicable pastel pastiche physical phenomena, until it was that I had the good fortune to share a few resplendent hours, in the company of visiting LARQ international artist-in-residence, Mr Richard Kenton Webb, senior lecturer in Fine Arts, West Bristol University, England, in late autumn of 2014.

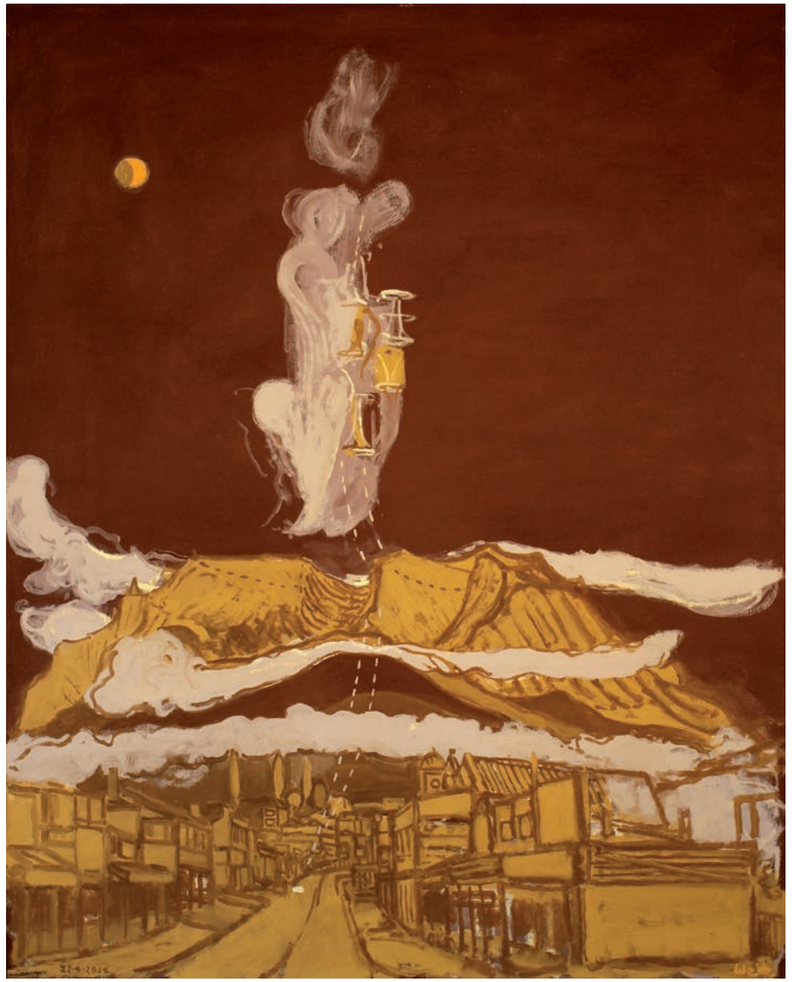
As the luck of an intrepid life would have it, RKW soon managed to knock the home grown seen it all glaucoma, right out of my unseeing eyes, and in doing so completely changed my own innocent bystanders understanding of the meaning of, and the importance of, colour in my daily life.

So for the want of a few prospective words, I'd like to explain how it came to be, that I now appreciate those naturally charged atmospheric stimuli that personify Queenstown, just as much as the very first time I ever set eyes on them.

It is not every bleak West Coast day that one gets to wallow in the mud with an artist whose works are exhibited in major galleries throughout the world and that hang on the walls of the homes of some of the biggest modern art collectors on the planet.

The colours of Queenstown and the pigment source for Richard Kenton Webb's paintings





Thoughts having found a thinker
No. 3 2014
handmade oil paint with
Queenstown pigment on linen
152 x 122cms

As might be expected, it was only through the lush West Coast art vine that it had come to my local attention, that the latest intoxicating ingredient to be culturally bonded and forever glued to the Western Tasmanian LARQ industrial, geologic and social art phenomenon, just happened to be in town for a while.

Looking back over that busy art sojourn, and on earnest recollection of his 23 contributed VLOG tutorials, an inspirational rush of relentless passion he proved to be, as well as a characteristic giant of a humble man on a magnificent worldly mission.

That is to say, by labour of love, and critical time and effort, to effectively translate, paint, sculpt and define the wind, by harnessing the sublime energy and exhilarating power of everyday colour and potent imagination.

Colour by breezy continent you might say, one potent palette at a time.

Or in down to earth essence, a gun surrealist's dramatisation of wind via a hurricane of colours.

Whew.

So it came to be, straight off the high street that I arranged with RKW to give him a brief insight into the landlubber heritage attractions of the West Coast of Tasmania that he may not have already considered in his flat out residency so far... it made my day when he replied sure, great.

Initially I only wanted to give the new chum a formal campfire insight into some of the other less well known exotic eco-stimuli that West Coasters are compelled to deal with on a daily basis, like boobooks, pademelons, pygmy possums, Joe Wickys, black cockies, marauding devils, fat badgers and five kilo inland yabbies... and hopefully put a flourish in his pallid pommy ears.

So it came about that I picked RKW up at 9am, one Tyndall blue Queenstown morning, outside the LARQ Bank in Orr Street and proceeded to haul him north... to Mt Dundas.

Ever on a tight artistic schedule it was necessary to compress and extract a lifetime of panache out of a few miserable turns of a Barminco watch... I kicked him out of the bush basher less than five hours later in the same Tyndall blue, Orr Street sky.

Great artists come and great artists go and never mind that we were fresh out of boobooks that day... they'll be back.

Even so, RKW certainly managed to put a flourish of rosy colour in my pallid West Coast ears all the same.

He did in fact administer a five hour intravenous flush of refreshing pure oxygen for the soul that quite clearly put one of those warm West Coast autumn zephyrs right up me, I don't mind saying, at least as far as knowing colour and its everyday mortal significance to the daily fabric of local humanity.

I'm no artist and don't have a sharp artistic bone in my body but as we drove down Penghana Hill heading south back to nirvana, I said to RKW, 'I promise I'll never drive into Queenie again without second guessing what I'm seeing and living, and then remembering what I've known all along since I first legged it here... the colours of Queenstown... one of the great heritage wonders of the world and as verdant and vivid a rocky place as ever was razed to the ground.'

Or searching words to that modest effect, and to be frank, what better cultured place on earth than wild and windy Queenie to create a fully mentally interactive, 38 piece yellow phase, of the masterly wind manifesto that RKW has so far visualised and created, since first conceiving the open-eyed challenge many years ago.

As far as new chum art exhibitions go, I urge you, walk that country mile to canvas a stunning, if not apt measure of the wandering genius at heart and to see with your own skew-wiff mountain eyes, why it is that all Tasmanians are in LARQ's mighty debt.

Thank you Skip and thank you Helena.

Rory Wray McCann

A Beautiful Process: The Bion Factor

Jill Davis

References

An excellent introduction to the work of Wilfred Bion and its historical context is Neville and Joan Symington's 'The Clinical Thinking of Wilfred Bion' in the *Makers of Modern Psychotherapy* series published by Routledge in London and New York in 1996 and available as an e-book.

Both Christopher Allen in *French Painting in the Golden Age (World of Art)*, part of a series by Thames and Hudson, published in London in 2003 (with superb reproductions) and Kenneth Clark in *Landscape into Art* published by Pelican Books in 1956, present brief and erudite summaries of the work of Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) which I have drawn on extensively here. Clark's comments come from his chapter on 'Ideal Landscape', page 79. Allen's analysis of the philosophic and Miltonic framework of Poussin is quoted from the above pp 69-71.

The landscape with the ashes of Phocion was painted in 1648 and is in The Walker Art Gallery Liverpool.

The experiences of the painters of the Western Desert are recorded by Nicholas Rothwell in *Another Country*, published by Black Ink in Australia in 2007, and available as an e-book.

Donald Kuspit is a prolific writer, poet, trained psychoanalyst, critic, academic and provocateur. The work most relevant to this essay is *The Rebirth of Painting in the Late Twentieth Century* published by University of Cambridge Press, USA in 2000. I am indebted to his critiques of post-modernist art.

Details of the artist's background and approach are drawn from conversations, webcasts, private correspondence and his 2014 essay 'Drawing as a Way of Thinking'.

Drawing as a Way of Thinking

Richard Kenton Webb

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Richard Kenton Webb

Born in Kent in 1959, Richard is the son of a long line of dentists and a mother who taught domestic science. From both parents he gained a fascination with sailing, the sea, and the elements.
Richard studied at the three great art colleges of London: Chelsea (1977-78), The Slade (1978-82) and Royal College of Art (1983-86). Residencies and scholarships have taken him to the British School in Rome, Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, St. Stephens College in Oxford, SACI in Firenze and most recently to LARQ in Tasmania.

He has exhibited in Iceland, Italy, Germany, China, Japan and Australia, and closer to home in galleries in London and the UK.

Richard is now based in the Cotswold Hills near Cirencester where he lives with his wife Tessa and their sons Theo and Ezra. He is Programme Leader of BA (Hons) Drawing & Print Degree at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

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