

STAGING THE SENSATION

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Introduction

The main concerns of this work lie in examining the role of architecture in staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny. This document describes my research and practice since the Proposal was written in 2008 (Steiner, 2008).

Central to this enquiry is the notion of the uncanny house - that of my childhood in post-war suburban London. Buildings and lives had been lost and damaged. I attempt in my research to acquaint myself with, and understand, the background to my early years. My memories as the child in the house, together with my later experience of being within built spaces, form the basis of the investigation.

I write about the artists who have influenced my work during the doctoral programme. The study of these artists has enabled a progression from formal considerations towards a greater psychological and emotional content. In the paintings of Antoni Tàpies and Giorgio Morandi I looked at colour and form; three-dimensional spatial considerations in the work of Nathan Coley and Richard Serra; the architecture of fear of Edward Hopper and Egon Schiele; the lonely architectural settings of George Shaw and Vilhelm Hammershøi; and the psychological content of the work of Käthe Kollwitz and Hughie O'Donoghue.

Three main areas of theory have been researched. The first is the uncanny house as described in the work of Anthony Vidler. Particularly relevant to my work are his references to the uncanny house having the possibility to be both homely and cosy, and concealed and kept from sight. The dark dwellings of my memory are also recalled by his descriptions of houses in 19thc. Gothic literature.

The second area of research is photography. Part of my practice was based on a set of press photographs taken during the second world war. Theories of the photograph's relationship to time and history give an insight into the way I have used them.

The third area of research concerns the experience of being within a built space. This resumes an enquiry begun during BA studies, about the consciousness of being within built spaces. It concludes with a reference to the writing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his theories of the body being sensitive to its surroundings.

My creative practice of the five years of the doctoral programme is described. Modelmaking was used during the early part of the programme. Models were used to investigate the terraced houses of the suburbs and reflect on the lives of their occupants. I write of the uncertainty experienced when I was no longer able to make models, and how this led to the use of a set of press photographs from the second world war. I describe the significance of these photographs to my creative practice and how new photographs were made from the originals, giving them a different interpretation.

Finally, the advances of the latest phase of my practice are reviewed. I acknowledge the value of drawing as an effective medium with which to express myself. I describe my reticence in confronting the people in the war photographs, how I was finally able to engage more closely with their emotions, and by doing so, how my perception was modified of how architecture could stage the sensation of the psychological uncanny.

Autobiographical context

Childhood

I was born towards the end of the second world war and spent my childhood in the East London suburbs. These outer suburbs were not so heavily bombed as the centre of London and from my small world among the terraced houses, I had no perception or understanding of world events or the trauma suffered by the family and community. My memories of my early years are few and they are of dark internal spaces. I remember a kitchen, some stairs and a stair cupboard, the dark relieved only by small domestic details. It was only in subsequent years that I was aware of indirect references made to people and property that were lost or damaged. My father's responsibilities took him to construction sites throughout East London. As a child I could sometimes accompany him and my love of buildings began with these visits.

Architecture and engineering

I began my art education in 1996 as a mature student after a career in building services engineering. My interest in architecture and engineering derived from two sources. I was influenced, as a young child, by my father's connection with the construction industry, and my education at a technical school enabled me to seek a career in what had been a male dominated industry and which satisfied my desire, as a young woman in the 1960s, for equality of opportunity. I worked for consultancy practices of architects and engineers, and began day-release study, in 1979, of building services engineering. On completion of the CIBSE¹ Associate examinations, I transferred, in 1986, to the Bank of England's Printing Works where my specialism was air-conditioning and ventilation systems.

As a services engineer, one has to become familiar with all those parts of buildings not usually seen: rooftops, ducts and underground passageways. One has to engage with, and understand, dark internal spaces and the threads and continuity of their services. There is also a heightened awareness of one's own presence in large energy transfer installations: the inherent danger of water and gas systems at high pressures and temperatures.

¹ Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers

My empathy with, and affection for, the built environment endures, and has continued to inform my practice and theory.

Fine art

I studied fine art at the University of East London between 1998 and 2003, at BA and MA level. From 2003 I concentrated on exhibiting my work until beginning preparation for the doctoral programme in 2007.

I was able to choose, from the BA curriculum, a residency and a thesis which both had buildings as their focus. I could relate to them with the same familiarity as I had as an engineer, but on the basis of a different enquiry.

The three months residency, at Waltham Abbey church in Essex, was a splendid opportunity to study this one building – the crypt, the tower, the roof-space: timbers and organ pipes. It also provided an invaluable introduction to the history and customs of Christianity which gave me the confidence to select further investigation into church architecture for a thesis subject. For this, I chose three Wren churches in London. The purpose of the research was to identify the visual characteristics of these buildings which produced in me feelings of awe. These, I found, were verticality and contrast – the dominant verticality of the structure, and the contrast of light and dark – between the bright sunshine outside and a dark interior, or the darkness of a winter afternoon and a candlelit interior. I expanded my self-determined brief: it was impossible not to notice that contrasts affecting the other senses, smell and hearing, affected me very much. Developing concurrently was my awareness of being within built spaces: the consciousness of oneself in a greater world.

I was able to combine the disciplines of engineering and fine art by choosing projects which enabled me to base my artistic practice on research of the built environment.

My practice originated in the rigidity of engineering drawing. There was inevitably a conflict between representation and abstraction and this was addressed during my MA studies. My intention was to develop my painting

practice using my recent studies of buildings as source material. It followed two distinct lines of inquiry: one was directly influenced by my engineering background, the other an attempt to break away from that constraint. I sought to develop an artistic language from a position in which my engineering roots tied me to the literal image and influenced my use of perspective. I questioned the validity of abstraction, the use of depth in the visual field, and my preference for restrained use of colour. But, most importantly, my paintings did not express the empathy I had for the built environment. These issues were not resolved at the time of my final MA exhibition, and my determination to continue to use paint finally led me to put aside the literal image. I engaged for the first time with the painted surface of a canvas, preferencing the use of material and colour over the image. The making of these paintings was a response to the uncertainty I was experiencing and revealed an unexpected pleasure in working intuitively with paint.

Between 2003 and 2007, I made and exhibited paintings of buildings which eschewed the spontaneous use of paint in favour of a descriptive use of the literal image.

I thought that I had achieved much in my fine art practice, but as I had not identified the exact nature of my feelings about buildings, I could not find an artistic language with which to describe them.

Artists

My central concern, during the doctoral programme, has been to develop an artistic language in which architecture may be shown to stage the sensation of the psychological uncanny. In this section I introduce the artists whose work I have studied and who have in some way helped me to progress my own. The sequence is one that mirrors my developing practice: from the formal considerations of colour and form towards a deeper psychological content.

Artists whose work has been relevant to me are Antoni Tàpies and Giorgio Morandi; Nathan Coley and Richard Serra; Peter Doig, Egon Schiele and Edward Hopper; George Shaw, Vilhelm Hammershøi and finally, Käthe Kollwitz and Hughie O'Donoghue.

The work of Antoni Tàpies² continues to have a profound emotional effect on me. The use of the cross within his work, with all its connotations, is contrasted with the use of the 'humble material' – sand or earth. Represented are the walls within which he and his compatriots lived during the civil war in Spain. Kuspit writes (1996, p.241) that 'Tàpies's wall is Catalan...suffering engrained; wounds that cannot heal; emotional conflict that cannot be resolved'. Or perhaps the sand and earth echo in my memory because they are the materials of the building site on which I spent happy childhood hours with my father.



1
Antoni Tàpies
Collage sobre materià (2001)
Mixed media, paint and collage on wood



2
Giorgio Morandi
Still Life (1956)
Oil on canvas

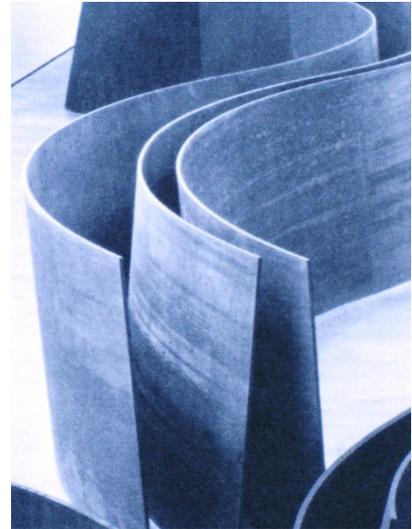
² Appendix 2, note 1.

The placement of bottles in the paintings of Giorgio Morandi creates an interplay of the physical relationships of masses and spaces that might be found in buildings, or the psychological relationships of people. The description of the solids is by subtle use of colour and tone – they are crowding or caressing or isolated. I find the paintings have, as de Salvo and Gale have written (2001, p.11), an 'intensity which belies their simplicity'.

I include here two artists who produce three dimensional work: Richard Serra and Nathan Coley. For different reasons, both were important to me in the early years of the programme.



3
Nathan Coley
The Lamp of Sacrifice (2004)
Cardboard



4
Richard Serra
Snake (1994-7) Steel

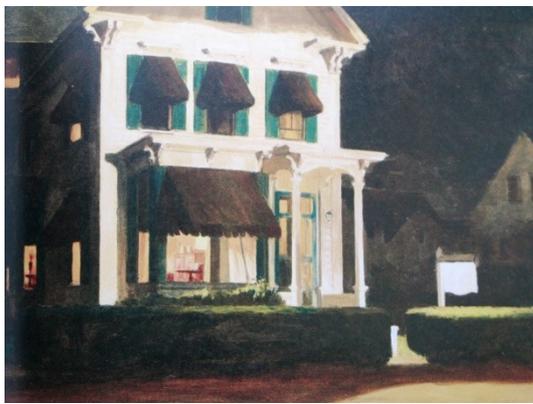
Working with papers is a simple and direct means of expression but one to which I had not previously given credibility. Seeing Nathan Coley's models³, of all the religious buildings in Edinburgh, supported my emerging interest in working in card at a small scale. They covered the gallery floor with no pretence to be other than scored and folded cardboard and I found the

³ Appendix 2, note 2.

characteristics of the material as forceful a presence as the buildings they represented.

The other three dimensional work is that of Richard Serra. His '*Snake*'⁴ is extremely powerful in its disorientation effect. Its three walk-through steel plates form the most psychologically controlling space I have experienced, generating a strong sense of self-awareness and unease.

For examples of the psychological uncanny in architecture, I look to Edward Hopper, Egon Schiele and Peter Doig.



5
Edward Hopper
Rooms for Tourists (1945)
Oil on canvas



6
Egon Schiele
Dead Town VI (1912)
Oil on canvas

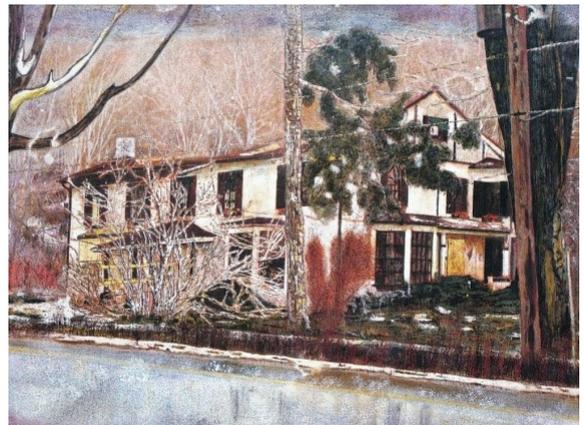
Of these, Hopper's work conveys to me most strongly the emotions of fear and loneliness in an architectural setting. Dorment writes (2004) that he creates 'the atmosphere of a place and not its pictorial representation'. Renner (2006) writes about the transformation of the outer view to an inner psychological scrutiny and about his use of light, colour and barrier devices to defamiliarise the building and its setting. His painting style is spare, almost devoid of texture; strong sunlight and dark shadows describe masses and spaces some of which Levine (1988, p.10) shows by comparative photographs to be manipulated to 'suit expressive needs'. An example from Renner (2006, p.42) is *Rooms for Tourists* which shows 'an ambivalent, Freudian world in which the things that comfort us and the things we find unsettling are implicitly shown to have the

⁴ Appendix 2, note 3.

same origins. The house defies the night, offering comfort and in every sense accommodation'. But, there is nobody to be seen in the house, its emptiness is mocking, and the impression of comfort and security is soon dispelled. The house is exposed in the harsh glare of light which, I believe, conveys anger and contempt at the deception and the impossibility of finding such things.

I find the paintings by Egon Schiele particularly powerful, and the text by Steiner (1993, p.86) expands my understanding: 'I went to towns that seemed endless and dead, and felt sorry for myself'. Schiele's black and dead towns; are not to do with 'observation and aestheticization of historical decline'...'but reflect his own condition'. 'The dead or black town is for Schiele the phenomenological epitome of a condition in the human spirit...no topographical precision is called for not even...people'. 'The walls, windows and roofs of the houses have physiognomies all their own, facial eloquence that expresses the lives of those who live there'. He dispenses with verifiable topography and concentrates on 'facial expressions' of the houses. The anthropomorphic characteristics of the buildings are the ones I engage with. There is much here that corresponds to my memory and experience and it is interesting to note that there are no people in the paintings. The 'dead town' paintings are supporting my enquiry into architecture 'staging the sensation' of the psychological uncanny.

The *Pine House (Rooms for Rent)* by Peter Doig similarly offers no comfort or security for its occupants. Interviewed by Scott (2007, p.10) he explains his methodology: that his paintings are made with the help of photos and newspaper cuttings, some spoiled with paint or dirt and thus 'He tried to avoid becoming involved in nostalgia...a lot of the images I used for these paintings were things that reminded me of my experience rather



7
Peter Doig
Pine House (Rooms for rent) (1994)
Oil on canvas

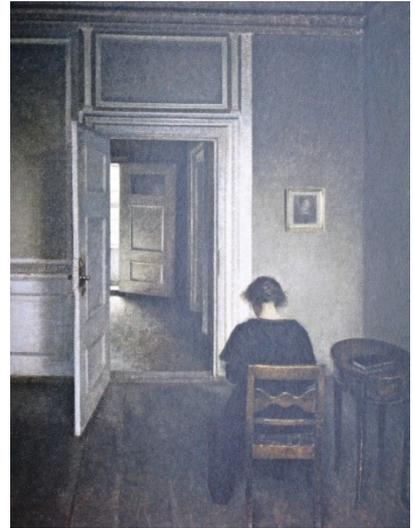
than things that were directly from my experience', and, particularly relevant for my practice, he was interested in what buildings represent... 'often they seem to be anthropomorphized'.

A look of desolation in the painting is created by the shell of the house and bare branches. It contains no figures but geraniums bloom in the window boxes and indicate an unseen human presence. Directly relevant are the observations by Catherine Grenier and Patricia Ellis. Grenier (2007, p.135) sees in Doig's paintings a sense of sadness, fearfulness and uncertainty, and perhaps 'family histories and things best kept hidden. A painting may be filled with things but still record an emptiness'. Ellis (2007) asks 'Is it possible to construct the ideal habitat, or is 'outside' more comforting and familiar? The safety of the refuge is called into question across Doig's oeuvre'. The means of achieving this are different in the two paintings: Hopper's painting directs the gaze to focus firmly within the pictorial space of the canvas with an intensity which increases the viewer's involvement and unease. Doig's painting 'implies a world that continues beyond its boundaries' and involves the viewer in speculation of the unseen sinister event waiting to happen. Searle (2007, p.59) writes that 'Doig's paintings present a narrative that is ongoing'. He comments on their transitory nature and the passing of time. We are encouraged to ask 'what happens next?'

The paintings of George Shaw and Wilhelm Hammershøi I include because of their distinctive representation of buildings. As Bracewell (2011, p.9) writes, about the work of George Shaw, but which is equally valid about the room settings of Hammershøi: 'time and place conflate into a single suspended moment'. In both, the viewer is kept at a distance and the impression is of emptiness and loneliness.



8
George Shaw
Ash Wednesday: 7.00am (2004-5)
Humbrol enamel on board



9
Vilhelm Hammershøi
Interior, Strandgade 30 (1908)
Oil on canvas

I consider that Shaw's use of colour and painting technique, the spatial relationship of each building to its neighbour and the arrangement within the picture boundary, all emphasise the recognisable, resolute confidence of the public face of the suburb and the possibility for turmoil behind the façade.

The paintings of the Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi⁵ continue to provide inspiration. A gentle melancholy and sense of loss is achieved with a subtle intensity; and his affection and sensitivity for the spaces and architectural elements which contain them are evident. I have viewed his work in Copenhagen. Due to a provincial gallery refurbishment, additional paintings were collected there and available to view. I find his use of colour particularly beautiful – in *Interior, Strandgade 30*, small, loose, dry brushstrokes are layered light and dark – building up an extraordinary delicate richness with very few hard edges defining the planes.

⁵ Appendix 2, note 4.

Examples of the work of Käthe Kollwitz⁶ and Hughie O'Donoghue are included. As the images of buildings became less defined in my practice, and the awareness of their occupants became greater, the power of the representation of people and their emotions by these two artists had great impact on me.

Käthe Kollwitz's concerns were the poverty and death of peasants in late 19thc. Germany. She then lost a son in Flanders in 1914. Her media were predominantly drawing and print and she worked in cycles: *The Weavers*; *The Peasants' War*; *Death*. Each cycle contains causes, reactions, violence, defeat and death. Zigrosser writes (1969, p.xiii) 'The protagonist'...is a woman...but 'it was not so much as woman but as mother that she looked at life...an authentic voice of womankind'. She was (1969, p.ix) a 'dramatic artist who dealt in human emotions and who evoked them with great subtlety through gesture and facial expression'.



10
Käthe Kollwitz
After the Battle (1907) Etching



11
Käthe Kollwitz
The Survivors (1923) Lithograph

The portrayal of the bond between mother and child is emotionally very strong, enhanced by the monotone print techniques. *After the Battle* shows a mother looking for a child: its softly rendered dark greys enhancing the point of contact between the hand of the mother and the face of the child. The method of working in cycles I found to be very effective, in telling the story and

⁶ Appendix 2, note 5.

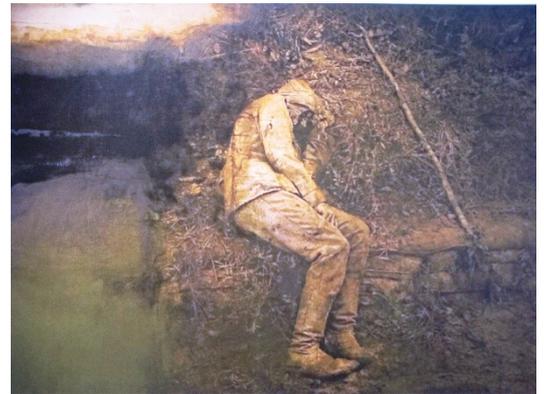
emphasising it. So many of Kollwitz's images echo my own emotion. They are of people trying to escape incarceration and there is an intensity to their containment which seems to offer no relief or escape. Their anguish is plain.

Hughie O'Donoghue is the final artist to be included . His concerns and interests are of the same period as mine, but, where my primary interest was for buildings, he has preferred the people who were engaged in wartime activities.

Hyman (2008) observes his use of photographs and archives, a methodology that parallels my own. He combines found and family photographs in order to construct a narrative that brings together different times, places and lives. He is able, writes Hyman (2008, p.10), to 'personalise history and focus on the minutiae of individual lives'.



12
Hughie O'Donoghue
Flanders and the Narrow Seas (2005-6)
Oil on linen canvas incorporating
transparent photographic component

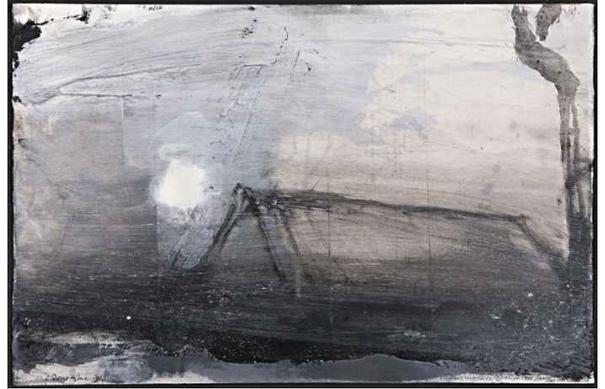


13
Hughie O'Donoghue
Prodigal Son (2004)
Oil on linen canvas incorporating
transparent photographic component

The use of photographs in the work gives it a melancholy nostalgia. However, each painting is overlaid with contemporary brush marks which, I find, lifts them from sentimentality and brings them forcefully into the present, while at the same time referring to the past.

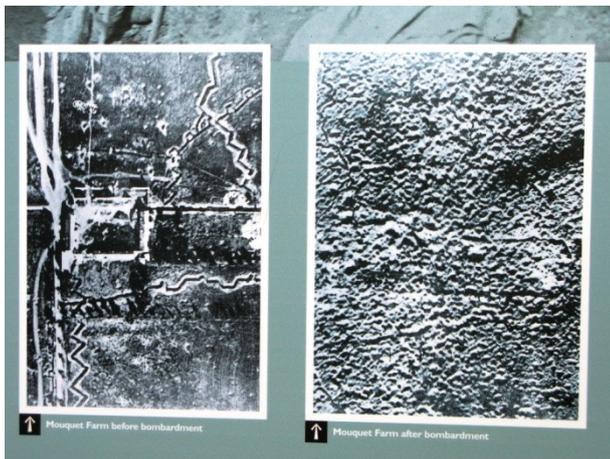


14
M Steiner
Moo Cow Farm in 2011 (2011)
Photograph



15
Hughie O'Donoghue
The Changing Face of Moo Cow Farm 1-9
No. 7 (2007)
Mixed media on paper

The Changing Face of Moo Cow Farm is a series of painted drawings by Hughie O'Donoghue. I was delighted to come across aerial photographs of the original 'Moo Cow' farm, and directions to its location, at the Thiepval⁷ Memorial on the Somme, France. Mouquet (known as 'Moo Cow') Farm, was above the site of a German underground stronghold and was destroyed in 1916.



16
M Steiner
Photograph (2011) taken in the Thiepval museum showing Moo Cow Farm before and after destruction. These images also available from the Imperial War Museum website.

⁷ Appendix 2, note 6.

The *Moo Cow Farm* series is an 'imaginative reconstruction' (James Hyman Gallery) by O'Donoghue, worked on old paper military diagrams, the lines of which still show through the paint, and which provide another, poignant, link to the past. The current building is the one which I photographed (image 14, above). It was rebuilt close to its original position.

O'Donoghue's paintings, writes Hyman (2008, p.11), with their 'insistence on every mark and brushstroke, are not just about excavating the past but also about the artist's own engagement with it' and (2008, p.22) 'discovering lost histories'.

This has been my experience during the final two years of the doctoral programme. My drawing practice has been the means of investigating, and linking, the history of my early years and subsequent experience.

Theory

The main concerns of this work lie in examining the role of architecture in staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny, particularly with regard to the house and family of the post-war suburbs of my childhood.

This section is a summary of the theories investigated during the doctoral programme and is divided into three parts: the uncanny house, the photograph and the experience of being within built spaces.

The uncanny house

The theories of Anthony Vidler underpin my work and it is from his text on contemporary buildings and the uncanny (1992, p.27) that I have taken the title of this work. Central to this enquiry is the notion of the uncanny in the house as described by Vidler (1992). *Heimlich* and *unheimlich* are translated from the German into homely and unhomely. In Daniel Sanders' German Dictionary, of 1860, *heimlich* is translated as 'belonging to the house or family; familiar, with agreeable restfulness and security'. But *heimlich* has a second meaning which is 'concealed and kept from sight'. 'Its meaning', writes Vidler (1992, p.25) 'develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*'. The progression from *heimlich* to *unheimlich* – comfortable, cosy, through to secret, obscure, concealed and finally terrifying has influenced my investigation. Also, to define the principle, Sanders uses Friedrich Schelling's idea that '*unheimlich* is the name for everything that ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to light' (1992, p.26, ellipsis in original). Ernst Jentsch, in 1906, attributed the feeling of uncanniness to a fundamental insecurity brought about by a 'lack of orientation, a sense of something new, foreign and hostile invading an old, familiar, customary world. The better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny' (1992, p.23). This, according to Sigmund Freud, is a first relation of the uncanny to the spatial and environmental, that of 'orientation' or 'knowing one's way about'.

Freud used the German meaning of the words *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, together with Schelling's theory of the uncanny, to progress Jentsch's theory of 'simple intellectual uncertainty' and propose that this is 'only understandable by the theory of repression' which might give rise to behavioural problems and phobias.

Dark dwellings fill my memory. The house, writes Vidler (1992, p.17), is a 'favoured site for uncanny disturbances' in 19thc Gothic literature – where its 'apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia' is subject to a sense of 'lurking unease rather than a clearly defined source of fear'.

The uncanny house might be abandoned: desolate, with blank windows and walls; rooms gloomy, silent and confined. Poe's description (Galloway, 2003) of the inside of the house in 'The Fall of the House of Usher', and particularly the small picture of a dark corridor with mysterious light revealing 'its exceeding depth below the surface of the earth', mirrors exactly my experience, as an engineer, of being in the dark, damp, spaces of underground tunnels and ducts. In them I felt oppression and seclusion, but not fear, and I was never subjected to such traumas as the occupants of the House of Usher.

Melville's story 'I and my Chimney' ([Gutenberg](#), 2008) describes the dominating character of the chimney which is placed centrally within the narrator's house, and his anthropomorphic relationship with it. The chimney is master but is threatened with destruction. The narrator fears 'losing the one permanence of his dwelling, fears confrontation with his wife and fears loss of manhood'. It is a symbolic architecture, its 'inner recesses hiding unknown mysteries and its external walls impermeable and silent'. These stories use the house as a setting for psychological disturbances and illustrate the role of architecture in staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny.

In his article *Take One* (Architecture, 1999) Vidler writes of architecture and film and the potential to set up a relationship between mental and physical sensation in space. 'Like film, architecture has the potential to create, stage, or frame events so they take on added meaning. The apparently mundane

experiences of everyday life would, through the lens of architecture, gain significance and appear in stronger relief'.

The suburbs are described by John Burnside and Gaston Bachelard. Burnside's poem *Suburbs* (2006, p.2) exactly expresses my feelings as I walked the familiar streets in the early days of the doctoral programme: the 'suburb always has an abstracted quality like a sentence learned by heart and repeated till the words are finally magical; and 'the suburb has its own patterns; arrangements of bottles on steps...'. They are the suburbs as I see them now but not the places in my memory and my creative practice has taken me to darker places. From Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958, pp.47, 57, 17) I reproduce here fragments of text which describe the remembered house: 'the remembered house transcends geometric space; it is scattered inside me and conserved in fragmentary form; it contains centres of boredom and solitude; it appeals to our consciousness of verticality and centrality'. Transcending geometric space, and in fragmentary form, my childhood home is condensed into a few impenetrably dense memories. I retain them more as a feeling than a visual memory. The only details I remember are of a kitchen floor with a low-level tap from a wash boiler, and the dark boarding on the inside of a stair cupboard.

My memories of the dwellings of my childhood can be described as claustrophobic, dark places and spaces. These dark spaces, if they had not been blown apart during the war, were the epitome of what Walter Benjamin described in Hanssen (2006) about 19thc. dwelling, but which remained true in the middle of the 20thc. as bearing 'the impression of its occupant...the 19thc. was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case...' (2006, p.256), and having 'an aversion to open air...to live in these interiors was to have woven a dense fabric about oneself, to have secluded oneself within a spider's web in whose toil world events hang loosely suspended like so many insect bodies sucked dry' (2006, p.161). This vividly describes the rooms, not of the house in which I lived with my parents, but of the elderly relatives we visited,

and brings back memories of stuffed birds in glass domes, clocks and chenille tablecovers; narrow stair carpets on dark stairs leading to darker rooms upstairs, the geography of which I was ignorant.

This poetic nostalgia is moderated by Lefebvre (1991, p.120-12, italics in original), who writes about the house: it 'has a merely historico-poetic reality rooted in folklore...or in ethnology . This *memory*, however, has an obsessive quality: it persists in art, poetry, drama and philosophy. What is more, it runs through the terrible urban reality which the twentieth century has instituted, embellishing it with a nostalgic aura...the dwelling passes everywhere for a special, still sacred, quasi religious and in fact almost absolute space.'

These insights into the suburbs overlay my memories and the sentiments they express have helped to define my own.

The photograph

My enquiry has been into the post war years of my childhood in the suburbs. Memories are few, so photographs have been central to the understanding of family life. I have a few photographs of my close family: some seaside visits, the adults clothed as if for the city; some studio photographs of me as a baby – an interesting use of scarce resources; photographs of my father and aunt in service uniforms. These people are, to me, remote: I see them but don't enter their lives. They smile back at me from a different world.

My use of found photographs has been extensive. It was not until I uncovered a batch of second world war press photographs, with all the horrors of death and destruction, emaciation and disfigurement, that I thought I could make the link between myself and my post-war family. I could share their suffering, even if only in this very small way, and I had some idea of the turmoil of the world around them and the changes they had to contend with. The original press photographs have no named photographers but some have location details and dates. I have used them extensively since I was obliged to stop making

models⁸. I quote here ideas from Roland Barthes and Edward Cadava on the relationship of photography with history and time.

From Barthes' *Camera Lucida*: (1980, p.4) 'What the Photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once'; and: (1980, p.76, italics in original) 'In Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past'. The following extract from Barthes (1980, p.79) introduces a concept which also has relevance to my practice, the Real and the Live: 'For the photograph's mobility is somehow the result of a perverse confusion between two concepts: the Real and the Live; by attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to Reality an absolute, somehow eternal value; but by shifting this reality to the past...the photograph suggests that it is already dead.' This layering of time has been a significant factor in my experience of using the old photographs.

In *Words of Light* by Cadava, (1997, p.92) I have found theories which deepen my understanding of the connection between photography, history and death: 'Both matter and memory, object and representation, the image condenses enormous periods of an infinitely dilute existence into a few more differentiated moments of an intense life and in doing so abbreviates a very long history'. He quotes Kracauer: (1997, p.xxviii) 'What makes photography photography is not its capacity to present what it photographs, but its character as a force of interruption'. 'That the photograph is always touched by death means that it offers us a glimpse of history to which we no longer belong', and quoting Walter Benjamin: (1997, p.11) 'What we know that we will soon no longer have before us...this is what becomes an image...the image bears witness to an experience that cannot come to light...the having been there now forms part of the referential structure of our relationship to the photograph...takes the form of a haunting'. The 'glimpse of history to which we no longer belong' and the 'experience that cannot come to light': this is what I am exploring in my theory and practice.

⁸ This refers to my creative practice described in Section 5.

I re-photographed many small parts of the original wartime photographs and found beauty in the destruction they depicted. Relevant for the remaking of the photograph in my practice, David Company is quoted by Bull (2004) on 'late photography' – 'images that are not of an event itself but rather of the traces of an event'. 'The decisive moment' is no longer captured by (still) photography...often such photographs are now no longer a trace of what happened but a 'trace of a trace'. On reflection, my practice developed the trace to be greater than the event. This is probably what, unconsciously, I intended.

The experience of being within built spaces

The ambition of the doctoral work has been to identify, understand and communicate ideas of architecture staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny. In this section, I examine my personal response to being within built spaces beginning with a summary of investigations undertaken before starting the doctoral programme.

My interest in, and awareness of, being in built spaces began during my BA residency in Waltham Abbey church. The text to which I referred at the time was Alister Hardy's *The Spiritual Nature of Man* in which he gathers together experiences of people who felt some unexplained presence, or consciousness, or spirituality, when being within a built space.

I contributed to a series of lectures at Waltham Abbey at the end of my residency, explaining, or attempting to explain, the way that I felt conscious of myself being within certain built spaces, not necessarily religious buildings, and I remember that several people in the audience were eager to recount their own experiences. This is supported by Pallasmaa (2005, p.11) who writes: 'The ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and towards our own sense of self and being'.

In attempting to explain the way in which I interpret information from the physical world of the built environment, I am aware that I am not only seeing my surroundings, I am also receiving information by all other senses. This is

reinforced by Lefebvre: (1974, p.200. italics in original) '...space does not consist in the projection of an intellectual representation...but that it is first of all *heard* (listened to) and *enacted* (through physical gestures and movements)' and (1974, p.183) 'Objects touch one another, feel, smell and hear one another then they contemplate one another with eye and gaze. One truly gets the impression that every shape in space, every spatial plane, constitutes a mirror and produces a mirage effect that within each body the rest of the world is reflected, and referred back to, in an ever-renewed to-and-fro reciprocal reflection, an interplay of shifting colours, lights and forms'.

These observations on experiencing one's surroundings are underpinned by the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. As Anthony Quinton has summarised in Bullock and Woodings (1983, p.508): Maurice Merleau-Ponty 'insisted...on the bodily nature of sense perception as a physical interaction between the embodied perceiver and the world he perceives. Each acts on the other: the world by supplying opportunities for agency to the perceiver, the perceiver by endowing his environment with meaning and form'.

Baldwin (2004, p.15) expands this theory: Merleau-Ponty discusses the 'status of the body. He aims to show how the conception of the body as simply an object within the world fails to do justice to the body's contribution to our experience of the world'.

Merleau-Ponty has written: 'In short, my body is not only an object among all other objects, a nexus of sensible qualities among others, but an object which is *sensitive* to all the rest, which reverberates to all sounds, vibrates to all colours, and provides words with their primordial significance through the way in which it receives them. It is not a matter of reducing the significance of the word 'warm' to sensations of warmth by empiricist standards, for the warmth which I feel when I read the word 'warm' is not an actual warmth. It is simply my body which prepares itself for heat and which, so to speak, roughs out its outline.' (1945, p.275, italics in original). So when, in a built space, I 'read' the walls and windows and pipes, my body 'prepares itself' and 'roughs out its outline' for what it is to experience. My body is sensitive to its surroundings, reverberating to

sounds, 'vibrating' to colours. My body will interact with the qualities of the architectural space, and will superimpose onto them my own experiences. Previously lived experiences become part of us and we project this experience on to the way we interpret our surroundings. My experiences of architectural spaces, as the child in the post-war house and of underground tunnels and ducts, are a major factor in my interpretation of architecture staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny.

These three strands of research have uncovered theories about the house and the nature of dwelling, the significance of the photograph, and of my personal response to being within built spaces. They have informed and supported my creative practice throughout the doctoral programme.

Creative practice

My creative practice, in seeking an effective means of expression, has included model making, photography and drawing. This section contains an account and analysis of each.

Model making

The practice of the early part of the programme was derived from my affectionate relationship with buildings.

I transferred my own fears and insecurities to a small model house⁹. This cardboard model was placed in vulnerable situations and photographed at each location. In these photographs, I had found a means of expressing my emotions. The doctoral investigation into how architecture could be shown to stage the sensation of the psychological uncanny developed from here.

I constructed a card model of the house of my childhood and photographed cast shadows on it – abstract and linear – of branches and barbed wire. They slice and wound its form, and represent the physical and psychological damage sustained by the house and its occupants.



17
House with cast shadows
(2008) Cardboard model
Size: approximately
300x300x300 mm

⁹ Appendix 1, images 1 and 2.

The suburban house of my memory has two contradictory characteristics - the regularity, silence and discretion of the outside and the restrained instability of family life within. I made models, as I reflected on these contradictions, of the façades of terraced houses in a suburban street and of the living rooms inside.

Taking the hearth as a symbol of the centre of the family home, I worked in different ways to deconstruct it. I wished to convey something of the loss, of people and property, experienced by all families in this post-war period.

I constructed models of the living room – with a deserted hearth, a fractured hearth¹⁰ and lastly a decaying hearth¹¹. In these, the model is the artwork. With each successive model, the hearth, as symbolic centre of the home, became increasingly distressed.

These concepts are more easily communicated by exaggeration. More difficult to articulate is a visual language describing the qualities of reserve – a worn tiredness, a drab cleanliness.



18

Deserted hearth

(2009) Cardboard model. Size: approximately 400x600x100 mm

¹⁰ Appendix 1, image 8.

¹¹ Appendix 1, image 9.

19
Terraced house
(2009) Cardboard model
(part)
Size: approximately
400x300x100 mm



The model of terraced houses, in a low-relief wall frieze, illustrates the repetition of the module, the containment and insularity of each, and the isolation of its occupants. Each is enclosed within a hedge and fence. Identical façades were presented, the turbulence within was concealed.



20
Terraced houses
(2009) Cardboard model wall frieze awaiting hedges
Size: approximately 500mm high x 3m long

The models of suburban houses were a reflection on the insularity and changed lives of the families within. The construction and presentation of these models enabled me to express my thoughts and emotions in a way that other methodologies had not. The models successfully expressed my empathy with the built environment, but the potential of model-making was not fully realised because I developed an allergy to the materials and could no longer use them.

Photography

A period of uncertainty followed, as I tried to find another medium which had the same expressive qualities. In fact, it was the trigger for a new body of work based on a set of press photographs of the second world war.

Aware of their content, but not wanting to look at them, this pack of photographs had lain unopened in my cupboard for more than 40 years. As a child, just after the war, I felt inexplicable guilt and envy and exclusion: guilt that I missed the horrors of war; envy of those who thought it the best time of their lives; exclusion because I received only nuances, undercurrents: 'not for the children'. Looking at these photographs, and being able to work with them with the detachment of an artist, was confronting these feelings.



21

Second world war press photograph of Wesel
Photographer and date unknown

The photographs are of very fine quality, perfectly preserved, and unflinching in their depiction of the damaged people and buildings in England and the Rhine towns. I visited some of these towns to look for traces as they appeared in the photographs. Most had been completely destroyed and have been rebuilt differently, but two sites, one in Blerick, Netherlands, and one in Cologne, Germany, were identifiable. I spoke to two elderly gentlemen in Blerick, on the street where the photograph was taken, and they remembered the events of the time. This, for me, was one of the most memorable experiences of the doctoral programme and provided a significant emotional input to my work. I have, with these photographs, been introduced to the post-war suburbs, not only of London but in the Netherlands and Germany. The location no longer matters: the buildings, the people, the wounds, were the same.

22
Press photograph
Blerick, Netherlands
in 1945
Size: 160x250 mm



23
*Blerick, Netherlands
in 2010*
(2010)
Digital Photograph



The nature of my enquiry, and my practice, were both fundamentally transformed by engaging with the press photographs. Buildings had been my central concern but the people in the photographs could not be ignored. They are leaving, escaping, all walking with bundles of bedding and babies, carts, layers of clothing. Where did they go? Did they eat or sleep or die?



24
Second world war press photograph
Photographer, location and date unknown

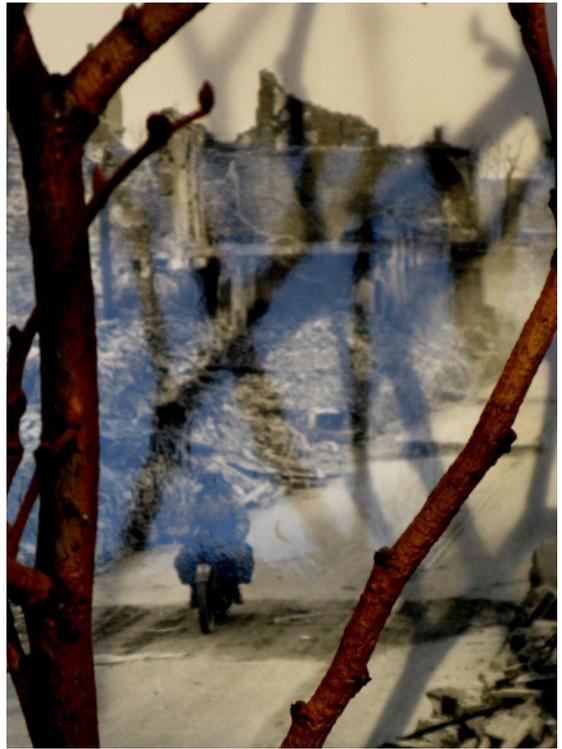
I inherited this collection of photographs, but their history and photographers are unknown. They were, nevertheless, the insight I needed into the conditions at the time with just enough personal ownership for their message to be reinforced. I could not have found a better, more meaningful, illustration of the sad and serious years of my enquiry.

Their content was overwhelming, and I could not initially see in what way they could be used to further my practice. I began by simply re-photographing many small parts of the originals. Re-photographing them in evening sunlight gave a delicate colour and beauty to what had been a monochrome image. I re-photographed them overlaid with twigs so that they acquired another two layers of information: the twig and its shadow. The sensibilities of the results were quite surprisingly different. Images of subtlety and beauty replaced the crisply defined realism of the originals. But this generated further questions about the way I was distancing myself from them by technique and time.

How is the work to be viewed? As a historical document being re-photographed in the present time and lit by an instantaneous and unique sunray? Has the re-photographing strategy been used as a device to reduce the violence of the original, to distance or disguise? Are the modifying strategies a way of dealing with guilt and the moral doubts about looking? Yes, in part, I am still denying events and not admitting reality, but I think there is inherent beauty in the original photographs and I have instinctively and superficially looked for ways to enhance it. Ultimately, my work is not made with anger. Louise Bourgeois, when questioned by Paul Herkenhoff (2003, p.18) 'Is there an emotion one can be possessed by and still make art?' her reply: 'Yes, compassion. Without compassion there is no work, there is no life, there is nothing...'. It is not the political and military history that interests me, it is the insight into social and personal history which these photographs give. They are a record of the years of my birth and childhood. I personalised the press photographs¹², but they did not, in themselves, contain sufficient substance to define and communicate my own experience.

¹² Further images in Appendix 1, nos. 22-26.

25
Street in Wesel
(2009) Part original
re-photographed.
Digital photograph

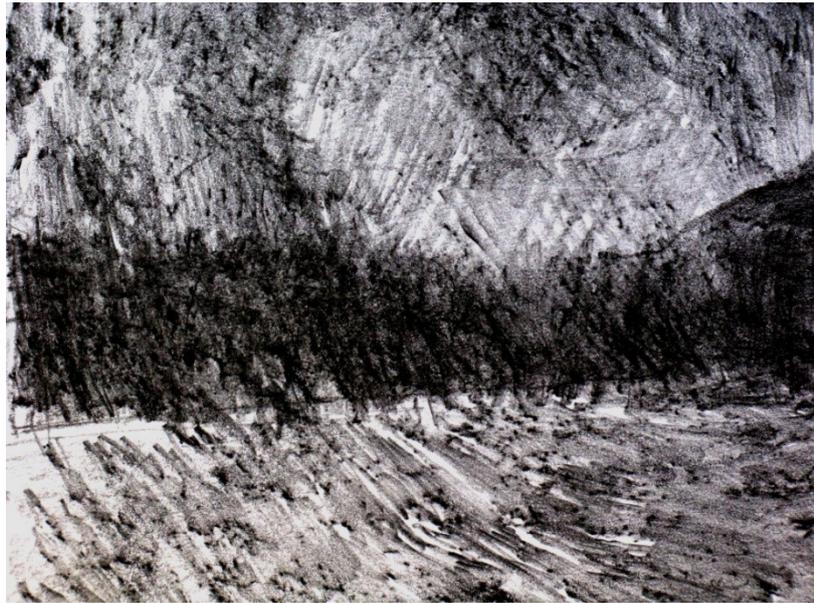


26
Clock in Cologne
(2009) Part original
re-photographed.
Digital photograph



Drawing

In May 2010, I had what can only be described as a breakthrough in my practice. In retrospect it was a simple and logical step: to acknowledge my enthusiasm for drawing and overcome my reservations about its value and credibility. Illogically perceived reservations, in that notebook drawings have formed the one consistent part of my practice throughout my life. One of these is shown below and further images are in Appendix 1.



27

Lake Brienz 11 September 2008 (2008)

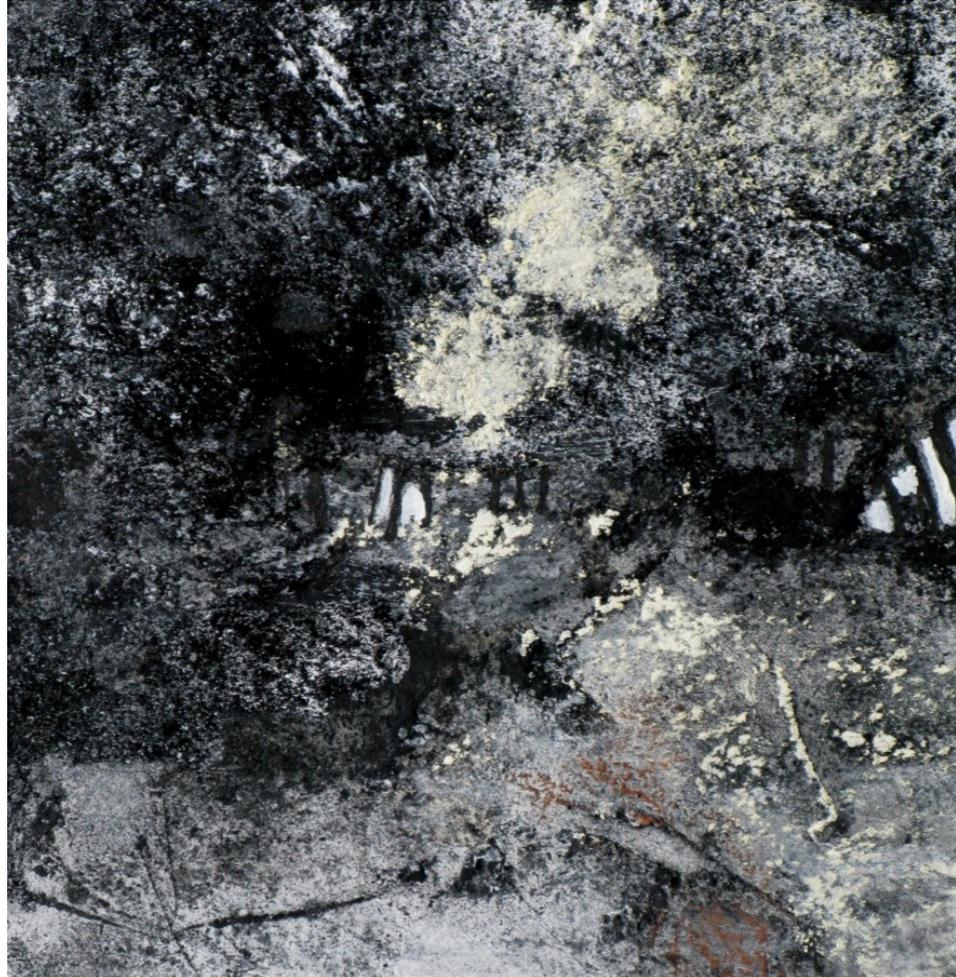
Notebook drawing in pencil. Size: 140x180 mm

My experience of engineering drawing has predisposed me to representation and the use of line. The first set of pastel drawings¹³ were of enclosed ducts and alleyways in which lines were used to create tone. The responsiveness of the dry drawing media – pastel, charcoal and chalk sticks, and the enjoyment I have in using them, encouraged me to experiment with 'losing the line'.

I made a series of small format drawings to test my emotional response to a methodology giving priority to the abstract use of materials. In these, the line was lost altogether (see image 28 below). The result was that the pieces, superficially attractive in their use of materials, did not speak to me unless I

¹³ An example in Appendix 1, image 31.

superimposed recognisable building elements onto them. So the line was not lost, but I did, thereafter, allow the materials to make a much greater emotional contribution to the work.



28
Damaged Buildings
(2011) Chalk and charcoal dusts on paper.
size: 190x190 mm

The drawings made next were the most significant of the doctoral period. In them were raised fundamental issues of meaning and intention. They led, subsequently, to a body of work resulting in the first satisfactory merging of theory and practice. The drawings were from three sets: small, drawn

monoprints of figures, larger chalk drawings of figures and building drawings in black pastel on white paper.

The monoprints, an example shown below, were of figures taken from books of images of war-damaged towns. They were the means of beginning to establish a relationship with the inhabitants: one which I had instinctively turned from with a fear of becoming involved in their lives – a fear of knowing too much. This was the first time I had engaged with the people of the period rather than their buildings and for this reason they were important.



29
Man falling
(2011)
Ink transfer drawing
Size: 300x250 mm

The larger figure drawings (see example below) were made with no planning or reference. They were an unconscious eruptive response to the frustration of recognising that my underlying enquiry was really about the people, but that I did not have the necessary authority to deal with it.



30
Figure drawing (part)
(2011)
Size: 450x650 mm

My concern was for the people: how could they be omitted from a study of my childhood in the post-war suburbs? But I did not have that close connection with which to understand their lives in the same way as I understand buildings. And to look was uncomfortable, being impolite, staring. I was aware that here was an inconsistency in my practice that should be resolved but about which I felt inadequate, especially when comparing my personal experience to that demonstrated in the drawings of Käthe Kollwitz.

The building drawings¹⁴ were made in a soft black pastel on heavy watercolour paper. The quality of depth in velvety blackness was used to describe built spaces: dark corners and enclosed alleyways. None of these images were taken from war photographs and at first seemed to be outside the scope of

¹⁴ Images 31 and 32 below.

research. But I had confidence in their production; in the realisation that the use of black pastel was articulating a relevant emotion. More than that, the physicality of the blackness had a reinforcing power of its own.



31
Passageway 1
(2011) Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



32
Passageway 2
(2011) Pastel on paper
Size: 560x760 mm

Dr. Sarah Taylor¹⁵ commented on the content of the drawings and the predominance of black: was I aspiring, searching; was I enclosed or escaping? I think, yes, to all these observations, and I think they refer again to the dark internal spaces of the house in the suburbs.

Still, at this time, the question remained about whether I would continue my practice 'looking at' or 'being within' buildings. In other words, am I being a remote observer, or am I emotionally involved in the experience of being enclosed? And how could either solution be made to integrate with my research subject? My childhood memory of being within dark spaces is clear and it has been one of the strongest emotions revealed during the doctoral programme, but this rather nebulous concept contradicts the objectivity required as an engineer to understand, and draw, buildings.

So at this point in my practice, I had found an artistic language with which to describe a dark space but I had not established whether I was in it or outside. I had established the need to include people in my work but they were not yet integrated within the whole¹⁶. I tried first to integrate figures and buildings into the same drawing, in every style and at every scale. In all of them, the drawing style was not compatible – confident and considered marks for the buildings and spontaneous, poorly conceived, figure drawings. Nothing was satisfactory until my anxiety was dissipated and I could relax into regarding my drawn figures as separate from the distressing images I saw in the war photographs. I had learned a little of their lives and that was now another facet added to my own experience. The sum of my experience could now be used in my creative practice, and my investigative methodology has become the same for the figures as it always has been for the buildings.

The question of whether I am 'looking at' or 'being within' buildings was resolved as I placed the figures into the black spaces of my memory. They are there instead of me, or perhaps with me or, ultimately, they are a substitute for me.

¹⁵ Dr. Sarah Taylor conducting an artists' forum at University of East London, March 2011.

¹⁶ Appendix 1, images 58 and 59 and image 33 below.

Instead of transferring my insecurities to the model house of my practice of four years ago, I have examined and brought together the causes of insecurity: the dark spaces; family lives changed by war. My practice now reflects this greater awareness and emotional involvement.



33
Figure in black space
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 560x760 mm



34
Figure in building
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 560x760 mm

I conclude with images of preparatory drawings for exhibition (image numbers 35-38).

For the figures, fragments of cityscape and building structure, I have referred to photographs taken during, and immediately after, the war. The dark spaces, steps and passageways are taken from my own experience.

The four sets of drawings are:

Image no. 35: Steps which offer a way out of the darkness into the light are contrasted with fallen figures who failed to escape.

Image no. 36: Figures in attitudes of despair are placed with fragments of their shattered environment.

Image no. 37: Questioning the future of a young life from a city that was destroyed.

Image no. 38: Two figures which represent my childhood memories of dark domestic spaces placed with a passageway which offers a route to the world beyond.

My knowledge of buildings and underground ducts, the insight I have gained into the traumatic lives of the people in the post-war suburbs and the emotions I hold as a result of these things have been brought together in these drawings. The architecture of my current practice is not included for itself but as a means of focusing on, and intensifying, my personal experience. The role of architecture has been diminished but it is still staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny.



35
Figures and steps
(2012)
Preparatory drawings on paper
Size: 5 x 450x340 mm



36 *Figures and fragments*
Preparatory drawings on paper
Size: 5 x 450x340 mm



37
Figure and destroyed city
(2012)
Preparatory drawings on paper
Size: 3 x 340x450 mm



38
Figures and dark spaces
(2012)
Preparatory drawings on paper
Size: 3 x 340x450 mm

Professional practice

Solo exhibitions

- 2004 National Trust Treasurer's House, York, paintings.
Acrylic on canvas, York city buildings and landscape.
- 2002-3 ID Gallery, Colchester, paintings.
Acrylic on canvas, Colchester historic buildings.
- 2002 City Screen, York, paintings.
Acrylic on canvas, York riverside buildings.
- 2000 Waltham Abbey Church, Waltham Abbey, drawings.
Drawings sold for the Church at completion of residency.
- 1999 Epping Forest Field Study Centre, drawings.
Promotional display for the Field Study Centre.

Joint exhibitions

- 2011 AVA Gallery, University of East London, drawings.
Monoprint and pastel drawings on paper, people and buildings.
- 2011 AVA Gallery, University of East London.
Pastel drawings on paper, buildings.
- 2010 Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, paintings.
Oil on canvas, landscape.
- 2010 AVA Gallery, University of East London, photographs.
Photographs remade from war-time press photographs.
- 2010 AVA Gallery, University of East London, models and paintings.
Card models, war damaged rooms; oil on canvas, building details.
- 2009 AVA Gallery, University of East London, models and photographs.
Model frieze of suburban street and photographs of them.
- 2009 AVA Gallery, University of East London, models and photographs.
Models of room interiors and photographs of them.
- 2004 Kings Langley School, Kings Langley, paintings.
Watercolour on canvas, historic local buildings.

Selected exhibitions

- 2009 Parndon Mill Gallery, Harlow, paintings.
Oil on canvas, landscape.
- 2008 Parndon Mill Gallery, Harlow, paintings.
Oil on canvas, landscape.
- 2005 Gibberd Gallery, Harlow Civic Centre, Harlow, painting.
Oil on canvas, building detail.

Residencies

- 2000 Waltham Abbey Church, Waltham Abbey.
Drawing and painting, leading community groups in art classes.
- 1999 Epping Forest Field Study Centre, Epping Forest.
Drawing and painting, forest landscape.

Commissions

- 2005-6 For Albemarle Developments Ltd., paintings.
Acrylic on canvas, historic building restorations.
- 2005-6 For private client, paintings.
Oil on canvas, landscape.
- 2003-5 For Lexden Restoration and Development, paintings.
Acrylic on canvas, historic building restorations.
- 2003 For private client, paintings.
Acrylic on canvas, historic village buildings.

Critical reflection of professional practice undertaken during the programme

This critical reflection is of the years of the doctoral programme but it is reviewed against the background of exhibitions of my work that were held during the years between finishing the MA and beginning the doctoral proposal.

In spite of my continuing artistic education, and developing artistic language, the work I exhibited returned to a content and style with which I was confident. The building drawings of York and Colchester were a transition between engineering and art. They were popular, they all sold and led to commissions. But they were of limited public interest – they were bought by people who knew the buildings. They were not general enough, did not convey any emotion, to be of wider interest. To continue them would have been to use a technique only; there would have been very little creativity or emotion in them. This was my position at the beginning of writing the doctoral proposal.

My creative practice methodology has changed frequently during the five years of the programme. I have felt throughout that each artwork was exploratory – research rather than product – and that each was part of the journey. In fact, I have had a clear objective in what I wanted to communicate, but had not achieved the best way to say it. In these circumstances, I have not had the confidence to seek to exhibit more widely.

It is not until the final year of the programme that I have felt that I have a product which conveys my experience and intention, and that it is my own invention. I had supposed that my doctoral research subject was too personal and introspective to be of interest to others. But the reason for creating artwork must be for communication. I have demonstrated that the characteristics of material and mark making have a voice of their own. In fact, the image is itself, and for these reasons, it becomes more widely accessible. It is not merely an illustration but has been created from my particular accumulated experience.

I now have the confidence to exhibit the work and will seek out opportunities to do that, both with my colleagues and by myself.

Conclusion

This section is a reflection on my conceptual position and achievement at the end of the doctoral programme. In the Proposal document written in 2008 (2008, pp.13-14), I wrote of the intention to investigate the role of architecture in staging the sensation of the psychological uncanny, particularly of the house and family of the post war suburbs in which I grew up.

Two theories of Anthony Vidler defined this: that the uncanny house might be homely and cosy, and 'concealed and kept from sight' (1992, p.24); and his reference to the house as a 'favoured site for uncanny disturbances in 19thc. Gothic literature', with 'lurking unease rather than a clearly defined source of fear' (1992, p.23). These ideas resonated with my memories of the suburban house.

I also wrote of my experience, as an engineer, of working in underground tunnels and ducts. The stagnant blackness touched all my senses, helped to define and reinforce the concepts of the uncanny.

Since then, I have read, and been influenced by, the theories of Bachelard, Lefebvre and Benjamin about inhabiting space and dwelling. I have read about the role of the photograph in works by Barthes and Cadava, and about the function of the senses in the works of Pallasmaa and Merleau-Ponty.

My intention was, at the beginning of the programme, to use a factual representation of architecture to stage the sensation of the uncanny. It was Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* that first suggested to me that perhaps I was being too literal and there might be a different, or better, way to approach my subject.

I have worked extensively from found photographs of the war during the programme. This has been a profoundly moving link to the period of my research – the post-war years of my childhood. The writings of Barthes and

Cadava expanded my understanding of the photograph as being subject to interpretations of history and time.

The introduction to Merleau-Ponty's writings, however, gave the greatest insight to my developing practice. The enlightening concepts, of the body within the world, brought together all the strands of my previous experience in such a way that I could press forward my practice.

It is evident that my practice throughout the programme has seen a reduction in using architecture for itself. Whereas I had been expecting to continue to use my knowledge of buildings, I have in fact, quite properly, strayed from the comfort zone, away from buildings towards the unknowns of people and emotions. The doctoral programme has, for this reason, been my most valuable learning experience. The two disciplines, engineering and fine art, share methodologies of design and specification but differ in that engineering solutions do not engage with emotions. So the creation of artwork examines a different layer; excavates the psyche at a greater depth; stimulates the imperative of communicating something of personal significance.

I have been aware of a gradual shedding of layers of expectation and pretence: of using unsuitable media, or methodologies. It was a process of eliminating pre-conceived ideas, of being personally exposed, in order to arrive at a kernel of truth. This truth I found, firstly, when writing the proposal. I wanted to investigate and communicate my particular experiences of being within built spaces. And, secondly, during the programme, I found a means of expressing it.

I made models of suburban houses during the early years of the programme which allowed me a direct engagement with the built structure. The construction of models allows time for contemplation but does not promote spontaneity. Sensitivity to the model making materials forced me to find another means of expression. I speculate that had I not been obliged to question and change my methodology at this point, my enquiry and practice would not have developed to include people and emotions but would have remained static. I believe the pressure I felt, of the creative uncertainty which

followed this disruption to my practice, gave emphasis and urgency to my selection of a suitable replacement medium.

My artistic language has, since then, evolved to take the most simple form and materials: drawings on paper in pastel. The tactile physicality of these materials enables a direct statement to be made which engages my emotions. When a model is the product, to a much greater degree, the outcome has to be determined in advance. I find, when comparing the two methodologies, that the planning and construction skills used in modelmaking suppressed the spontaneity and emotional input that I have discovered in using paper and pastel.

I had expected to use representational buildings in my artwork to create a sense of the uncanny. Buildings have for me an anthropomorphic quality and I had used them as a substitution for people, seeing in them the characteristics I chose. They did not interfere with my emotions, whether they were benevolent or gruesome. I have used second world war press photographs as source material. I have been surprised at the beauty revealed by re-photographing small parts of them and I have acknowledged that I have used this strategy as a distancing technique. In summary, I did not want to be disturbed; I wanted to distance unwelcome emotions and personal involvement.

But ultimately, success was only achieved because I had to identify with the people who lived in those buildings. This was remarkably difficult to achieve. I have never engaged closely with people. I have seldom photographed people, even close family. So in my recent work, I have achieved another breakthrough: that of trying to share and interpret the lives of others.

And now architecture is still staging the sensation in my work, but in a much reduced manner. It has become a suggestion, a black space, within which I have placed my figures. It serves to emphasise the perceived vulnerability of human beings. Nearly all the detail has gone. The physical details did not matter, but the emotions of being contained in them did.

With these concepts in place, I have found a new confidence. There is now an inevitability, a rightness, about my continuing practice. I expect the work to evolve, but with less anxiety, and with a calm focus that had been lacking before.

How has this transformation been realised? By producing a probing and honest proposal and then keeping to its spirit and direction; by the regular insightful participation of my Supervisors; by dealing with problematic issues in a rational, investigative manner.

I have brought together all the strands that were introduced in the proposal. I have identified my version of the uncanny as being the black space. I have come a little closer to the inhabitants of the post-war suburbs: instead of seeing building details, I saw their emotion and ultimately my own.

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Appendix 1, Additional images from creative practice

1
Card house encircled
(2007)
Digital photograph



2
Card house on precipice
(2007)
Digital photograph



3
Mouchy, September 2008
(2008)
Notebook drawing in ball-point pen
Size: 180x180 mm



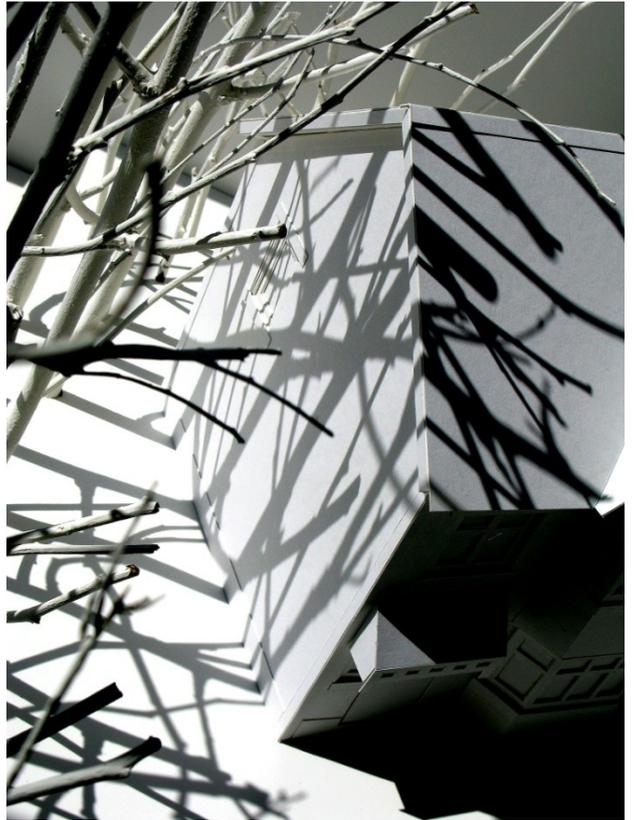
4
Mouchy, September 2008
(2008)
Notebook drawing in ball-point pen
Size: 180x180 mm



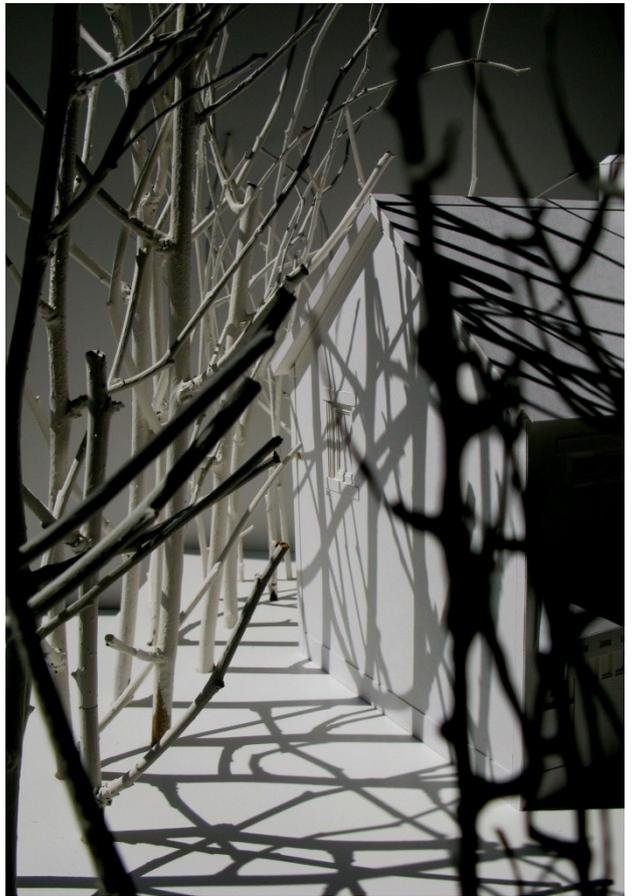
5
Colmar, October 2008
(2008)
Notebook drawing in ball-point pen
Size: 180x180 mm

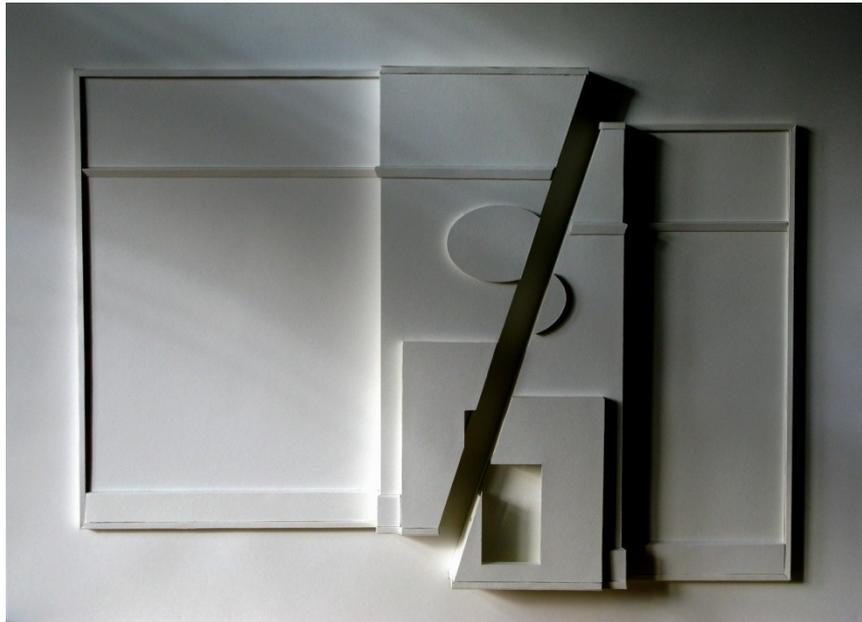


6
Card house and shadows
(2008)
Cardboard model and twigs
Size approx. 500x500x500 mm



7
Card house in trees
(2008)
Cardboard model and twigs
Size approx. 500x500x500 mm





8
Fractured hearth (2009)
Cardboard models
Size approx. 400x600x100 mm

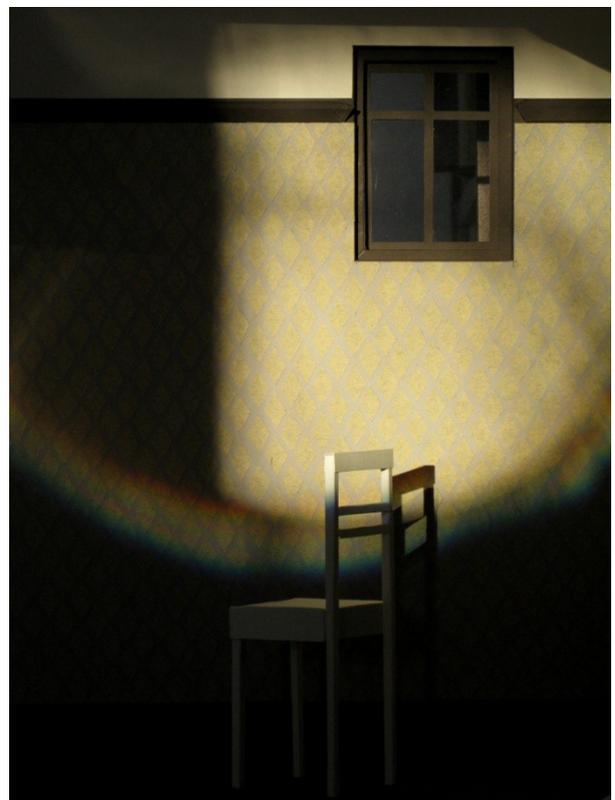


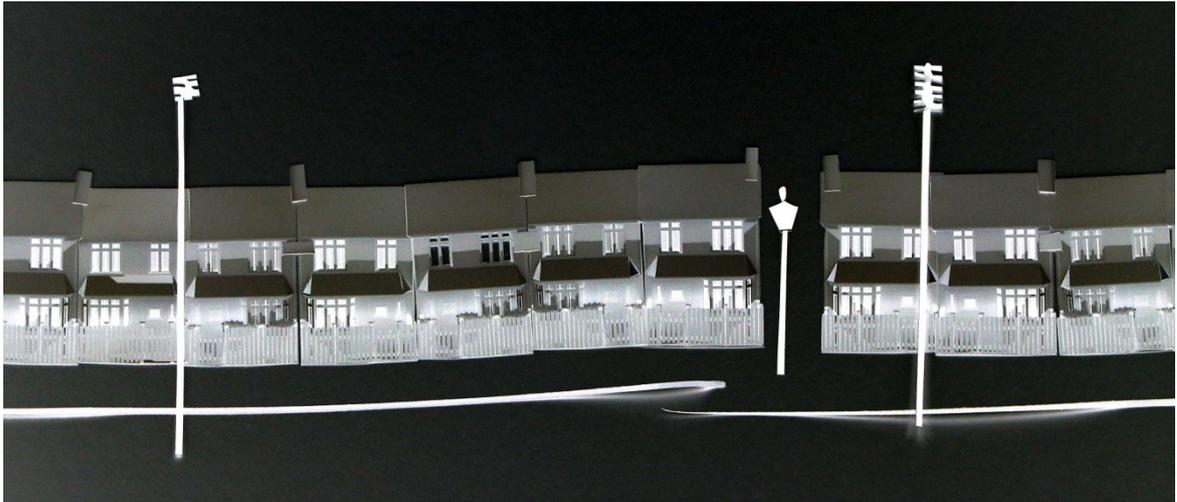
9
Decaying hearth (2009)
Cardboard models during construction
Size approx. 400x600x100 mm

10
Chair in the corner
(2009)
Digital photograph of cardboard
models
Model size approx. 300x300x300 mm



11
Chair under window
(2009)
Digital photograph of cardboard
models
Model size approx. 300x300x300
mm





12
Suburban street at night
(2009)
Digital photograph of reconstructed photographs of models
Size: 1600x600 mm



13
Broken windows
(2009)
Cardboard model with fabric
Size approx. 500x300x100 mm

14
Terraced houses
(2009)
Cardboard model,
photographed during
construction
Size approx. 500mm
high x 3 m long



15
Second world war press photograph of Cologne cathedral
Dated 1945, photographer unknown



16
Second world war press photograph
Photographer, location and date unknown



17
Second world war press photograph
Photographer, location and date unknown

18
Snow in Herschbroich 1,
March 2009
(2009)
Notebook drawing in ball-
point pen and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



19
Snow in Herschbroich 2,
March 2009
(2009)
Notebook drawing in ball-
point pen and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



20
Front door in sunlight
(2009)
Digital photograph of part
cardboard model
Door height approx. 150 mm



21
Front door in shadow
(2010)
Oil on canvas
Size: 320x450 mm



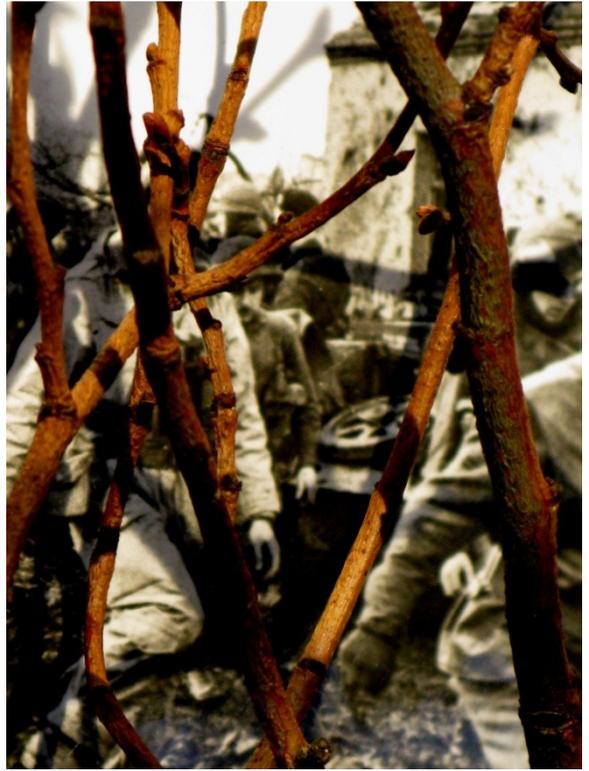
22
Broken trees
(2010)
Re-photographed part of original
and printed on commercial copier.
Size: 700x1200 mm



23
Leaving the ruins
(2010)
Collage and drawing
Size: 450x350 mm



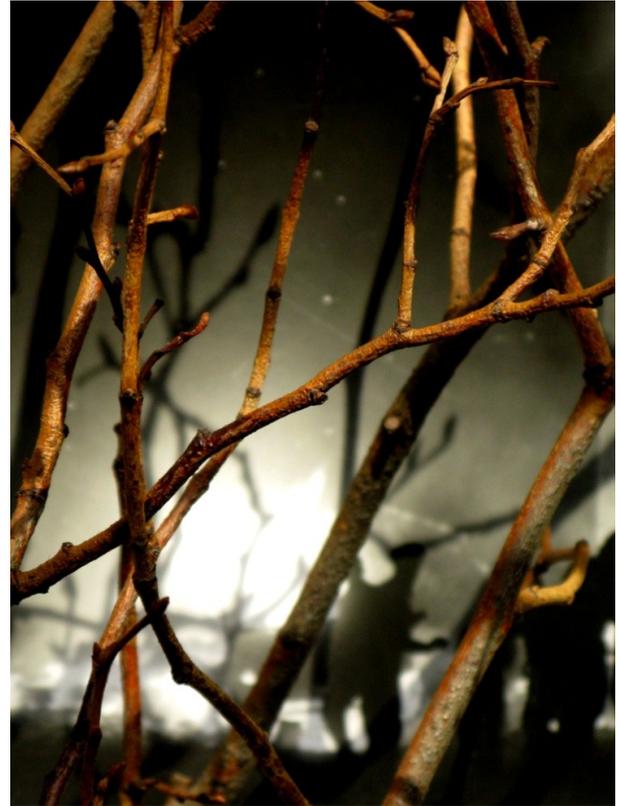
24
*Re-photographed part original
with twigs*
(2010)
Digital photograph



25
*Re-photographed part original
with twig shadows*
(2010)
Digital photograph



26
*Re-photographed part original
with twigs 3*
(2010)
Digital photograph



27
People walking through forest
(2010) Ink and water-colour drawing overlaid with twigs
Size: 300x450 mm

28
Queensferry, August 2010
(2010) Notebook drawing in ball-point pen
Size: 180x180 mm



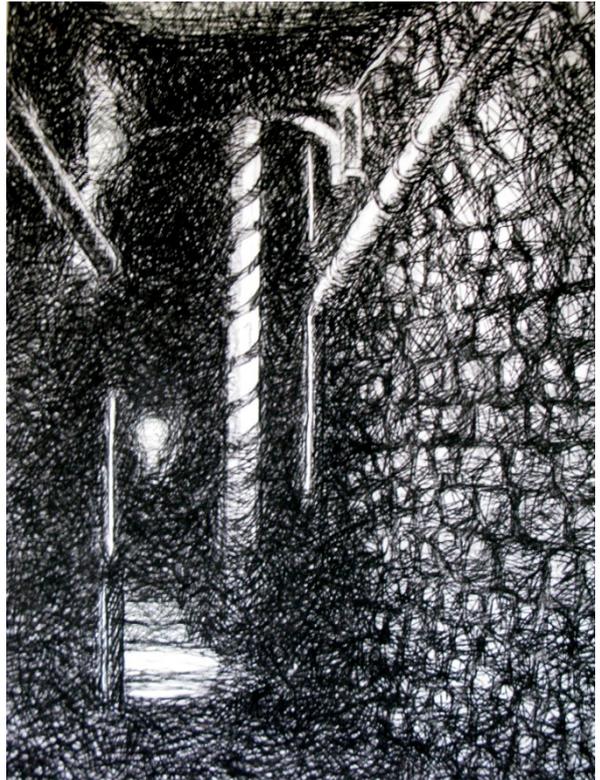
29
Strasbourg, September 2010
(2010) Notebook drawing in ball-point pen
Size: 180x180 mm



30
Audley End, September 2010
(2010) Notebook drawing in ball-point pen
Size: 180x180 mm



31
Underground duct
(2010)
Chalk on paper
Size: 600x800 mm



32
Back of the house
(2010)
Pastel on paper
Size: 560x760 mm



33
Leaving
(2010) Pastel on paper
Size: 250x375 mm



34
Running
(2011)
Acrylic and charcoal dust on
paper
Size: 180x180 mm



35
Steps 1
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



36
Steps 2
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



37
Broken roof
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



38
Steps 3
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 560x760 mm



39
Brodsworth, June 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing
in pen and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



40
Calais, September 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
ball-point pen and water colour
Size: 180x180 mm



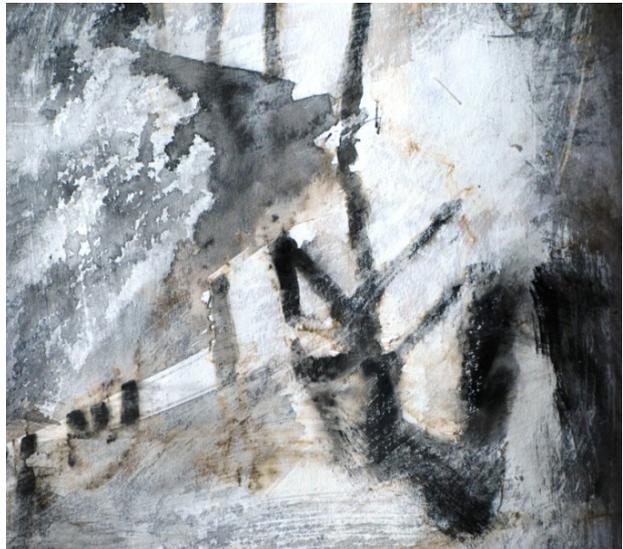
41
Sunbury, September 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing
in pen and water-colour
crayon
Size: 180x180 mm



42
Saustal, September 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
pen and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



43
Parc de l'Orient, September 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



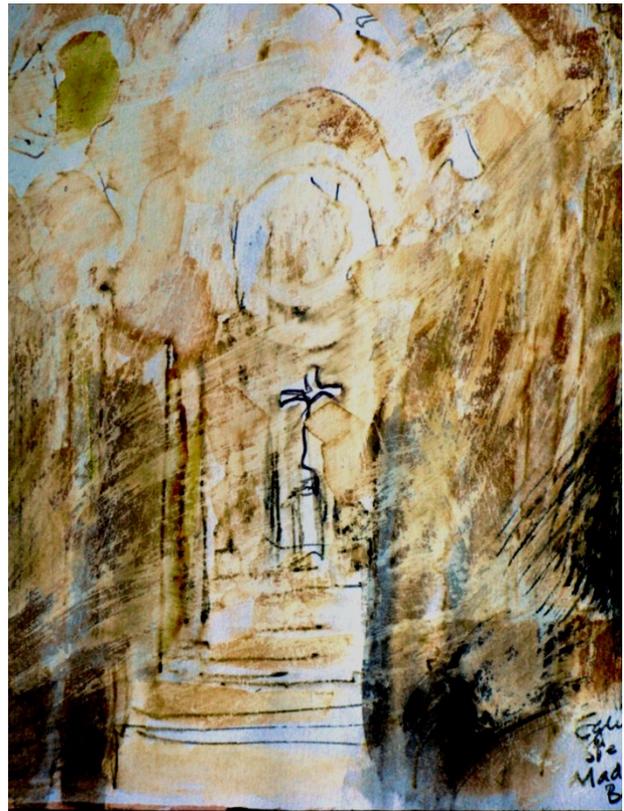
44
Besançon, September 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
pen and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



45
Brienz, September 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
pen and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



46
Eglise Ste. Madeleine, September
2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in pen
and water-colour
Size: 180x180 mm



47
Woman in red coat
(2011)
Ink transfer drawing and
gouache
Size: 280x330 mm



48
Figure with building
(2011)
Working drawing, pastel on paper
Size: 350x480 mm

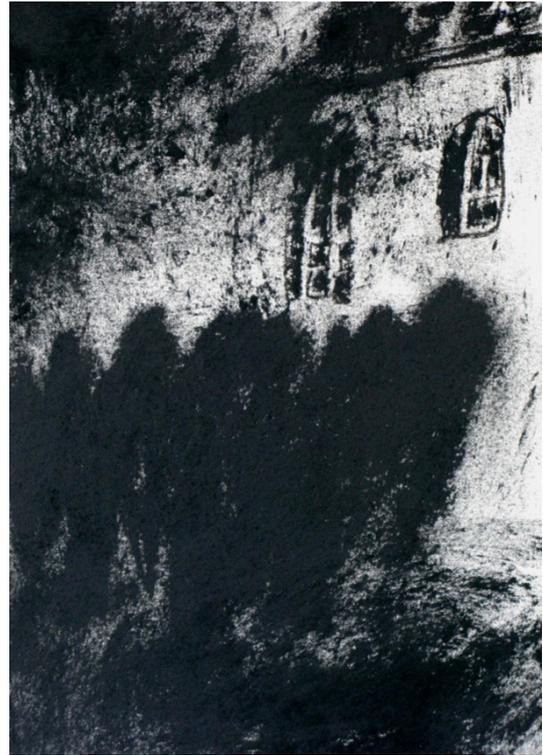
49
Building and twig
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 200x280 mm



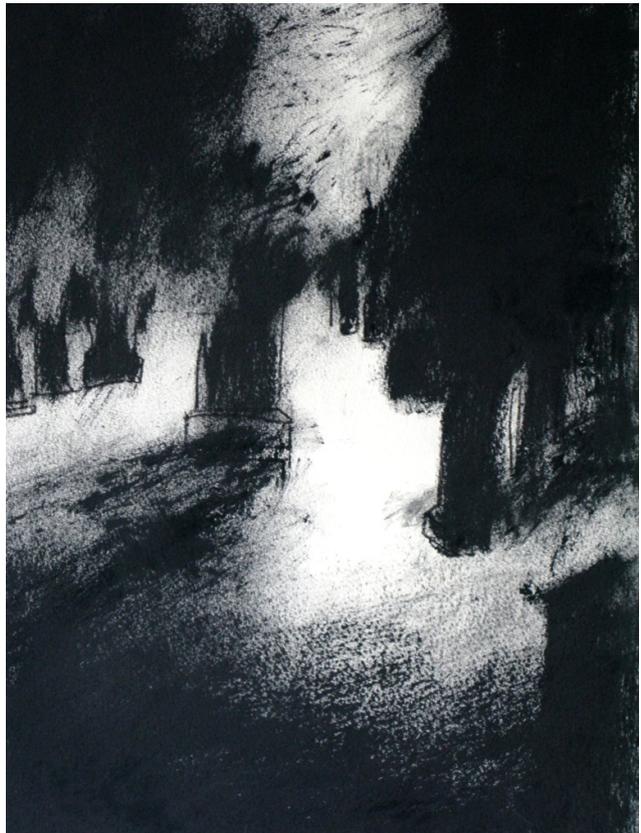
50
Woman in black coat
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 280x380 mm



51
Pursued
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 280x330 mm



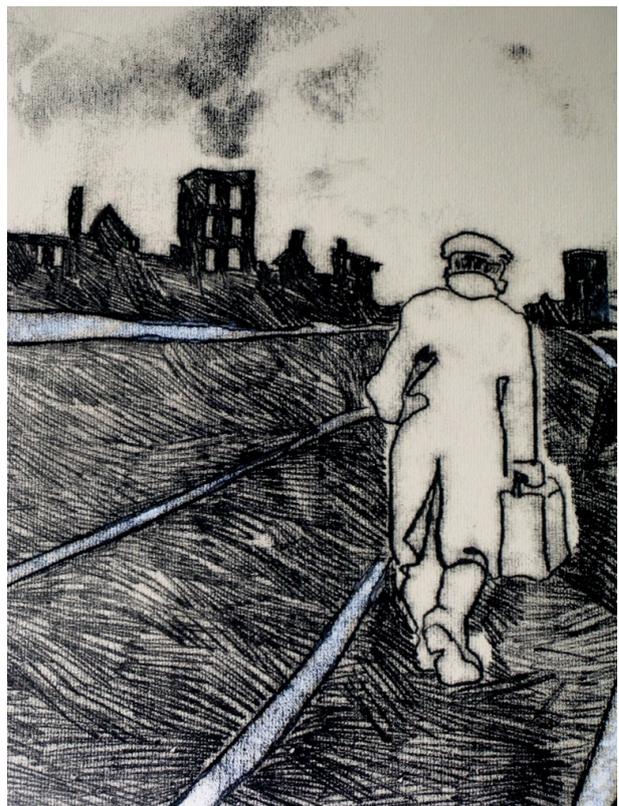
52
Dean Cemetery
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 280x380 mm



53
Boy squatting
(2011)
Ink transfer drawing on paper with
oil colour
Size: 280x330 mm



54
Man walking
(2011)
Ink transfer drawing on paper with
gouach
Size: 280x330 mm



55
Easedale, October 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
pen and Quink
Size: 180x180 mm



56
Grasmere, October 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
pen and water colour
Size: 180x180 mm



57
Grasmere, October 2011
(2011) Notebook drawing in
ball-point pen and water-
colour
Size: 180x180 mm



58
Woman in black space
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



59
Children in black space
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



60
Hand and roof timbers
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



61
Head and steps
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 380x560 mm



62
Study of girl's head 1
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 280x380 mm



63
Study of girl's head 2
(2011)
Pastel on paper
Size: 280x380 mm



Appendix 2, Reviews of exhibitions

1 *Fourteen Paintings*, the exhibition of work by Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012), was shown in the Waddington Galleries (www.waddington-galleries.com) in 2003.

They are large, up to 2 metres square, and created with natural materials: sand; earth; timber. The contrast between the coarse simplicity of these and the delicacy of the personal symbols inscribed into them – a cross, or some initials or personal artifact - emphasises a powerful message.

These deceptively simple forms are perfectly placed within the picture boundary, leading to a dynamic and engaging image.

2 *The Lamp of Sacrifice, 286 Places of Worship, Edinburgh* by Nathan Coley (b.1967), was shown by the National Galleries of Scotland (<http://www.nationalgalleries.org>) in 2004.

The gallery floor was covered with models of religious buildings, in Edinburgh, of all denominations and sizes. At first impressed by the sheer number of buildings in the display, I had no way of judging whether Edinburgh is a city more or less religious than others. The physicality of the cardboard with which they were made was noticeable. They were skillfully made, but in rudimentary form with cut edges showing and with no pretence to be anything else but cardboard. Here were models of buildings, historically constructed by the most able and talented craftsmen, assembled with no more effect than a list. The impact was in the use of cardboard, a modest material, to create buildings of significance.

3 *Snake* by Richard Serra (b.1939) was exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, in Bilbao, in 2005. *Snake* was created for the museum's inauguration and is sited in a large gallery with further steel sculptures from '*The Matter of Time*' series. They all encourage the visitor to engage with their material and form. One succumbs to the imperative of moving between the steel plates, confronts and engages with the characteristics of the steel – its manufacturing surface marks, the colour of the natural material. *Snake* comprises three steel,

walk through, plates forming a psychologically controlling and disorientating passageway.

4 The paintings of Vilhelm Hammershøi were shown in the David Collection of Danish Art (<http://www.davidmus.dk>) in Copenhagen, Denmark. They are small, softly coloured and delicately painted. The room interiors shimmer with soft light; the woodwork and panelling caress the shadows. One is enveloped in the space, but distanced and inert as though it is impossible to breath, let alone move. He was born in 1864, lived in Copenhagen, and exhibited his work between about 1885 and 1916, the year of his death. His subjects were his house and wife in Copenhagen and some landscape and street scenes in and around the city.

5 Käthe Kollwitz was born in 1867 in Königsberg and died in 1945, having witnessed the trauma of Europe. I viewed a collection of about 50 drawings and prints, in the art museum in Interlaken, Switzerland, in 2011. It proved to be one of the most important emotional contributions to my work. The line quality and gradations of tone are so expressive in the original drawings and prints. The subjects she chose were of injustices to her fellow human beings: poverty, imprisonment, old age and death. There are graphic representations of distress: mothers who lost children; prisoners gaunt and hollow cheeked; children, innocent and expecting comfort. Of all the exhibitions I have seen, this spoke to me most strongly of the emotions of a mother, and I identified with the plight of her subjects.

6 *Thiepval Memorial* (<http://www.thiepval.org.uk>) is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorial on the Somme, France. The museum on the site was built to inform visitors of what happened on the Somme in 1916 and show the course of the first world war.

Appendix 3, Images of exhibition for viva examination



1 View of part exhibition space



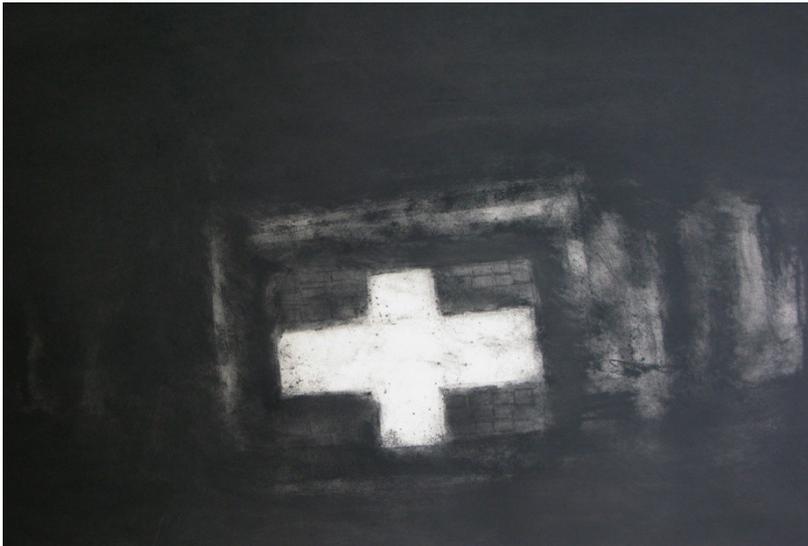
2 View of part exhibition space



3 *City in ruins* (2012) Three pastel drawings on paper. Size: each approx. 1000x660 mm



4 *Figures and dark spaces* (2012) Three pastel drawings on paper. Size: each approx. 1000x660 mm



5 *Dark Spaces with crouching figure* (2012) Three pastel drawings on paper. Size: each approx. 1000x660 mm



6 *Buildings with dark spaces* (2012) Three pastel drawings on paper. Size each approx. 1000x660 mm