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Edited by Fabian Dorsch and Dan-Eugen Ratiu

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The European Society for Aesthetics

Department of Philosophy

University of Fribourg

Avenue de l'Europe 20

1700 Fribourg

Switzerland

Internet: <http://www.eurosa.org>

Email: secretary@eurosa.org

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Inaesthetics — Re-configuring Aesthetics for Contemporary Art

Clodagh Emoe*

GradCAM/DIT, Dublin

ABSTRACT. The testing of aesthetics that was performed through critical art practice in the late 1960's has re-emerged in the domain of continental philosophy, primarily through Alain Badiou's interrogation of aesthetics.¹ Badiou configures inaesthetics "against *speculative aesthetics*", insisting that the role of philosophy is not to interpret, but to reveal that art is "itself a form of thought". In formulating inaesthetics Badiou relocates thought from the external source of philosophy to the immanent space of art. Although Badiou proposes inaesthetics departs from aesthetics, this paper presents my reading of Badiou's prefix "in" as expanding rather than departing from aesthetics. This paper presents an artist's proposition that inaesthetics offers a reconfigured aesthetics that sustains a productive rather than a contentious bind with contemporary art.

1. Introduction

The relevance of aesthetics as philosophy's discourse of art that was contested in the early twentieth century by the early avant-garde re-surfaced in art practice in the late 1960's. Hal Foster, Arthur C. Danto and Peter Osborne develop their readings of contemporary art through their retrospective analysis the developments in art practice that emerged during

* Email: clodaghemoe@gmail.com

¹ Although the continental/analytic opposition is contested, I use this term to distinguish the focus of my practice on philosophies associated with the continental tradition, namely phenomenology and existentialism. The term 'continental' thus differentiates my enquiry from the analytic tradition, which is predominately focused on logic. For more on the continental tradition please see Richard Kearney, (1994) *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*, 2nd edition, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

this period. These particular readings observe that this troubling of aesthetics is central to our current reading of contemporary art. This question of the applicability and relevancy of aesthetics for contemporary art has re-surfaced through the work of Alain Badiou. Although Badiou is a philosopher, he sees the relationship between art and philosophy and the question of aesthetics in relation to contemporary art as consequential, so much so that he proposes inaesthetics as “necessary” for contemporary art because it relocates thought from the external source of philosophy to the immanent space of art.² Although Badiou proposes inaesthetics departs from aesthetics, this paper presents my counter position that inaesthetic reconfigures aesthetics for contemporary art because it that overcomes the impasse of aesthetics as the philosophical interpretation of art.

I develop this claim through four main discussions. The first discussion focuses on aesthetics, outlining its emergence as a discipline. This brief précis reveals an inherent “ambiguity” surrounding aesthetics by outlining the range of interpretations of aesthetics from its emergence as a discipline in the late 18th to the dominant configuration of aesthetics as a discourse on art.³ I argue that this ambiguity coupled with its continuing evolution as a series of ruptures, permit a re-interpretation of inaesthetics as a re-configuration of aesthetics. The second discussion draws on Foster, Osborne and Danto’s theories to outline the lineage of contemporary art and how it is bound up (albeit in a troublesome manner) with aesthetics. This discussion focuses on these specific readings of contemporary reading because they register how developments in art practice asserted thought as a condition of art. This discussion demonstrates how the interpretation of aesthetics as philosophy’s discourse on art is incompatible with a contemporary reading of art. However, it also functions to support my argument that a complete departure from aesthetics would obscure the complex bind between art and aesthetics that defines the current status of contemporary art.

The third discussion develop the claim that inaesthetics provides an applicable aesthetic framework for contemporary art. I argue that by performing a rupture to previous aesthetic categories, inaesthetics presents

² Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 8.

³ Osborne, *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, 61.

a new aesthetic framework that has the critical resources to engage with contemporary art. This discussion outlines how inaesthetics reconfigures a new schema between philosophy and art, demonstrating how this particular engagement between the disciplines is posited to reveal thought through Badiou's treatment of the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. However, although Badiou proposes the necessity of inaesthetics for contemporary art, he makes no reference to any forms of contemporary art practice to support his thesis. (Instead, Badiou draws on literary examples, namely Mallarmé to explore the implications of this reciprocal engagement between art and philosophy.⁴) The fourth discussion addresses this gap in Badiou's thesis in its direct reference of contemporary art. By focusing on my post-conceptual practice I demonstrate how inaesthetics provides a theoretical guide to explore the integrated engagement between art and philosophy in my practice. This discussion focuses on my drawing *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations* (2003) to support the claim for the applicability of inaesthetics for contemporary art (a reading of art that promotes the understanding that art is a domain for thought) by demonstrating it providing an aesthetic framework that does not interpret, but to reveal the capacity of this work to *invite* thought. (My use of the term *invite* will be developed in this discussion). My correalating with inaesthetics from the side of art practice rather than from the side of philosophical argumentation further demonstrates how inaesthetics offers a reconfigured aesthetics that sustains a productive rather than a contentious bind with for contemporary art.

2. The Ambiguity of Aesthetics

The term aesthetics has repeatedly been misused, or rather used insufficiently, to describe the formal qualities of an art object. This conventional interpretation of aesthetics is indicative of glossing over its complexity. This complexity is noted by Peter Osborne who identifies an ambiguity surrounding aesthetics. Osborne maintains this ambiguity stems from the numerous interpretations that arose since its emergence from philo-

⁴ He also reflects on the writings of Beckett, Rimbaud, Celan, Milosz, ben Rabi'a and Pessoa in *Handbook of Inaesthetics*.

sophy to a discourse in its own right in the 18 century. Osborne notes how the subjective nature of aesthetics undermined its academic status. He proposes that the desire to develop a more coherent discipline of academic worth led to the different interpretations of aesthetics since it first emerged as a genre of philosophical enquiry. Mario Perniola furthers this point by identifying “turns” that have occurred within the development of aesthetics since the late 18th century.⁵ He observes how new configurations of aesthetics emerged through a series of ongoing ruptures within previous aesthetic categories. This account of aesthetics draws on Paul Oskar Kristeller’s analysis of art and aesthetics and the theories of Jonathan Rée. Although this brief précis invariably glosses over more nuanced interpretations of the discipline, it is offered demonstrate how the conception of aesthetics as the philosophical interpretation of art emerged. This discussion is offered to support my claim that inaesthetics presents a re-configured form of aesthetics for contemporary art.

Because aesthetics is multifaceted, it is necessary to capture how aesthetics evolved to define a particular relationship between art and philosophy that privileges philosophy as the domain for thought. Prior to the emergence of aesthetics philosophical reflections on beauty and art had engaged Western thought. The Third Earl of Shaftsbury and the Scottish Enlightenment thinker Francis Hutcheson looked to Plato’s insights that connected beauty and morality to form their own theories.⁶ However, although Shaftsbury and Hutcheson are credited with writing on issues surrounding aesthetics, it is now accepted that Alexander Baumgarten secured the term aesthetics from the Greek *aisthānesthai* in his academic thesis *Meditationes Philosophicae* (1735) (Reflections on Poetry) and his unfinished textbooks *Aesthetica I* (1750) and *Aesthetica II* (1758).

Kristeller’s influential survey of the arts from antiquity to the 18 century reveals the emergence of art in its modern sense as coinciding with the emergence of aesthetics. Kristeller proposes Baumgarten as the founder of

⁵ Please see: Mario Perniola, (2007), ‘Cultural Turns in Aesthetics and Anti-Aesthetics’, *Filozofski Vestnik* XXVIII, no. 2, pp. 39-51.

⁶ For more see The Third Earl of Shaftsbury and Francis Hutcheson *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), written as two treatises; the subject of the first is aesthetics – *Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* and the second morality – *Concerning Moral Good and Evil*.

aesthetics insofar as he conceived a general theory of the arts (namely poetry) as a separate philosophical discipline. Baumgarten substantiated the term through his compilation, developing his reading of aesthetics as ‘sensuous knowledge’, from the Greek meaning ‘perceive sensuously’.⁷ Baumgarten’s texts were used in an academic context to teach students how *aesthetica* should be articulated in discourse and text. However Baumgarten failed to develop this doctrine with reference to visual art or music. Felix Mendelssohn criticised Baumgarten on this shortcoming and suggested that these aesthetic principles should be formulated so as to apply music and visual art.

Jonathan Rée describes how Baumgarten’s term aesthetics became connected with the fine arts. He identifies Gotthold Ephraim Lessing as re-launching Baumgarten’s term as a theoretical attempt to connect the different bodily senses to the various fine arts, including the non-discursive arts that Baumgarten had failed to consider. Rée identifies Lessing’s *Laokoön* linking the *bildende Künste* - the ‘formative’ or plastic arts of sculpture and painting with aesthetics. This link between the fine arts and aesthetics that we know today was further advanced by Kant’s comprehensive attempt to integrate the system of the fine arts (which had recently been expanded to five domains from previous three that were established during the Renaissance) with judgments of beauty through his theory of sensory experience in *The Critique of Judgment* (1790).⁸

Kant’s public and highly prolific response to Baumgarten’s thesis furthered the discourse, connecting it with the speculation of the nature of art. An acknowledgment of sensuous knowledge in Kant’s *third critique* increased the gap between the discourse of art and empiricism. Kant’s *third critique* complicates quantifiable scientific analysis by advancing the notion of “disinterestedness”. Kant’s notion of “purposiveness without purpose” ran counter to the previous role of art. The subjective nature of a discourse on sensuous knowledge was not without issue as it destabilised the Platonic interpretation of the didactic function of art.⁹

⁷The enquiry into sensuous knowledge was further developed through J.G. Hamann in *Aesthetica in Nuce*, (1762).

⁸ It is noteworthy that Kant rejected the whole idea of a theory of arts or artistic value in his first critique, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781).

⁹ For more see: Andrew Bowie, (2003), *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, 2nd edition,

The current interpretation of aesthetics as ‘the philosophy of art’ is a comparatively recent configuration, established by Hegel in the early 19 century expounded in his *Lectures on Fine Art* (posthumously published in 1835).¹⁰ Rée identifies the fulfilment of aesthetics as a philosophical discourse on art through Hegel’s synthesis of Plato, Lessing and Kant philosophical conjectures.¹¹ This dominant interpretation of aesthetics is problematic for contemporary art, as I will outline shortly, because it asserts the Platonic conception of philosophy as the locus of truth, thereby establishing philosophy as the space for thought. Although Hegel is associated with Romanticism through his contribution to *The Oldest System Programme ... his End of Art* thesis articulates his departure from the Romantic conception of art as the source of truth. Although Hegel claims art invites intellectual consideration, he maintains it is “not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is.”¹² Under these terms the relationship of philosophy to art is that of interpretation. By claiming philosophy ‘knows’ art, Hegel affirms the Platonic conception of philosophy as the locus of truth, locating meaning in the sole jurisdiction of philosophy.

3. Contemporary Art and the Troubling of Aesthetics

The notion that aesthetics, and accordingly the critic could impose meaning on art was brought to task from the domain of art practice at the turn of the nineteenth century. Practices now defined as early avant-garde complicated aesthetics through their explicit rejection of the prevailing standard in art. The introduction of unconventional artistic forms and gestures by Dada that included public gatherings, demonstrations, publications and performances at the *Cabaret Voltaire* such as Kurt Schwitter’s “psychological collages” or sound poems and Marcel Duchamp’s *ready-made* under-

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

¹⁰ This series of lectures was delivered in Berlin and compiled in 1835 by his publisher, Heinrich Gustav Hotho.

¹¹ Rée, ‘The Aesthetic Theory of the Arts’, 58.

¹² It is acknowledged that this manifesto is handwritten by Hegel. However many consider the work to be that of Schelling. Please see: Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity*, 55.

mined the role aesthetics by their resistance to interpretation.¹³ This concern with aesthetics that motivated the early avant-garde re-surfaced in the late 1960's and radically changed the nature of art and instigated a departure from the modernist to a contemporary reading of art. Foster, Osborne and Danto look to this moment in art practice that specifically problematised the role of aesthetics to formulate their readings of contemporary art.

Foster formulates his readings of contemporary art through his analysis of the neo avant-garde. Foster coined the term neo avant-garde to designate minimal and post-minimal practices that re-engaged with the concerns of the avant-garde, namely the troubling of aesthetics. Foster observes how an emergent concern with the dynamic between the 'subject/object' initiated a departure from a reading of the artwork as an autonomous idealised form. This shift of emphasis from the art object to the subject and their experience introduced new conditions for art that resisted traditional aesthetic categories. Like Duchamp's *ready-made*, Foster observes how minimal artworks no longer fulfilled the aesthetic requirements that applied to a modernist interpretation of art. Foster notes how Robert Morris' and Tony Smith's rejection of the plinth and Donald Judd's redefinition of the artistic form as a 'specific object' destabilised the notion of idealised, autonomous art object. The logic of Judd's definition is sound when we learn that his works, like those of his fellow minimalists, were fabricated in industrial factories.¹⁴ The minimalist departure from an overarching emphasis on the medium-specificity of the artwork that had been generally preserved since the late 18 century undermined formal traditional aesthetic categories that lacked the critical resources to engage with these specific objects.

By disrupting a visual bias associated with late modernism minimalist practices articulated a radical shift from an emphasis on the object to an emergent concern with the subject/object dynamic. This concern with

¹³ As. C. Foster observes, "The fabrication of Schwitter's collages is not simply a combinational task of fitting elements together; nor is it just an assembly of discovered materials. It is a more complex process of the constant reinvention and exploration of dialogues." Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 277.

¹⁴ The company that fabricated *Die* (1967) had a sign that read, "You specify it; we fabricate it."

experience and perception instigated a new, contemporary reading of art as an open contingent form. Smith articulates this radical shift in attitude in his now famous anecdote of his night ride on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. Smith articulates how his experience of this journey that was “mapped out but not socially recognized” did “something for me that art had never done.” His emphasis on experience is further asserted by his claim, “I thought to myself, it ought to be clear that's the end of art. Most paintings look pretty pictorial after that. There is no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it.”¹⁵

The minimalist emphasis on the subjects experience and their perception over the formal qualities of work prompted minimalism's most vocal critic, Michael Fried, to charge minimalism as the “negation of art” because it disrupting the idealised notion of art by threatening the “disciplinary order in modern aesthetics.”^{16 17} Fried coins the term theatricality to articulate that such physical forms of engagement situate the viewer's experience in a palpable presence of the here. He uses this term to wager his claim that minimalism negates art because it denies the viewer a proper aesthetic experience by initiating an immediate encounter with their physicality. The scale of Smith's *Die*, (1968) at 6 ft. that and its placement directly on the ground demonstrate this disruption to the visual bias by necessitating a new form of engagement that is more physical.¹⁸ Rosalind Krauss articulates a new form of encounter by reinterpreting the viewer of Morris's *Three L Beams* (1968) as a “mobile beholder”.

Fried maintains that it is impossible to approach these artworks as complete because, he maintains, “the contingency of perception” undoes the “purity of conception.”¹⁹ However, although Fried coined the term theatricality as a term of derision, Foster observes how Morris and Smith deemed contingency productive because it relocated the source of the

¹⁵ Wagstaff, *Talking with Tony Smith*, 386

¹⁶ Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 153.

¹⁷ Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 40.

¹⁸ Jonathan Rée examines the bias towards vision in his commentary on 20th century modernity. Rée looks to German philosopher Oswald Spengler's theory of culture in *Decline of the West* (1918). Spengler notes the underlying principles differ from culture to culture and observes through the development of perspective that the principles in the West became oriented by vision.

¹⁹ Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 40.

meaning from the critic to the subject and the “body in a particular space and time.”²⁰ These artists reinterpreted theatricality to articulate the overarching concern with the encounter, the subject’s experience and their perception. By identifying the “special complicity that a work exhorts from the beholder” theatricality demonstrates how meaning is formed through the encounter with the artwork and in this way immanent to art. Morris ends his essay *Notes on Sculpture, Part I* claiming that the emergence of aesthetic terms that are not thematised by formal aesthetics potentialises a “new freedom” in artistic practice.²¹ Morris develops this in *Part II* by claiming “The object is but one of the terms in the newer aesthetic” that extends to incorporate more contingent categories of experience and perception.²² Instead of reading theatricality as the negation of art, Foster registers how minimalism used this term to further the understanding of the artwork as an open-process, an unfixed form that requires the viewer to realise and complete the work.

Although Foster focuses primarily on minimalism, the term neo-avant-garde can be expanded to designate conceptualism. Osborne claims that contemporary art is premised on a “complex historical experience” that followed the destruction of the ontological significance of previous artistic conditions that was instigated by conceptualism.²⁴ When Osborne speaks of contemporary art he does not use the term contemporary as a chronological descriptor defining the present but one that asserts a continued interrogation of the meanings and possibilities of art. Osborne also observes how our contemporary reading of art is bound up with this troubling of aesthetics, so much so that he claims an “ineliminable” bind between aesthetics and contemporary art. The conceptual mandate of Art as Idea demonstrates this bind in its explicit contestation of aesthetics. By reassigning the role of the art object as a functionary to mediate idea conceptualism undermined the philosophical role of interpretation. The various

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Morris, *Notes on Sculpture Part II*, 229–230.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ “Q. Why didn’t you make it larger so that it would loom over the observer. A. I was not making a monument. Q. Then why didn’t you make it smaller so that the observer could see over the top. A. I was not making an object. Tony Smith’s replies to questions about his six-foot steel cube.” Morris, *Notes on Sculpture Part II*, 229–230.

²⁴ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, 48.)

processes associated with conceptual art practice, such as Joseph Kosuth's use of philosophical enquiry, Art and Language's archival practices, Laurence Weiner and Robert Barry's artistic gestures demonstrate clearly how aesthetics lacked the critical resources to thematise artworks that functioned primarily to mediate idea.

Osborne observes how conceptualism profoundly challenged aesthetics by introducing a new engagement between philosophy and art. Kosuth's direct use of philosophy in *One and Three Chairs* (1965) complicates aesthetics by shifting the role of philosophy from the external realm to the internal domain of art, demonstrating an alternative role of philosophy from that of interpretation. Osborne describes how *One and Three Chairs* literally performs Wittgenstein's philosophical conjectures on language by presenting the relation between language, picture and referent. In "Art After Philosophy", Kosuth argues that the explication of philosophical ideas through presentation affirms the philosophical status of the artwork so much so that he claims "art is analogous to an analytic proposition."²⁵ ²⁶ Kosuth explains how conceptual artworks demonstrate the separation between aesthetics and art by arguing that "art's existence as a tautology enables art to remain 'aloof' from philosophical presumptions."²⁷

Although Adrian Piper's conceptual art practice does not adhere to Kosuth's "exclusive" or "strong" conceptual reading of art as analytical enterprise, it nevertheless demonstrates how art offers a domain for thought by raising specific philosophical ontological questions surrounding the subject.²⁸ Piper's participatory work *Funk Lesson* (1982-1984) took place as a series of social events where the artist of black extraction taught white people the moves and history of funk. *Funk Lesson* exemplifies a work as an open-process, structurally, in the way that it unfolds over time and in the way that it requires a social group for its realisation and conceptually, in the way that the participants engagement play a role by adding to the meaning of this work. Danto cites this particular artwork (and earlier works from the late 1960's namely Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* (1964) and Carl Andres Bricks, (1966) to articulate a shift in art practice that exem-

²⁵ Kosuth, 'Art After Philosophy', quoted in *Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy*, 56.)

²⁶ Kosuth, 'Art After Philosophy' quoted in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 161.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, 49.

plifies a post-historical moment in art.²⁹ Although Danto's notion of post-historical can be aligned with a contemporary reading of art in that that conveys the conclusive fact that there are no longer any qualifications for art. Danto develops his reading of post-historical by reflecting on specific artworks from the late 1960s that resist categorization. (Danto's observations mirror Osborne's identification of a "transcategorical" quality that distinguishes contemporary art).³⁰ Without stylistic or philosophical constraints Danto proposes that the final moment in the meta-narrative of art is marked. However, Danto does not approach the post-historical as completely dismantling the institution of art. Instead of rejecting artworks that complicate aesthetics, (as was the case with Fried in his critique of minimalism), Danto observes their resistance to philosophical interpretation demonstrates a new capacity - the potential of the artwork to embody meaning.

Although Duchamp's first *readymade* pre-dates *Funk Lesson*, Danto references this seminal artistic gesture because it heralds a new dialogue between philosophy and art that he observes re-surfacing.³¹ In presenting objects that could not be determined by taste as good or bad, Duchamp's *readymade* set the conditions that mark the redundancy of formal aesthetics. Danto reflects on this moment in art practice as the liberation of art because it can no longer be conceived under a metaphysical judiciary of philosophy. Danto observes a double movement in Duchamp's *readymade*. By "sunder[ing] aesthetics from art" Duchamp's artistic gesture radically disassociated itself from philosophical interpretation.³² Similarly, with *Funk Lesson* it is impossible to interpret this work and establish it's meaning by example, insofar as appearances were concerned. Rather than offering a discrete form that might be readily interpreted through conventional aesthetic categories *Funk Lesson* problematises the nature of art and simultaneously complicates the role of aesthetics by introducing forms of activities

²⁹ Although Danto, like others refer to Andres seminal work as "Bricks" it's actual title is Equivalent VIII. Iseminger, *The Aesthetic Function of Art*, 56.

³⁰ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, 10.

³¹ As Danto states, "I owe to Duchamp the thought that from the perspective of art, aesthetics is in danger, since from the perspective of philosophy art is in danger and aesthetics the agency for dealing with it."

³² Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, 131.

such as dance lessons that might be more readily associated with everyday activities.

Danto identifies a defining sense of disorder in the post-historical moment where, “anything could be a work of art.”³³ He reflects on the emancipatory capacity of “period of information disorder” to posit his theory that meaning is immanent to art, and accordingly confirm that art is a domain for thought.³⁴ Within the aesthetic entropy of the post-historical moment Danto identifies a single universal essence in the plurality of contemporary art. This is outlined in his philosophical defense of his *End of Art* thesis (1999), which explains a contradictory aspect of seeing the “possibility of a single, universal concept” only when “extreme differences” were available in art.³⁵ By reflecting on the multifarious categories of art Danto identifies a “single, universal essence of art.” Rather than seeking to entice the beholder with its “external surface on which feelings play,” Danto maintains the universal essence in post-historical is precisely its capacity to embody meaning. By conceiving art’s “liberation” from “philosophical oppression” Danto relocates meaning and accordingly the act of thinking from the external domain of philosophy to the immanent domain of art.³⁶

4. Inaesthetics — A New Engagement Between Philosophy and Art

Through inaesthetics Badiou advances thought as immanent to art by presenting this schema as a philosophical project that departs from the task of defining art.³⁷ Badiou posits inaesthetics “against speculative aesthetics” (ie. aesthetics as the philosophical interpretation of art) because he maintains aesthetics imposes a false truth on art. Badiou configures inaes-

³³ Danto, *After the End of Art, Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*, 13 and

³⁴ Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, 131

³⁵ Danto, ‘The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense’, 128.

³⁶ Danto, ‘The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense’, 135.

³⁷ My reading of inaesthetics is predominantly informed by Badiou’s *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (1998), a series of his papers, including *Philosophy and Desire*, presented in Sydney in 1999 and *Fifteen Theses on Contemporary Art*, 2003, presented at the Drawing Centre, New York and secondary readings by Peter Hallward, Gabriel Riera, Sam Gillespie, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, Alberto Toscano and A. J. Barlett.

thetics as a new schema that disrupts this imposition. This in turn confronts the problematic relation between contemporary art and aesthetics. By stating inaesthetics “makes no claim to turn art into an object for philosophy” Badiou registers a new task for philosophy that overwrites philosophy’s interpretative role to reveal that art is “itself a form of thought”.³⁸

Inaesthetics presents a new schema to engage with the condition of thought in art by re-conceiving philosophy so that it may be conditioned by art, and not vice-versa. Badiou formulates inaesthetics in response to three previous schemata that he identifies as designating particular relationships between art and philosophy. He claims these schemata sustain “closure” because they lack the resources to reveal truths while undermining the fulfillment of new regimes of thought by imposing a false truth on art. Badiou’s three *schemata* follow Hegel’s *categories* and Schelling’s *classifications*. Like Hegel and Schelling, Badiou defines each schema by the relationship of art to philosophy, identifying the previous schemata as didactic (platonic), classical (Aristotelian) and Romantic (hermeneutic).³⁹

Badiou maintains that contemporary art cannot be approached philosophically through the previous schemata because they prohibit reciprocity between art and philosophy that is essential for the possibility of engendering of thought.⁴⁰ According to Badiou the didactic and classical schemata undermine arts primacy for thought by privileging philosophy as the site for thought. Badiou outlines how this occurs in the didactic schema that is informed by a Platonic understanding of art as a form of mimesis. Rather than reading art as an imitation of *things*, i.e. a form of representation, the Platonic understanding of art is that it is an imitation of *truth* itself. Under these conditions art is not the locus of truth but as a semblance of truth. “The charm of the semblance of truth” indicates a false truth, and as a false truth art must be placed under the control of philosophy.⁴¹

³⁸ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 3.

³⁹ It is worth noting that Badiou makes no reference to these philosophers. I venture this omission of Hegel and/or Schelling is not an oversight on Badiou’s part, but rather a strategy to distance inaesthetics from aesthetics.

⁴⁰ Badiou describes the current cultural situation as one of “saturation and closure”, referring to the proliferation of artistic forms that delineate and restrict the cultural horizon. Badiou, 2005, 2 & 8.

⁴¹ The platonic gesture of excluding art from the polis of his idealised *Republic* demon-

This suspicion of art is articulated by the explicit rejection of art from Plato's *Republic*. Plato rejected art because he maintained truth emerges from the rigorous process of reasoning founded on first principles of philosophy. Badiou outlines how the classical schema undermines art's primacy through the Aristotelian development of Platonic understanding of art as mimetic. In the classical schema Aristotle subverts Plato's suspicion of art as threatening the first principles of philosophy by advancing art as providing a cathartic function. As truth is not immanent to art, the classical emphasis on verisimilitude renders art beyond suspicion. Badiou's commentator Lecercle articulates how speculative aesthetics sustains the classical emphasis on verisimilitude by observing, "The poem is no longer a source of knowledge but has become the object of the theoretical gaze of the philosopher, on a par with natural phenomena, and no longer concerned with truth but only verisimilitude."⁴² Under the didactic and classical schemata artistic forms require interpretation from an external source because artistic truths are neither singular nor immanent. Badiou maintains that the didactic and classical schema cannot ensure the revelation of new regimes of thought because they do not recognise truth as immanent or singular to art.

Unlike didacticism and classicism, the Romantic schema corresponds with Badiou's understanding that artistic truth is immanent. The Romantic schema, defined as the age of poets or the "literary absolute" is associated with philosophical aesthetics of the late 18 century, and has remained dominant to date.⁴³ Heidegger's hermeneutic philosophical system of thought centres around a Romantic conception of the poem being the "natural site for authenticity and the disclosure of being and Truth."⁴⁴ However, as a philosopher who seeks to register *truths*, the Romantic belief that art is site of Absolute Truth is unsustainable for Badiou because it prohibits the possibility of *truths* in the alternate non-philosophical fields of mathematics, politics and love.⁴⁵ In his *Manifesto for Philosophy* (1999)

strates Plato's suspicion of art. Plato's suspicion is indicative of how he interprets art in relation to truth. Badiou, 2005, 2.

⁴² Lecercle, 'Badiou's Poetics', 210.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, 12.

Badiou describes Romanticism as a moment when philosophy becomes “sutured” to only one of its conditions.⁴⁶ Badiou maintains this restricts philosophy from the free play that is required in order to “define a regime of passage, or of intellectual circulation between the truth procedures,” in the additional non-philosophical fields that condition philosophy. He further states that, “the most frequent cause of such a blockage is that instead of constructing a space of compossibility ... philosophy delegates its functions to one or another of its conditions, handing over the whole thought to one generic procedure.”⁴⁷ Badiou maintains that philosophy must be “de-sutured” from the poem to ensure its free circulation so that the emergence of truths, be they artistic, mathematical, political or amorous, can be registered by philosophy.⁴⁸

Inaesthetics offers a new schema that re-configures philosophy so that it may be conditioned by art. By maintaining a quality of compossibility, inaesthetics sustains the immanence of truth in art in the Romantic schema, while re-asserting the presence of truths in the non-philosophical fields.⁴⁹ Badiou borrows the term compossibility from the philosophical system of the mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716). For Leibniz, compossibility describes a situation that permits the existence of properties or elements without one suppressing the other. Badiou deploys the concept of compossibility to define the reciprocal engagement between philosophy and art that underpins inaesthetics. Badiou argues that because inaesthetics sustains a free circulation of meaning between art and philosophy, it furnishes the possibility of the revelation of new regimes of thought. By departing from a one-sided engagement where philosophy’s task is to interpret art, inaesthetics ensures philosophy may reveal the meaning that is implicit to art.

How does Badiou as a philosopher sustain reciprocity between the disciplines? (As noted, Badiou focuses primarily on literary artistic forms to

⁴⁶ Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, 12–14.

⁴⁷ Riera, ‘Badiou’s Poetics’, 69.

⁴⁸ Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, 12.

⁴⁹ An enquiry into the revelation of mathematical, political and amorous truths are for another day. For more on the revelation of truths in these three non-philosophical fields please see Badiou, *Infinite Thought, Truth and the Return to Philosophy* (2005), London/New York: Continuum.

advance inaesthetics.) Although Badiou reflects philosophically on the poetry of Mallarmé, he maintains that he avoids interpretation through inaesthetics. Instead of imposing meaning on the artistic form Badiou seeks to reveal the thinking that Mallarmé's poetry generates. Badiou avoids the trap of interpretation by focusing on syntax that he identifies as the crucial operator in Mallarmé's practice. Badiou responds to Mallarmé's conception of the poem as "operation", conceiving Mallarmé's poetry is an artistic form that sustains an open-process. Badiou discloses how the operative dimension of *Un Coup de Dés* (The Throw of the Dice) (1897), is ensured by asserting a resistance to interpretation. When reflecting on this poem Badiou states "it is only there, in its powerlessness, that a truth is stated".⁵⁰ Although this enquiry is not focused on the exploration of truths, Badiou understands these truths as the emergence of new regimes of thought. This is because truths perform novelty by causing a rupture to existing knowledge. Badiou observes the complexity of artistic truths, and accordingly, the emergence of new regimes of thought as inherently difficult to register. Because truths perform novelty, Badiou maintains they are unnameable. However, Badiou maintains that it is the task of philosophy to register this *unnameable*. As Badiou's commentator Jean-Jacques Lecercle observes, "For language is always, at first at least, the language of the situation, in which the event cannot be named, in which the truths that follow from the event cannot be formulated. And yet the *unnameable* event *must* be named."⁵¹ The *unnameable* in the poetry of Mallarmé is its indeterminate quality.

When reflecting on art (via the poem), indeterminacy does not denote inadequacy because it is through this quality that the poem fulfils its task to activate thought. It is precisely by resisting interpretation that the poem fulfils its "operation" by necessitating more perceptive and imaginative forms of engagement. Badiou articulates how an indeterminate quality in Mallarmé necessitates engagement when he states, "Mallarmé's poem does not ask to be interpreted, nor does it possess any keys. The poem 'demands that we delve into its operation'."⁵² The "demand" that Mallarmé presents takes place in the encounter in the way that the poem

⁵⁰ Lecercle, 'Badiou's Poetics', 211.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 29.

provokes thought. Badiou observes how thought is activated by stating, “the enigma lies in this demand ... not in order to know what it means, but rather to think what happens in it.”⁵³ The necessity that each of us must configure our own thought is asserted by Badiou’s observation of the poem that: “No one is its master, but everyone can come to be inscribed within it.” For Badiou, the value of Mallarmé’s poem is precisely because it is subtracted from the “impasse of the master.”⁵⁴ By suspending authorship, the poem permits us to forgo the singularity of meaning, by replacing this with the thinking of this thought.

For Badiou, the significance of this *unnameable* quality in the poem is that it sets the conditions for the emergence of new regimes of thought by activating a form of thought that escapes the existing regime of knowledge. This form of thought that is activated by the poem because it cannot be qualified, quantified or fully determined. This is inferred by Mallarmé’s request that one must proceed with words that are “allusive and never direct.”⁵⁵ Because of its refusal to be determined Badiou names this form of thought *unthinkable*.⁵⁶ He develops this further by naming the poem *unthinkable* thought.⁵⁷ Badiou’s commentator A.J. Bartlett observes Badiou’s reading of the poem articulates a form of “thought whose intelligibility owes nothing to the regime of existing knowledge.”⁵⁸ Bartlett observes how this break with doxa performs novelty by setting the conditions for new regimes of thought. In this way the poem places a ‘demand’ on the reader by necessitating them to think, but in a manner that is resistant to reason or logic.

Inaesthetics reveals this particular form of thought as determined by, and dependant on, the artistic form. This articulated by Mallarmé’s definition of the poem as “a happening of *l’Idée* in the sensible itself.”⁵⁹ For Mallarmé, this is not the representation of the sensible. The sensible is what manifests as poetic thought. Rather than considering the poem as a sens-

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 56.

⁵⁵ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 134.

⁵⁶ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 19

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Bartlett, ‘Conditional Notes on a New Republic’, 217.

⁵⁹ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 29.

ible form of idea, affixing a specific idea through linguistic representation, the poem designates a process or an activity of thought in the way that it presents itself “via the linguistic power of a possible thought.”⁶⁰ This specific way of thinking arises through our encounter with the artistic form. Badiou develops this by describing the encounter with the poem as “the sensory perception of a regime of thought” and, accordingly, enactment of thought as “inseparable from the sensible.”⁶¹ Inaesthetics not only reveals the thinking raised by art, but also discloses the specificity of this thought as being bound with experience.

Badiou employs inaesthetics to explore how the poem embodies meaning and provokes thought. By revealing how Mallarmé’s work “operates” Badiou reiterates the contemporary notion of the artwork as an open-process that requires a subject to realise and complete the work. Through inaesthetics Badiou advances the capacity of the poem to raise thought by its refusal to entice the reader with a sensible form of idea. (A claim that aligns readily with Danto’s claim for *Funk Lesson*.) By employing inaesthetics to engage with the poem as an open-process that potentialises thought, Badiou demonstrates the capacity of inaesthetics to engage with the condition of thought. This observation supports my reading of inaesthetics as applicable for contemporary art. As noted in the first discussion, Perniola observes that new configurations of aesthetics emerged through a series of ongoing ruptures within previous aesthetic categories. By re-configuring the engagement between the domains of art and philosophy, I propose inaesthetics marks a “turn” in aesthetics that sustains a productive bind between art and aesthetics.

5. Exploring the Entwinement Between Art and Philosophy in a Contemporary Art Practice.

This discussion seeks to correlate with inaesthetics from the domain of contemporary art by reflecting on my practice through an artwork, *The*

⁶⁰ This method of registering informed by Badiou’s translator, Alberto Toscano, who states, “Badiou’s approach is committed to both declaring the autonomy of artistic procedures (poetic, literary, cinematic or theatrical) and to registering what he calls their ‘intrap philosophical effect’.” Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, x.

⁶¹ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 19.

Clear Apprehension of Ones Own Limitations. This discussion is presented to disclose how inaesthetics admits the complex relationship between art and philosophy that is sustained by my practice and how it also provides an aesthetic framework that does not interpret but reveals that art is “itself a form of thought”.⁶² This account reveals that practice activates me to think, but in a particular way that that differs from an abstracted reflection, argumentation and theory building that one would associate with the discipline of philosophical enquiry. I maintain that the thinking in my practice is also performed through the work in the way that these works *invite* thought. (I use the term *invite* to avoid making a grandiose claim that this work successfully activates thought. I use the term *invite* because this form of thought cannot be prescribed, being dependant on the one perceiving the work.) Through this discussion I demonstrate the value of inaesthetics to me as artist by disclosing how it provides an aesthetic framework to explore my practice, how my works operate and their potential to *invite* a particular way of thinking.

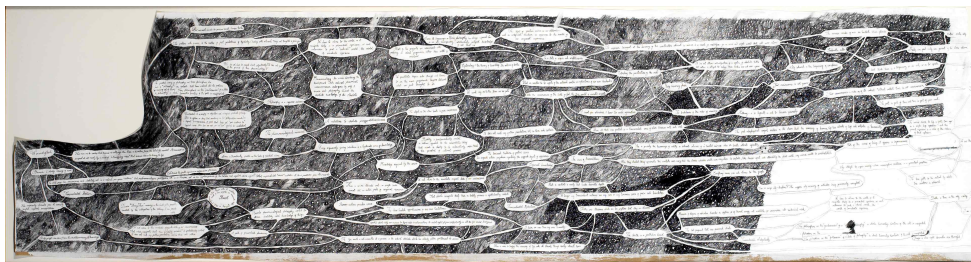


FIGURE 1. *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations* (2003). Unframed drawing (43.5 cm x 140 cm).

The Clear Apprehension... (FIGURE 1) is a long, narrow length of paper that is heavily rendered with intricate graphite marks using a .25 mm clutch pencil. This drawing comprises of over seventy-five philosophical statements on the subject of being, existence and knowledge. These statements are linked together in a web-like structure that floats on a surface of stars formed by tiny gaps of unmarked paper surrounded by erratic graphite

⁶² Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 20.

marks. The name Husserl transcribed in the bottom right corner suggests a link with phenomenology (FIGURE 2). The statement circling his name reads, “most of his projects are concerned with picturing an ideal programme rather than with its execution.” This quote appears to be lifted from some form of introduction to phenomenology. Other statements that relate to phenomenology and appear to be transcribed directly from Husserl include, “There is no original root, no single basic concept but an entire field of original experience” and “We have to return to the world as it manifests itself in a primordial experience, we must endeavour to find a ‘natural’ world, the world of immediate experience” (FIGURE 3).⁶³

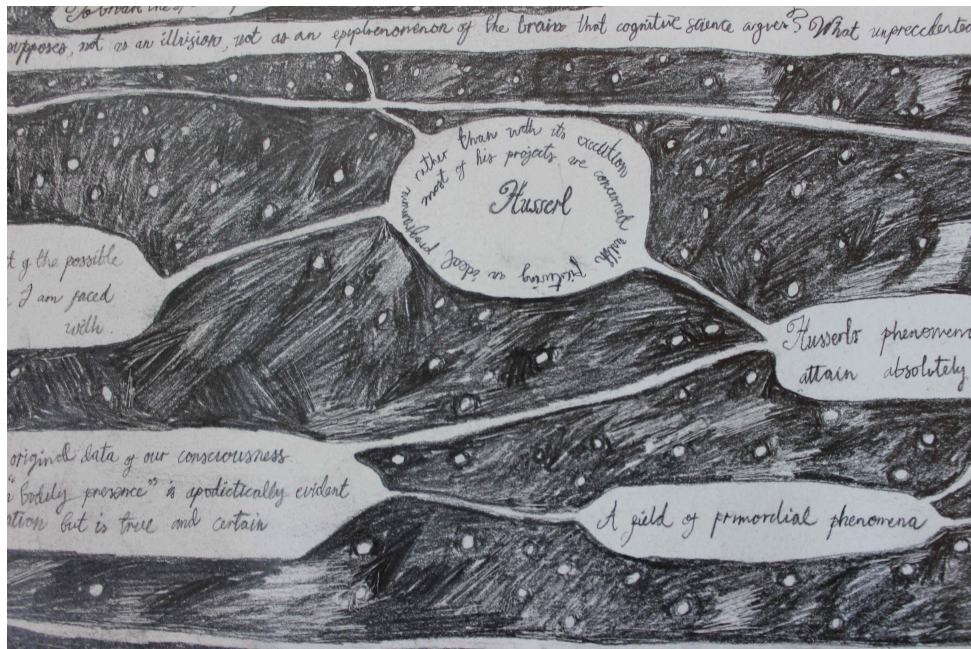
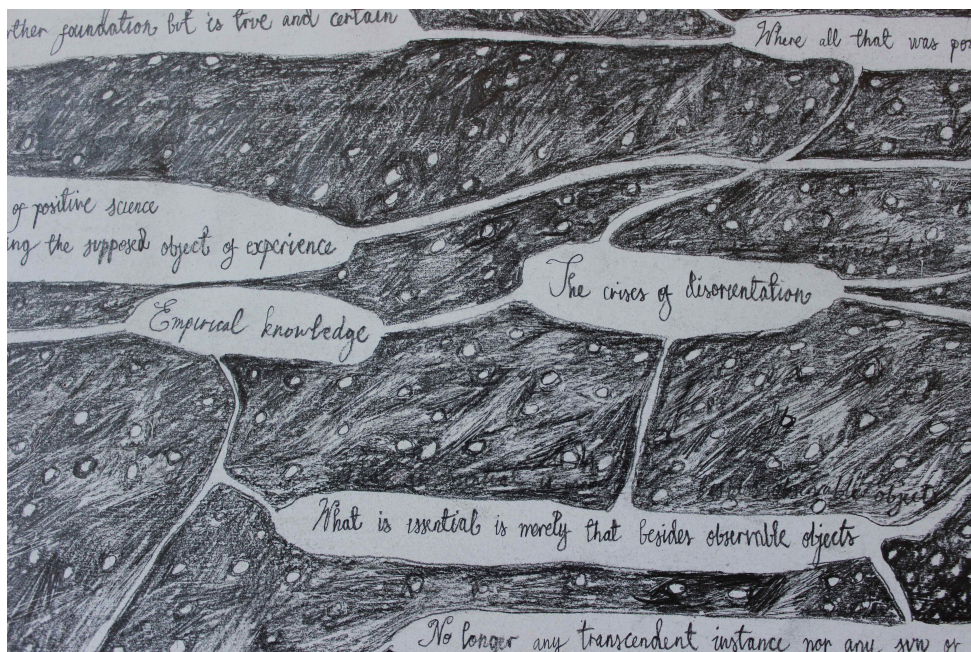
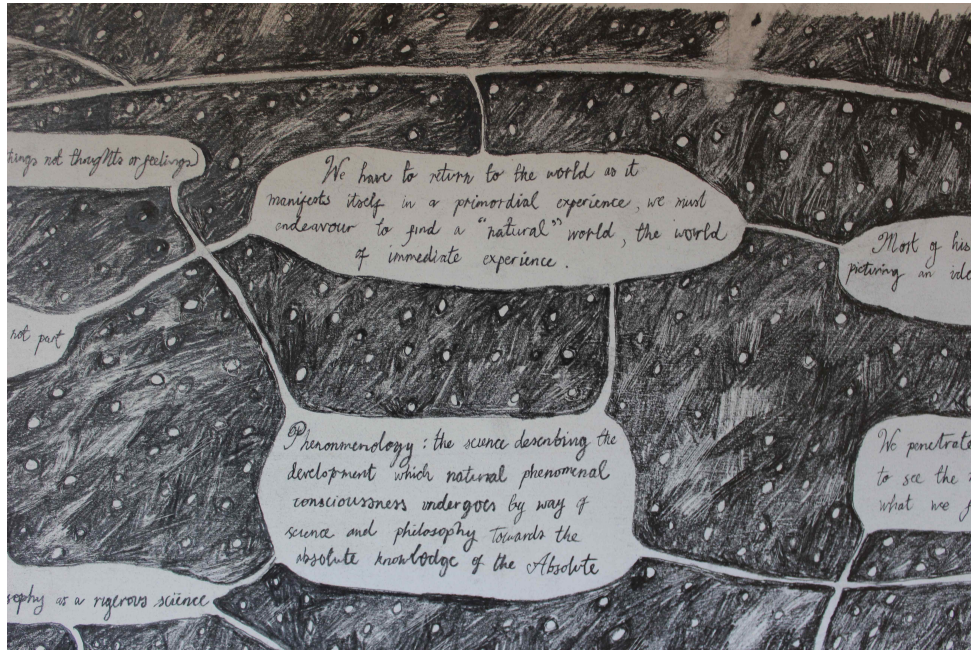


FIGURE 2. *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations*, Detail (2003).

⁶³ Because *The Clear Apprehension...* was made almost ten years ago it is difficult to source the seventy-five quotes rendered on the page. I have been unable to locate these two particular statements. However, as my direct reference would imply, I was engaged with his writings, and I venture that these are his statements, but that they have been transcribed incorrectly.



FIGURES 3 AND 4. *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations*, Details (2003).

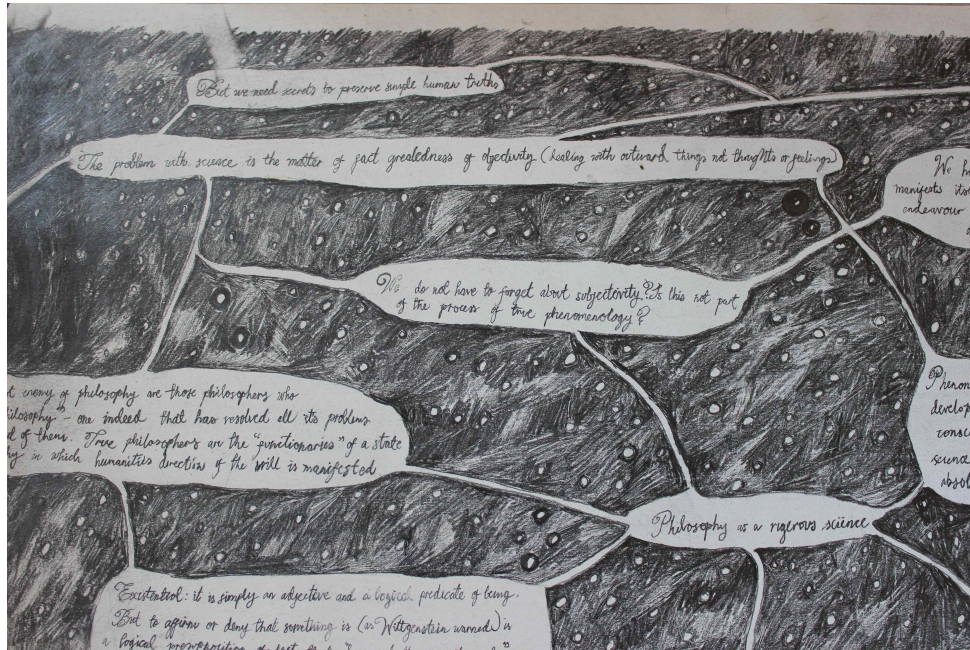


FIGURE 5. *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations*, Detail (2003).

Juxtaposed with these statements on phenomenology are others referring to truth and knowledge, existentialism, critical theory and eastern philosophy. For example, the term “Empirical knowledge” links to a statement that describes a psychological position, “The crises of disorientation.” This in turn links Baudrillard’s statement, “This is precisely the haemorrhage of reality, as internal coherence of a limited universe when its limits retreat infinitely,” taken from his essay “The Orders of Simulacra”, which then links to a retrospective anecdotal conjecture from an unknown source of the fallout of the atom bomb: “When they started doing experiments the scientists were wary that the atomic explosion would cause every atom to explode, like domino effect, and ultimately the whole world, nay universe, would be annihilated,” which in turn links to a statement associated with Buddhist philosophy: “Part of the essence of being it appears is impermanence,” leading to an existential statement that floats in an empty space in the bottom right-hand corner that reads, “Why attempt to repair meaning when meaningless existence is guaranteed?” To counter

this position a statement by the psychologist in Tarkovsky's film *Solaris* reads, "but we need secrets to preserve simple human truths (FIGURES 4, 5 & 6).⁶⁴ *The Clear Apprehension...* appears unfinished. This is not only this work remains unframed but also because the task of rendering stars appears to have prematurely stopped as some unfinished statements are left floating in an empty corner.

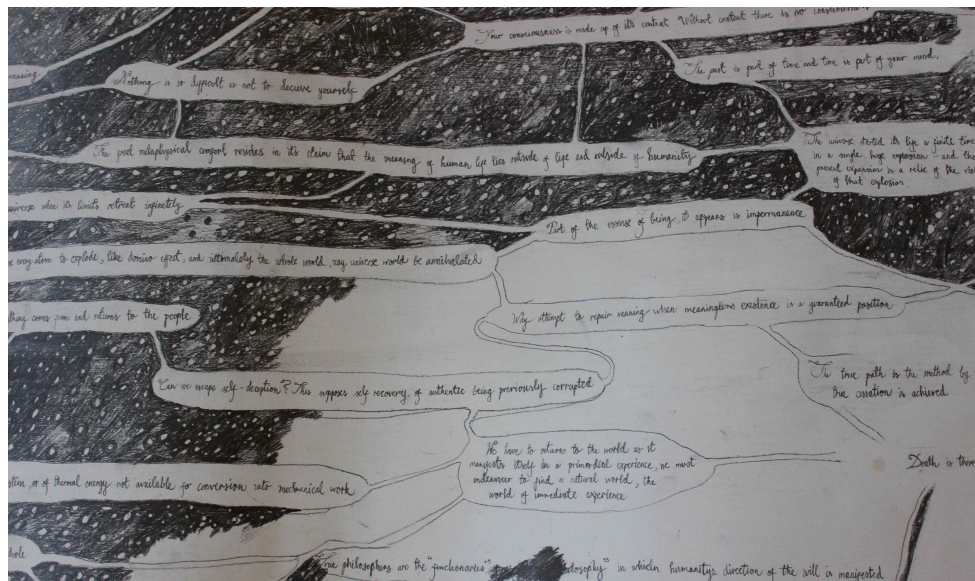


FIGURE 6. *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations*, Detail (2003).

The Clear Apprehension... demonstrates the complexity of the relationship between art and philosophy in my practice. This work emerges out of an engagement between the two domains. This is the case with all of the works I create making it impossible to completely separate philosophy and art in my practice. As post-conceptual artist I do not use philosophy to interpret my work but engage with philosophy throughout the entire process of art making. Similarly, my works do more than simply illustrate philosophical ideas. Instead of seeing philosophy as a resource, it

⁶⁴ Stanislaw Lem and Fridrikh Gorenshcheyn, *Solaris*, directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, 1972.

is this complex relationship between art and philosophy, a hesitancy to conflate art with philosophy and the impossibility of separating them in my practice that defines this complexity. *The Clear Apprehension* reveals how my practice performs an *entwinement* or in Badiou's metaphorical parlance, a "knot" between these disciplines. The term *entwinement* articulates how my post-conceptual practice complicates a straightforward reading of philosophy as separate or external to art.

My practice is not centred on the production of works of art but functions as a method to engage with the indeterminate nature of existence. I describe *The Clear Apprehension* ... as an artefact because it attests to this explorative pursuit. This drawing exemplifies an open-process, in the way that it *emerged* from this endeavour.⁶⁵ *The Clear Apprehension* ... reveals my practice as a multi-layered process that draws on artistic activities, such as drawing in tandem with pursuits associated with philosophy, such as engaging with philosophical texts. The tripartite process, of reading, rendering and reflecting demonstrates the *entwinement* as a symbiotic engagement where activities associated with art making and those associated with philosophical enquiry are equally weighted and necessary.

My practice presents a radically different engagement between art and philosophy that is designated by aesthetics. Philosophy is not deployed to interpret my work instead aspects of philosophical enquiry are implicated in their production. This is demonstrated explicitly by the statements in each drawing and by the titles that are borrowed from philosophical texts. It is also important to note that philosophy does not merely inform this drawing. *The Clear Apprehension* ... does not illustrate particular philosophical systems of thought. Although Husserl's name features in *The Clear Apprehension*... this work does not systematically present or illustrate Husserl's

⁶⁵ This understanding that process constitutes the artistic form is exemplified by Morris's exhibition *Continuous Project Altered* (1969). Describing this work, Morris maintains that the "process becom[es] part of the work itself." This notion of the artwork as process has been described succinctly by Morris in his reflections of *Continuous Project Altered Daily* (1969), at Leo Castelli Warehouse Gallery, New York. He states, "As ends and means are more unified, as process becomes part of the work instead of prior to it, one is enabled to engage more directly in the world of art making..." Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated", quoted in Jon Bird, (1999), 'Minding the Body: Robert Morris's 1971 Tate Gallery Retrospective,' in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. J. Bird & M. Newman, London: Reaktion Books, 96.

thoughts (FIGURE 2), nor does the drawing provide a diagrammatic rendition of phenomenology. The expansive range of ideas encompassing phenomenology, existentialism, scientific thought and eastern philosophy further complicates matters. *The Clear Apprehension...* demonstrates a notable difference between the practice of making art and undertaking theoretical research, philosophical or otherwise. The sources of the seventy-five statements that feature in this work are not specified. There are other crucial aspects of work that distance it from a strictly academic or fully rational enterprise. Unlike an academic text the primary source material and secondary sources are given equal weight. For example, the statement reading, “With the consciousness of the death of God, the true world is revealed as fable” is not a direct quote of Nietzsche, but Simon Critchley’s analysis of Nietzsche’s interpretation of nihilism in *Very Little ... Almost Nothing* (2004). The inclusion of quotes from films and my own sentiments complicates a clear reading of this work.

Although covering a wide range of discourse seems an unconventional method of conducting philosophical enquiry, this approach allows me to immerse myself in a more explorative mode of enquiry. My enquiry through practice is not carried out to prove a point, argue a philosophical position or stake my claim to a theory. My practice seeks to explore and approach our place in the world and the indeterminate nature of existence. The drawings attest to and emerge out of the *entwinement* of art and philosophy, (in this case demonstrated by the tripartite process of reading, reflecting and rendering) through which I develop my thoughts around the notion of ontology, subjectivity and the indeterminate nature of existence.

The notion of indeterminacy that I explore through my practice becomes manifest in the drawing. To explain this movement it is necessary to outline how these works emerged. To develop my understanding of the indeterminate nature of existence I looked to existential philosophical thought, which in turn led me to engage with other related philosophical systems of thought, such as phenomenology. Although phenomenology and existentialism are regarded as separate discourses they are directly linked. Phenomenology seeks to avoid presuppositions by locating the source of knowledge in the subjects’ experience. Existentialism is also centred on the agency of subject and through the premise that the indi-

vidual is free establishes that there are no universal truths. During this period I was looking also to the teachings of the Buddhist scholar S.N. Goenka to develop my understanding of existence, through his interpretation of impermanence.⁶⁶ This notion of impermanence and indeterminacy at the core of Buddhist thought also underpins the teachings of Jiddu Krishnamurti, who famously rejected the notion of truth.⁶⁷ My practice enabled me to make links between these different systems of thought through a non-systemic approach.

I devised a method of capturing key ideas by transcribing key statements onto large sheets of paper. The process of rendering enabled me to capture these abstract thoughts - literally speaking, as they appeared on the page, but also metaphorically in the way that I could spend time reflecting on them without their disappearing, had they be confined to my memory. Giving these abstract thoughts a physical presence enabled me to reflect more deeply on the indeterminate nature of existence by aligning these statements with others. Through drawing I formed new associations that became manifest in the web-like structure. The drawing offered an alternate perspective from where I engage with the notion of indeterminacy by connecting ideas associated with phenomenology, existentialism and eastern philosophy. In this way, statements such as “Human existence precedes essence” were literally linked with the claim that “The subject on

⁶⁶ This interest in yoga and meditation stems from my sustained practice of yoga and meditation since 1998. I had also been exploring Vipassanā meditation through the non-sectarian teachings of S.N. Goenka. Vipassanā meditation is performed in order to observe at the deepest level the constantly changing nature of the mind and body. S.N. Goenka describes *anicca* (impermanence) as fundamental to existence. He references the Bubble Chamber, an instrument that demonstrates how in one second a single atomic particle arises and vanishes.

⁶⁷ The Order of the Star of the East was founded in 1911 to proclaim the coming of the World Spiritual Leader J. Krishnamurti was made head of the order. On August 2, 1929 at the inauguration of the Annual Star Camp at Ommen, Holland, Krishnamurti dissolved the order before the three thousand members who had gathered. The following quote is taken from his speech: “I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect ... Truth being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organised; nor should any organization be formed to lead or coerce people along any particular path.” For more on the life and teachings of Krishnamurti see Mary Lutyens, (1975) *Krishnamurti: the Years of Awakening*, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, 272.

the other hand is pure consciousness” (FIGURE 7). The drawing provided a point of entry to reflect on the indeterminate nature of existence by juxtaposing ideas associated with phenomenology, existential discourse and eastern philosophy in a more immediate and physical capacity. By reflecting on my practice through this work, I observe that my thinking is bound with up with the artistic form, through the processes used to create the form, the experience of the activity and the reflection on and perception of the form as it unfolds.

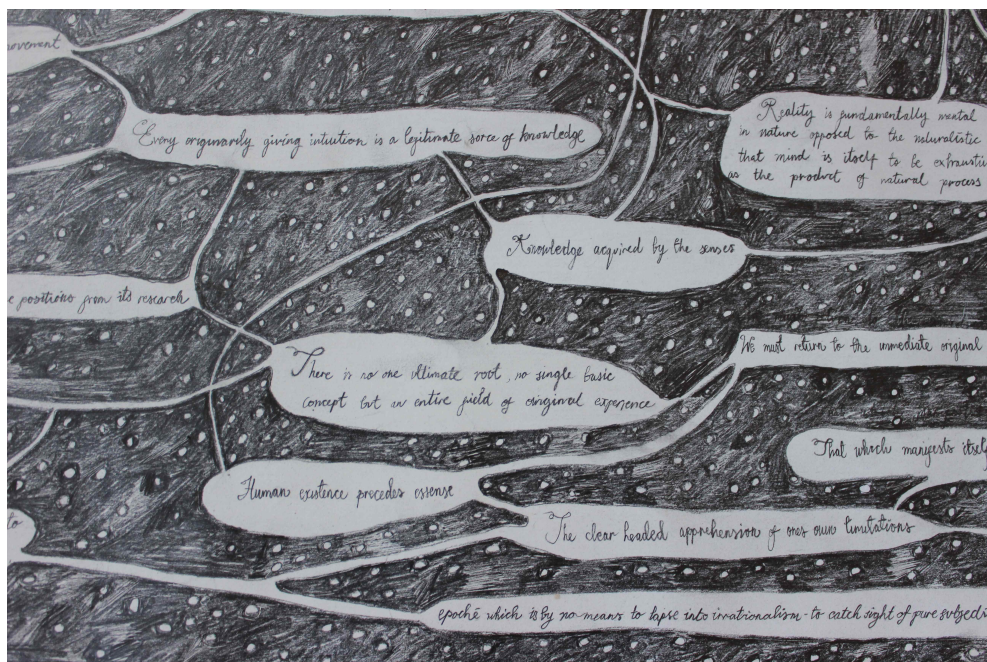


FIGURE 7. *The Clear Apprehension of One's Own Limitations*, Detail (2003).

Although the unedited and incomplete quality particular to *The Clear Apprehension* ... appears illogical, I maintain that there is an internal logic to this work. This logic occurs through the process of art making itself. In this way the meaning of the work is immanent because it presents the limitations of the self that existential philosophy seeks to articulate. The illogical web-like structure in *The Clear Apprehension* ... conveys a sense of disorder that articulates my grappling with philosophical systems of thought.

On reflection I construe the tracts of text floating in an unfinished depiction of the universe work as symbolically representing forms (both planetary and abstract ideas) beyond my reach. The fact that the drawing stops in the right-hand corner of the work gives the impression that the task has not reached fruition, that there is more work to be done and that these thoughts need further development. The logic of this work lies precisely in its unedited quality and incompleteness by revealing indeterminacy by articulating the artists struggle to fully understand existence.

Inaesthetics allows me to conceive how indeterminate quality of this work, “demands”, or in my lexicon, *invites* thought. Because *The Clear Apprehension* ... does not make clear statements it requires further teasing out on the part of the viewer. Because this form of thought is determined by and dependant on the viewers encounter with the work I propose it as bound with experience. The fragments of philosophical thought that are awkwardly transcribed on a large sheet do not relay ideas in a logical didactic way. The strange and illogical apparatus that presents these ideas require more perceptive and imaginative forms of engagement. As outlined in the previous discussion Badiou distinguishes artistic thought as “inseparable from the sensible” and “*unthinkable*”. He confirms this by arguing this form of thought is “irreducible to philosophy”, because he sees philosophy as “devoted to the invention of concepts alone.”⁶⁸ *The Clear Apprehension* ... demonstrates that thinking raised by art is not analogous to the form of thought instituted by conventional methods of philosophy. This drawing *invites* a particular way of thinking that differs from differs from an analytical enterprise because it does not follow a systematic process of theory building and is not bound with the strictures of reason. This drawing *invites* a particular way of thinking that unfolds on an experiential level. Thought is formed through the viewer’s encounter with, and their perception of this artistic form.

My reflections on the *The Clear Apprehension* ... demonstrate the value of inaesthetics for me as an artist. The entwinement of art and philosophy in my practice demonstrates the necessity for a new aesthetic framework to engage with my work - inaesthetics provide this framework while enabling more rigorous engagement with my work and how it operates. By

⁶⁸ Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 9-19.

registering that contemporary art asserts the condition of thought and concurrently bound up with the troubling of aesthetics I see it as essential to our current understanding of contemporary art and aesthetics that the ruptures that arise through contestation are acknowledged. From my perspective as an artist, a complete departure from aesthetics would obscure the complex bind that defines the current status of contemporary art and the complexity of aesthetics as a discourse, acknowledging that it continues to evolve and develop the critical resources to engage with contemporary art.

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