

Master of Arts

Research Project Synopsis

Student Name: Amanda Watson

Wintec Student ID: 16452124

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Preliminary Synopsis of Research Project

This document will be assessed by the Media Arts Postgraduate Programme Committee as part of your application to study and in the consideration of the suitability of your project for supervision. It will be accompanied by a portfolio of recent works. You may be invited to amend it during the application process. If your application is approved, this synopsis will form the basis of a teaching and learning agreement between you and your supervisors, and be used in the development of your research proposal that is part of your study.

This document shall be read in conjunction with all relevant documentation, including but not limited to:

- Wintec's [Academic Regulations](#) and the [Master of Arts Programme Regulations](#)
- The Master of Arts Supervisory responsibilities (will set up as link to pg resources webpage)
- Wintec's [Human Ethics in Research Guidelines and Procedures](#)

Please briefly outline the initial ideas you have for your area of research addressing the following:

1 Make a brief description of the potential final outcome(s) you could expect to achieve in your practical project.

An exhibition of paintings for exhibition.

2 Describe the project and the general area of research enquiry.

My research will investigate how contemporary paintings register experience of place. The body of work will demonstrate the findings, and use them to work out how to convey a sense of place, or an experience of place, in outside environments that are uncultivated or not built up, and in the studio setting. Information will be gathered by spending times in the environments, to paint, take photographs and moving image, make drawings, to use along with my memories of the site.

What the work might communicate

- moments or types of experience rather than a translation of a scene (general non-specific imagery) using abstraction in its suggestive obscurity
- experience of landscape/site – my ‘experience’ in terms of Jane Bennett’s ideas about ‘vital materialism’ and the exchange between things

- An invitation to pause and notice
- An invitation to engage physically with the work
- Time, duration (Mehretu – concept of flattening of time, past present future through her marks/language/erasure of marks)
- indications of natural matter – surfaces of places
- Relationship between artist’s body movements and the application of mark-making
- Conceptual territory between landscape as a living environment and as an experience
- The material qualities and behaviours of materials and the way they are used

3 Contemporary and historical context

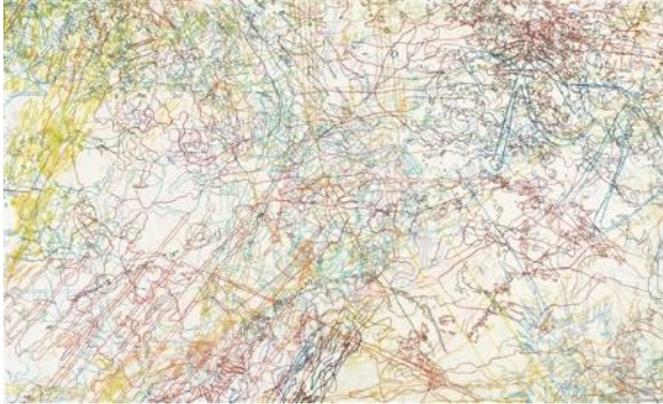
Contemporary context

I will analyse the work of selected artists whose work moves between landscape and abstraction, to look at the how painting conventions are used. I aim to set up a contemporary community of practice for my work, that will springboard discussion about how experience of place can be registered through painting in the contemporary context.

I will look at the work of artists where experience of place includes physical connection, memory, and a more conceptual political and social

connection, to build up a sense of place. And work that shows evidence of the painting process and the unpredictable things that occur during the painting process, and work that moves between landscape and abstraction – focusing on Peter Doig, Ingrid Calame, and Julie Mehretu

- Cecily Brown (UK/LA)
- Barbara Tuck (NZ)
- David Hockney (UK)
- Judy Millar (NZ)
- Marina Rheingantz (BR)
- Andreas Eriksson (SE)
- Ralph Hotere (NZ)
- Ingrid Calame (USA). *American painter Ingrid Calame (born 1965), is known for her complex map like paintings that trace fragments of environments and human detritus.*



#219 Tracing up to LA River by Ingrid Calame, coloured pencil on mylar, 122x203cm, 2005 (Source: Artnet, 2019)

- Peter Doig (UK). *Peter Doig, born in Scotland in 1959, is a prolific painter and is well known for his timeless and yet personal work that is full of imagination, mystery, observation and memory of places and events.*



Pelican (Stag), oil on canvas, 276x200cm, 2003, by Peter Doig (Source: Doig, 2014)

- Julie Mehretu (Ethiopia/USA). American painter Julie Mehretu, born in Ethiopia in 1970, is well known for her multi-layered abstracted landscapes that combine architectural drawings, geometric shapes and gestural marks that speak about geographies and histories.



Julie Mehretu, Mogamma 'A Painting in Four Parts' Part II, 2012, Ink and acrylic on canvas, 15 x 12 feet

Historical context

plein air painting, abstract expressionism, action painting, trajectory of gesture and process

- Painting outside and responding to environmental conditions, direct connection to experiences, limitations of time and physical challenges to produce a kind of immediacy and naturalism (Plein air painting in early nineteenth century in France/Italy/England - the Barbizon School, the Macchiaioli Group, and the Newlyn School; French Impressionism).
- Gesture was understood as an artist's personal expression during abstract expressionism in the United States in the 1940s, then the perception of it pulled away from the identity of the artist and was exposed as being a convention, or a semiotic sign – something to be read.
- Process in painting began to become a subject in its own right (Rosenberg/action painting), and in the work of the artists I'm looking at here, process is central and evident.

For Rosenberg, the act of painting is where a revelation could occur, and he considered this kind of encounter in an anthropocentric way, as revealing something of the artist's inner self, whereas contemporary new materialist theorists such as Bennett and Haraway would see it as revealing something about the broader ecological assemblage – the relationships between human *and* non-human things – rather than about the human specifically. This shift away from a human-centred perspective is evident in the trajectory of gesture in painting

4. Theoretic context

Aspects of materiality, representation, time, process, and mark making that are relevant to my project:

- Ideas associated with new materialism, such as the idea that interactions or encounters between actants is where disclosures can occur - 'actant' / Bruno Latour's 'actor-network' theory where relationships between all things that constantly shift and change. Latour (2017), uses the term 'actant' to describe both human and non-human agents involved in these relationships.
- Jane Bennett's 'vital materialism', where interactions between things can occur to create new understandings and Donna Haraway's 'borderlands' or 'contact zones' as places where the push and pull of knowledge occur and connections between things can arise.
- I suggest that the encounters between environments, materials, and myself as artist, are where surprising understandings of place can occur, and I want my paintings, and the process of making them, to evidence this

5 How will you extend your previous work in your field and what are some possible research questions that you hope to answer with your project?

I will aim to extend ideas of process in painting and using materials in ways that engage with environments, to give a sense of collaboration. I would like to experiment with scale, mark making, and practical application techniques.

Research questions

- What are some of the conventions and values of painting that move between landscape and abstraction, as embodied in the work of

Ingrid Calame, Julie Mehretu, and Peter Doig?

- How is 'process' and 'gesture' used to register 'experience of place' in the work of these artists?
- How can these be extrapolated and reformed in the making of a body of paintings for exhibition, to represent experience of place?

6 Bibliography of texts that relate to the proposed project and dissertation

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- 7 List the facilities/equipment you will require to support your practice (such as a painting studio space, editing suite, specialist equipment or software).

Studio, workshop, library, audio and camera gear, printer, photocopier

- 8 List the kinds of supervisory support/expertise that would be most appropriate to this project.

Tim Croucher – practice supervisor

Ed Hanfling – theory supervisor

- 9 Ethical and copyright considerations (where applicable). Your research project will need ethical approval if it involves observing, surveying, interviewing or in any way recording human participants. Copyright issues may arise in music projects, using existing music scores and/or music. Please follow Wintec's [Ethics approval guidelines](#).

