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Beyond Painting, Beyond Landscape: Working Beyond the Frame to Unsettle Representations of Landscape

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In this article I reflect on an art practice-based project that I have been working on in response to a particular landscape in the far west of Cornwall that was subject to a violent storm and flash flood in 2009. Landscape studies in geographical discourse have a long history of engaging with critiques of representation that focus on the power of the frame to conflate the culturally and politically constructed image of landscape with a substantive material and embodied form of knowing. Parallel developments within art discourse have shifted from a consideration of the form and essence of the art object to thinking about the troubled, uncomfortable operations of images and the generative work that art does. As such, both landscape and image could be described as provisional and generative, involving troubled subjectivities; both could be said to operate through processes of dissemblance, instability, and ambiguity that perform across and between frames. In light of such critiques, how might a visually orientated arts practice (understood in a materialist, embodied, and emergent sense) function amidst the aporetic hauntings and dissonant conditions found in this landscape? **Key Words: dissensus, expanded field, landscape, painting, transitivity.**

At first sight, the cliffs of West Penwith in Cornwall[1] are solid and impermeable. Made of hard granite, they stand often 150 m above sea level, seemingly impervious to the frequent storm ravages that sweep in from the Atlantic. As they are protected by various environmental and heritage designations, development poses little threat. This is an area of rugged moors, ancient field systems, and scattered settlements; it is a favorite holiday destination and walker's paradise. Meanwhile second homes sit alongside homelessness, "portfolio working," and scratching out a living. It is a landscape marked by complexity, contradiction, and compromise in which different histories and narratives interweave and collide.

Walking daily along the Poldark cliff line (Morris 2015; Figure 1), I am reminded of this complexity. The linear and horizontal boundary of coastline separating land and sea, so clearly represented by line-on-map and way-marked path along the cliff top, feels little more than surface decoration. Stretching way out under the cliff line at Levant (half a mile past Botallack Head) is a labyrinth of hand-tooled and blasted underground mine workings. Levant Mine, now a visitor attraction owned by the National Trust, was known as the "mine under the sea" with workings stretching out under the waves as far as a mile and a half. Miners would often hear the rumble of rocks moving around the seabed in storms over their heads. Levant was also the site of one of the worst recorded mining disasters in Cornwall. In October 1919, the man engine (the mechanical lift used to take miners deep down into the workings) collapsed, with thirty-nine

FIGURE 1 Filming *Poldark* (BBC production) at Wheal Owles, Botallack Head, West Cornwall. Photograph: © Tim Martindale/Apex. (Color figure available online.)

lives lost and many more injured. For many like me who walk the cliffs here, these histories resonate through time and space as we encounter other lives and the material traces they left behind (DeSilvey 2012, 49–50).

A couple of miles north, an unnamed stream runs off the moor from Pennance (meaning "head of the valley" in Cornish) for a mile until it joins the Atlantic at Porthglaze Cove. On 5 April 2009, a localized storm came in unexpectedly, straight off the Atlantic and directly hitting the now inland, fossilized cliff line through which the stream usually trickles. This cliff, or raised beach, was formed during the warm climatic period of the Miocene (23–5.3 million years BP). It edges the High Country of the West Penwith moor a couple of miles inland, running laterally above the coastal plateau of the north coast for some miles (Knight and Harrison 2013). With the moors still waterlogged from winter, the run off funnelled down through the valleys of Zennor and Pennance. Over a period of two hours, the settlements of Zennor and Boswednack were flash flooded. Little was able to hold ground against the sudden torrent, with even a tractor losing its grip and being swept down the road toward Zennor village. It took six months for the National Trust and local authorities to complete repairs to bridges along the South West Coastal Footpath, effectively closing this much visited section of West Cornwall through the usually busy summer months.

This interdisciplinary art-practice-based research project, within geography, has grown out of a long-standing engagement as an artist living and working in this landscape of West Cornwall. I am concerned to find a way of image making that troubles this overwhelmingly beautiful touristic landscape by accounting for the often quite different reality of living here—the "post-

industrial" Cornwall, for example, that has attracted substantial European structural funding to try to address deeply embedded levels of disadvantage and poverty.

With the framings of landscape by the heritage industry, and the international Modernist legacy of artists associated with St. Ives[2] in mind, I walked the stream, considering the material power of water over and through rock to trouble notions of a harmonious landscape, to cut anew the coastline, and to disrupt the narrative of carefree holiday destination. I became fascinated by how this tiny trickle, suddenly swollen by flood, revealed, or "performed" even, the deep time-embedded liveliness of the Earth. Geological maps reveal that the stream lies along a fault in the granite caused by tectonic activity—a folding in the Earth's plates about 350 million years ago. It is a fault line formed through deep-in-time geological processes still complicit in the event world of this stream today. Hinchliffe (2003) described a river as "event, an on-going achieve-ment of multiple trajectories, multiple processes" (194). At the point of flood, with the surging water spilling over or washing out bridges, homes, garages and trackways, 3,500 years of humanity shaping this landscape were folded into an event in which "humans, nonhumans and materialities are woven together as hybridised collectives" (Brettell 2015, 5). This is a whirl of entwined and spinning effects and affects reaching far back into time, of which we as human are only one part. The volatile Earth will continue to throw major challenges our way, despite our best, or indeed our worst, endeavors. Back in the studio, I was looking for a way to work with this liveliness of the stream that might avoid the framing or static tendency of images, and to rehearse the interdisciplinary and praxis-centered approach I have taken.

The source of the stream a mile inland up on the moor is, in a topographical sense, easier to work out than the source of the project—why am I doing this? On one hand, I can write categorically that the starting point for the project is and was the violent flood of 2009. But I can also then talk about the complexities of this landscape in which I am interested, and a wish to trouble the picturesque and surface narrative. I can write of the elderly St. Just man I chatted to in 2007 who, despite losing six brothers to silicosis,[3] is still wistful for the late twentieth-century days of Geevor,[4] now a museum, then a productive mine—"It doesn't bring in the money like [mining] used to." I can write of the warden who told me that, with second-home inflated house prices, the only way he will return to Zennor, the village in which he was brought up, is "in a box." There is also my own story of painting in the landscape with my mother; it was a formative part of my early years, which I have struggled to reconcile with my practice over the years. With the rise of conceptual approaches to art making, painting generally, and landscape painting in particular, was considered an uncritical form of practice with romantic overtones. With the gradual resurgence of painting and materials-based practices into the contemporary mainstream (Petersen 2005; Verwoert and Rorrison 2005; Graw, Birnbaum, and Hirsch 2012), a return that I am aware brings with it a whole set of complexities, I needed to think, through praxis, how a materials-based practice might function in these theoretical landscape and visual culture contexts. And so as Wylie (2012a) remarked in regard to the walker and writer Tim Robinson, I returned to painting and site-based working "acutely aware of [my] inheritance of a set of idioms and tropes, through which the landscape is framed and apprehended" (both in terms of the history of English landscape painting generally, but also the specific tradition of St. Ives Modernism), and that the work, by implicating to some degree land and life, "bears traces of a romantic inheritance" (7).

The research process has unfolded in cycles that have tended to have distinct stages involving the setting up of a problematic (which can either take the form of a theoretical proposition, or a scored proposition generated through praxis); a period of practice as research, working on site

and in the studio to develop a materials-based response to this problematic; a revisiting of the original starting point to reflect on the practice using desk-based research and engagement with theory; and, finally, a presentation of the work and the solicitation of feedback, a process that produces its own problematic, which can become the starting point for a new cycle of work. This cyclical process does not privilege either practice in the studio or desk-based research; instead they talk to and through each other. The structure of this article reflects this cyclical relationship.

Initially I drew up a score or set of rules by which to work. I was to walk the length of the stream from its watershed, up on the West Penwith moor above Pennance, to where it joins the Atlantic at Porthglaze Cove just over a mile away. This walk was to be drawn out temporally, taking in places of pause for investigating through wandering, drawing, photography, note taking, and journal entries. It took some months before I allowed myself to climb down to the cove for the first time, the final point of pause. I had no preconception of where this would lead; the challenge at this point was to "be *involved* in the landscape" (Pearson and Shanks 2013, 135), to immerse myself in an embodied experience—"a practised environment" (Cresswell 2003, 277) and from this experience generate material with which to work in the studio. To echo Solnit (2001),

> My circuit was almost finished, and at the end of it I knew what my subject was and how to address it in a way I had not six miles before. It had come to me not in a sudden epiphany but with a gradual sureness, a sense of meaning like a sense of place. When you give yourself to places, they give you yourself back, the more one comes to know them, the more one seeds them with the invisible crop of memories and associations that will be waiting for you when you come back, while new places offer up new thoughts, new possibilities. Exploring the world is one of the best ways of exploring the mind, and walking [like art] travels both terrains. (13)

In what follows I introduce three strands of early investigation in the studio that will form the basis for reflection and discussion. In the second section, I set out the theoretical backdrop by briefly outlining the complex relationships and synergies between phenomenologically oriented landscape theory, images, and representation, with a particular focus on the work of Rancière (2007b, 2013) and the operation of images in what he referred to as the aesthetic regime of art. In the last section I return to reflect on practice, particularly to consider what happened when the work discussed in the first section of this article was installed as work in progress in a gallery space. I propose that the distance of the studio allows for the opening up of a gap or void; in Rancière's (2013) terms, this is a space of dissensus between word and image. For me, these fractures and slippages allow something else to happen in the spaces in between visuality and landscape. This offers the possibility of a practice where the contingent and individually subjective hand of the artist acts to mirror many of the provisional and unsettled conditions of landscape under which the work is being undertaken, highlighted in this case by the flooded stream. Art "beside itself" has the potential to unleash both landscape and painting from their respective frames (Joselit 2009, 132–34).

THREE PHASES OF PRACTICE: DISRUPTING THE VIEW

Returning to the studio having spent some months traipsing the moor and overgrown banks of the stream, three strands of work developed over the next year: first, a large-scale mapping or polyform painting, *Poniou*; a slowly emerging engagement with microforms associated with the stream called *Fuchsia*; and finally the triptych installation *The Ocean City*. In this section, I

introduce these phases of work in turn, returning later to consider the significant way in which these three phases came together and became more than themselves in the form of gallery installation and presentation.

Poniou (Figure 2)

After the months of walking, drawing, and photographing the stream, I was faced with the problem of how to "start" in the studio. In previous work focused on derelict houses, I had used multiple and disrupted vanishing points to distort conventional ideas of Cartesian perspective, so that although the images could be read as rooms within derelict houses they could not be described in any way as static (Vickery 2009–2011). Walking in the Cornish landscape, with no obvious perspectival lines to situate the artist and the view, I felt I needed to find a different way of working that had the potential to disrupt and unsettle any tendency toward the fixing or framing of this landscape within my work. I started to experiment with several strategies: the use of multiple forms, the juxtaposition of conventional pictorial elements, and the collaging of painterly traditions.

I had a stack of identical small canvases that had been sitting looking at me for a while. This, from the practical point of view of economy and availability, prompted me to start working with the idea of an extended polyform. Working in the studio, it is quite often the contingent or incidental that prompts development. What emerged was a painting of many parts, 7.5 m long, that took on the form of a visual mapping of the project. At first blush, it reads as a very direct horizontal narrative of the stream from its source on the moor to where it meets the Atlantic a mile later at Porthglaze Cove. Close up, however, you can see that the image is fractured between and across canvases, employing a process of collage or assemblage to break the illusion of representation, or direct semblance between landscape and its imaging. I intended that another space—a gap—open up, somewhere between paint and landscape; it is this idea of a gap that retained its significance throughout the project. In some parts of the work the handling of paint resembles the surface of a puddle, drawing the viewer

FIGURE 2 *Poniou*, 2012–2014. A polyform painting spanning nineteen canvases, overall measurement 8 m × 1.6 m, oil on canvas. (Color figure available online.)

into a close examination of the surface as paint. In other places, the scale hovers between middle ground and far distance. In this way, and departing from the usual conventions associated with landscape painting, the viewpoint moves from the horizon to the surface of the canvas and back again, setting up a tension that avoids any obvious reading of the image as a mimetic. I wanted the painting to function in such a way that, while holding together as a whole by virtue of its physical presence, it was experienced as visually disrupted by an audience moving from one section to another. Indeed, the size of the piece makes it very difficult to take in at one view, and almost necessitates that the spectator walk the length of the piece. It demands an embodied encounter, drawing up close and then standing far back again, implicating a fuller corporeal experiencing of the work than might usually happen when looking at a small framed landscape on a gallery wall.

I was also making use of other methods to disrupt "the view." Traditionally landscape painting (and painting more generally since the Renaissance) is associated with the "golden section," a mathematical formula that splits the canvas into sections for the ideal distribution of weight or composition of its subject matter (Cosgrove 1985). Typically this can be interpreted in terms of foreground, middle ground and distance, with the horizon line forming a strong horizontal line and a corresponding feature, such as a tree, forming a strong vertical approximately one third of the way into the canvas.[5] With *Poniou*, I wanted to trouble the conventions of landscape painting by juxtaposing the close up with the far away, the micro with the macro, and the immediate materially liquid canvas with the far distant sublime of horizoned ocean. I wanted to bring spectators into almost direct contact with the picture surface and then push them back into the far distance of spectatorship. Theoretical stances of absences and presence came to mind.

Third, I wanted to juxtapose different ways of handling paint and mark making, appropriating ways of working with landscape from different periods of art history. As the painting (and the spectator) moves from one end of the spread of canvases to the other, art historical references include the romantic, indexical, and immediate gestures of impressionism and expressionism; the sometimes empty vastness and absences, and at other times crazed surfaces, of abstract expressionism; and the overly presenced content of photography worked hyperrealism. I was and remain interested in what happens when different ways of working arise in the immediacy of painting processes hitting up one against another.

Fuchsia (Figure 3)

The second phase of work arose from noticing that the banks of the stream were covered in naturalized wild fuchsia, which would often flower all year in the secluded and usually tranquil gorge below the unnamed bridge at Poniou. I have a long-standing interest in wild flowers, and the tapestry of microflora beneath our feet on the cliffs and moors, usually trampled without a passing thought, had been part of a former art project (Vickery 2008). Associated with the ancient history of the Incas, discovered by Europeans in the West Indies in the eighteenth century, the fuchsia reached the height of its popularity in the United Kingdom in the 1800s.[6] I had often noticed before fuchsia growing up on the moor, but only in the gardens of derelict cottages, pointing to former inhabitation or dwelling. I conjectured that the plant had been washed down along the banks of streams by storm runoff. The carmine-red sanguine intensity of its flower recalled for me the flood event, and it was this resonance with tragedy I wanted to pursue further.
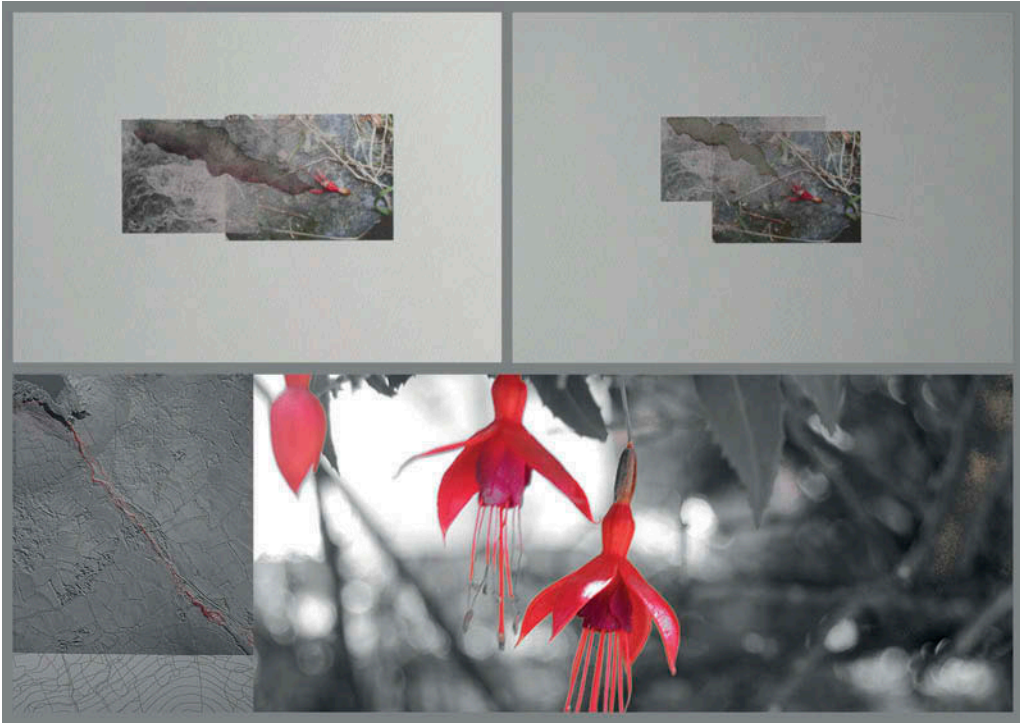
FIGURE 3 *Fuchsia*, 2013. Mapping (base map data © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2013. Ordnance Survey. Digimap Licence.); digital photograph; reworked inkjet print/drawing with watercolor traces on watercolor paper. The actual drawing is small, measuring 10 cm × 7.5 cm. (Color figure available online.)

Fuschia itself takes the form of reworkings of photographic prints, scratchings, and erasures.[7] Each piece is only 10 cm and has an intimacy of making, scale, and weight of line that stands in direct contrast to the *Poniou* polyform. Mabey (2012) referred to "weeds"[8] as "the boundary breakers, the stateless minority, who remind us that life is not that tidy. They could help us to learn to live across nature's borderlines again" (291–92). Like many so-called weeds, the opportunistic fuchsia is well traveled across societies and through time.

The Ocean City (Figure 4)

The third phase of work arose as a result of an artist-in-residence opportunity to work in Plymouth for ten days. Given the contrast of location, from rural to port-city urban environment, and from the trickle of an unnamed stream to the national-identity-defining, geolocating River Tamar,[9] it was at first sight a diversion, but one that in hindsight proved very useful in opening up my project. The resulting work, as we shall see, led me to more consciously understand painting (in an expanded sense) as embodied and performative both in its making and reception;
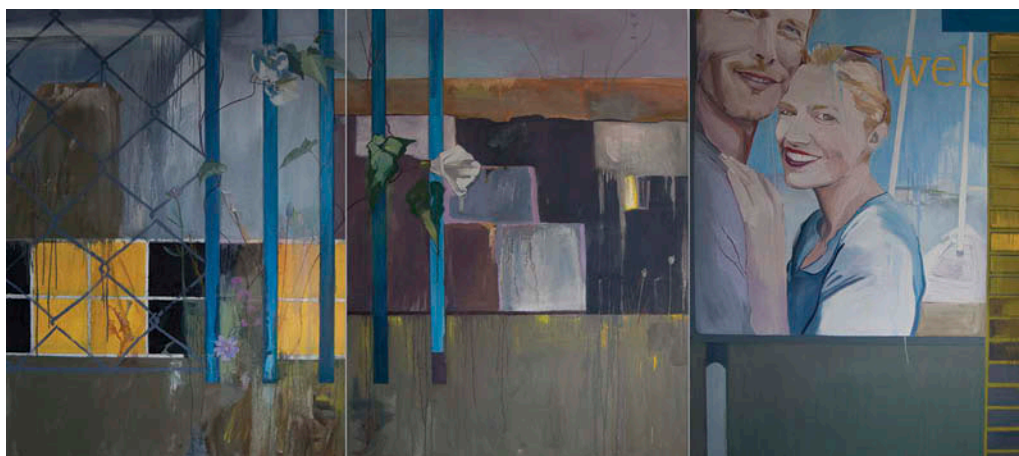
FIGURE 4 *The Ocean City*, 2013. Triptych 3.4 m × 1.2 m, oil on canvas
(without frame). (Color figure available online.)

and to consider how an art object, once it enters a network, cannot be stilled but becomes
constitutive of, and subject to, different affective states (Joselit 2009, 132).

I crossed the Tamar from Cornwall on the Saltash ferry, to be greeted by the sign "Welcome
to Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City" (Figure 5). In my proposal I had stated that I wanted to use
this opportunity to create a mapping of the foreshore close to KARST,[10] concentrating on Mill
Bay Docks. I intended to extend the work that I had been engaged in through the photographing
and reworking images of fuchsia, by incorporating LiDAR coastal mapping data into scratched
drawings worked from the derelict edge lands around the basin. I quickly realized, however, that
accessing the foreshore was not as straightforward as I had imagined. The Google Earth image
of the area used while writing the proposal had not shown fences. This line of enquiry had to
change, and it became focused on a journey in search of the foreshore that was blocked by
boundaries of all descriptions: prohibitive signage, building sites, gated residential housing
schemes, and Ministry of Defence restrictions. It also became about weeds, the plants that
colonize and give form to the places that we consider off limits.

I began to look at the places of which Mabey (2012) wrote, where the tidy compartmenta-
lization between nature and culture breaks down; exploring the boundaries between land and
sea, where despite the efforts of a range of agencies and owners of the foreshore, weeds could be
said to bring a welcome untidiness to the cityscape; an untidiness that refuses to have its path
waymarked and its boundary delineated (Mabey 2012, 21–22) by humankind.

From this enquiry, I amassed a large stock of photographs, some taken with a standard lens
and some close-up with a tripod and macro lens. I trawled the Internet and visited housing
developers' showrooms, gathering brochures and regeneration plans for what is considered to be
the most deprived part of Plymouth. I also started to work with paint back in the studio at
KARST—it was the hottest week of an unusually hot summer, so the midday sun was too
intense to spend hours outside—working with a large spread of paper measuring four by eight
feet high. Here, the urban environment, and the gridded breezeblock surface of the heat-

FIGURE 5 Photograph of signage welcoming visitors to Plymouth.
(Color figure available online.)

oppressed studio, became a visual starting point. The black gridlines with which I started could be read in terms of a need to control an environment that was out of my comfort zone, or equally could be read as an affective response to the direct materiality of the studio. Weeds found their way into the grid, disrupting the alignment of the space, refusing to be tamed.

In the next section, I go on to outline how my understanding of the Cornish landscape, and the work of the stream, as unsettled, fractured, and aporetic, was situated and fleshed out via reference to developments in critical studies (geographical and visual culture) that cover phenomenologically oriented landscape studies, representation, and images. This then forms a platform for thinking about how painting (in an expanded sense) might operate, which I use later to reflect on an informal gallery presentation of my work.

BEYOND THE FRAME OF LANDSCAPE

In cultural geography, a tendency to adopt a distantiated, expert "eye" in regard to a thereby externalized landscape (Wylie 2006, 520) has been countered by a nonrepresentational approach to landscape studies that, informed by the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, and attentive to but also critical of an eighteenth-century European romanticism (Wylie 2012b), understands landscape as being a lively and embodied everyday experience. Such a positioning queries the easy presumption of a distance between seeing and the seen, in which landscape can be

conceived of as a visual text or cultural object consisting of layers of culturally constructed meaning to be read or deconstructed (Ingold 1993). It also problematizes approaches to landscape where looking, or viewing, is understood as a distancing device akin to image making (Ryan 2012). Instead, landscape functions in phenomenological accounts as "the world in which we stand taking account of our views" (Ingold 1993, 171); landscaping is understood as a subjective process that fundamentally consists of and "injects temporality and movement" (Cresswell 2003, 280).

Such an approach does not thereby negate the embodied act of viewing, nor its import for subject and object formation in all manner of contexts. Sight is clearly implicated in how experiences are anticipated, felt, and remembered. Mitchell (2002), for example, concerned to understand the relationship among word, image, and writing over twelve years ago against the backdrop of Israel–Palestine geopolitics (that still feels all too familiar), wrote of the "fractured, agonized appearance" of landscape that is a point of cultural encounter and in this case conflict (29). As Wylie (2012b, 59) pointed out, phenomenological accounts point to events and processes that reach beyond the surface of the land and of the image; events that are both constituted from and that animate myriad everyday practices of interaction between and among people and things. As such, there is no stationary "hinge" on which meanings can be fixed, either in reference to self or land: Indeed, "a landscape cannot be grounded, cannot be given firm and final foundations. Between the name and the land, between past, present and future, between word and world, a gap interposes itself, necessarily, fragmenting senses of belonging and identification" (Wylie 2012b, 13–14). Attentive to the complex social realm within which belonging and identification are articulated and "felt," and on which so much of our politics depend, there is yet the risk, as M. Rose and Wylie (2011) argued the case, "of overlooking, (a) the varied non-human agential forces and affectivities through which perception and sensation are emergent per se, and (b) the indelibly post-structural status of both subjects and landscapes as incomplete, incoherent, in actuality never-present-as-such—as, in truth, haunted and aporetic materialities" (230).

To sum up, such accounts seek to work in the gaps and fissures or tensions that are landscape, where subjective experience is understood to be directly implicated and emergent. Such accounts are deeply materially and subjectively embodied, and also posed at a critical distance from the same, assuming "an aporetic, more hesitant vision, edging away from any notion of land and life as quintessentially conjoined" (Wylie 2012a, 376).

BEYOND THE FRAME OF PAINTING

How, then, to proceed as a visual artist concerned not to center and cohere self and landscape? When I think of West Cornwall, this much designated and protected landscape, I cannot but recall that these framings are cast in and across futures forged by geologic activity deep in time. Returning to the flooded swollen stream, this is part of "A watery, flood-prone landscape (which may flood in yearly cycles or much longer cycles) ... constructed by absences and tensions; absences of the other past and future states that the river, or sea, or pluvial discharges will take and the material and non-material tensions this will bring" (Jones, Read, and Wylie 2012, 89). An embodied experience of this landscape (of which visual experience is clearly an active component) deeply implicates the world beyond and including the human in its ongoing in-the-makingness. Against a cultural "gravitation pull towards the visual" (G. Rose and Tolia-Kelly

2012, 2) how might a visually orientated arts practice (understood in a materialist, embodied, and emergent sense) work in response to the hauntings and dissonance found in this landscape? Echoing Verwoert and Rorrison (2005), is there anything left for painting to do?

In addressing this question, I want to start by focusing on an issue that resonates with both landscape studies and arts practice; namely, representation; it is necessary to ask what we mean by representation. Representation has often been conflated with a realism that implies images standing in directly for the original referent; in general usage, it is often equated to achieving a likeness, which implies a mirroring, something static, possibly captured, and framed. For Cresswell (2012), nonrepresentational geographical practices (from which landscape theory draws heavily) have tended to position themselves as being against representation, which is "equated with the dead and already achieved [framed] work in stasis, while the lively, embodied world of the event is one of generous and affirmative world in [an unframed] constant transformation" (99). Dole (2010) discussed this issue of representation within the nonrepresentational theory and suggested it need not be understood "as a refusal of representation per se. It is a refusal of representation yoked to the problematic of a repetition of the same" (118), a problem with the often confused way with which we tend to understand the word *representation*. Representation, for Dole, points to something at odds with the way the word is commonly used; it is not about producing a copy of something. Representation at once stands outside of its original reference and also hints back to it.

This question of what we mean by representation, and the way that images operate, has been a long-standing subject of debate among artists and theorists of visual culture, with modernist thinking and practice seeking to question the underlying relationship between image and object. This is classically illustrated in the seminal Magritte (1929) painted image of a pipe, known as *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, or the "Treachery of Images."[11] Magritte was very clear: This is not a representation of a pipe; it is a painting, and acts to demonstrate "the inability of words to explain images . . . the slipperiness of the image/word relationship" (DeLuca 2008, 2).

To eschew mimeticism, however, is not to deny a situatedness to an image. With the "return of the real" (Foster 1996), art and theory sought grounding in actual bodies and social sites, in direct reaction to the relatively confined and elitist spaces of modernism. In the 1970s, the American school of art criticism associated with the journal *October* asserted the "normative validity of the turn towards conceptuality" in art criticism (Verwoert and Rorrison 2005, 2), and the postmedium condition of art (Krauss and Broodthaers 2000). The work of Krauss (1979), writing on the "expanded field of sculpture," was seminal and still wields enormous influence across art and architecture (Papapetros and Rose 2014);[12] Krauss reconfigured practice according to what it was not, as opposed to some fundamental and pure essence. Such an expanded field, within which practice was situated, allowed one to determine the "negative condition of the moment" (Krauss 1979, 34). This was a "turn away from medium specificity and successive reformulations of practice in opposition to Modernist demands for purity and separateness of the medium" (42) marking out "a strategic movement whereby both art and world, or art and the larger cultural field, would stand in new, formerly unimaginable relations to one another" (Baker 2005, 136).

Although the idea of an expanded field of practice has for all intents and purposes become mainstreamed within arts practices, as well as interdisciplinary cultural and creative practices (Andermann 2012; Hawkins 2013a, 2013b), it is usually cited within an art theoretical context that owes more to Deleuze, rhizomes, and network theories, or the dissonance of Rancière than the structural analysis that underpins the work of Krauss. This is because Krauss's framework

retains largely formalist terms, wherein the structural analysis of practice is defined "in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms" and the "logic of space ... organised through universal terms" (Krauss 1979, 43). Certainly, such logics run counter to phenomenologically derived understandings of the world, wherein experience is held to be contingent, provisional, and always in a state of becoming.

A more phenomenologically attuned, performative turn has run through art paralleling developments in landscape theory, and wider cultural geographical practices. The work of Australian artist and new materialist thinker Barbara Bolt, for example, with its emphasis on performativity and material affect, has synergy with nonrepresentational stances within geography. She suggested that by focusing on the internal logic of the work of art rather than practice, modernism leaves a gap in our understanding of how art operates as process (Bolt 2004a, 2004b). It is by engaging with the performativity of the everyday that the generative process— that is, "the relationship between the artist, the complex of practical knowledges, the materials of practice and the novel situation" (Bolt 2004a, 6)—can poetically reveal, as well as emerge from, lived embodied experience. By "focusing on enunciative practices, that is, the systems of fabrication rather than systems of signification, there is a possibility of investigating the field of an 'art of practice' starting from the bottom, rather than from the top down" (Bolt 2004a, 7).

For my part, although I echo Bolt's desire to think of the work of art in terms of its vitalist, performative, and materialist operations, I am skeptical of Bolt's efforts to "overcome the filter of representationalism thinking" (Bolt 2004a, 108). Although not necessarily implying a direct coincidence among mimesis, realism, and representation, Bolt (2004a) proposed that "representation is not an outcome but rather a mode of thinking that involves a will to fixity and mastery" (17). At its most reductive, her thesis rests on a binary between object and subject, representation (image) and performativity, in which approaching a work of art as a "thing-concept" (e.g., through the conceptually understood pipe-like qualities and cultural contexts of Magritte's painting) obscures the essence of a work of art. For me this suggests that we need to look elsewhere for a more nuanced and aporetic understanding of how representation or images operate. Ideas are always going to be complicit in the operation of the image; we are unable to set life to one side in favor of a closer experience of the "being" of art (Bolt 2004a, 104). The legacy of postmodernism disavows originality; there is no pure essence separated from life. Art, like landscape, resists the separation of word and image.

IMAGES AND REPRESENTATION: THE WORK OF JACQUES RANCIÈRE

In search of a theory of images that can somehow deal with the paradoxical nature of representational operations, and a way forward that does not either rely on the structural analysis of Krauss, or use a framework for thinking that struggles to rethink representation from within practice, I want to turn to the work of Rancière. In particular I am looking for an egalitarian way of thinking about art that places it firmly within a broad understanding of politics and a vitalist engagement with life, while also being able to talk about the specifics of the making and reception of images in a way that makes sense as an artist. Rancière takes word and image, the sayable and the visible, to be inseparable in the operation of images: "the image as raw, material presence and the image as discourse encoding a history" (Rancière 2007b, 11) are thoroughly entwined. Rancière refuses to take on a binary position between ideas (discourse–

history) and the stuff of images, echoing moves in the humanities that resist nature–culture binaries in favor of hybridity (Lorimer 2012; Brettell 2015) as well as posthumanist accounts that call "into question the givenness of the differential categories of 'human' and 'nonhuman,' examining the practices through which these differential boundaries are stabilized and destabilized" (Barad 2003, 808). Images, for Rancière, contain several functions, and it is the problematic alignment of these, as alluded to earlier in discussions around representation, that constitutes the labor of art (Rancière 2007b, 1). I find this an enthralling beginning, sensing that here, in the dissonance of images, there are parallels with the dissonance we find in aporetic and political conceptions of landscape.

Rejecting "interpretations that frame artistic practices in linear, mono-causal historical narratives" (Deranty 2014, 118), Rancière set out three regimes of the operation of images. He coined these fundamental regimes, or metahistorical categories, the ethical, the representative, and the aesthetic. Each new (but often contemporaneous) regime defines a "specific type of connection between ways of producing works of art or developing practices, forms of visibility that disclose them, and ways of conceptualising the former and the latter" (Vermeulen 2010, 3). Key to Rancière's work is an emphasis on historical relativity: Art happens within the context of its time. It is an expression of the wider societal reality with which it evolves; this is the *partage du sensible* ("distribution of the sensible"; Dixon 2009). The most relevant regime for the purposes of this discussion is the aesthetic.

The beginning of the nineteenth century was marked by a challenge to the traditional hierarchies of painting, prompted by the advent of photography, but also broader societal moves toward democracy and the rise of the urban bourgeoisie. Unlike the representative regime, where "the sayable tends to order and direct the visible," in this new, aesthetic regime, "the sayable is subsumed by the visible" (Vermeulen 2010, 3). Where the text had once linked, at a conceptual level, the word and the image, it was now the image that became active, exceeding its former role as the fleshy referent that denoted the presence of the concept. We begin to see, according to Rancière, "the revocation of the subordination of pictorial forms to poetic hierarchies" (Rancière 2007b, 76), and "the breakdown of a system where the dignity of the subject matter dictated the dignity of genres of representation" (Rancière 2013, 28). Vermeulen (2010) usefully gathered together, from passages written by Rancière (2007b) that almost burst with vitalism (and as Vermeulen pointed out an endless juxtaposition of binaries), a vision of the "image [that] has become the active, disruptive power of the leap (p. 46) with the sentence-image oscillating between continuity and fragmentation, between articulation and inarticulateness, between heterogeneous media, forms, and surfaces (p. 106), between the diabetic and the symbolic (pp. 56–58), between consensus and chaos (p. 47), between logos and pathos, between lethargy and energy (p. 46), and, perhaps, between the visible and the sayable" (4). An often uncomfortable space of dissensus opens up in these paradoxical oscillations between the always inseparable word and image. In this way, in the aesthetic regime, it is expression that comes falteringly to the fore: "For what is newly visible has very specific properties. It does not make visible; it imposes presence … [with] an inertia that comes to paralyse action and absorb meaning" (Rancière 2007b, 121). Creeping through all of this is a vitalist, materialist approach to images that find an agency in the unstable, uncomfortable gap between matter and representation.

Key to understanding Rancière's conception of the political possibility of art is this idea of *dissensus*, which is a "modification of the coordinates of the sensible, a spectacle or a tonality that

replaces another" (Rancière 2007a, 259). He usefully illustrated this with reference to the subtle interventions of artist Sophie Ristelhueber, who photographs barricades on Palestinian roads. These are not, however, done in a clichéd manner, using the concrete wall and fences that are so well known to us (and therefore loose currency through visual familiarity). Instead, "She photographs from a distance, from above, the little handmade barricades made of piled stone, which look like rock slides in the middle of a tranquil landscape. That's one way of keeping one's distance from the shop-worn affect of indignation and instead exploring the political resources of a more discrete affect—curiosity" (Rancière 2007a, 257). This is one of several examples that Rancière gave that are "not models to imitate but illustrations of what 'dissensus' might signify: a way of reconstructing the relationship between places and identities, spectacles and gazes, proximities and distances." It is in the instability of dissemblance in the aesthetic regime, through its ambiguities and frictions, in the gap between saying and doing that art does its work (and thereby within the aesthetic regime becomes recognizable as art). "[T]he labour of art thus involves playing on the ambiguity of resemblances and the instability of dissemblances, bringing about a local reorganization, a singular rearrangement of circulating images" (Rancière 2007b, 24). For my part, the emphasis here on the labor of images, and the affects they have, feels most useful and dynamic from a practitioner perspective. But I am also drawn to the language of dissemblance and the sense of a distance, gap, or void opening up between the sayable and the visible, implying a sense of multistriatal and fractured or unsettled relations between things or systems; an art "beside itself" (Joselit 2009). A painting can both be a pipe and not a pipe (Magritte 1929). A landscape is both a landscape and not a landscape. Between pipe and pipe, between landscape and landscape, a gap opens up. Images are uncomfortably relational.

Scene Unframed

Rancière, thinking particularly about the workings of installation art, observed that "it is impossible to delimit a specific sphere of presence isolating artistic operations and products from forms of circulation of social and commercial imagery and from operations interpreting this imagery" (Rancière 2007b, 24). Nothing is made or perceived in isolation. Although art images do not necessarily have a special essence per se that separates them out from other forms of images, and indeed the world at large, in their labor amidst the "ambiguity of resemblance and instability of dissemblances" they bring about a local reorganization, a singular arrangement of circulating images" (Rancière 2007b, 24) in which the "metamorphic, unstable nature of images comes into play" (Rancière 2007b, 26). Something else happens; slippage occurs when images that are already unstable and in a state of dissensus are set loose in a state of play with each other, in a new form of circulation.

This resonates with Joselit's (2009, 2013) work on the circulation or "transitivity" of images. Discussing the work of Koether (2012), he proposed that it demonstrates transitivity, whereby the status of objects within networks is divined by their circulation from place to place and their subsequent translation into different contexts; in particular, Joselit, in an analysis that has parallels with Ingold's description of meshwork, suggested that painting with a transitional quality is marked by the "notion of passage." Referring to Koether's work *Lux Interior* (2009),[13] which is freestanding in the midgallery space on a frame that suggests legs, Joselit described the painting as being a cultural artefact that activates and is activated by social networks around it, also embodying with each brushstroke the passage of time, or historicity.

In this way, "instead of attempting to visualise the overall contours of a network, Koether actualises the behaviour of objects within networks by demonstrating what [Joselit] would like to call their transitivity" (Joselit 2009, 128). The artist focuses on what is done with objects and their ensuing affects; in a similar vein, G. Rose (2014) wrote, "What matters is what is done with an image" (15), amidst its circulations.

In this section, I want to consider, using the preceding discussion as a lens, what happened when my work was installed in a space and opened up to an audience. It is important to emphasize that this installation was never framed as a conventional exhibition; rather, installation and dialogue become an extension of the making process. I was resident in the project space at Back Lane West, Redruth for just over a week, during which time I set the space up as a working studio, with several intentions in mind. First, having use of a space at my disposal that was larger than my usual home studio, I wanted to see the work made so far during this project as a collection, to see how the different elements interacted. Second, I wanted to use the time in a space free of distractions (with no Internet or mobile signal) to concentrate on developing practice. Third, I wanted to generate a discussion about the work, and so I used social media to invite an audience to a work-in-progress presentation and discussion at the end of my time in the space. During the residency time I made and edited 25/5 (a performance to camera), worked on some drawings, and experimented with different configurations of the works.

The ensuing installation *Behind the Scene* was made up of a number of different elements, namely *The Ocean City* triptych; the *Poniou* polyform; half a dozen *Fuchsia* drawings; two small canvases that sit upright on the floor space using offcuts from a metal grid attached at right angles; a filmed projection of *25/5;* the detritus from the original performance; and finally some fuchsia flowers made from sugar paste, some hanging on the fence grid and some slowly dissolving in the mud detritus from the performance. This last piece consisted of a text referencing the event of the stream, painted up onto a piece of canvas sewn onto the fence. The "paint" consisted of mud taken from the stream mixed in a bucket of water. The performance deliberately set out to play with the shifting relationship between painting, text and frame or fence. There was no explanatory narrative for the installation, although most of the audience had a degree of familiarity with my work.

Before I describe this installation in more detail, however, I would like to take a step back in time to when I had first shown the triptych piece *The Ocean City* (Figure 6). It was in a group show in East London with little wall space. The lack of hanging space prompted me to think laterally and install it in a frame that came to resemble (conceptually and metaphorically) a fence, similar in style to the temporary fencing I encountered around the docklands of Plymouth. I realized that I wanted the "fence" to have a function as an integral part of the piece, to unsettle the more usual function of framing through its ambiguity as frame or fence. Disappointingly, however, I had plenty of comments on the high quality of the actual framing device, which rather undercut my intent. In September 2013, I had use of another gallery space for a week leading up to a public presentation. For this, I altered the frame, adding a gridded section and attaching hinges to both of the outside edges, suggesting that it was only one potential part of a larger construction. It was with this framing in mind that I installed *Behind the Scene* (Figure 7) in Back Lane West.

Several things emerged through the process of forming and reforming the installation, mainly as a result of the limitations of the space, its small size and the low-level ceiling with flourescent strip lighting. *The Ocean City* (Figure 8) cut the space in two, for example, requiring a spectator

FIGURE 6   *The Ocean City*, 2013. Triptych 3.4 m × 1.2 m, oil on canvas.
Welded steel frame, grid and hinges. Newlyn Art Gallery. (Color figure
available online.)

walk around it to see the other works. Addressing the lighting situation, I found an old stage
light in the back cupboard, which produced a strong directional light. It activated the work in a
way I had not imagined, casting grid shadows from the fence across the floor and onto the wall
behind, cutting across the polyform. This brought a sense of movement to the space, with
elements of work that might not on first glance have a direct relationship to each other now
performing against and across each other.

   25/5 (Figure 9), the performance to camera, developed as the work was activated in site. My initial
intention in making it was twofold. I wanted somehow to work with the materiality of the stream, and
the water and soil were sourced from here. I was also interested in the relationship between text and
painting, as outlined earlier. I had been using this specific text in conference presentations that were
leaning in a performative direction. Developed here as a performance to camera, it became a way of
working out, through praxis, something around the relationship of what could otherwise potentially slip
into two distinct ways of working: practice and theory, image and text.[14]

   Through the installation I was looking to set up a tension between the immediate presence of
the fence or frame in the space (which by its placing forces an audience to negotiate the space
around it), the intimate sense from the performance residue that something strange has already
happened here, and the ensuing mediation through technology—the camera—which serves as a
distancing device. The resulting film was shown projected onto the wall (Figure 10) just above

FIGURE 7 *Behind the Scene*, 2013. Installation view: canvas, steel frame
with grid, trace of performance and lighting. Back Lane West, Redruth.
(Color figure available online.)

knee height, with the border of the image being only about 30 cm wide. It was deliberately
shown at a small scale, projected at a low height, and almost hidden behind the frame or fence
structure. I was consciously looking to usurp more usual framing expectations of the screen in
the hope of animating the work in relation to the space.

One of the issues manifest most strongly from audience feedback was the sense of alienation
people felt in the studio, with the harshness of the urban landscape of the triptych abruptly
intersecting the space. Feedback on *Poniou* (Figure 11) suggested that hanging the work lower,
beneath a more usual viewpoint, changed the viewer's relationship to it, creating a more intimate
engagement: People talked about having "an unexpected encounter" with the work. One felt as
though they were "looking down into it." This last comment is interesting in that the experience
of looking down into something implies an immersive encounter, rather than relating to surface.
The space behind the fence seemed to open out, people suggested, with the polyform, and
become more expansive. The embodied encounter was emphasized by the low ceiling of the
space. The rather strange lighting was described as "shadowy," with the "evening light" it
provided seeming to add to this effect of intimacy and encounter. The drawings, meanwhile,
seemed to invite close attention, in contrast with the very different spatial engagement with the
rest of the installation, and I think served to change the pace. When I compare this installation
with previous showings of individual elements, it becomes clear how much a spectator's

FIGURE 8 *Behind the Scene*, 2013. Installation view. (Color figure available online.)

encounter is affected by both the relationship of the work to the space and the relationships set up between the various parts.

Approaching the configuration of the space and work as an *installation* of painting (in an expanded sense) rather than the hanging of a show, in which the gridded industrial form of the frame or fence cuts through the installation like a fissure, actualizes an agentic network composed of objects and human actors, in which neither eclipses the other (Joselit 2009, 128). This development in practice-as-research has reinforced for me the need to work provisionally, always allowing the work to be activated by site and social interaction. I want my practice to function as fissure, or fracture; as an interruption within an ever moving network of things, both human and more than human. By working in this way, through the "metamorphic, unstable nature of images" (Rancière 2007b, 26), amidst transitive networks of affect, it becomes possible to release landscape and painting from their respective frames.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Much of this project through its evolution has become about activating the frame of painting, quite literally in the case of *The Ocean City*, in response to working with landscapes that are

FIGURE 9 *25/5*, 2013. Screenshot of performance to camera. (Color figure available online.)

FIGURE 10 *Behind the Scene*, 2013. Installation view, projection of *25/5* (performance to camera). (Color figure available online.)
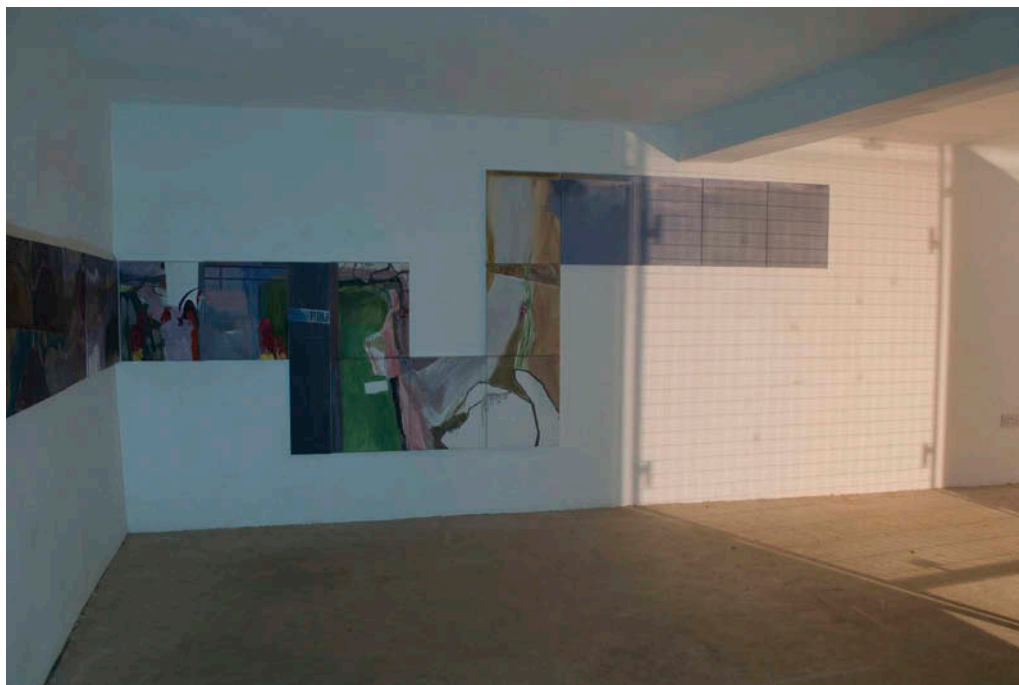
FIGURE 11 *Poniou*. Behind the Scene, 2013. Installation view, with projected grid. (Color figure available online.)

heavy with the framings of cultural heritage and tourist imaging. It has provided a useful way for me of understanding my practice as functioning in terms of "painting [being] beside itself," as ambiguous in its resonance and in which painting can act as a nodal point reaching out and through performance, installation, and the digital (Joselit 2009). I have come to realize that I am interested in a practice where the showing of work is more akin to an expanded idea of (reperforming) the studio, than it is to traditional gallery presentation. This approach of an expanded practice of painting and the reperformed studio, like social networks on the threshold between public and private, sets things in motion or passage.

The upfront acknowledgement of the always contingent or provisional hand of the artist embodied within the materiality of practice acts to mirror many of the conditions under which the work is being undertaken. Art is able to stand, to be present and act amongst the world, casting up a reflection or glimpse into the deeply and dirty, usually more-than-human materiality that makes up our landscape(s); landscapes that are inherently marked by absences and that can only ever be partially known or beheld. An arts practice can in this way acknowledge that "a landscape must be a reckoning with provisionality and ambiguity, a kind of dislocation or distancing from itself" (Wylie forthcoming, 21). This idea of landscape as provisional, as being marked or even formed by contingent process of distancing calls to mind the processes of dissemblance Rancière described as being at work in the art image, processes again characterized by the instability and ambiguity that act in the gap or dislocation to which Wylie

referred. Just as we are always both inside the landscape and removed from it, so it is, too, with a work of art. Both form and take place—provisionally—within and beyond frames—unquarantined. In this way, a practice-based research process such as this provides a useful vehicle to counterreflect backward and forward on both.

> Transitivity is a form of translation: when it enters into networks, the body of painting is submitted to infinite dislocations, fragmentations, and degradations. As Kippenberger suggested nearly twenty years ago, these framing conditions cannot be quarantined. Painting is beside itself. (Joselit 2009, 134)

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NOTES

1. This work is sited in the far southwest of the United Kingdom, near the end of the Lands End Peninsula, Cornwall.
2. During the postwar years, an internationally significant group of artists worked together in St. Ives, including Alan Davie, Terry Frost, Patrick Heron, Barbara Hepworth, Roger Hilton, Peter Lanyon, William Scott, and Bryan Wynter. This group, working through ideas relating to painting and sculpture, was unique in the UK context for the time, in being outward looking. They were initially keenly aware of concurrent modernist movements on the continent and later they made strong links to the abstract expressionists in New York. Much of the discourse around the St. Ives School, however, has tended to be dominated by a strong undercurrent of localism, the work being discussed in relation to the specifics of landscape, topography even, rather than the broader context of artistic enquiry. The exhibition at Tate St. Ives "International Exchanges: Modern Art and St Ives 1915–1965" sought to reposition this work away from place-based narratives, in terms of its quality and relevance to the best art of its time (Joselit 2009, 134). The tendency to parochialism (which often feels overwhelming) in the treatment of art associated with this area, its fixings of narrative (Stephens 2014) in terms of place, and the ensuing association with cultural-heritage product and thence tourism, is hugely problematic for contemporary artists attempting to engage with this landscape.
3. Silicosis is a long-term lung disease caused by inhaling large amounts of crystalline silica dust, usually over many years. It is also known as miner's lung.

4. In 1991, after a period of prosperity, world tin prices crashed. The pumps at Geevor were finally switched off and the underground workings slowly flooded over the next three years.

5. For a full analysis of this perspectival tradition in landscape painting, please refer to Dennis Cosgrove (Stephens 2014).

6. Cornwall is well known for its plant collecting tradition during Victorian times, funded by wealth created from the mining industry and forming part of the wider sea-going exploration of the Empire.

7. I had recently seen an exhibition of Bryans's (1985) erased drawings in the Exchange, Penzance, and then later at the Kate MacGarry Gallery, London (18 January–2 March 2013).

8. The word *weeds*, often used by us in a derogatory way, denotes those plants that actually have an amazing ability to defy our attempts at control, as a visit to my allotment and its beautiful but vegetable-strangling display of bindweed would show.

9. The River Tamar forms the boundary between Cornwall and the rest of the United Kingdom. In the popular imagination it stands as an image for the construction of difference associated with all things Cornish.

10. KARST is a contemporary art space in a former warehouse in the dockland area of Plymouth. The name KARST refers to the local geology of the area, which is quite different to the granite coast where I have been working—the Docks are a mix of bomb-damage infill and limestone (karst). I am interested in how geology continues to cause events that affect the present day and into the future, particularly through river systems formed over the millennia. In the Dockland context, it is a soluble, unstable man-made landscape.

11. For a discussion of René Magritte's (1898–1967) painting "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (1929), please see Olwig (2005, 23–24).

12. Hawkins (2013b, 7–8) gives a good introduction to Krauss's work, outlining both the conditions that led to it and the way it opened up not only arts practice, but also more recently the work of geographers embracing methodologies more usually associated with the arts.

13. "Lux Interior" directly references the painting "Landscape with Pyrasmus and Thisbe" by Poussin (c. 1604–1682).

14. This relationship between image and text is something I take up further in later developments of this piece, when it becomes part of a performance-lecture first shown and delivered at the Spaces of Attunement symposium, Cardiff University, in 2015.

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