

Water in Visual Art:
An Investigative Study of Selected Paintings
by Joseph Mallord William Turner
Oscar Claude Monet
and Pat Steir

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Abstract

This research examines the significance of water as it has been used as a subject in the visual arts, with particular concentration on the use of geometry as a means of accessing pictorial possibilities. The study focuses specifically on selected paintings by Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), Oscar Claude Monet (1840-1926) and Pat Steir (1940-) including some of Steir's etchings, to further demonstrate her thought processes and techniques.

It is argued that the paintings of all three artists, although widely divergent yet include threads of commonality and convergence. All explore the fundamental structure of nature (in this case water) through geometry. In addition, spatial concepts through the use of light and colour are closely intertwined and give rise to metaphysical implications.

Turner and Monet broke the bonds of the existing academic composition and style of painting. Their paintings pointed the way for artists of the twentieth century, like Steir to further explore the close relationship between the motif and abstract painting. References to paintings, other than the selected paintings, by these artists will be made in order to illustrate their different approaches yet similar objectives.

Finally the relevance of the study to the candidate's own work will be correlated.

The dissertation intends to offer a new interpretation of water as a subject in painting, by illuminating and illustrating aspects of the selected paintings by Turner, Monet and Steir.

In conclusion, it is anticipated that this discourse will enrich and complement previous interpretations of water, when used as a subject in visual art. It is also envisaged that the study will suggest further research on the subject.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work, which has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other institute.

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Preface

The text style and layout used in this dissertation was prescribed by the Center of Visual Art, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The Harvard method of referencing has been used and endnotes add information that might otherwise have distracted the reader from the text.

A list of the illustrations and the illustrations are included at the end of the text under References. These illustrations have been photographed from books, the sources of which have been included in the list of illustrations. Where measurements and media are mentioned in the source this has been included, otherwise it is listed as not given. Information obtained from sources consulted by the candidate, such as authors, books, journals and websites have been acknowledged in parenthesis.

Full details of publications (books, journals and websites) are listed alphabetically at the end of the dissertation. This list comprises a complete set of references to all authorities consulted in the text.

Titles of books, journals and websites are italicized, as are terms in a foreign language. Titles of journal articles are not enhanced, and also do not appear in quotations.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to clarify specific aspects of the use of water as a subject in visual art. The scope of the research has of necessity, been delimited to the choice of specific paintings by selected artists: Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), Oscar Claude Monet (1840-1926) and Pat Steir (1940-). The candidate's intention is not to produce an art historical investigation, but to rather examine the paintings of these three artists from the point of view of a painter interested in the theme of water. The candidate's concern with the subject of water as a motif, led her to explore the paintings of these artists with the intention of obtaining an in-depth insight into her own paintings.

The key criterion determining the choice of the artists and their paintings has been the shared motif of water, which has served as a vehicle of communication and expression, suggesting that the concept of water as a subject in visual art may extend its meanings beyond those of naturalistic representation. The divergent character of the selected paintings substantiates this argument while simultaneously encouraging debate. All three artists have referred to geometry as a tool with which to explore the fundamental structure of a part of nature, in this case, water. Spacial and metaphysical dimensions have been suggested through innovative use of colour and light. Notably, both Turner and Monet broke the existing bonds of traditional, academic composition and technique and pointed the way to abstract painting of the twentieth century.

Information will be gathered by analysing and examining the paintings, as well as through references to written information provided by the artists themselves, their friends, relatives, critics and philosophers of the time. Of the texts available, few offer detailed, specific information on the subject of water in visual art. When investigating a specific point of study, references will be made to other artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and several Japanese artists. Herschel B. Chipp (1968: v) warns that it is with caution that quotations from artists' writings are interpreted, as it is easy to impose an interpretation that does not correspond with the meanings intended in the original text, reflecting instead a personal evaluation based on the critic's own experience.

As a practising artist, painting the sea, the candidate is involved in artistic and aesthetic choices, which provide the reason for this inquiry. Turner used water (the sea) as a

metaphor for the magnificence and magnitude of the Divine power. The passion, energy and turbulence of the sea, especially evident in his later paintings such as *Snow Storm- Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (1842) (fig.1), led to the development of light and colour and suggested revolutionary, new ideas and pictorial possibilities.¹ Monet found in Turner's work a correlation of similar ideas confirming his own objectives in painting the atmospheric effects of light and linking the two artists. Steir's interest was to interpret and translate some of Turner's and Monet's images into a contemporary visual language, connecting a particular period, from the eighteenth century to the twenty first century. Steir affirmed that her 'obsession with the history of painting is really an obsession with what's coming. Every [painting] reflects into the future from a different point in the past' (McEvelley 1995: 42).

Water, as a symbol, has been the subject of works of art depicting cleansing, initiation and transformation. This may be seen in the religious mosaics and frescoes of Byzantium from the early Christian period and in the early Renaissance paintings of Piero della Francesca (1416-1492) such as *The Baptism of Christ* (Skira 1954: 37) in the National Gallery, London. An important aspect of art from the East and West has been the use of symbolic implications of the sea, waterfalls and rivers. Art, as a primary source of transformation, has been associated with the natural rhythms of water, referred to as "The Tao" or "The Way" in the Eastern philosophy of Taoism. The point of focus guiding the discussion of the paintings included in this research, originates in my own work and the curiosity stemming from it.

The first chapter comprises analyses of three of Turner's seascapes: *Fishermen at Sea* (1796) (fig.2), *The Shipwreck* (1805) (fig.3) and *Snow Storm- Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (1842) (fig.1). These paintings demonstrate different aspects of the sea under different climatic conditions. The purpose of the analysis and examination of Turner's seascapes is to reveal more covert meanings, such as his search for the fundamentals in nature, reflected in his belief in a basic universal geometry (Shanes 1990: 255). Furthermore, Turner's use of a geometric composition in his earlier paintings, which is gradually transformed into a concept of space and colour signifying a break from the traditional composition and techniques of the time, will be examined.

Turner was born within walking distance of the Thames and never lived far from the sea (Wilton 1979: 12). The many sketches, paintings, lecture notes and pieces of poetry left by him, testifies to his deep involvement with the sea and the lives of the fishermen. Marine painting gained importance in his life as it offered greater scope to explore his

interest in the special effects of light, coupled with those of weather and climate. Central to the understanding of Turner's paintings was his need to portray the sea as having more than a purely pictorial value. For Turner, the sea was an arena for pictorial metaphor and his emotive expression. The paintings display a primary concern for the environmental and social context of humanity together with an ongoing dialogue between the Divine and human beings, represented in the seascapes by the portrayal of the elemental forces of nature and human beings. Eric Shanes (1981: 14) observes that Turner's constant search for new means of expression led him to break the pictorial boundaries of traditional Renaissance picture making to explore greater colour complexities, more dynamic compositions and varieties of form. A life-long respect and admiration for the principles of the Royal Academy provided him with a sound academic foundation from which to explore his visual ideas. These influences were to remain part of Turner's creative processes for the rest of his life. Finally, the paintings establish Turner's undisputed understanding of the rhythms and dynamic power of the sea.

Chapter Two examines Monet's paintings of water. Like Turner the effects of light and atmosphere, which suggested the pictorial possibilities of rocks and water, fascinated him. Pivotal to his painting was the overall atmospheric effect whereby the ever-changing *enveloppé*,² (surrounding) of coloured air merged the individual elements of a scene into a closely integrated whole. Turner's rich colour harmonies would have had a direct relevance to Monet's seascapes from the 1890s onwards. John House (1988: 29) maintains that 'Monet's admiration for Turner was at its height as he focused on painting the *enveloppé*; he was looking at Turner's art with particular interest in the late 1880s and early 1890s.' Unlike Turner, Monet's seascapes do not serve as a vehicle for social comment. His was a phenomenal art portraying the fleeting instances of changing light: 'I seek: "instantaneity, above all ... the same light present everywhere"' (Tucker 1989: 3). His belief that art should go beyond the 'mere description of objects' (House 1988: 223) is expressed in his sensitivity to natural phenomena and his ability to evoke the metaphysical, regenerative and decorative qualities of nature. Monet's approach to reality was closely concerned with the process of seeing, of the retinal action of light and the sensations he felt in response to nature. The influence of photography and its idiosyncrasies, together with the influence of Japanese art, fed the evolution of Monet's art confirming the way he perceived nature and how he related these perceptions to his paintings.

The third chapter concentrates on Pat Steir's paintings of water. Steir is a contemporary artist working in America. Her interest in the wave and later the waterfall,

represents an art-historical investigation into the representation of water in Chinese, Japanese and Western traditions. Thomas McEvelley (1995: 53) refers to her paintings as symbolically incorporating 'the sensibilities of past artists and unifying them momentarily, as in the work of a single mega or meta-person'. The paintings by Steir discussed in this dissertation embody many layers of meanings and references, from Eastern philosophies to personal issues of self-identity. Steir acknowledges the source of inspiration for some of the paintings of waves as directly stemming from Turner, Monet and Japanese artists. She explains her work: 'my visual mediums were like research methods, and art was an insane method of research' (McEvelley 1995: 17). In order to facilitate an understanding of her paintings one needs to acknowledge the post-modern thought processes that inform her *oeuvre*, the dialectical complexities of history and selfhood, the polarities of the individual and the collective selves and the ongoing search for the essence of being that would transcribe itself in the concept of abstraction. This groping for meaning involved an exploration of the physicality of paint, the duality of the mark and its references.³ Steir said 'I'm only interested in abstract painting' (McEvelley 1995: 25).

The painting of waves and waterfalls by Steir, debated in this dissertation, have their roots embedded in Taoist painting theory (McEvelley 1995: 57) and the relevant tensions of the *yin* and *yang* energies. Steir's concept of water as a female symbol sheltering, birthing, cleansing and renewing are discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to the selected paintings. Steir sees Eastern and Western traditions merging in the amalgam of Japanese art and she interprets different themes with this idea. Steir examines Turner's expression of the sublime from an historical viewpoint and sees in the projection of her body into the circular motif of the wave, a relationship between herself and the universality of the wave, as McEvelley (1995: 59) states, 'the work suggests a microcosm/macrocasm relationship between the individual and the circle'.

The choice to study Pat Steir's paintings of water came from a strong sense of identification with issues raised by her work, primarily those of symbolism and metaphor. The candidate's own work forms the content of Chapter Four. Many of the investigations into the motivation and picture-making processes that stimulate the candidate's artwork, respond to the philosophical context of Steir's work. Steir's use of practical devices to explore pictorial and metaphysical possibilities, such as the use of a grid, circles and geometrical features that overlap, can be recognized in the candidate's own paintings.

The Conclusion considers the importance of water in the paintings of each artist. It highlights similarities as well as the highly individual concepts expressed in their own

distinctive styles and suggests further investigative studies, which could be significant, of contemporary artists who paint water as a motif.

ENDNOTES

¹ Gowing (1963 vol.62: 30-33) believes that the essence of Turner's achievement lay in 'deploying in fact simply the basic substance out of which a new art was to be formed'.

² The term *enveloppé* was used to describe the atmospheric mantle that surrounds objects. Monet felt that these 'almost tangible effects of atmosphere gave his paintings unity' (House 1988: 204). The overall effects of colour harmony and the light between objects became more and more important to the development of Monet's paintings from 1880 onwards.

³ '[t]he interface of the mark that refers to something else and the mark that refers only to itself, or simply *is* itself without any act of reference being involved' (McEvelley 1995: 19).

Chapter 1

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851)

This chapter examines Turner's use of the sea as a vehicle to convey the idea of the power of nature, man's relationship to this power and also as a vehicle to express his own inner turbulence. Turner's awe and respect for the grandeur and magnificence of nature and the forces of energy are pivotal to the understanding of his subject choice and the methods he chose to paint the sea. His response to the sea and the painterly methods he used to depict water provide the basis for this investigation.

Turner's intention to paint a sublime experience is polemic and outside of the scope of this dissertation. However, the concept of the sublime dominated late eighteenth century thought and forms a strong basis for Turner's marine work. Turner's concept of the sublime in his paintings is expressed through the forces of nature and forms the framework and unambiguous aim of his seascapes. Andrew Wilton (1981: 11) believes that 'Turner's art was built upon a foundation, and in a philosophical context, established by theorists of the sublime'. Kant's (1989: 29) observation that: 'the sublime was characterised by "boundlessness" and that it was a dynamic state of mind,' also that '[t]hese objects raise the energies of the soul above their accustomed height, and discover in us a faculty of resistance of quite a different kind, which gives us courage to measure ourselves against the apparent almightiness of nature', may be associated with paintings such as *Shipwreck* (fig.3) and *Snowstorm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.2).

Turner's copious writing and his sketchbooks (<www.tate.org.uk/researchservices>) (Wilkinson 1977: 7) indicate an intellectual, deliberate and conceptual approach to his subjects and themes. Shanes (1990: 261) points out that 'he was far too inventive and self-demanding ever to be satisfied with painting merely serried rows of waves, or conventional stylisations'. Some of the fundamentals of these demands for self-expression and new solutions to express his intentions are rooted in his extensive writing and sketches. Wilkinson (1977: 7) writes that the sketchbooks 'add an extra dimension as aids to the understanding of Turner's creative process.' Wilkinson (1977: 10) further states that the sketches served both as a visual record and an area of experimentation for using different media, such as chalk, ink and washes to get specific effects, as in *Sunrise or Sunset at Sea* (1789-1820) (fig.4)¹ which he could subsequently employ in his larger paintings. In his sketches Turner worked out visual ideas and planned suitable compositions around those

ideas. The sketches functioned as working drawings, which were often accompanied by notes on his findings and objectives (Wilkinson 1977: 10). Drawing therefore formed the basis of all Turner's work (Wilkinson 1977: 12). The use of line contributed to his own understanding of form and could vary from being an intense scribble to indicate mass and tonal areas, as in the sketches for the painting of *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) (Wilkinson 1977: 105), to a vigorous scribbling combined with washes and fine calligraphic lines to suggest direction, movement, texture and composition.

In his ongoing search for new means of expression, Turner's development of colour as a means to suggest space, distance, emotion and light was revolutionary; he used colour to unify his composition and to guide the eye over the surface of the canvas. Although Turner's use of colour functions in perceived conjunction with tone, it nevertheless demands a strict control and understanding of the essence of colour itself: its expressive ability to evoke emotion and sensation. Turner's sketches of natural phenomena also reveal his drive to understand the essence of natural forces and their active and dramatic impact. In the *Skies* sketchbook (Wilkinson 1977: 149) there are substantiating studies of cloud formations, while the Dunbar sketchbook (Wilkinson 1977: 74, 75) displays clashes of the elements in stormy conditions.

Although the sea and clouds remain in constant flux they are subject to certain laws of behaviour determined by weather patterns. Turner's academic training, which emphasized geometric form and composition, made him sensitive to these formations and patterns. However, as his depiction of light and space intensified, so this linear construction eventually gave way to eulogising light and shade by the specific use of colour as in *Light and Colour, (Goethe's theory)-The Morning After The Deluge - Moses Writing the Book of Genesis* (1843) (fig 5).

As the title of this painting indicates Turner's intention to explore Goethe's colour theories, it seems prudent to highlight some of Goethe's ideas, in order to better understand the painting. In 1793 Goethe postulated a colour circle similar to the prismatic scale and divided his circle into "plus" and "minus" colours (Butlin 1980: 14). He extended his colour circle into a triangle, putting smaller triangles next to the circle (<http://www.colorstem.com/projekte/engl/14goee.htm>). This geometric concept can be seen as another indication of Turner's exploration of fundamentals through the use of geometry. The circle with its implied dynamic included, for Turner, a profoundly basic concept of the vortex, which both centered one's interest and suggested a sense of infinity.

Goethe's colour system developed from the opposition of light and dark and the relationship of the colours to each other. He maintained that colours had a spiritual, mental and symbolic effect on our emotions. In *Light and Colour, (Goethe's Theory)-The Morning After The Deluge-Moses Writing the Book of Genesis*, exh.1843, the primary colours are distributed around the edge of the circle, as they would be in the formation of bubbles. Goethe associated the reds, yellows and greens with happiness, joy and warmth (Butlin 1980: 14), emotions which Turner has expressed through his choice of colour and the geometric manner in which he expressed them.

An examination of *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2), *Shipwreck* (fig.3) and *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) shows an increasing relaxation of classical, linear composition. In these paintings, Turner suggested space by the use of vortical spirals, which defy the limitations of the two-dimensional surface of the canvas and which pay homage to the majesty and grandeur of light.

Fishermen at Sea (fig.2) is a moonlight scene of two fishing boats off Needles, on the Isle of Wight. The rocks responsible for the name lie to the left of the painting. According to Wilton (1979: 50), moonlight scenes were the vogue in the eighteenth century, a fashion largely promoted by Joseph Wright of Derby.²

An intricate play of lines and silhouettes provide hidden as well as obvious guidelines for the observer's eye. Sea and sky dominate the scene, with a strip of land and rock curving in on the left of the picture, marking the end of the vortex holding the first fishing boat. A huge, dark swell pushes up towards the front of the picture, the moonlit crest forming the first diagonal of the rectangular trough rocking the front boat. Inside the trough the water pulls and pushes up to form the second diagonal of the rectangle. The first boat rolls and heaves in an upward movement, which at the peak of the wave, slides down taking the second boat with it. The truth of nature as a foundation of his art is the central theme of Turner's art; here the convincing rendering of the ebb and flow of the sea testifies to his understanding of the underlying principles governing the ocean and the forces that propel the waves.

White gulls relieve the dark area on the right and intensify the movement and musical theme of the swaying lines supported by a network of fine black lines flowing in tune with the water, nets and rocks. Moonlight, linking the moon and the boats, allows for dramatic contrasts of light and dark. The shaft of moonlight further suggests the transitory nature of time, a moment between an impending storm and the storm being unleashed. The contrast

of the iron-grey of the rising storm and the bright moonlight show Turner's concern with fleeting or accidental effects.

The impact of this painting lies in Turner's concept of space, which is a protagonist in its own right, and the vastness of the sea which gives rise to the emotional experience of the spirit of the place or *genius loci*.³ His sketchbooks, such as the *Skies* sketchbook (T. B., CLVIII-42, Wilton 1979: 143-108 and <www.tate.org.uk/researchservices>) testify to his ongoing, absorbing interest in this creation of space to contain his seascapes. Deeply receding planes of sea and sky converge on the misty horizon imparting a feeling of infinity. It is this immensity of space that is the vehicle by means of which Turner evokes our emotions. A strip of moonlight combines with the blue-greys of the misty horizon, subsequently melting into large, dark areas of complementary warm browns. Tonal contrasts and colour distribution are subject to the intellectual, geometric linear construction: sea and sky divide the canvas horizontally into two thirds by one third proportions, while the same division occurs along a line running from the moon down the central mast and shadow of the boat. Both the moon and the front boat are placed off centre: a favourite device used often by Turner to intensify the sense of limitless, empty space encircling the small boats. *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) and *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) adequately display this asymmetrical design. The boats are situated in two areas of the sea: the first one is cradled in a hammock-like trough between the waves, while the second boat is held in the smoother, calmer waters of the English Channel, defined by a wavy line of swell and the contrasting straight line of the horizon. Diagonals across the sky and the sea emphasize a deliberate, purposeful design. Strong curves of cloud on either side of the moon mark out a larger vortex enclosing the front boat, while the lines of both the masts and ropes stabilise the diagonals and the curves. Fishing nets, strewn along the front of the painting serve as guides for the eye towards the boats.

In many of Turner's seascapes, he uses the specific ratio of division known as the Golden Mean, in order to create a deliberately measured and constructed geometric design. The Golden Mean or Golden Section had its roots in the Renaissance and was known to Turner (Wilkinson 1982: 122-124). Wilkinson (1982: 122-124) describes the Golden Mean as being analogous to an alchemist's sense of a magic formula. Artists have used the Golden Mean as a ratio to divide their pictures into classical proportions. He further (1977: 105) draws attention to the use of the Golden Mean in *The Shipwreck* (fig.3), 'the point of the sprit exactly reaching the centre line of the picture at its intersection with a golden

mean of the vertical dimension'. Many of Turner's paintings, such as *The Fighting Temeraire* (1838) (Wilton 1979: 206 pl.224) confirm the use of this ratio. Shanes (1990: 254) asserts that '[o]ne underlying concern clearly pre-occupied Turner throughout his perspective lectures, namely a desire to arrive at the fundamentals'. Turner believed that '[l]aws...regulate the appearance of *form*' (Shanes 1990: 254). Shanes (1990: 254) explains further that: 'Turner felt that the selfsame structures are far more than just useful pictorial devices; they are pointers to the existence of a supernal reality'. In other words, there is strong evidence that Turner attached importance to the geometrical patterns underpinning nature and associated metaphysical meaning with them.

The cold, white moon left of the picture centre, breaks through the clouds tingeing them with warm, golden light determining the focal areas of the scene, and plays a controlling, unifying role in the composition. Turner's use of light to suggest meaning is evident in the boldness of the moonlight, which contrasts with the weakness of the light of the flickering lantern, implying nature's hold over the fishermen's fate (*Fishermen at Sea*: www.tate.uk/researchseavices). The idea of human frailty and insecurity are further intensified by the size of the heaving swells seen against the smallness of the boats and the vast areas of dark sea and sky that surround them. Shanes (1990: 18) discusses at length Turner's propensity for the inclusion of metaphor: 'there is conclusive evidence that Turner intended deeper levels of meaning'. The size of the swells in comparison to that of the boats indicates the power of the elements over the lives of the fishermen, while the low, even-key palette suggests melancholy and uncertainty.

The huge, dark swell across the foreground situates the viewer in the sea itself, establishing immediate and intimate viewer response. Brushstrokes follow the predetermined framework of the composition and vary from large smooth washes in the distance, to the shorter, livelier strokes describing the action of the breaking waves around the boat. Lines scratched into the pigment suggest the use of the handle of a brush or even Turner's thumbnail, which he grew to use as a tool with which to scratch marks into the paint (Wilton 1979: 13): 'the very functional cultivation of a long thumbnail with which to scratch out highlights'. The smooth finish does not take advantage of the textural potential of the medium that is displayed in *The Shipwreck* (fig.3), and is founded on the classical principle that a smooth finish contributes to a better resemblance of the 'operations of nature' (Gowing 1966: 10). The tight control of brushstrokes and medium also contributes to the idea of a potential storm brewing and the consequent feelings of apprehension.

Colour plays a major role in conveying meaning, both emotional and spatial. Using a well-modulated balance of colour and tone, Turner elicits the effect of cold air rising off the sea. A dark, murky green, suggesting fear and apprehension, is contrasted with a series of warm browns, forming the main colour areas separated by the thin, light blue-grey strip on the horizon.

Turner's specific choice of colour to evoke emotion, suggest distance or to act as a compositional device. The deliberate choice of a night scene allows for a dark brooding sky, and the use of a sombre palette, specified by Burke as being 'sad and fuscous colours, as black or brown, or deep purple and the like' (Wilton 1979: 59). According to John Gage (1969: 20) the striking use of emerald green is unusual, as it was not a colour popular with Turner: '[g]reen as a mixed colour, was one for which, as he got older, Turner found increasingly little use'. The green in this painting evokes further connotations of cold and dark in the unlit areas, indicating unknown depth, which in turn suggests the vulnerability of the fishermen against the power of nature. The warm browns of the boats, and the glow of the orange-yellow lamplight provide a human contrast to the cold neutrality of the sea, embodying 'many of Turner's enduring interests, the sympathy with human life and the sensitivity to the effects of light' (Wilton 1979: 32). Turner's seascapes almost always 'retain a firmly perceived framework of human reference' (Wilton 1981: 99). The warm orange-red of the lamplight reflecting on the faces of the human beings acts as a magnet drawing attention to the focal point of the painting and accentuating the human involvement.

A lack of detail in these areas contrasts with the detail shown in the boat, the fishing nets and the water as it splashes against the sides of the boat. The hands, faces and clothes of the men as well as the sails and equipment are carefully painted with loving care suggesting Turner's empathy for the men. The darkness of the sky and the size of the swells indicate the possibility of a storm, another reminder of the dangers that the fishermen face everyday and the unpredictability of the forces of the sea.

Nineteenth century England supported a vital and prosperous fishing industry, which controlled the lives of the fishermen who had to go out everyday in order to survive, making the fishermen's lives subordinate to two powers, the elements and industry. In an article on Pembroke Castle, Alan Bewell (1997: 426) mentions 'a new kind of power is expressed in the English commercial and fishing fleets, which derive their strength not from struggling against nature, but by precariously riding the waves and employing the winds to their advantage'. Turner's technique, composition, use of colour and brushwork,

exposes the spectator to his response to the scene and also suggests spectator participation in the very experiences of the daily lives of the fishermen.

A series of shipwreck paintings and ships in distress followed *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2). England was at war with France making shipwrecks a familiar sight, highlighting the importance of the navy. The sea becomes more of a destructive force, which is nevertheless magnificent in its power, the power of nature over men's lives. In his choice of subjects and the manner in which he painted them, Turner displayed an awareness of the marvel and the awesomeness of the sublime experience. In contrast to the *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2), *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) is a more violent scene. The storm is raging and the men are fighting for their lives. *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2) implies potential energy whereas *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) depicts released energy: the storm has broken, energy whips the waves into mountainous volumes regardless of the human plight. The force that drives the sea is as indifferent as the moonlight. Rigorous movement directs and controls a precise composition, underpinning terror, fear and helplessness. Sea and sky blend to give a sense of infinity, implying also that occurrences in the heavens operate in conjunction with the earthly events. Paint is vigorously and freely applied, in contrast to the significantly formal structure of the composition. The dominant yellow sail halts the diagonal sweeping movement of the water to the right, providing a strong focal point. A symphony of movement creates a vortex, enhanced by a system of diagonals and lines containing the central figures. The straight lines of the mast, oars, poles, ropes and drifting wood of the wreckage re-inforce the linear design. Panic and exhaustion is evident in the Brueghel-like attention to detail of the figures. Turner has portrayed the human condition caught between the power of evil and good symbolised by darkness and light. The painting illustrates how Turner could find cosmic meaning in a contemporary and natural event. By the use of his aesthetic prowess he has communicated the terror of a sea storm to evoke this kind of horror and its effect upon the people, whose daily lives are threatened by that horror. The human significance of the painting is obvious, as is the magnificence of the storm.

As in *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2) the viewer is situated in front of the painting, resulting in direct access to the action and an anchoring of the underlying pictorial structure. Water rushes in from the left, over wooden wreckage and rocks, capturing the viewer's vision and guiding the eyes up over the rocks on the right. A massive volume of water pours over the rocks to form a mountain-like range of water diminishing in perspective towards the horizon, where it blends indefinitely with the sky giving a feeling of infinity, space and vastness. Sea and sky once again form receding planes upon which to stage the action.

Water swirls around in exciting, intricate patterns of white froth and spray from the edges of huge swells. The waves have as much solid structure as the tragic bulk of the mother ship, now at the mercy of the power of the storm. The floating timber lends a note of morbidity to the scene and suggests the fate awaiting the people. As in *Fishermen at Sea* 1796 (fig.2) the ebb and flow of the tides and the structure of the waves are authentically and powerfully stated.

The visual expression of energy is central to the understanding of Turner's seascapes. The sense of solid architectural structure that underpins the waves was 'undoubtedly reinforced at the start of his career by his study of architecture' (Shanes 1990: 260). Shanes (1990: 260) draws attention to the Hastings sketchbook (T.B.CXI, pp.3a, 4,4a, 5.) in which Turner's 'complete grasp of the ideality of form' is evident in the analysis of geological data, strengthening his belief that natural phenomena were subject to certain universal laws of behaviour and that a fundamental geometry underpinned everything. Every line and brushstroke is related to this desire to comprehend and express the energy (Shanes 1990: 273), which expresses itself in the fundamental patterns and rhythms of the waves and form the supporting structure of the seascapes. The driving force of this energy is made visible through the impact of the wind upon the waves. In his seascapes Turner uses the kinetic potential of painting to materialise the evidence of this dramatic impact of the wind's energy on the waves. Contrasting light and dark, short and long strokes, fine calligraphic threads of foam and scratched, engraved lines build the formation and movement of the water, as Gowing (1966: 48) aptly writes: '[t]he movement of water, as Turner showed it, was also a movement of the eye and the image'. As the eye is guided along the scene so the emotions are whipped up into peaks of hope and troughs of fear and despair echoing the ebb and flow of the sea.

Wilton (1981: 46) states that as Turner's interest in the painting of a sublime experience 'progressively became more ambitious, he explored gradually the technical problem of representing the sea, and the interrelationship between the sea and human beings'. In both the *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2) and *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) the people are visibly expressing emotions of anxiety and fear, whereas in *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) painted thirty-seven years later, Turner's vision became broader and less specific. People are not visible and the ship, a hazy shape in the distance, seems to be part of the elements of water and air. Space in this painting has been stirred up into an asymmetrical spiral, winding down and finally compressed in the dark shape of the boat. The viewer is not just looking at the scene; he is in the scene and part of the experience. The subject and

the technique of painting convey the magnificence and power of the storm. The experience this painting offers to the observer is not just a visual recording of a storm, rather, it conveys what it feels like to be part of the storm itself, which is painted by a man who had personally experienced this energy, fear and drama (Gowing 1966: 45).

Turner himself stated that 'his meaning [of his painting] was in the experience itself' (Wilton 1981: 99), in other words, he used his entire pictorial vocabulary to capture the essence of the sea's energy and to involve the viewer in the experience. Turner recorded being aboard the ship *Ariel* during a storm when he asked to be tied to the mast, in order to experience the storm intimately (Wilton 1979: 209). *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) was subsequently painted to record this experience. Turner's hundreds of drawings and notes testify to the value he placed on his personal involvement with his subject and it is this solid foundation of experimental knowledge that he offers his viewers.

At first glance *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) seems to present a swirling mass of colour and atmospheric mist. However, the energy of the painting is contained by the underlying geometrical composition. Contrasts are achieved through tone and colour. Shanes (1990: 97) states that Turner 'felt that colour is dependent upon the more fundamental values of light itself; and it is limited in the associations it can introduce.' Light, in this painting seems to have broken free and forms a powerful force held within the boundaries of the canvas. Form is dissolving into a swirl of water, energy and light. Turner's reverence for light as a revelation of the divine is well documented (Shanes 1990: 275).

'The sun is God' (Shanes 1990: 275) is a statement that Ruskin claimed Turner uttered on his deathbed. The importance of the statement lies in the implications of the value given to light by Turner, verified by his poetry and writing (Shanes 1990: 277, 279). Shanes suggests Turner saw metaphorical correlations between the sun and spiritual energy, reminiscent of Byzantine mosaics and stained glass. Certainly, light served as a practical option for Turner enabling him to create space and awe, and subvert the boundaries of form.

Seen in retrospect, Turner was never an abstract artist, preferring to preserve the representational recording of nature. However in his search for essentials, his later work such as this painting of the *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) begins to suggest abstract conceptions of space, rhythms and geometry. A controlling factor in Turner's work was his belief in an underlying geometry, which structured everything.

Shanes (1990: 255) states that ‘such fundamental geometry enjoys a metaphysical existence “sequester’d far from sense” and ‘generated by “one great cause”’. Energy, generated by the heat of the sun is seen as the omnipresent force sustaining this universal geometry and light. In his on-going search for fundamentals Turner saw, over and above this geometry, light as being the source of the Divine and an “even more fundamental power” (Shanes 1990: 275) than energy. It is this light, in fact, that was the source of all earthly energy for Turner.

A brief comparison between *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2), *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) and *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) shows some significant developments. The first painting could be viewed as a mostly naturalistic rendering of fishing boats at sea. The overall mood is quiet but tense, the controlling factor being the sea. Nine years later *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) displays a more adventuresome exploration of energy through the sea. Twenty-seven years later *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) is a display of Turner’s use of his medium to interpret the force of the elements. Every component of the picture is subordinate to the concept of energy, light and universal rhythms in a composition that approaches the abstract.

Turner’s paintings of the sea are full of movement and images, which were most suited to his purpose; water served as his subject and his medium to convey meaning. Through the subject of water he explored the pictorial potentiality of colour and light, movement and line. The sea was an arena in which to explore mortality and death, terror and awe; his storms were apocalyptic, his space infinite. Light was an emanation of the Deity.

Turner’s belief in the kinetic power of painting enabled him to use the sea as a vehicle to suggest recondite associations with other spiritual realities. The sea served as a ‘metaphor for the transformative powers and ultimate triumph, of the artistic imagination’ (Susan Sidlauskus 1993: 59). It is this revolutionary ‘transformative’ approach that anticipated artistic routes for modern painters. His interpretive use of light and colour to create atmosphere and convey the essence of the place were of encouragement to Monet and will serve, in this research a stylistic and iconographical link between the two artists’ work.

ENDNOTES

¹ The ‘Wilson’ Sketchbook, Wilkinson (1977: 40).

² According to Wilton (1979: 50) Joseph Wright of Derby was known for his painting of moonlight scenes, with strong chiaroscuro effects.

³ ‘“Genius Loci” the essential nature of the place that exists behind the outward appearances’ (Shanes 1981:15).

Chapter 2

Oscar Claude Monet (1840-1926)

The candidate has chosen to discuss Monet's paintings of water because he was, like Turner, inventive and passionate about the sea, painting its magnitude and power. Monet found in Turner's painting an atmospheric synthesis of light, colour and form that reflected the moods and the grandeur of nature, House (1988: 29). 'In the name of God,' Monet exclaimed in 1890 when looking at a painting of an ethereal blue lake by Turner, 'if that doesn't make you despise Monet's originality and people of his ilk - an evaluation that Monet was out to contest in 1899' Tucker (1989: 252).

Together with Turner, Monet's paintings depicting water provided avenues for further development of twentieth century visual concepts,¹ specifically for those artists who dealt with abstraction, transcendency and identity, such as Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) and Pat Steir (1940-). In her paintings depicting waves, Steir refers to both Turner and Monet for sources of inspiration and direction (McEvilley 1995: 58-61).

This chapter will consider Monet's choice of the sea as a subject and will proceed to analyse selected paintings to investigate his particular techniques and objectives in painting the sea. Quotations from Monet's notes and letters, which give significant insight into his aims and frustrations, will be considered as well as the criticism of a number of critics of the day, such as Georges Lecomte, whose understanding of Monet's work was remarkable in its foresight (House 1988: 225).

Monet's focus moved, from the 1880s onwards, away from urban and landscape scenes, eventually to concentrate on the forces of nature, as in the later paintings of 1890s at Etretat, Pourville and Belle-Isle. Images of gigantic, imposing rocks spreading across the picture surface, pounded by waves, form the motif for many of these canvases. In a letter to Alice Hoschedé, Monet wrote, 'Etretat is becoming more and more amazing; it's at its best now, the beach with all these fine boats, it's superb and I rage at my inability to express it all better. You'd need to use both hands and cover hundreds of canvases' (Kendall 1999: 113). Embodied in this statement is Monet's passion for the sea and his feelings of awe at the discovery of the spectacular coastline of Etretat. Here was a locale that would tax his

imagination and his energy. Painting outdoors presented multifarious problems not the least of which was the transitoriness of the elements. Consequently it became necessary for Monet to begin separate sequences of canvases to capture the atmosphere and tidal changes. It was the *enveloppé* that provided the seascapes with a unity to which the subject became more and more subordinated, eventually, culminating in the water lily series where the essence of the motif is the ephemeral, evanescence of light.

Waves Breaking (1881) (fig.6) is divided into sky and sea by horizontal rows of predominately blue and white waves extending across the canvas, imparting a feeling of unrestricted space and ceaseless movement that could continue beyond the visual field of the canvas. This type of loose composition, which seems to spread outwards illustrates Monet's rendering of continuity and space. The viewer looks down onto the smaller waves in the foreground, then shifts attention to the larger waves and finally is drawn to the distance by a change of horizontal, green brushstrokes. A more fluid, mobile perspective, well within the character of the sea, has replaced the traditional fixed-point perspective, allowing for Monet's preference for pattern to be explored. In relating the sea to the surface of the canvas, Andrew Forge (in Rewald 1984: 102) writes: 'we must picture not only absence of focal points but an equality of meaning all over the picture surface' and again, 'the motif is both a parable about painting and a metaphor for a picture'. In contrast to the waves, the sky forms an unbroken area of blue, with smudgy white clouds touched with pink. Pictorial coherence and an illusion of space and distance, is created by a complex, calligraphic surface pattern and a carefully worked out colour scheme. The emotional response evoked by the colours, lines and brushwork is one of boundless joy and delight.

Although Monet never visited Japan, his interest in Japanese art is substantiated by his collection of Japanese prints (Green 2001: 4). For Monet, Japanese art suggested ways of viewing and relating to nature and as such, it was a creative rather than an imitative source of influence (Green 2001: 5).²

Katsushika Hokusai's *Under the wave off Kanagawa* (1830-31) (fig.7) and Utagawa Hiroshige's *Picture of a large crowd visiting Enoshima Shrine to worship an image of Benzaiten, the Goddess of Good Fortune* (1847-52) (fig.8) share two similarities: firstly, the wave's movement has been translated into an abstract equivalent and made into a pattern; and secondly, in Hiroshige's painting, the pattern-like waves run right across the picture's surface

in much the same way in which Monet has depicted them in *Waves Breaking* (fig.6). Spate and Bromfield (Green 2001: 32) also suggest a correlation between *Waves Breaking* (fig.6) and Ikeno Taiga's hanging scroll, *Impressive view of the Go River* (1769) (fig.9). Both Hokusai and Monet have filled the picture surface with decorative, abstract brushstrokes, signifying the movement and nature of the sea. The function of Monet's brushstrokes was to make visible his experience of the scene before him; they acted as pictorial, symbolic shorthand to convey sensations based on his extremely accurate observation of nature.

The high horizon, simple statement and flat, undifferentiated planes of colour seen in Monet's *The Green Wave* (c.1865) (fig.10), suggest the hallmarks of Japanese prints. Tension from the interaction of the elements and the boats form the focus in this painting. The visual concerns expressed by the critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century avant-garde, preferred an art that depicted the sensation conveyed by the artist (Green 2001: 9). Opinions were divided: the Academicians chose classical, naturalistic painting and the avant-garde painters sought to capture new ways of conceiving and expressing what they saw and what they felt. Monet, speaking of his experiments with colour, verified his need to find new techniques to convey his ideas said 'I was working at effects of light and colour which ran counter to accepted conventions'.

The Green Wave (fig.10) illustrates the speed of the boats as the wind propels them across the huge swell. The 'H' on the sails of the boat in Monet's painting, acts as the focal point of the picture, drawing the eye straight out to the horizon. Diagonals and curves form a network that keeps the eye moving across the canvas. The suggestions of speed and movement are intensified by the wind filled sails and the angle of the boat, as it balances on the crest of the huge green wave. Monet's interest in capturing and materializing a moment in time is expressed in the tension of the intersecting diagonals. The forces of nature are captured in perfect balance, as they are in Hokusai's print of *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (fig.7), just before the wave crashes down to change the assemblage. The influence of Japanese prints on Monet's painting may also be detected in the comparably flattened and silhouetted boat and sail, the suppression of detail in the surrounding body of water and the high horizon, effecting also a sense of pattern and design. Monet's respect for a sound underlying composition is attested to by the inclusion of the vertical sailing boat on the horizon to give stability to the composition.

The frontal view over an empty sea echoes a similar composition seen in Courbet's painting, *The Wave* (1869) (fig.11). John Rewald (1984: 16, 102) quotes an incident in which Monet declared: 'I occasionally had the advice of Courbet, who would come to visit me.' The open viewpoint of *The Green Wave* (fig.10) facilitates direct spectator participation in much the same way that one would view a photograph. The contrast between the rapidly moving sea and the static stance of the viewer results in a feeling of being destabilized and submerged in the experience of the motion and immensity of the sea. Turner achieved a similar effect in *The Shipwreck* (fig.3) and *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2).

Although both Courbet and Monet were realist painters,³ Monet's inquiry concerned the process of seeing, the reflection of light on the retina and the effect of light in defining colour and atmosphere. His aim was to translate his visual experience of nature into a pictorial equivalent 'to embody the immaterial in nature - light, atmosphere, water - in the materiality of paint' (Green 2001: 26). Monet therefore chose motifs that would draw attention to immediacy and scenes that would capture the unbiased, unprejudiced moment of the first glance, before preconception spoilt the impact of the sensation. His seascapes evoke moods and atmosphere, inviting the spectator to contemplate the pictures as creations in their own right. By avoiding imitation and relying on the spectator's ability and imagination to interpret pictorial signs such as brushstrokes, compositional devices and colour, Monet effectively evoked reality in his paintings analogous to the spontaneity and freshness of the first glance.

Monet's artistic career had its beginnings in caricatures, so he would have agreed with Baudelaire's theory in his book *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863) that encouraged artists to learn from caricaturists who made use of a 'line or patch of tone to stimulate the spectator to *recreate reality* through an act of imagination' (Green 2001: 9).

Seascape Storm (1867) (fig.12) shares a similar open, direct viewpoint and colour range as *The Green Wave* (fig.10). The boats in *The Green Wave* (fig.10) ride rapidly on the high sea in contrast to the immobility of the boat in *Seascape Storm* (fig.12). In this painting the fishermen are preparing for the storm, which is threatening. Both paintings evidence that moment before and after an event. Monet's treatment of colour varied according to the response he wished to convey. In this picture the deep greens of the water in the foreground contrast with a luminous yellow-green strip of distant water along the horizon. The strange, ethereal light that often precedes a storm pays tribute to Monet's powers of observation and

bears witness to his experiments with light and colour under variable weather conditions. For Monet observation of nature proved the best teacher: 'But I don't teach painting. I just do it ... there has been and will be only one teacher ... that, out there' (House 1988: 110). The broad expanse of warm mauve-grey balances the dark sea, like the advancing mass of cloud on the left balances the sails of the boat. The horizon is both emphasized and distanced by the strip of pale green, smooth water, a clever device for silhouetting the figures of the men and guiding the eye to the focal point of the painting, at the bottom of the mast. Space, indicated by the direct access from the foreground to horizon, is counteracted by the brightness of the green strip, which paradoxically lifts the horizon and brings it closer to the picture's surface, reinforcing the awareness of the two-dimensionality of the canvas surface. The swells of the sea are of little threat as yet, although the dark sky, the direction of the clouds moving in swiftly from the right, the billowing sails and dark sea, suggest the threat of a storm starting.

Although the point of departure is reality, this painting is not a naturalistic imitation of the sea and boats. The quiet balance of the horizontal and vertical lines communicates a mood of stillness. The slight flaring out of the sails and the thick splashes of white foam indicate the stirring wind, which precedes a storm. Colour contrasts and varying brushstrokes relieve the somewhat severe linear composition underpinning the painting. Monet's use of staffage, silhouette and the red of the men's clothing and faces to establish the central focal point of the scene also highlights the sense of fear and drama as does the tension generated by the opposition of the vertical, diagonals and curves of the boat. Not only do we know what the scene looks like, but also we feel the threat of the approaching storm, the vastness of the sea and sky and the fragility of the sailors.

Seascape Storm (fig.12) is said to be the only painting in which Monet used a palette knife to apply paint: the thick green paint describes the expanse of water, and forms a sharp contrast to the white foam (House 1988: 75). The impasto of the central white wave crests is densely material and evocative. It rivets the eye to the boat, highlights the foreground and establishes awareness of the two-dimensionality of the canvas.

During the 1860s and 1870s (House 1988: 76) Monet experimented with different brushstrokes and techniques in order to evolve a repertory of brushstrokes with which to translate the endlessly differing aspects of nature into paint. Mark making and the use of the dark outline could be attributed to the possibilities offered by Japanese woodblocks (Green

2001: 10). In *The Green Wave* (fig.10) this is noticeable in the outline of the boat, which both flattens the boat and lines it up with the picture surface, emphasizing the two-dimensionality of the canvas. Compared with *Seascape Storm* (fig.12), *The Green Wave* (fig.10) is about speed and movement to which the restricted colour and powerful lines contribute.

The effect of the sunlight in *Regatta at Argenteuil* (1872) (fig.13) also suggests a solid, opaque and tactile application of paint, but here the mood is peaceful and the colours are lightly and delicately applied. Steady horizontals and verticals add calm and serenity to the scene. An earlier painting of the *Regatta at Sainte-Adresse* (1867) (fig.14) shows a greater assortment of coloured brushstrokes over coloured 'lay-ins, *ebauché* or under painting' (House 1988: 65).⁴ The brushstrokes act as visual shorthand: dark, short horizontal strokes for calm water, rounded strokes for stones, contrasting with a mixture of broad sweeping linear strokes and curly, smudgy strokes describing the clouds.

A comparison between these Regatta paintings and Turner's painting of the same subject shows the different handling of a similar subject. Turner's *Sketch for 'East Cowes Castle, The Regatta Beating To Windward'* (1827) (fig.15) is a turbulent composition with few straight lines. Vigorous movement is shown by the curves of the sails and the water, which is being whipped up by a strong wind. Except for the patch of clear blue in the top left of the picture, the colours are subdued and chiaroscuro is fundamental to creating form. In Monet's *Regatta at Argenteuil* (fig.13) flat slabs of colour replace the conventional tonal structure, and give rise to a feeling of spontaneity. Shadows are dispersed by the light coming from the front of the painting, which allows the juxtaposition of colour to provide vibrancy and to convey the mood of the scene. Reflections painted with flat, straight strokes add to the feeling of tranquility and peace.

Turner's picture is a metaphor for the relationship between humanity and the elements (Divinity) while Monet was interested in translating his visual responses to nature into painting. This marks an essential difference between the two artists, simultaneously emphasizing their different goals. Monet's painting captures the changing light affecting the fleeting moment indicated by the reflections in water. Reflections formed an important leitmotif throughout his career. Monet was fascinated by the ephemeral, fleeting aspect of the water's surface that acted as a mirror for the sky with its ceaseless movements and reflection of light; he proclaimed that he 'fell in love with the ray of light (*rayon*) and the reflection

(*reflet*)' (House 1988: 111). Armand Silvestre (Stuckey in Rewald 1984: 114) suggests that reflections also mirror the upside down retinal action on the mind, which uses the retina as a screen.

Turner explored the sea under specific conditions to convey meaning, whereas Monet, through the use of colour and light, eventually reached pure sensation in *The Waterlilies*, (c.1903-1925) which were the focus of his later years from 1900 onwards.

The Breton island of Belle-Isle, off the south coast of Brittany, provided an array of strange rock formations, dramatic tidal patterns and variable weather. Most of Monet's paintings done along this coast contain no human presence, so that the paintings emphasize the relationship between the artist and the sea. The transient weather patterns provided an opportunity to explore atmospheric effects and moods. In a letter to Alice Hoshedé, Monet wrote of the sea at Belle-Isle:

I'm mad about it; but I well realize that, in order to paint the sea, one has to see it everyday, at every time of the day at the same place in order to get to know its life at that place so that you can understand its ways in that particular spot and that is why I am working on the same motifs over and over again. (Kendall 1999: 122)

This quotation emphasizes Monet's determination to paint outdoors, *plein-air*⁵ and the importance he placed on his choice of a suitable viewpoint, which had to remain stable throughout the painting. He took time to get to know the place, to identify himself with its rhythms and to decide which view point would best embody the character, or essence of the place (House 1988: 22, 23). Familiarity with the place also gave him a certain mastery over his choices. The quotation also describes his excitement at the sheer violence of the forces at play. Belle-Isle presented a new range of effects that extended his scope as a painter: he explained that he needed 'to make a great effort to paint somberly, to convey its sinister, tragic appearance, I who am more inclined to gentle, tender tints' (House 1988: 125). To Paul Durand-Ruel he enthused about the challenge of exploring and depicting the extreme forces of nature and the sensation the scene evoked in him: 'I am full of enthusiasm for this sinister place, and this is precisely because it gets me away from what I usually do' (House 1988: 25). The obdurate, somewhat primitive qualities of this coastline offered the most basic subject matter of rocks, land, sea and sky. Charles. F.Stuckey (1995: 2) points out that these paintings of the Normandy coast also stressed the 'manifest interactions of solar and tidal time' and in

so doing provided commentaries about ‘the elemental verities of nature’. Stuckey believes that these paintings have as their subject:

the full spectrum of time, observed as a succession of instantaneous truths of quickly moving light and water acting on the rocks and cliffs that were sculptured over centuries by relentless geological forces. (1995: 2).

In paintings such as *Storm on Belle-Isle* (1886) (fig.16) it becomes increasingly difficult to define composition as being distinct from execution. The brushstrokes and colour amplify the simple formal structure of diagonals, bypassing traditional composition through the creation of space and movement by accentuations of the brush and gradations of colour. The elaboration of the surface follows the short, choppy motions of wind, the energy of which seems to have penetrated the rocks themselves. One could interpret the rocks as representing latent energy and the sea kinetic energy, which would relate to the kinetic properties of art itself. R. R. Bernier describes this technique of applying paint as the

reciprocal relation between the painting rhythm and the rhythm of the subject, that is, to the way in which the procedure of laying on paint in broad and quick slabs, sweeps and thrusts recurs in the painting as *thematic* and gives actual substance and structure to what is relevant within the subject matter and again the thing depicted and the depicting procedure, or subject and painting – are interdependent (1989: 305, 306).

Brushstrokes direct the eye around the canvas much the way the wind moves in circles, swells, gaps and streaks. Monet’s paintings of Belle-Isle show his enthusiasm for translating the restless, stormy mood of the place, indicating the struggle of natural forces. Monet’s friend, the writer and critic Emile Zola, defined a work of art as being ‘a corner of nature seen through a temperament’ (House 1988: 218). This statement referred to the fusion of an essentially personal sensation and impression, which the artist then conveyed with his specific technique. The idea that ‘all experience is, to a degree, filtered through individual perceptions was a subject much debated in the late nineteenth century by philosophers, psychologists and critics’ (Rewald 1984: 149).

The high horizon is reduced to a strip in *The ‘Pyramids’ at Port-Cotton, Belle-Île-En-Mer* (1886) (fig.17). A wider blue-grey band of unbroken colour gives way to more and more intense variations of colour and brushstrokes towards the foreground of the painting, creating a

platform on which to secure the rocks. By flattening the rocks, instead of using conventional tonal modeling to describe volume, Monet has taken advantage of the silhouette effect, highlighting the taut outlines and their subsequent interrelationships with each other and the viewer. The rough texture and sharp, stony edges are defined by juxtaposing vertical brushstrokes of saturated colour, rich red-browns, purples, pinks and blue-greys. Similarities can be found between this painting and Hiroshige's woodblock print '*The Twin Sword Rocks in Bō Bay in Satsuma Province*' (c.1853-56) (fig.18). Both pictures depict similar rock formations rising like monsters out of the sea. The technique of the silhouette emphasises the dramatic shapes of the rocks and the tension generated between them. Furthermore, silhouettes create pattern and contrast. Hiroshige's print evokes a feeling of awe through the contrast of the largeness of the rocks with the smallness of the fishermen. Monet's painting does not include people; instead the haunting power of the place comes from the contrasting shapes of natural forms and how they interact with each other and the sea. The position and size of the principal rocks within the format of the painting initially draw attention to their menacing stance and the struggle of natural elements. The diverse brushstrokes and variation of colour used by Monet, is opposite to the flat unified colour of Hiroshige's print. Hiroshige defines the wave movement with a fine black line, consistent with the demands of woodblock printing whereas the nature of Monet's varied brushstrokes indicate movement, depth and sea currents. Monet's signature in red is carefully placed to give maximum projection to the front of the painting, allowing the background to sink into the grey-blue smoothly painted haze.

Monet's choice of viewpoint, a position slightly above the scene, allows for a dramatic and unusual composition. When presented with an unusual or unexpected view the observer becomes inclined to take a closer, inquiring look, resulting in an increase of awareness and experience of the environment. By becoming tuned into the very rhythms of the scene before him Monet was able to translate the sensations of his visual experience into painting. The drama of the viewpoint also enabled Monet to portray the essential character of that part of the coastline, reflecting its dangerous rocks and swirling tides. Monet has decreased the space between himself and the water, subsequently increasing the immediacy of the scene. Tension generated through the inherent interrelationships of the rocks is significant and part of the controlling network of the composition. As in *Storm on Belle-Isle* (fig.16), Monet's space is oriented along diagonal axes. Superimposing one dark shape in front of another, Monet

encourages the eye to move towards the back of the painting. The thrust of the energy built up from the diagonals is engaged by the dominant, huge rock and pushed down towards the base of the frame, where it is directed back into the distant horizon. Less obvious lines and patterns made by the brushstrokes connect rocks and water, in moving rhythms, forming a pictorial harmony.

House (1988: 57) finds similarities between Monet's *The Manneporte, Etretat* (1883) (fig.19) and Hiroshige's *Seashore at Izu, from 36 views of Mount Fuji* (fig.20). Both images picture natural, almost architectonic rock-like forms, rearing out of the sea, forming a dramatic composition, and reflecting the essential character of the environment. Such rock formations may have suggested pictorial possibilities and reflected Japanese compositional traditions of simplification and pattern exemplified in Hiroshige's print, but Monet's own experiences and his fidelity to nature, led him to faithfully record the scene in front of him (House 1988: 57,58). The value of accurate impartial observation was an integral part of his training as a realist, by masters like Eugéné Boudin (1824-1898) and Johan Barthold Jongkind (1819-1891). Writing to Gustave Geffroy on 8 May 1920 he said, 'I consider Boudin as my master ... that was how I came to understand nature and to love it passionately and how I became interested in the high-keyed painting of Boudin' (Kendall 1999: 255). Douglas Skeggs (1987: 12) maintains that Monet learnt the importance of painting outdoors from Boudin:

'Everything that is painted on the spot,' Boudin explained, 'has always a strength, a power, a vividness of touch that one doesn't find again in the studio'. In a series of cloud studies Boudin sought to capture 'cloud poetry', that fleeting appearance of clouds in different weather conditions at different hours of the day (Stuckey 1988: 13).

It was to Jongkind that Monet owed his passion for atmospheric effects and changing light (Skeggs 1987: 19). Monet's paintings were rooted in the direct experience of painting outdoors, often entailing hardship as the weather changed. Yet he exulted in participating in and communing with all the aspects of the light and movement surrounding him. At the end of Monet's life he commented: '[m]y only virtue is to have painted directly in front of nature, while trying to render my impressions in front of the most fugitive effects' (House 1988: 145-146).

Monet's evolving use of colour can be seen in the two paintings of *The Manneport, Etretat*, one painted in 1883 (fig.19) and the other in (1886) (fig.21). Monet's golden rule was to work

the whole picture surface simultaneously, to ensure harmony and unity (House 1988: 66). The colours are subdivided into many closely related but varied hues distributed all over the pictorial area, covering the *imprimatura*. Often the *ebouché* is allowed to show through, even exposing the canvas for light effects. House (1988: 167) states ‘seen from a normal viewing distance the brushwork gives a far more precise idea of the furrows of the cliff and the breaking waves, but, from close to they become a delicate weave of cursive patterns across the picture surface’. The absence of any foothold in the foreground provides the viewer with a sense of immediacy and directness.

Blue became increasingly important to Monet as a means of suggesting atmospheric distance and could vary from cool to warm by the addition of its complementary, orange. In both these paintings colour has been used mostly straight from the tube, effecting a vibrancy and freshness of impact. Monet used the tonal qualities of the colours themselves to create shadows and sunlit areas (Skeggs 1987: 138). Prussian blue, ultramarine, viridian and alizarin crimson were used to suggest depth and shadow, whereas the lighter areas touched by sunlight were painted in mixtures of cerulean blue, cadmium red and yellow. The colour was applied in daubs and strokes of pure pigment in keeping with the structure of the rock face and the rhythms of the water.

The Manneporte, Etretat (fig.19) pictures a simple motif. A huge stone arch juts out from the left into the sea, occupying most of the picture space. Monet’s method of developing his seascapes in relation to the skyline, allows the sky to act as a backdrop for the arch, emphasizing its size and implementing the idea of the arch soaring upwards out of the sea into the heavens. Contrasts between the solid arch and the movement of the water re-inforce the idea of the arch serving as a buttress for the impact of the sea. Intersecting diagonal lines forming a network in the waves, direct the eye through and around the arch towards the horizon. Tiny figures on the gigantic left inner leg of the rock act as staffage by which to compare the huge rock, and give rise to feelings of man’s inconsequence when measured against the power of nature.

An observation made by House (1988: 184) reveals that Monet made changes to the shape of the arch in the first working of the painting. The reason for making changes varies; it could be that Monet was dissatisfied with the composition or the viewpoint he had chosen. Close observation of the paintings that have been subjected to change, show that Monet built upon

the underlying work, often leaving traces of the original picture. It could be that he felt these were in fact, part of the total concept and execution of the painting. Once Monet felt familiar with the area, he gravitated towards expressing either the atmospheric impressions, or the forces of nature, especially the opposing forces of land, rocks and the sea. Such contrasts reinforce the energy of the painting while underpinning the geometrical components of the composition.

Yet another view of *The Manneporte, Etretat* (fig.22) also executed in (c.1883) explores the impact of the sea against the rock more intensely. In comparison to the other *Manneporte* paintings, (fig.19 and fig.21) the composition of this painting (fig.22) has been simplified to include only one leg of the arch, which centralizes the action of the waves onto the rocks at the base of the arch. The brushstrokes are loose and vigorous against the slab-like lines of the rock surface.

Painting the same motif from different viewpoints and under varying conditions had the advantage of revealing the essential character of the scene to Monet, as well as contributing to a deeper understanding and mastery of his subject. His series of paintings from Etretat includes studies of the different climatic conditions of which *Rain, Etretat* (1886) (fig.23) is an example of the *enveloppé* or coloured air (mist and rain) surrounding form (rocky cliff) and existing between the motif and the artist. The creation of conflict by both suggesting space and then denying it increases the awareness of the artificiality of the two-dimensional surface of the canvas. In this painting, the effect of space and distance suggested by the blues and greens, is curtailed by the warm colour mixes concentrated in the foreground and the background. The eye is drawn in and simultaneously brought back to the level of the foreground. Diagonal rain lines blur the solid contours of the rock, which are countered by the moving slant of the water's edge and the hazy horizon. A delicate mingling of brushstrokes and colour blend, blurring outlines and depicting the misty, wet atmosphere of a coastal scene.

Monet's continued search for diverse viewpoints enabled him to choose scenes which provided him with the possibilities of conveying the visual sensations he experienced about a place, often painting the same scene under different conditions. *Cliffs at Etretat* (1885) (fig.24) conveys a feeling of serenity and calm. The location is the same as *Rain, Etretat* (fig.23) but the pictorial syntax and palette have changed. The cliffs now appear on the right of the picture with the sentinel rock rising out of the water like a needle. Brighter colours and crisp rock

formations, the use of the silhouette and reflections impart a feeling of serenity. Human intrusion is kept at a distance in the small sailing boats. The painting signifies Monet's deep engagement with nature, and his belief in her 'regenerative powers by contemplation and meditation' (Tucker 1989: 264). This is nature at peace, an unexpected vista, giving rise to feelings of solitude, silence and infinity.

The advent of the camera and the availability of Japanese art in France and Europe may have served as catalysts in developing this type of pictorial formula. However, Monet himself said that ' [t]hese Japanese artists confirm me in our visual standpoint' (House 1988: 58). Monet's sketches and notes re-inforce his belief that his compositions were always based on fidelity to nature and on his visual response to the sensations he felt when confronted by a particular scene. In seeking to communicate these visual sensations, he continually strove to develop a pictorial language of brushstrokes and colour, that would capture the fleeting changes of light and the effects of weather and that would materialise them into paint: 'the painter must consecrate himself entirely to the study of nature, and try to produce pictures that may be a lesson' (House 1998: 110).

Steven Levine (1984: 390) testifies to Monet's relationship of joy and despair with the sea 'It was a joy [*jouissance*] for me to see that sea in fury; it was like nervous exhaustion [*enervement*], and I was so excited [*emballé*] that yesterday I was desolate to see the weather become calm so quickly'. To his dealer (17 Oct. 1866) Monet wrote 'this coast excites me with a passion'. In another statement (House 1988: 1) he expressed his desire to 'paint as the bird sings', in other words he sought to think himself into nature with freshness and simplicity and to understand the rhythms and pulse of the scene.

Social and cultural thought constituting the climate of ideas of the mid-nineteenth century provides an insight into the many influences that had an impact upon Monet's approach to his art, as Picasso aptly said (Roskill 1959: 7): 'you can't escape your own period. Whether you take sides for or against, you are always inside it'. In 1839 Eugene Chevreul's book *The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours, and their Application to the Arts* was published. Phoebe Pool (1973: 14-15) confirms that Monet had 'first-hand knowledge of this book' in which Chevreul describes the effects of juxtaposing colour, and the use of complementary colours. The year 1839 also saw the invention of photography, which was to have a direct bearing upon the ways in which artists perceived their painting. Aaron Scharf

states (1968: XI): ‘that very process of subjecting one medium to another, may to a significant extent account for the high incidence of pictorial possibilities in art after the appearance of photography’. Painters realised that the camera challenged the illusionary concept of reality, instigated by the Renaissance in the fifteenth century. A new way of expression was needed, based on a more introspective, emotional and spiritual direction as ‘perception was not purely an optical procedure’ (Scharf 1968: XV). On the positive side then, the camera suggested many novel ideas, such as the unusual viewpoints and subject matter offered by high-speed photography and negatives.⁶

Monet consistently affirmed his intentions in many of his letters. To Gustave Geffroy, he wrote on 7 June 1912 (Kendall 1999: 245): ‘I only know that I do what I can to convey what I experience before nature and that most often, in order to succeed in conveying what I feel, I totally forget the rules of painting, if they exist that is’. This seems to suggest that Monet became totally immersed in his intuitive directions while allowing his knowledge of picture-making to play its part almost subconsciously. He believed that realism included more than a technically proficient collection of details. In fact, in his fascination with atmosphere, or ‘tinted air’ he ignored detail in favour of a unifying haze, as can be seen in most of the paintings that have been discussed, such as *Rain, Etretat* (fig.23) or *Storm on Belle-Isle* (fig.16). The haze in nature and in Monet’s paintings affords the viewer certain ambiguities, or areas where individual participation can take place. In addition this *enveloppé*, or haze, was used by Monet ‘as a vehicle to comment on the basic contingencies of all experience-space anti time’ (Stuckey 1995: 2). The *enveloppé* signified empty space or ‘nothing’, which stretched from near and far constantly determining how and what we see. Turner’s awareness of this atmospheric concept of space has already been discussed with reference to *Light and Colour, (Goethe’s Theory)-The Morning after the Deluge-Moses Writing the Book of Genesis* (fig.5), and *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour’s Mouth* (fig.1) and forms a link between the two artists.

Monet’s interpretation of space culminated in the series of water-lily paintings, known as the *Orangerie paintings*, which occupied the last three decades of his life. His intense observation of the most fugitive of nature’s effects and of the idiosyncratic power of nature combine in these paintings. Although the series consists of individual canvases, the aim was to conceive them as an aesthetically defined whole. The evanescent qualities of light and

atmosphere evoke the poetic and metaphysical qualities of nature. Blurred shapes and pulsating colour harmonies allow the mind to wander with heightened imagination, as Monet leads us into a world of infinite possibilities.

In Monet's paintings, mirrored reflections become analogies for the eye's retinal action before the images reach the brain (Stuckey 1988: 17). The upside down reflections of the flowers, plants and sky, also served as a means to express near and far space. Pictorial qualities of colour, touch and pattern evoke feelings that have been described as sublime and not unlike the sensations related to Eastern philosophies, which advocate reflection, meditation and transcendence. Yet Monet never aspired to doing anything more than paint what he observed. To Lilla Cabot Perry, he encouraged, '[p]aint just as it looks to you, the exact colour and shape, until it gives your own naïve impression of the scene before you' (House 1998: 110).

During the painting of the *Water Lilies*, Monet's vision became severely restricted by cataracts. A lifetime of close observation of nature combined with a vast amount of pictorial knowledge, including brushstrokes, colour harmonies and technique enabled him to paint virtually from memory and the series of paintings present some notable paradoxes. The geometric, linear structures of reality that underpinned Turner's paintings, have been dissolved by the variable flux of light. The canvases were to be installed as close to the floor as possible. By the act of bowing his head, the viewer would in fact, be humbling himself, a concept in keeping with Eastern Zen traditions (Stuckey 1984: 118).

In *The Water-Lily Pond* (c.1907) (figs.25) and *The Water-Lilies: Study* (c.1907) (fig.26) eye is immediately drawn into the scene and moves from one point of attention to another. A spacial paradox is implied in the vertical movement of the reflections of the sky and the horizontality of the water marked out by the side-to-side movement of the lilies. The melting and blending of colour and the relinquishment of boundaries suggest the journey from the individual consciousness to a universal consciousness. Metaphorical, metaphysical and symbolist meaning may be revealed by images such as the flowers growing from the mud to the surface and the drops of water on the leaves as well as the hidden world of grasses under the water. There is no proof that this kind of interpretation fell within Monet's intention. However, his paintings serve to create awareness and suggest possibilities to their viewers

‘[t]hat others grasp what I have in mind seems unessential, at least as long as they have something else in theirs.’ (Heller 2002: 10)

Although it does not fall within the scope of this dissertation to expand on metaphysical and philosophical interpretations, it is of importance to link these philosophies with Monet’s long relationship with Japanese art and his empathy for its philosophies (Green 2001: 2). His interpretation of water was re-inforced and given impetus by his admiration and respect for Japanese artworks. Referring to Hokusai’s *Peonies and Butterfly* (c.1832) (Green 2001: 3) Monet said: ‘how powerful his work is. Look at this butterfly which is struggling against the wind, the flowers which are bending. And nothing useless. Sobriety of life.’

Monet’s relationship with water formed a major part of his paintings. They served to express spiritual and philosophical concepts; transforming his motif beyond a mere simulacrum as well exploiting the tension between representation and his intention. By stimulating our perceptual and imaginative faculties Monet’s paintings of water extend our experience of life itself. Spatial concepts, the relinquishing of traditional boundaries and the perception of form becoming formless gave a strong impetus to future abstract painters.

ENDNOTES

¹ Generally, the path followed by some avant-garde artists of the early twentieth century was one of individuals exploring the subconscious and spiritual expression; sensation was of greater importance than imitation. Monet’s paintings of water, culminating with the paintings of water lilies, became more ambiguous and misty, eventually loosing the traditional use of line and object, evoking transcendence through contemplation and meditation.

² After the signing of peace treaties with America in 1854 and France in 1858 Japan began to export artefacts to Europe. Many artists at that time were seeking new ways of interpreting reality. They were exploring ‘imaginative transformation rather than realistic imitation’ (Green 2001: 9) and they found inspiration in the flat, bright colours, asymmetrical compositions and use of calligraphic outlines in Japanese woodblock prints.

³ ‘Realist’ used in this context refers to the subject matter and the artist’s adherence to the here and now in nature. Monet did not manipulate nature; instead he chose aspects of nature that enabled him to express his sensations of the place. Therefore the choice of his viewpoint was of prime importance.

⁴ *Ebouché* is the standard term to describe the lay-in, the first stage of a painter’s work (House 1988: 65). Monet’s use of an under-coat or lay-in (*ebouché*) helped to establish a scale of values and ‘determine at the outset the tonality of the whole’ (House 1988: 68).

⁵ *Plein-air* painting was embedded in the French landscape painting tradition. It involved the practice of painting outdoors and had a profound influence on Monet (Green 2001: 2).

⁶ Scharf (1968) reviews the development of the camera and its profound impact on artists, both positive and negative: ‘photographs confirmed ideas already germinating in the minds of the artists ... photography served to heighten the artist’s perceptions of both nature and art’ (Scharf 1968: IX).

Chapter 3

Pat Steir (1940 -)

The candidate has chosen to examine the paintings of water by Pat Steir because she is a contemporary artist who refers, in her own paintings, to works by Turner and Monet. The paintings chosen for discussion extend over a period from 1985-1988, and will include an investigation of her subject choice and painting methods. Reference will also be made to her etchings.

As her paintings form a complex combination of many influences, it will be helpful to briefly discuss the individual paintings. These influences include feminism, Eastern and Western philosophies, art historical references and the physical craft of painting itself.

For Steir the enigmas and complexities of water, in both Turner's and Monet's paintings, form an interface between abstraction and representation. She admits (McEvelley 1995: 25)

'I am only interested in abstract painting'. Both Monet and Turner painted within a particular period, which affected their perceptions, some of which were specific such as Turner's socio-political references to the lives of the fishermen and references to sublime feelings of terror and the fear of death. Steir's interpretation of these ideas and the manner in which she translates them into her personal, contemporary, pictorial vocabulary are central to this examination of her paintings. She alludes especially to the contribution made by Turner and Monet to abstract painting. In their efforts to portray limitless, natural forces, both artists hovered on the border of making abstract art. It is this interest in the abstract that Steir shares with Turner and Monet.

Steir saw art history as 'a set of possibilities that I could draw on whenever I needed something' (McEvelley 1995: 10). McEvelley (1995: 10,11) further describes Steir's paintings as the 'intense grappling with historical thematics.' This would account for some of the many possible meanings suggested in her paintings. In addition, she explains her relationship to the history of painting: 'My obsession with the history of painting is really with what's coming. Every painting reflects into the future from a different point in the past' (McEvelley 1995: 42). In other words Steir considers visual modes used by Turner and Monet in the light of contemporary concerns. She looks at the representation of the idea behind their paintings and finds them to be still formative as part of a contemporary, abstract artistic vocabulary. Like the

paintings by Turner and Monet, Steir's paintings reflect the sea as an enigma and a source for metaphor; the diverse energies of water present a fecund subject for Steir's personal, artistic interpretation. In its vastness and magnitude, the sea refutes literal painting in favour of abstract expression.

Steir's interest in both Eastern and Western philosophies and the part they play in her painting of water are pivotal to this chapter. In interviews with McEvelley (1995: 58) and Juliane Willi (1989: 11), Steir discussed the various philosophies that she admits interest her and have influenced the content of her paintings, such as Taoism¹, Thale's belief that all things originate in water and return to water and the Egyptian assertion of a prehistoric oceanic 'soup' from which evolution started. The connection between Japanese Zen, Taoism and painting was decisive in the development of Steir's ideas, affecting her choice of format, such as in her paintings depicting a circle within a square and her use of the 'drip' technique in the painting of waterfalls (McEvelley 1995: 68). As the principles of Taoism are reflected in Steir's paintings, a brief explanation of these beliefs would be beneficial.

G. Roger Denson (1999: 115) offers assurance that Steir owns a copy of Lao Zi's *Dao Te Jing*.² *Tao* means 'the way' (leading to primal unity), which is an ancient Chinese system of working with the forces of nature to achieve harmony and inner peace. To the Taoist, water signifies the inner law of the universe and one should not attend to outer appearances without regarding the inner laws (Lin Yutang 1967: 71) According to Lao Zi (Denson 1999: 119) water with its persistent movement 'is the strongest and most enduring force on earth', claiming that his 'proof was to be found in its persistent movement'.

When considering the depiction of waves (Willi 1989: 11) Steir admits to identifying with what she believes Leonardo (c. 1514) (fig.27), Courbet (fig.11) and Hokusai's (fig.7) feelings were, namely that the rhythms found in water are to be found within the human being as well as the sea (McEvelley 1995: 61). In an interview with Willi on February 7, 1988 in New York, Steir explained her approach to her painting. She professed to a layered (multiple) thinking process, which in turn determined the subject: 'I use always a subject with many meanings' (Willi 1989: 10). In other words, Steir's paintings seem to be encoded with successive layers of images, meanings and ambiguities. Water with its fluidity, transcendental and regenerative powers, lends itself to her kind of pictorial imagery including symbolic and metaphysical interpretations. *Curtain Waterfall* (1991) (fig.28) forms one of her poured waterfall pictures

which combines the real and the symbolic. The painting is real and materialistic in the sense that it represents a waterfall and the water actually did flow gravitationally down the canvas. The idea of the brevity of fleeting moments and the possibility of an existence beyond that which can be seen, suggests a symbolic dimension to the interpretation of the picture.

Steir found the etching process analogous to her approach to painting, as it demands many layers of superimposed prints. Etching plates act like drawings, presenting challenging possibilities of solving visual and iconographic problems through the technique of layering and viewing the motif from many aspects. (Willi 1989: 10). It is of note that Turner too showed an interest in engraving, a medium that emphasises light and dark. Steel plates were well suited to the light effects that inspired Turner. In order to convey a sense of drama, Turner used engraving, watercolour and oil painting techniques.

The paintings by Steir, chosen for discussion in this study, show the process of investigating and reworking Hokusai's woodblock print (*Under the Wave of Kanagawa*) (fig.7), Courbet's *The Wave* (fig.11) and Turner's *Light and Colour, (Goethe's Theory)-The Morning after the Deluge-Moses Writing The Book of Genesis* (fig.5). Steir restructured these paintings into an intensely personal iconography. She affirms:

I feel that what I do is my own work more than interpreting. I am taking several works of art and comparing them and that makes them be a new thing. I am probably very close to certain art historians in my thinking, except that I am painting the works not talking about them (Willi 1989: 11).

The inclusion of a further quotation by Steir illustrates the impact made by Eastern and Western art history upon her seascapes and paintings of waterfalls:

Now I am just using classical subjects for reference (still life, self-portraits, sea paintings). A lot of them are coming from an overlap between Europe and the Orient like *The Wave*. That's what the three sections of *The Wave* are: Leonardo, Hokusai and Courbet. Is that a picture of when Europe and the Orient met? I am interested that they look the same but more that they carry the same feeling. More than that it is an opening of myself because it is about my relation to-I won't say history-but time. Hokusai was 1700, Courbet was early modern: we think we have come so far but I think we are still in that time. Hokusai's little print and the Courbet's that are so small, still carry tremendous emotional terror (Willi 1989: 10,11).

Steir's prints based on the pictures by Leonardo da Vinci (fig.27), Hokusai (fig.7) and Courbet (fig.11) appear to be similar, but her technique varies, suggesting cross-cultural differences and indicating different art historical periods. Leonardo's intense, investigative drawing contrasts with Hokusai's simplification of the motif. Courbet's painterly use of the medium, his descriptive brushwork and Turner's expression of the awesomeness of the elements have been incorporated and translated by Steir. She examines philosophical and artistic issues and her own subjective, female stance in relation to them in time and history, such as can be seen in *First Wave after Hokusai in Blue* (1986) (fig.29), where the rounded form of the wave may be seen to symbolize the protection and sheltering aspect of motherhood.

The title *First Wave after Hokusai in Blue* (fig. 29) confirms Steir's interest in Hokusai's print of the wave. In this painting an almost circular wave occupies most of the square format, establishing an immediate, dialectic and geometric tension. The lack of perspective and the creation of a vortex, plus the flat application of bright colour affirm the two-dimensionality of the canvas surface, which is subject to a variety of vigorous brushstrokes. Water is shown rushing in from the left, only to fold back on itself and release the flow again in a large curve right across the bottom of the canvas. The greater volume of the wave grows out from this curve, and roars upward to form a crest of white, spattered strokes across the top of the painting. All three primary colours are carefully controlled to present a lively display, rather like a Catharine wheel during a Guy Fawk's event, or even a single flame. Movement is indicated by the brushstrokes: small, loose strokes clarifying the direction of the flow across the canvas. Steir's ongoing investigation into art history, especially the influence of Japanese graphic design on European artists in the late nineteenth century, (McEvelley 1995: 45) led to her preoccupation with the brushstroke as being meaningful in an abstract as well as in a representational manner. Her personally created iconography includes her approach to the use of paint and the approach to the picture surface itself. Large flat areas of red and dark brown describe the tube of the wave and its basic structure, also providing a close-up immediacy for the spectator, such as one would experience if one stood in the middle of a breaking wave.

A comparison with Hokusai's print, *Under The Wave off Kanagawa* (fig.7) shows these two pictures to be very different, yet similar in the depiction of the awesome power of the sea and the emotional terror generated by this power. In Hokusai's print, the immense energy and threat of the sea is dramatically shown by a single wave towering over the tiny fishing boats.

Detail is eliminated to give focus to the size of the wave and the fishermen in the boat. Boats or people are not included in Steir's painting; instead the spectator measures him or herself against the wave, by being situated directly in front of the pictorial field. Denson (1999: 120) states: 'it is this frontal emphasis that links Steir's paintings to the Romantic landscape painters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' Turner and Monet exploited this compositional tactic in their seascapes, to act as a powerful tool immediately involving the viewer, as does the exaggeration of the wave size. Steir's wave (243.8 x 243,8 cm.) towers above the viewer; Hokusai's wave towers above the fishing boats. The Japanese print evokes empathy for the fishermen; Steir's painting evokes fear for oneself, as there are no other figures in the picture, making the viewer the sole participator.

Unlike Steir's painting, line and pattern dominate and flatten Hokusai's wave. Areas fit into each other like a jigsaw puzzle, with definite shapes and decorative patterns, doing away with distance and volume to create an awareness of the surface of the picture, in keeping with Taoist principles, which encourage honesty and truth to materials (Denson 1999: 116). A Taoist would never mimic human vision by creating inroads of perspective. The structure of the wave has been simplified to a stark shape and the foam becomes a series of patterned, claw-like semi-circles.

Hokusai has captured the essence of the wave's energy in his choice of contrasting lines and shapes, to reveal feelings of fear and death. Only the misty shapes of the distant clouds carry a hint of reality in the Western idiom. (Denson 1999: 115). Similarly, Steir's wave is a figurative rather than a literal representation, but the application of the paint expresses a delight in the sheer thickness and colour offered by the medium of oil paint: this delight is shared by both Turner and Monet.

Opposing elements of force are expressed in Eastern philosophic terms as *Yin* (female) and *Yang* (male). These polarities of Chinese cosmology interact as the dark, feminine and hidden (*Yin*) and the bright, masculine and open (*Yang*) (Yutang 1967: 75) The strong, dominant thrust of Hokusai's wave, dominating and threatening the fishermen, indicates a male energy, while the more circular, embracing form of Steir's wave suggests a female energy and also determines her stance as a female. McEvilley (1995: 60) quotes various philosophical viewpoints, including the Taoist theory of the concept of a circle inside a square, referring to the text of Huai Nan Tzu '[t]he way of Heaven is spoken of as circular, the Way of

Earth as square' (McEvelley 1995: 60). Endlessness and infinity have been associated with the circle, whereas the square, being an obviously mathematical concept, speaks of earthly dimensions, (North, South, East and West) of closure and is finite. According to McEvelley (1995: 55) the wave for Steir, further symbolises 'the universalising force of dissolution, wearing all things down again into the primal sand'.

The representational and symbolic connotations of *First Wave after Hokusai in Blue* (fig.29) relate to Steir's statement (McEvelley 1995: 57): '[t]he Wave was really more about fear and death, terror of death, than image, and I think in the artists I took it from it's about that too, in the Hokusai, in the Courbet'.

In a review of Steir's work, Denson (1999: 115) refers to it as a 'fervent, ongoing conversation with art history, Chinese art emphatically included.' Denson maintains (1999: 115) Steir's work emerges as much from Chinese cultural history, especially the inclusion of Taoist painting traditions, as from nineteenth century painting, both of which are often cited as influences. Expanding on her motivation, Steir explains:

I am interested in the confrontation with the model. In some of them I feel like painting a work with the romance of the subjects, the romance of art, I am more interested in the romance of artists than of the subject. And this has been since making the marks. I am a translator, an appreciator because I am using the paintings as still life, as a model in a way with a great amount of love, like a painter who falls in love with the model. If Cézanne painted an orange, you felt like an orange (Willi 1989: 12).

Steir's paintings of both waves and waterfalls support this theory, which is especially evident in the choice of the titles, such as *The Moon and Wave Series: Japanese Moon Wheel* (1986-87) (fig.30). A slightly squashed circle within another circle totally fill a circular canvas depicting a huge wave breaking in front of the moon, possibly implying the tidal force exerted by the moon on the sea. The physical presence of the wave contrasts with the spiritual dimension implied by the moon. Dark, circular brushstrokes draw and redraw circles interspersed with short and broad calligraphic white strokes, describing the foam and crest of the wave. Colour is reduced to the minimum and loosely applied, as is shape and structure. The suggestion of a central vortex blocked by the inward falling of the wave's crest restricts perspective, projecting a feeling of shallow, contained space. This concept of space suggests a natural gravitation towards abstraction, which Willi (1989: 103) considers 'fundamental to

[her] concept of painting'. Here the circle stands alone, the canvas itself is circular and it is not enclosed in a square as in *The First Wave after Hokusai in Blue* (fig. 29).

Steir's choice of sources was deliberate and careful; therefore, the concept of a geometric consideration is not to be overlooked. The circular canvas (213.4cm in diameter) is obviously deliberately constructed and offers a contrast to the freehand painting of the distorted circle of the wave. This could suggest that the system of mathematical divisions, which is said to underpin the universe, could contain within it other systems for enclosure and contrast.

The concept of space in Turner's *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* (1812) (fig.31), *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) and *Light and Colour, (Goethe's Theory)-The Morning after the Deluge-Moses Writing the Book of Genesis* (fig.5) with their overt implications of infinity is evoked in Steir's painting of *Autumn: The Wave after Courbet as though painted by Turner with the Chinese in Mind* (1985) (fig.32). The human element has been removed, plunging the viewer into the spacial tension described by the vortex of the wave. Steir admitted to Willi (1989: 90) that she 'perceives Turner as an abstract artist: from a painter's point of view she is not interested in the illustrational aspects of the work - the narrative of Hannibal crossing the Alps - but in the marks he makes and the painterly effects' he achieves. In Turner's later seascapes, such as *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) the ship has almost disappeared in the swirl of waves, pushing the picture towards abstraction. Steir attempts to understand Turner's perception and rendering of his motif by isolating one small area of the painting, which she then reproduces, divides and subdivides, in order to extract the abstract qualities of the painting. By eliminating the human element and the narrative, Steir concentrates on the abstract characteristics of Turner's painting, enabling her to extend and define her point of focus, which is 'to transcend time and show, in effect, the timeless nature of Turner's art' and 'to include Turner in our time' (Willi 1989: 89, 90). Steir admits that Turner's painting of atmosphere and the drama of nature is of prime concern to her own work. By endeavoring to understand Turner's perceptions, Steir paints her interpretation of Turner's concept of space, atmosphere, and the experience of nature, in a modern idiom.

Autumn: The Wave after Courbet as though Painted by Turner with the Chinese in Mind (fig.32) displays this attempt by Steir 'to transcend time' and to paint that which is ever present, such as fear, and the indifference and power of the force driving the sea, regardless of

the artist or the period (Willi 1989: 89). The creation of a huge, dark vortex that threatens to draw the viewer into its depth implies oppressive, frightening space. Colour further implies sensations of heat and the vigorous brushstrokes remind one of Turner, but the concept of the single large wave refers to Eastern painting traditions. Denson (1999: 115) says this painting 'signals quite clearly the eclecticism and imagination with which Steir was approaching both Eastern and Western sources at the time she painted it'. A further insight into her art-historical intention, is recorded by Jeremy Lewison:

I feel there's really very little difference between the stylistic modes of art-historical periods. Hints of all are evident in all, and it's all the same thing-*painting*. The 'alphabet' is the same-red, yellow, blue, black, white-but not 'the handwriting'. The difference is in the scale, the use of space (Willi 1989: 89).

In *Autumn: the wave after Courbet as though painted by Turner with the Chinese in Mind* (fig.32) the calligraphic lines of the Chinese and Turner's brushwork are combined in Steir's own interpretation of their intention. The tube of the wave swiftly leads the eye into the depth of the painting ending in a circle slightly off centre, leaving the right side of the composition open for expressive, vigorous brushwork reminiscent of Courbet's *The Wave* (fig.11) and Turner's *The Shipwreck* (fig.3). In Steir's painting the viewer is immediately involved in the sublime experience of the terror imposed by a huge wave reminding one of Turner and nineteenth century Romanticism.

Virtually the same format and composition is repeated in *Summer: The Wave after Courbet as though painted by Monet* (1986) (fig.33). The colours are lighter and applied in a kaleidoscopic manner of separate fine brushstrokes, united by the form of the wave. The space is not as threatening as it does not penetrate the surface with a dark cavern, and the tones and colours are lighter.

The circle begins to stand on its own, rather than describing the wave in *The Moon and the Wave Series: Victor Hugo's Boat* (1986-87) (fig.34). Evidence of balancing the *Yang* (male) element with the *Yin* (female) element, can be seen in the contrast of the light-coloured vertical lines, (*Yang*), that show up against the dark background behind the circles, which symbolize the *Yin* energy. Loose scattered brushstrokes suggest water and connect the circles to the background. The progression of completely freestanding, strong, dark circles with dripping vertical lines develops in *The Last Wave Painting Wave Becoming a Waterfall*

(1987-8) (fig.35). Large, powerfully drawn circles occupy most of the canvas surface, almost separating the circular structure from the wave itself. The colour is subdued and the emphasis is on tonal contrasts. The free flowing drips of paint cascading down from the top of the canvas contrast with the geometry of the circles, an indication perhaps of the liquid unpredictability of the sea.

The striking, obvious employment of the circular motive repeated, gives rise to several interpretations: the implications of the circle have already been discussed, and range from those of femininity to continuity and include Turner's belief in a basic geometrical framework underlying nature, supported by Renaissance studies of the Golden Mean, a ratio or measurement underpinning all nature. McEvilley (1995: 58) describes a series of drawings by Steir in which she used her arms out-stretched out to touch the edges of the wave, referencing her own body to relate to the larger universal microcosm/macrocosm theory,³ suggesting Leonardo's man with his arms outstretched to touch the circumference of the circle. The repetitive circles in the painting describe a tubular space. On the right, the circle breaks free into loose brushstrokes and asymmetrical movement, countering the tension of the other circles. Steir's use of geometric structures such as circles, squares and linear grids introduces opportunities of organisational and problem solving devices, by opening up additional pictorial possibilities, such as breaking up shapes and re-assembling them to suggest an abstract idiom. The application of geometric forms has an added significance of lending a sense of ritual or ceremony, which in turn gives a sense of stability and endurance to the image.

David Bourdon (1995: 109), in a review of Steir's exhibition at the Robert Miller Gallery, New York, maintains that 'Steir's aesthetic is grounded in Abstract Expressionism' but admits that Steir has also worked her way through a range of paintings and styles, keeping a close contact with nature. The 'drip' paintings of waterfalls have given rise to speculation about the influence of Jackson Pollock's poured 'action' paintings. There are however some notable differences, such as the amount of control maintained when pouring the paint. Pollock paints on the flat surface of the floor, so as to be able to control and direct the flow of liquid, seeking to find a balance between random forces and his own control. Steir seeks to limit individual expressive control by working on an upright support and allowing the paint to follow the gravitational pull. Furthermore, Steir often halts the flow of paint, by loading her

brush with the accumulating paint and flicking it onto the canvas in an upward stroke, or flinging the paint onto the canvas at random from a distance. Other differences dealing with the issue of control highlight Pollock's practice of pouring from a vessel, compared with Steir's loaded paintbrush which touches the surface of the canvas, allowing the paint to be pressed out in greater or lesser amounts.

In paintings such as *Curtain Waterfall* (fig.28) Steir employs the spontaneous, intuitive possibilities of flinging paint onto the picture surface, reminiscent of the Chinese *Yi-Pin* painters or *ink-splashers* (Denson1999: 117).⁴ Paint is allowed to flow from a loaded brush to find its own way down the surface of the canvas. In some ways these paintings are a recreation of the waterfall itself. The essential nature and power of water lies in its subversive qualities of non-resistance and its movement in harmony with the natural law of gravity to find its level of balance, thus symbolizing its strength and also its humility. Steir's affinity with this belief is expressed in her loaded brush technique. Her intellectual involvement lies in making decisions of colour, wetness of paint and the placing of the brush, thereafter the paint's course down the canvas is left to chance and natural forces: 'Steir allowed diluted oil paint to run down the canvas, counting on the effects of chance while relying on skill to direct the outcome' (Kyle MacMillan 2003: 143). Having made these decisions, she steps back and allows the liquid to run its own course, once again in the Taoist tradition, affirmed by Lao-tzu 'do your work, then step back' (Ida Panicelli 2002: 203-204).

According to Michael Amy (2002: 127), 'Steir has been experimenting with the liquidity of paint since the late 1980s. She begins by covering the canvas with great washes of colour that will serve as a foil for all subsequent actions'. Very often the surface of the canvas is still wet when other colours are applied resulting in blurring, overlapping and mixing, working from fatty (oily) layers of paint to less oily layers on top, so that the paint flows down the surface according to gravity. Carol Diehl (1995: 240) refers to Steir's process of combining oil paint with water, which produces an almost filigreed effect. The line between abstraction and image, painting and process blur and mingle. Steir never lets the one dominate the other. The curtain of liquid is not solid, enabling the viewer to see through the veil of water indicating the possibility of another dimension existing beyond the materially visible one. Garrett Holg (1998: 150) describes Steir's technique:

Over the years she appears to have mastered something of the mind-set and wrist action of the centuries old Chinese landscape painting, a 'Flung ink' approach that she combines with the poured gestures of Abstract Expressionism. The result has been a varied body of work that skillfully blends nature and abstraction.

Panicelli (2002: 203) affirms that Steir's technique is contained within a procedural set of rules she imposes 'regarding her palette, methods of paint application and so on. Once these rules are set, she sticks to them'. In the paintings of waves and waterfalls this can be interpreted as maintaining the balance between intellectual control, or planning, while allowing the intuitive, emotional content of the painting to find its own expression and direction, in much the same way as water would behave. In this manner Steir seeks to form an alignment with natural forces and rhythms, rather than to mimic or use them as a series of symbols.

Within her *oeuvre* Steir has explored the visual concepts developed by other artists and translated them into a pictorial vocabulary that is essentially her own. The link she forms with Leonardo, Turner, Courbet and Monet highlights elements of artistic expression, such as the use of water as a signifier and a means of artistic expression. To summarise, it can be said that Steir presents a varied body of work that skillfully blends nature and abstraction within the boundaries of water in visual art. Diehl (1995: 240) sums up the impact of Steir's painting:

Through the merging of subject and artistic process, Steir's paintings not only capture the randomness and order of nature but also characterize a lightness and freedom many artists aspire to but rarely achieve.

ENDNOTES

¹ Japanese Zen philosophy, Zen Buddhism and Taoism, all reflect an aspect of working in harmony with nature. Heaven is seen as a prototype of order and harmony on earth. Steir identified with the philosophy of finding the rhythms of nature within oneself, as advocated in Japanese Zen philosophy and shared by Leonardo (Willi 1989:11).

² Lao Zi's *Dao De Jing* also known as Lao Tsu's *Tao te Ching*, is a 2,500-year-old Chinese book on the art of living and the alignment of thought and action with the path of nature (Panicelli 2002: 203).

³ The microcosm/macrocasm theory relates to the dramatic change of concepts and ideas that has occurred in physics during the first three decades of the twentieth century. This has resulted in a dramatic shift of paradigms given impetus by the exploration of the atomic and subatomic world (Capra 1983: xvii).

⁴ The *Yi-pin* painters formed a group of Chinese Taoist painters during the Tang dynasty of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Theirs was a rebellion against the rigidity of the current Chinese tradition not unlike the expressionists' rebellion against the academic tradition of the time (Denson 1999: 116).

Chapter 4

A discussion of the candidate's paintings from 2002 to 2004

This final chapter of this dissertation will examine a selection of the candidate's paintings of the sea to explore the possibility of a relationship between these paintings, and paintings by Turner, Monet and Steir who painted similar motifs. In so doing the candidate hopes to clarify her own motivations and intentions. The paintings chosen for consideration stretch over a period of three years, from 2002 to 2004.

Although the paintings may be classified as abstract, they are rooted in intensive observation of the motif, which is the sea. The term 'abstraction', used within the context of this dissertation, implies a process that allows appearances to be surpassed and the transcendental aspects of nature to emerge. The seascapes painted for the purpose of this degree evolved from drawings and paintings of waves made in 2002 and 2003. Rock pools and their metaphorical implications of sheltering and mothering became the focus in 2004. The intention was to investigate the energy of water expressed in its sources, impact, and magnificence. Tension, produced by the kinetic energy of the sea and opposed by the latent energy of the rocks, such as those painted by Monet, became a point of reference for the candidate's investigations.

In 2002 the candidate introduced geometry as a means of accessing and describing this energy, as well as the emotional impact of the waves. Circles, rectangles, squares and grids provided pictorial possibilities and ambiguities while maintaining the inherent structure of the wave. The use of geometrical structures also allowed an unpremeditated, aesthetic response to develop in the process of decision-making. Studying the paintings by Turner, Monet and Steir confirmed the candidate's ideas as well as suggesting ideas of portraying and stabilizing time as stated by Steir (McEvelley 1995: 28).

The sea follows certain rhythms created by the forces of gravity and magnetism. The portrayal of these rhythms forms the central theme of the candidate's painting; in them, she found stability and meaning. Steir's statement (McEvelley 1995: 17) '[m]y visual mediums were like research methods and art was an insane kind of research' appears particularly appropriate.

The process of picture making for the candidate has its embryo in drawing. Drawing, being both investigative and communicative, provides source material and suggests the formal composition of the painting. When comparing the candidate's drawings of waves with those done by Leonardo and Hokusai there seemed to be a distinctive similarity in the analytical approach and in the recording of the watery formations. This indicates a process of observation and deconstruction in the search for the fundamental principles of wave formation.

In *Sea Movement in Four Circles* (2003) (fig.36) geometry is used as a method by means of which to focus on the inherent rhythms of the sea. The movement of the waves is contained within four identical circles. Simultaneously, the candidate's belief in an innate mathematical order underpinning the universe, reminiscent of Turner's paintings of the sea, is indicated (Robert Lawlor 1982: 4). 'Primitive man,' according to Wilhelm Worringer (Weiss 1998: 280) 'finds an absolute in geometric ornament, which appeases his condition of deep spiritual distress.' Geometry affords a sense of stability, unity and order. Additionally, the inclusion of four circles within a square format creates an immediate geometrical tension. The square holding the circles together suggests unity within the whole. Simplifying the details of the water and reducing the variety of colour and line, direct the focus towards a stronger, more meaningful statement of movement. Concurrently, the use of single brushstrokes on a blank canvas with spaces between them, allows the painting to breathe and initiate a sense of spontaneity.

A comparison between the four circular waves in a square and Steir's square-format paintings of 1985 and 1986 reveals similarities in their geometrical conception and the inherent symbolism of the circle and the square;¹ the circle symbolises infinity and the square, the earth and mortality. Cross-cultural references to Eastern and Western philosophies² such as Taoism and to Western psychological implications of motherhood and sheltering occur in both Steir's paintings and the candidate's own paintings.

Apart from the connotations of Feminism and Taoism in Steir's work,³ the combination of the circle and the square suggests a release of energy (Lawlor 1982: 8), a basic tenet of my intention. This intention is further emphasized by the inclusion of four circles in one large square, as compared to Steir's single circle within a single square, as in *First Wave after Hokusai in Blue* (fig.29).

The source for *Sea Movement in Four Circles* (fig.36) and some of the following paintings came from isolating and enlarging sections of the candidate's previous paintings of waves. This provided her with an insight into areas, which were often painted subconsciously while her intention was focused elsewhere in the picture. The results contributed to a new pictorial concept and the basis for another painting.

Wave Movement (2003) (fig.37) consists of a deliberate combination of large brushstrokes and delicate wandering lines, which fill an almost square canvas with rhythmic wave movements. Colour tends to be more tonal than vibrant. The emphasis is on a variety of brushstrokes and lines to indicate the continuity and all-encompassing movement of the sea. The composition is pattern-like with no particular focus. Rather, the eye is directed around the canvas in a circular flow much as it would be when surveying the sea. Monet uses a similar moving focus in *Waves Breaking* (fig 6). In this painting the spectator becomes the participator, merging with the growth and thrust of the wave. Similarities can be found in Turner's *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1) and Monet's *The Green Wave* (fig. 10).

Three large elongated panels forming a triptych communicate different features of the sea. *The Red Wave* (2003) (fig.38) bespeaks the richness of colour and texture blended to evoke feelings of awe related to volcanic action and fire. Red was specifically chosen as symbolic of personal challenge. The painting also affirms the ambience and magnificence of the wave. The Red Wave (fig.38) manifests a time of formation, volcanic eruption instigating towering red seas, implying that destruction and formation are unified in the process of creation. Turner's love of surface textures and glowing colour, correlate and confirm the inspiration for this painting. The candidate has tried to depict energy and create the awareness that all manifested forms are part of an unending cosmic life force.

The mood imparted by *Deep Recesses* (2003) (fig.39) is quieter, to suggest a contemplative frame of mind. The colours belong to the same hue, the shapes are unobtrusive and the linear movement is subdued. Areas of the painting such as the bottom right indicate outbursts of potential violence both in the shapes and the way they are painted.

Upliftment (2003) (fig.40) is in a sense pantheistic, embodying spiritual feelings of awe and humility before the magnitude of the forces of nature, identifiable with feelings instigated by a Temple or place of worship and comparable with Turner's concept of the sublime as expressed

in his seascapes. Simplicity in this painting is a means to an end, as it offered the candidate the chance to paint broad open areas of colour and to concentrate on her meditative responses to the sea. Large areas of open, unpainted space, fewer colour combinations and a definite geometrical framework, give stability and structure to the composition. Space is not depicted according to the finite laws of logic: there is no foreground or background. The central white area suggests the physical foaming of the breaking wave, which becomes intangible and telescopes to an endless tunnel of space. Monet's observations similarly developed into prolonged meditations culminating in *The Waterlilies* 1903-1925.

In *Yellow Wave* (2004) (fig.41) a brocade of yellows, oranges, pinks, browns and greens suggests an overtone of regality, glory and ceremony, which can be experienced at sunrise or at sunset. The powerful, liquid motion of the current is indicated in the movement of the lines, shapes and brushwork. For me, the sea's ceaseless and unchanging rhythm is the supreme symbol of mystic infinity. To suggest this intangible, spiritual vision and energy, a vibrant use of paint with symbolic colour implications, suggests the light of the Divine, rebirth and glory, a pictorial device used by Turner in *Light and Colour, (Goethe's Theory) - The Morning after the Deluge - Moses Writing the Book of Genesis* (fig. 5). As the forms dissolve and flow the limitless energy of the wave is unbound by the canvas.

Edward Lucie Smith (1984: 9) defines abstract art as being '[a]rt which is either completely non-representational, or which converts forms observed in reality into patterns which are read by the spectator primarily as independent relationships, rather than with reference to the original source'. The following series of paintings of rock-pools fit into this definition and are based on the interpretation of the forms and colours of pools found along the Eastern Cape coast. Rich colour, texture and pattern display a range of responses to the sea in all its infinite variety.

Rock and Sand Pool (2003) (fig.42) marked the beginning of the series. Re-evaluating the forces of nature and the candidate's own spiritual interpretation led her to venture into an exploration of the ideas concerning the sheltered, feminine aspect of the sea; the pool acts as an embracing and protecting mother symbol. The composition depends on the balance and tension exerted by bold shapes and contrasting brushstrokes. The restricted space lends a pattern-like effect, which is contained within the perimeters of the picture.

Coral Pool (2004) (fig.43) depicts a rich variety of pattern, texture and colour, reminiscent of Moroccan mosaics. The effect is enhanced by the use of mixed media including pastels and chalk. Broad sweeping brushstrokes contrast with dots and stripes to create movement and pattern; colour harmonies are subtle and varied, moving from cool cobalt blue to a flood of yellow ochre.

There is nothing arbitrary about the design the *Sheltered Pool* (2004) (fig.44). The area around the pool serves to cradle it. Form has been simplified and colour restricted to greens, browns, ochres, blues and red/pinks. An intense blue core, almost in the middle of the painting is emphasized by the surrounding white brushstrokes and the reflections of reds and pinks. The discovery Monet made through his studies of reflections was that water had no colour of its own (Skeggs 1987: 130). Instead it took colour from its surroundings. This painting likewise, is a study in reflections and colour harmonies, differing from Monet's water studies, in the flat broad areas of colour and the angularity of the rock. Pattern and design form the focus, rather than the sensations of atmosphere created by the act of seeing.

Textured Pool (2004) (fig.45) developed from an element of chance. A wash of coloured paint revealed the textural patterns of the canvas, reminiscent of the corals and delicate colours of underwater forms. Frank A. Wilson (1981: 78) states that, '[t]he limits of penetration are set by the canvas or paper but the grain may itself be symbolic of basic events'. In other words, the artist should be sensitive to the demands that may come from the painting itself.

The value of this research into water as a subject in visual art has been to confirm and deepen the candidate's understanding of her intentions and also has suggested new concepts and techniques to express these intensions. Wilson (1981: 80) indicates that:

[a]ll sustaining realities in nature, and the profound levels of the mind, can in fact be intuitively sensed, thanks to the ability of the brain and body to communicate this through the arts in the use of pigments, words, sounds or movement. This penetration can be communicated to others provided they themselves open to such an intuitive revelation.

The study of selected paintings by Turner, Monet and Steir, have convinced the candidate of their similar intentions and that the sea has proved a suitable vehicle to express meanings. These meanings are not always conveyed in the visible characteristics of the painting (form and composition) but are expressed in the invisible implications. Baudelaire aptly wrote that 'a theory for a new art that would represent contemporary life through imaginative

transformation rather than naturalistic imitation' is needed (Green 2001: 9). By using the sea as a hermeneutic subject, this researcher has shown that the specified artists have accomplished this objective. Also, the candidate's paintings have benefited from studying painters who worked with similar themes and structures.

ENDNOTES

¹ Lawlor (1982: 16) writes extensively on the 'circular mandala' as a 'persuasive image throughout the history of art'. The circle suggests infinity, continuity and unity, while the square suggests the earth (Lawlor 1982: 24).

² McEvilley (1995: 57-58) quotes the Western traditions of receptivity and cosmology, as well as the Eastern traditions of the yin and yang forces.

³ These connotations to Steir's paintings have been discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

The central theme of this dissertation has been the use of water as a subject in art, with reference to selected paintings by three artists: Turner, Monet and Pat Steir. The candidate's own work was also examined as it was informed by aspects of the work of the artists under scrutiny. The results of this investigation have revealed in each case, that the depiction of water was highly idiosyncratic and determined by intent. The use of geometry as an artistic device was found to be seminal in the work of all three artists.

The motif of water has been used as a conveyer of metaphor and social comment. An added discovery was the release of the structural, abstract components of picture making, from supporting a purely descriptive function, to that of the expression of the artist. Kurt Schwitters (Chipp 1968: 383) maintains: '[t]he work of art comes into being through artistic evaluation of its elements'. Schwitters (Chipp 1968: 383) also aptly states that '[a]ny desire to reproduce natural forms limits ones force and consistency in working out an expression'.

Using water as a motif, the selected paintings form a sequential chain spanning a period from 1775 to 2004, simultaneously accentuating a path from the representational to the abstract in painting. As water is a moving, fluid system of integrated patterns, which are controlled by universal laws such as gravity and magnetism, it suggests a compelling motif by means of which to relinquish the bounds of representational methods and traditional nineteenth century linear composition. The use of geometry especially, has been used as a pictorial device.

Gowing (1963: 30-33) sees Turner as the 'patron saint of recent abstract painting'. The present dissertation has examined Turner's seascapes over a protracted period and found that the development of his medium, colour and light, supported by his practice of geometry, became the objective of the painting, rather than the motif. The realism in *Fishermen at Sea* (fig.2) contrasts with the purely spatial concept of light and movement in *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (fig.1). Seminal to his paintings of seascapes, were the more evocative effects of the painting itself, to which the weight and thrust of the brushstrokes, the mysterious quality of line and the use of light and colour to create space contributed. Turner's concern with the drama of time and with the balancing of opposing temporal forces made him

one of the first painters to explore the fleeting effects of light under various weather conditions.

The sea, for Turner provided a rich field of metaphor, association and symbolism. In the paintings discussed, the vastness of the sea situates humanity in a position of humility and reverence; the sea is unpredictable, regardless of humanity's existence, it is magnificent in a storm, presenting a display of power fuelled by a source of inexhaustible milling energy. Turner transformed the substance of paint into the idea this energy.

The sea presented Turner with an opportunity to explore this illimitable vastness and source of energy; it is the main protagonist; it is the vehicle whereby he manipulated his argument, be it a contextual social comment or an example of humanity's relationship with the Divine. The exposure of Turner's philosophical beliefs in a geometrical order, which underpins the universe and his identification of light with God form the substance of his seascapes (Shanes 1990: 275). His acknowledgement of geometry as a pictorial device for structure and emotional content has been a source of encouragement and knowledge for creating the candidate's own compositions.

Monet's admiration and respect for Turner's concept of light and space has been noted in the discussion and analysis of his work. However it was Turner's use of the ambiguity of atmospheric effects and fleeting moments, that Monet found meritorious. Monet's concerns lay with the process of seeing and conveying his visual sensations while in front of nature. He sought to capture the character of the scene and convert it into his personal abstract pictorial vocabulary. His concentration on the *enveloppé* enabled him to capture in his paintings the most ephemeral, fleeting moments of nature. Monet's use of *enveloppé* simultaneously created space and captured time. Through his study of reflections in *The Water Lilies*, Monet was able to create deep space and suggest a possible dimension beyond that space. In these final paintings, traditional uses of form and composition give way to a sense of the boundlessness of infinity, indicating that the underlying geometry on which many of Turner's paintings were based became subservient to a composition organized mostly by colour. The ambiguities of reflections and contours have had an impact upon the candidate's work in the treatment of edges and the description of volumes as in the latest rock paintings.

The influence of photography and Japanese paintings confirmed the simplification of Monet's compositions in order to sacrifice 'the identity of individual parts to the overall unity

of design' (Skeggs 1987: 91). An offshoot of this practice of simplification was the elimination of detail in order to paint unrestricted, large areas of colour and to portray the atmospheric impressions of the seascape. The element of chance, often captured in photography, sanctioned the use of compositions which extended beyond the frame of the canvas and this enhanced the feeling of timelessness.

Monet's relationship with Japanese art re-inforced these ideas and confirmed his own relationship with nature. Form is often broken and diffused and a fragment of a scene may well be the basis of his composition. Many of the candidate's own seascapes originated in a similar way, by using a fragment of a scene from a previous painting and subjecting it to enlargement or distortion to achieve the intended expression. Monet's discovery that water takes its colour from its surroundings, enabled him to create colour harmonies which lent unity and space to the composition. In a like manner, colour harmony as a compositional element is pivotal to the candidate's own paintings of rock and coral pools.

Pat Steir's intense, ongoing, artistic conversation with art history makes her approach to the painting of water unique. Water for Steir also reflected feminist and philosophical connotations, in which abstraction and representation unite. Although Steir's aesthetic is grounded in Abstract Expressionism, she nevertheless maintains explicit references to nature. The candidate was able to identify with Steir's participation with nature rather than the mimicking of, or use of its elements as symbols. For the candidate authenticity and integrity in painting stem from keeping a visible link to nature, while reducing the pictorial components to abstraction. Steir's belief in the principles of Taoism suggested the manner in which the act of painting should be executed: namely as a co-operation between the artist and the subject. Lastly, her fundamental belief in the power of paint which did not allow for the subversion or parodying of the medium, have confirmed the candidate's own ideas about integrity in the use of paint as a medium.

The value of this research has been to confirm the basic premises of my own paintings of water. The investigation into the work of Turner, Monet and Steir offered visual solutions to formal problems the candidate had encountered, and also suggested new themes to explore.

Turner, Monet and Steir have indicated a significant tendency to gravitate from naturalistic painting to a more abstract concept of their individual responses to their motif. Each artist has contributed in a particular way. Turner suggested unlimited space beyond the pictorial

boundaries of the canvas, and used light to give value to colour. Monet's emphasis on the *enveloppé* further dissolved form to suggested space and time, leading to Steir's conflation of abstraction and representation. Finally the commonality between these artists lies in their concern with exploring water and their use of geometry as a tool for accessing abstraction.

Although this research has investigated only some of the aspects of water in visual art, it gives rise to many more possible areas of study. A suggested direction of investigation might involve the work of contemporary artists such as David Hockney and might involve investigating a greater range of media: likewise, the use of water as a symbol and as a metaphor in art since Early Christian times forms another possible area for future research.

The research has shown the value art history holds for the practising artist, as the candidate's intention was not to investigate art history per se, but was to find solutions to the formal, conceptual and compositional problems she encountered in her own work.

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Illustrations

All dimensions are in cm. unless otherwise stated.

Figure:

1. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Snow Storm-Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, exh. 1842. Oil on canvas, 91.5x122. Tate Gallery, London. Acq.no.530. (Butlin 1980: plate 83).
2. Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Fishermen at Sea*, exh. 1796. Oil on canvas, 91.5x122.4. Tate Gallery, London. Acq.no.T.1585. (Butlin 1980: plate 1).
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6. Claude Monet, *Waves Breaking*, 1881. Oil on canvas, 60.6x82.6cm W767. Fine Art Museums of San Francisco; Gift of Prentis Cobb Hale. (Kendall 1999: 134).
7. Katsushika Hokusai, *Under the wave off Kanagawa*, c. 1830-31. (cat.49). Colour Woodblock Print. 24.6x36.8. The British Museum, London. (Green 2001: 122).
8. Utagawa Hiroshige, *Picture of a large crowd visiting Enoshima Shrine to worship an image of Benzaiten, the Goddess of Good Fortune*, 1847-52 (cat.85). Triptych. Colour Woodblock Print. 37.6x 78.2cm. The British Museum, London. (Green 2001: 144).
9. Ikeno Taiga, *Impressive view of the Go River*, 1769 (cat.118). Hanging scroll on paper; ink on paper. 129.9x56.8cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. (Green 2001: 164).
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12. Claude Monet, *Seascape Storm*, c.1867. Oil on canvas, 20x42 cm. W86. Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. (Green 2001: 41).
13. Claude Monet, *Regatta at Argenteuil*, 1872. Oil on canvas, 48x75cm W233, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. (House 1988: 111).
14. Claude Monet, *The Regatta at Sainte-Adresse*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 75.2x101.6cm W91. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (Kendall 1999: 42).
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17. Claude Monet, *The 'Pyramids' of Port-Cotton, Belle-Île-en-Mer*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 59.5x73cm W1086 Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen. (Kendall 1999: 156).
18. Utagawa Hiroshige, *'The Twin Sword Rocks' in Bō Bay in Satsuma Province*, c.1853-56 (cat.95). Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio. (Green 2001: 150)
19. Claude Monet, *The Manneporte, Etretat*, 1883. Oil on canvas, 65x81,W832, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (House 1988: 90).
20. Utagawa Hiroshige, *Seashore at Izu, from 36 Views of Mount Fuji*, Woodblock Print Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (House 1988: 57).
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22. Claude Monet, *The Manneporte, Etretat*, c.1883. Oil on canvas, 73x92cm W1036, Private Collection. (House 1988: 57)
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24. Claude Monet, *Cliffs at Etretat*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 65.8x82.4cm 1034 Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. (Kendall 1999: 142).
25. Claude Monet, *Water-Lily Pond*, c.1907. Oil on canvas, 101x74.5cm W1715. Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishihashi Foundation, Tokyo. (Kendall 1999: 277)
26. Claude Monet, *Water-Lilies: Study*,c.1907. Oil on canvas, 105x73cm W1717. Musée Marmottan, Paris. (Kendall 1999: 279)

27. Leonardo da Vinci, *Cloud Burst*, c. 1514. Black Chalk, 15.8x20.3. Windsor Royal Library no. 12,377. U.K. (A.E.Popham (ed.) 1953: 293).
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33. Pat Steir, *Summer: The Wave after Courbet as though painted by Monet*, 1986. Oil on linen, 213.4x365.8cm. Jacksonville Art Museum, Florida. (McEvelley 1995: 124).
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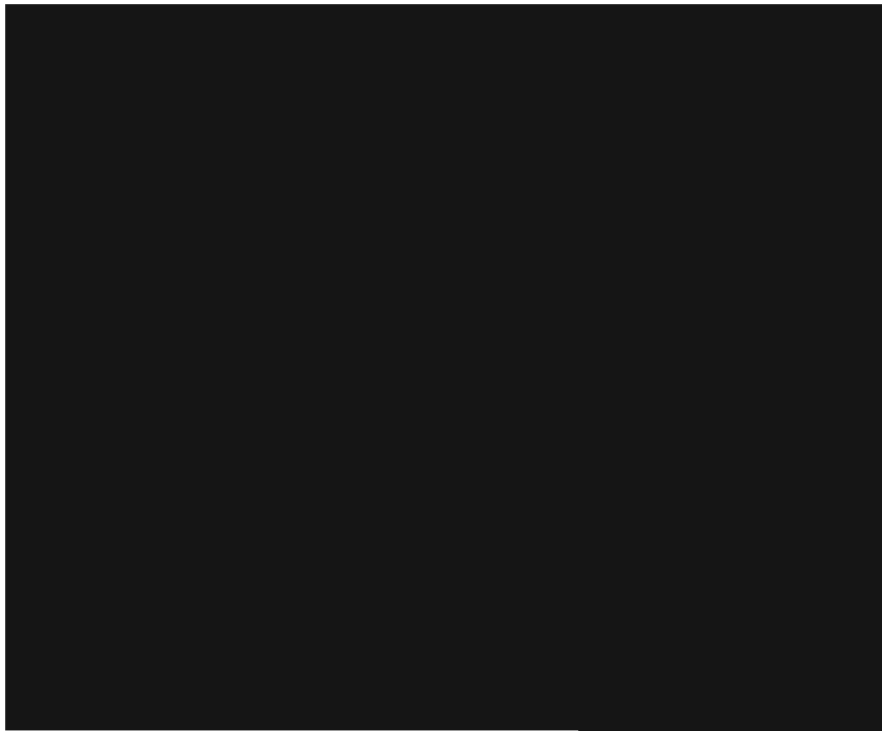


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Watercolour on coloured paper, size of page, 4.5x3.58. Tate Gallery london.
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Waves Breaking, 1881.
Oil on canvas, 60.6x82.6cm W767.
Fine Art Museums of San Francisco; Gift of Prentis Cobb Hale.
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Figure 7. Katsushika Hokusai,
Under the Wave off Kanagawa,
c.1830-31. (cat.49) Coloured woodblock print, 24.6x36.8.
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Figure 8. Utagawa Hiroshige,
*Picture of a large crowd visiting Enoshima
Shrine to worship an image of Benzaiten, the Goddess of Good Fortune*,
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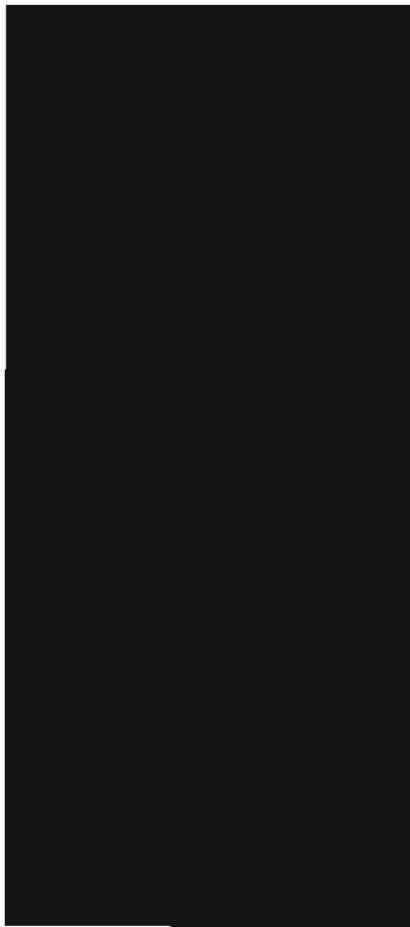


Figure 9. Ikeno Taiga,
Impressive view of the Go River, 1769 (cat.118).
Hanging scroll on paper; ink on paper. 129.9x56.1
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
Kansas City, Missouri.
(Green 2001: 164).



Figure 10. Claude Monet,
The Green Wave, 1865.
Oil on Canvas, 48.6x64.8cm W73.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(Kendall 1999: 40).

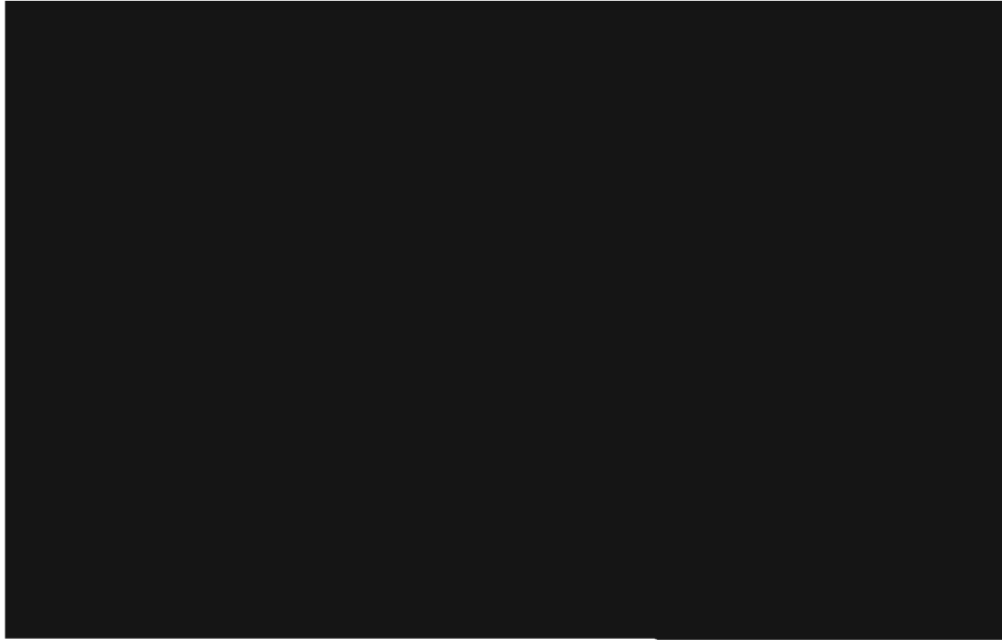


Figure 11. Gustave Courbet,
The Wave, 1869.
Oil on Canvas, 67.5x107cm.
Bremen, Kunsthalle.
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Seascape Storm, 1867.
Oil on canvas, 20x42 cm W86.
Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts.
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Figure 13. Claude Monet,
Regatta at Argenteuil, 1872.
Oil on canvas, 48x75cm W233,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
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Figure 14. Claude Monet,
The Regatta at Sainte-Adresse, 1867.
Oil on canvas, 75.2x101.6cm W91.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
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Figure 15. Joseph Mallord William Turner,
Sketch for 'East Cowes Castle, The Regatta Beating To Windward', 1827.
Oil on canvas, 45x60.5cm. Acq. No.1994.
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Figure 16. Claude Monet,
Storm on Belle-Isle, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 60x73cm, W1117, Private Collection.
(House 1988: 71).

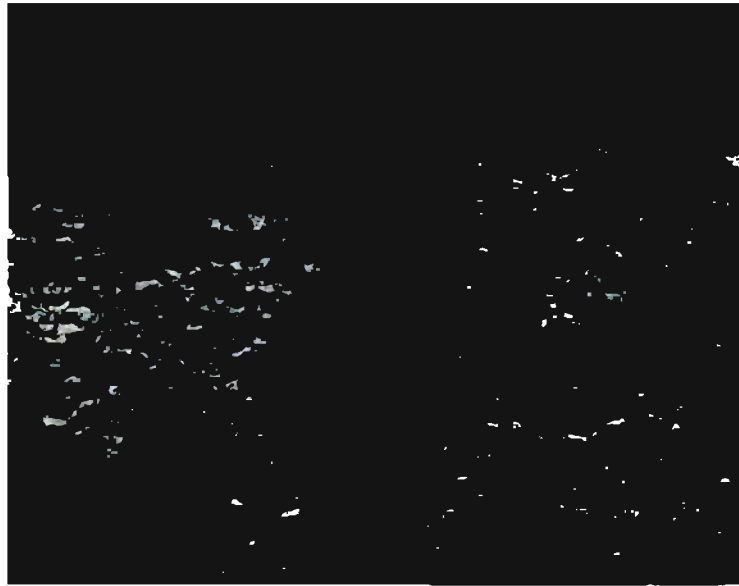


Figure 17. Claude Monet,
The 'Pyramids' of Port-Cotton, Belle-Île-en-Mer, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 59.5x73cm W1086 Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen.
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Figure 18. Utagawa Hiroshige,
'The Twin Sword Rocks' in Bō Bay in Satsuma Province, c.1853-56 (cat.95)
Engraving. 36.2x25.1. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.
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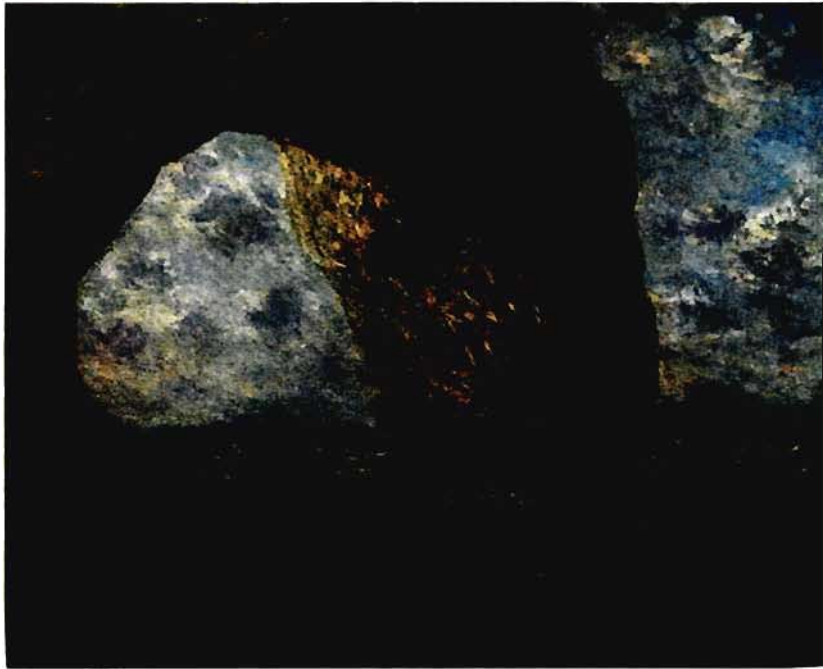


Figure 19. Claude Monet,
The Manneporte, Etretat, 1883.
Oil on canvas, 65x81, W832, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
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Woodblock print
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
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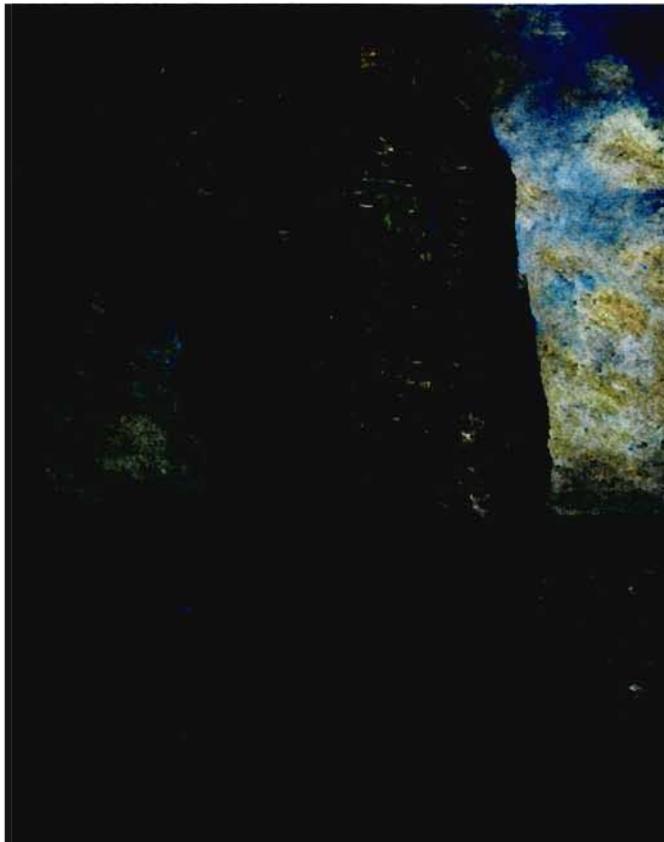


Figure 21. Claude Monet,
The Manneporte, Etretat, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 81.5x65.5cm W1052,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
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The Manneporte Etretat, c.1883.
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Cliffs at Etretat, 1885.
Oil on canvas, 65.8x82.4cm 1034 Sterling and Francine Clark Institute,
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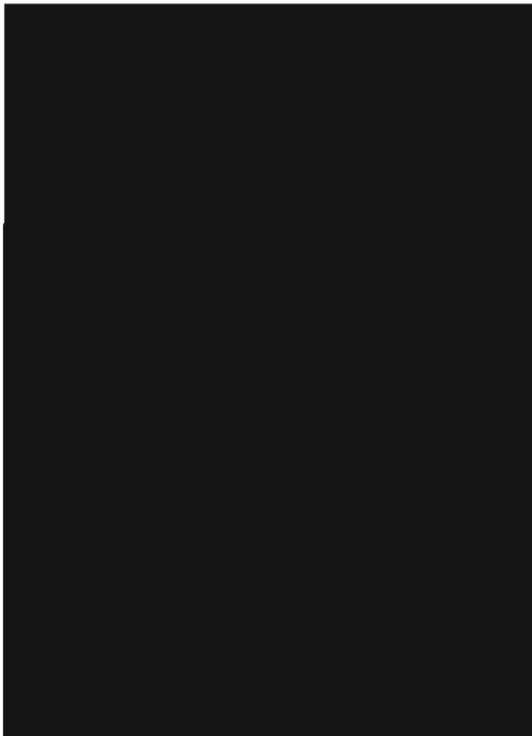


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Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishihashi Foundation, Tokyo.
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Oil on canvas, 105x73cm W1717.
Musee Marmottan, Paris.
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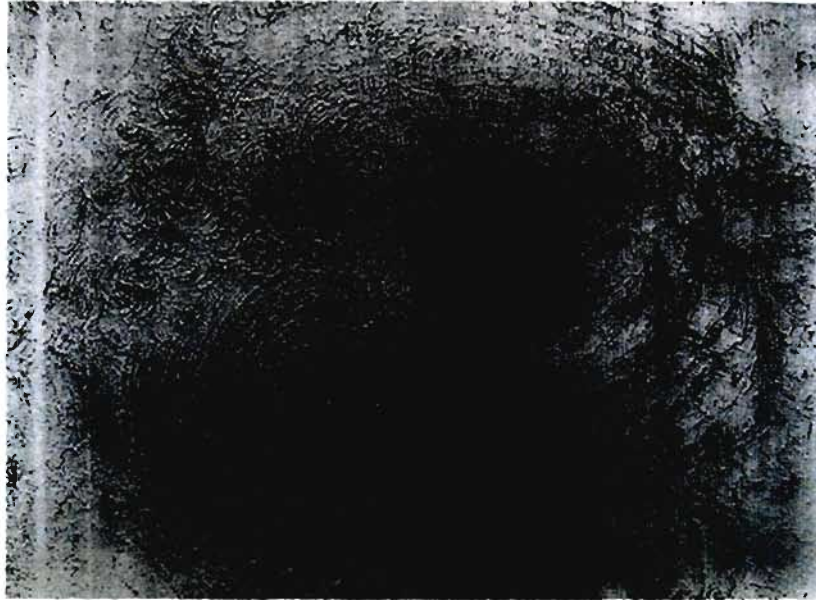


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Black Chalk, 15.8x20.3.
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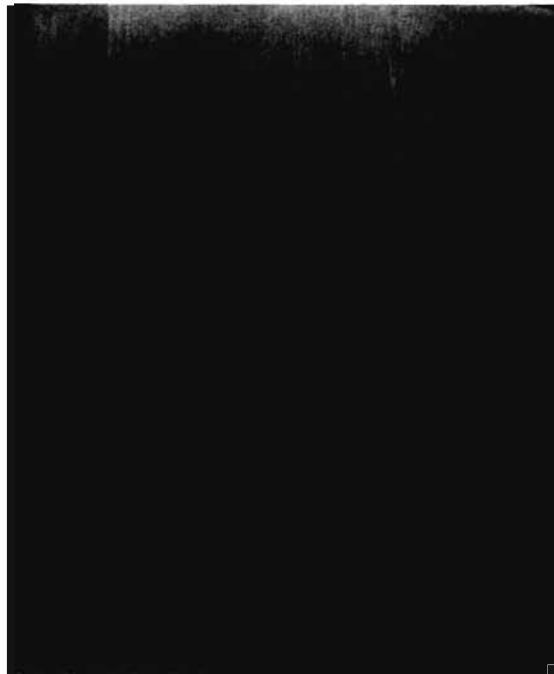


Figure 28. Pat Steir,
Curtain Waterfall, 1991.
Oil on canvas, 351.8x303.5cm.
Private Collection.
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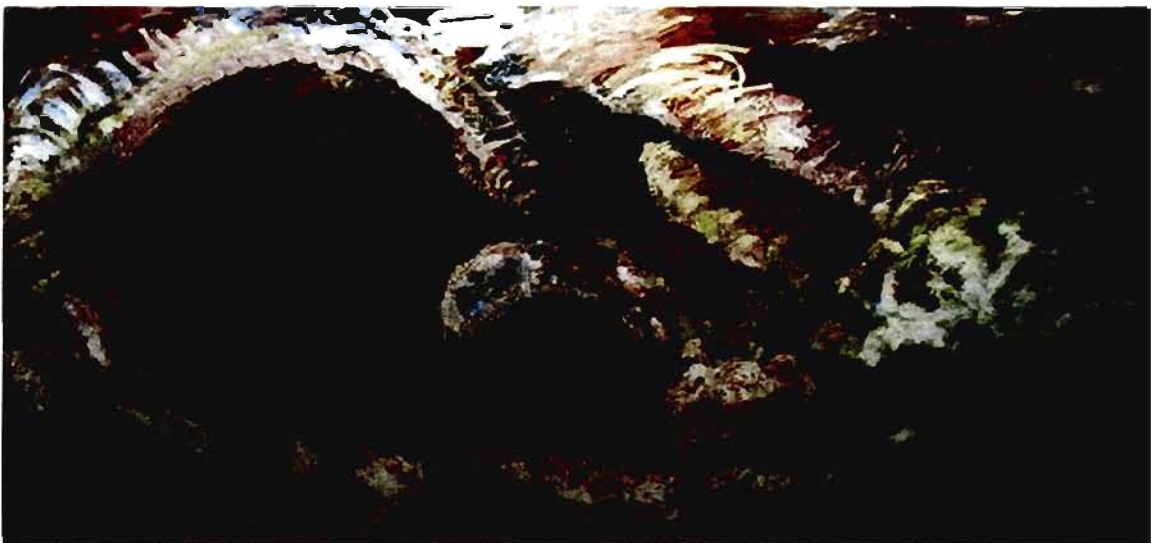


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Autumn: The Wave after Courbet as though painted by Turner with the Chinese in mind, 1985.
Oil on linen, 213.4x451.7cm.
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Figure 33. Pat Steir,
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Oil on linen, 213.4x365.8cm. Jacksonville Art Museum, Florida.
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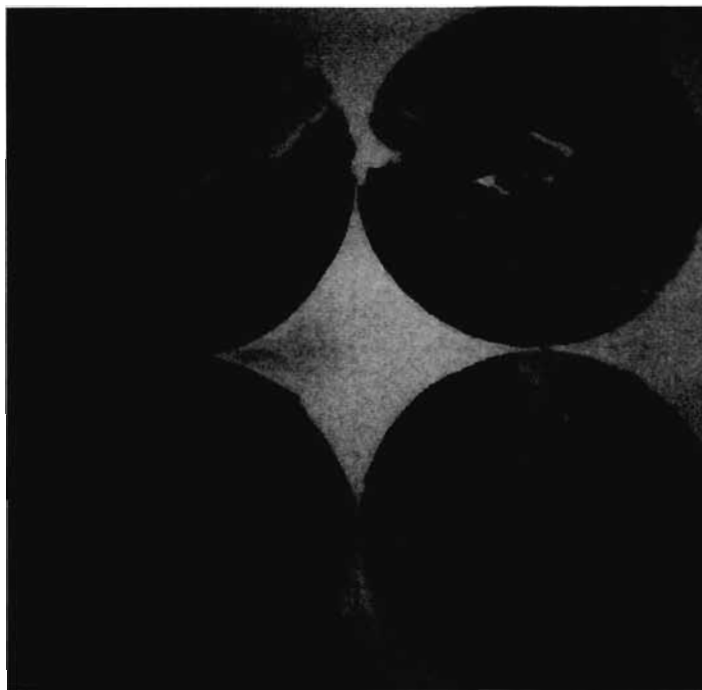


Figure 36. Annette Henderson,
Sea Movement in Four Circles, 2003.
Acrylic on canvas, 100x100cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.



Figure 37. Annette Henderson,
Wave Movement, 2003.
Acrylic on canvas, 120x120cm.
Collection photograph: the artist.

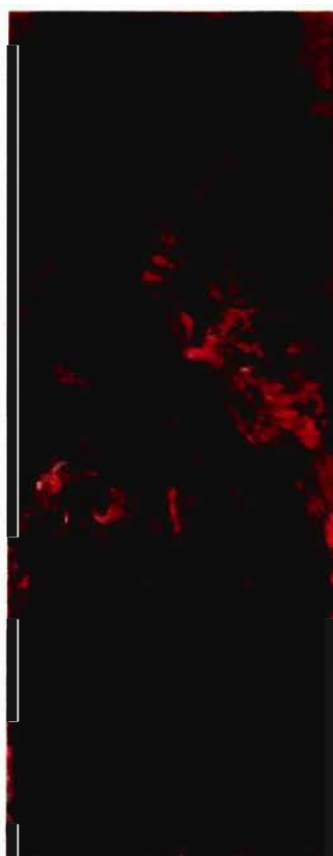


Figure 38. Annette Henderson,
The Red Wave.
Oil on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

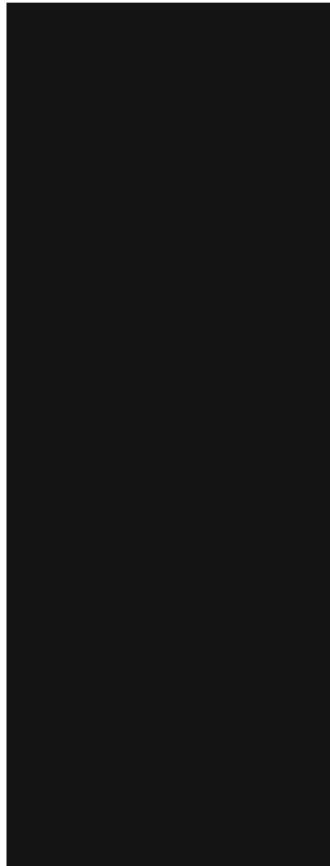


Figure 39. Annette Henderson,
Deep Recesses, 2003.
Acrylic on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

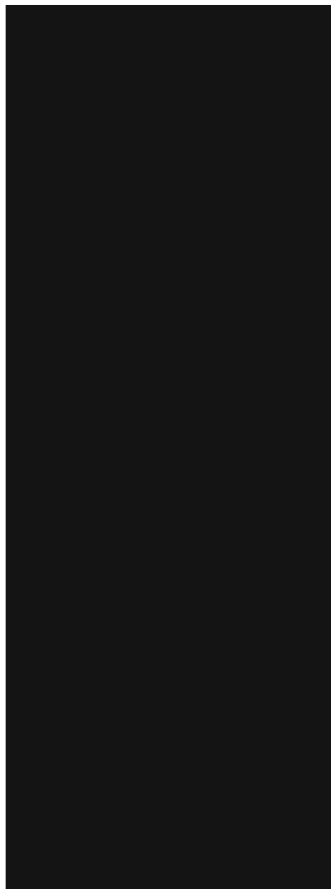


Figure 40. Annette Henderson,
Upliftment, 2003.
Acrylic on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.



Figure 41. Annette Henderson,
Yellow Wave, 2004.
Oil and acrylic on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.



Figure 42. Annette Henderson,
Rock and Sand Pool, 2003.
Acrylic on hardboard, 130x114cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

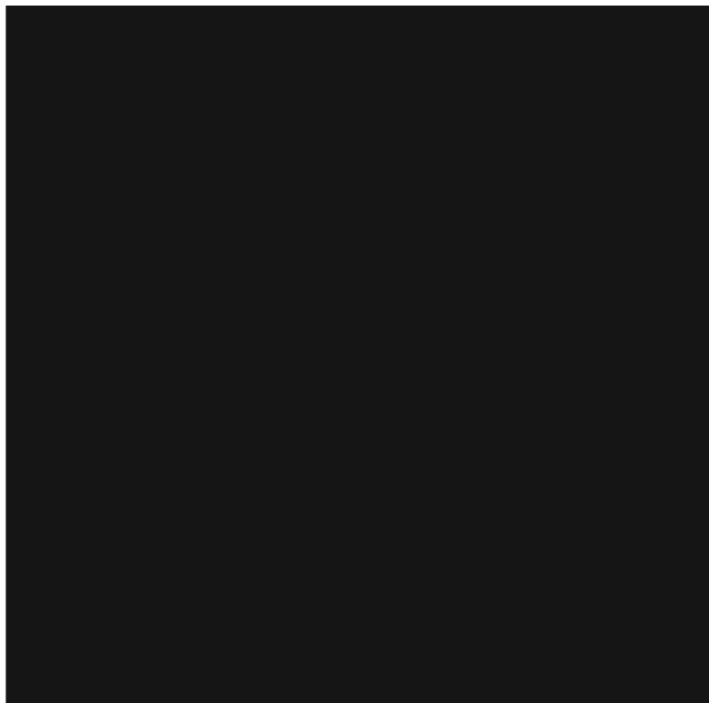


Figure 43. Annette Henderson,
Coral Pool, 2004.
Oil on canvas, 50x50cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

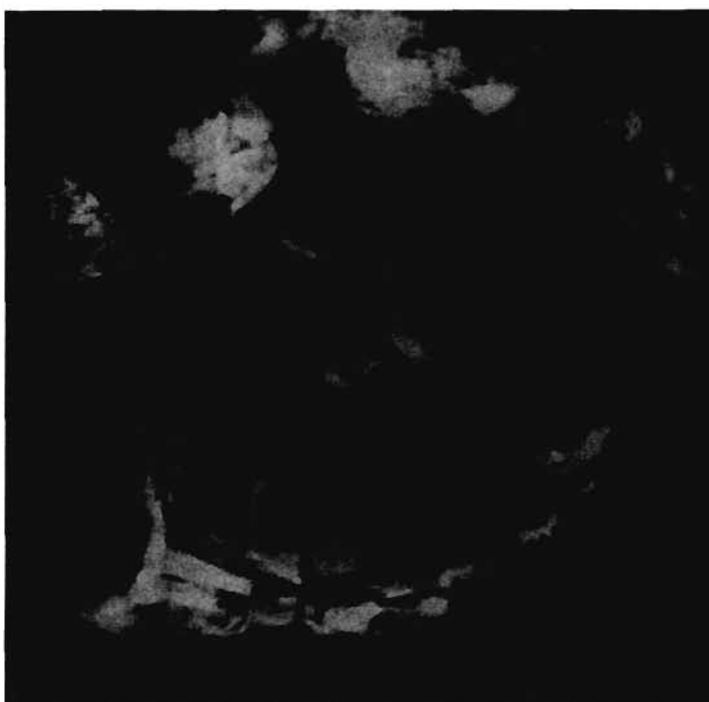
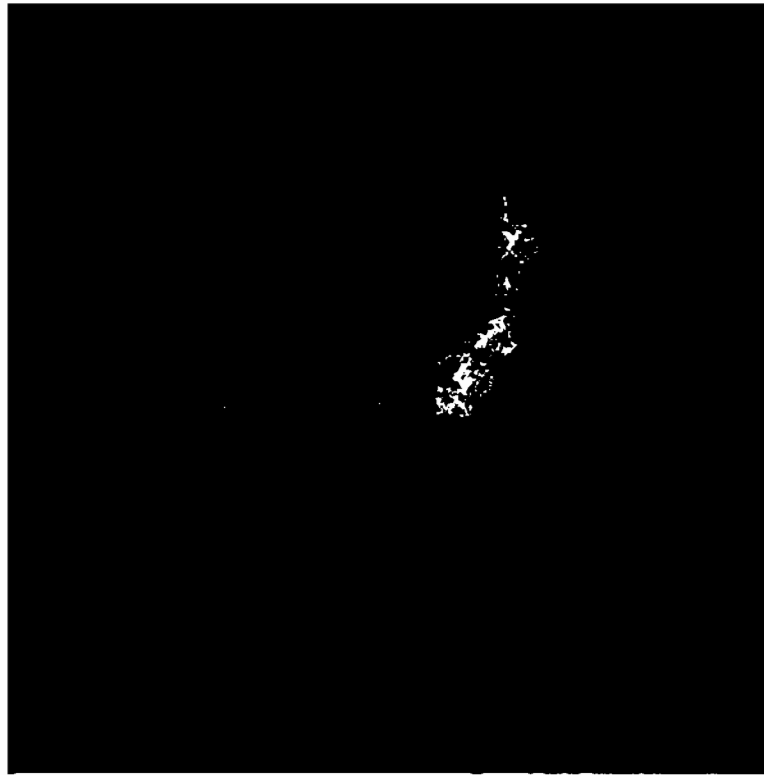


Figure 44. Annette Henderson,
Sheltered Pool, 2004.
Oil on canvas, 50x50cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.



**Figure 45. Annette Henderson,
Textured Pool, 2004.
Oil on canvas, 50x50cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.**



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Fishermen at Sea, exh.1796.
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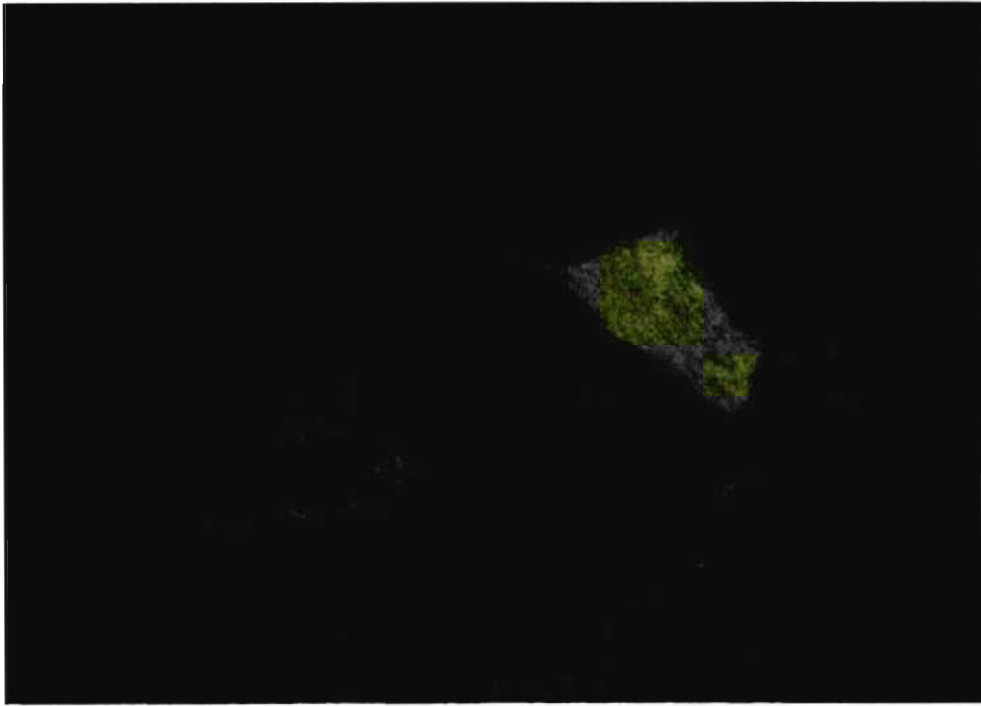


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Oil on canvas, 170.5x241.5. Tate Gallery, london. Acq.no. 476.
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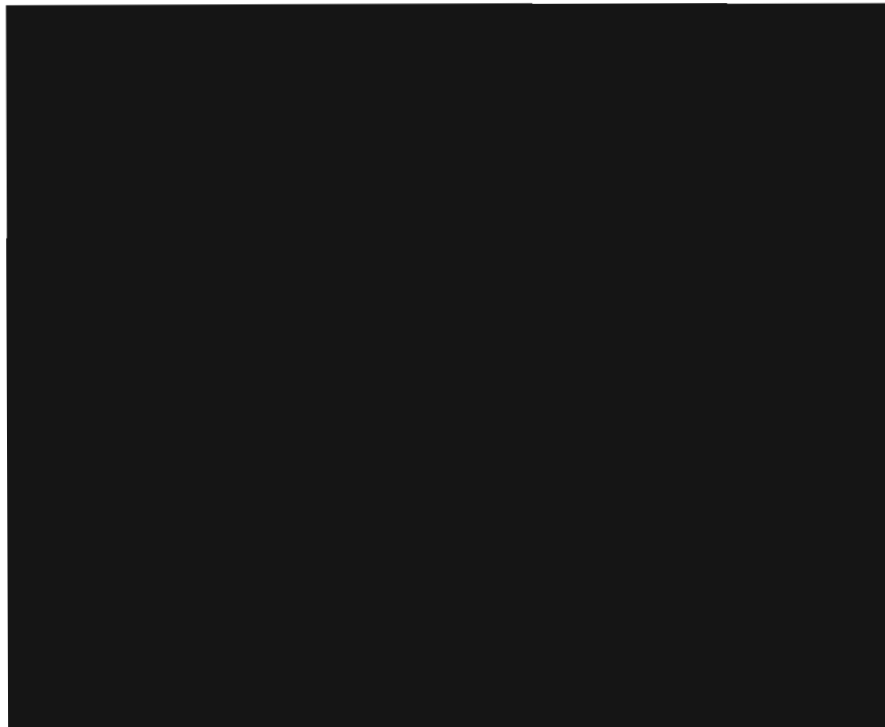


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Watercolour on coloured paper, size of page, 4.5x3.58. Tate Gallery london.
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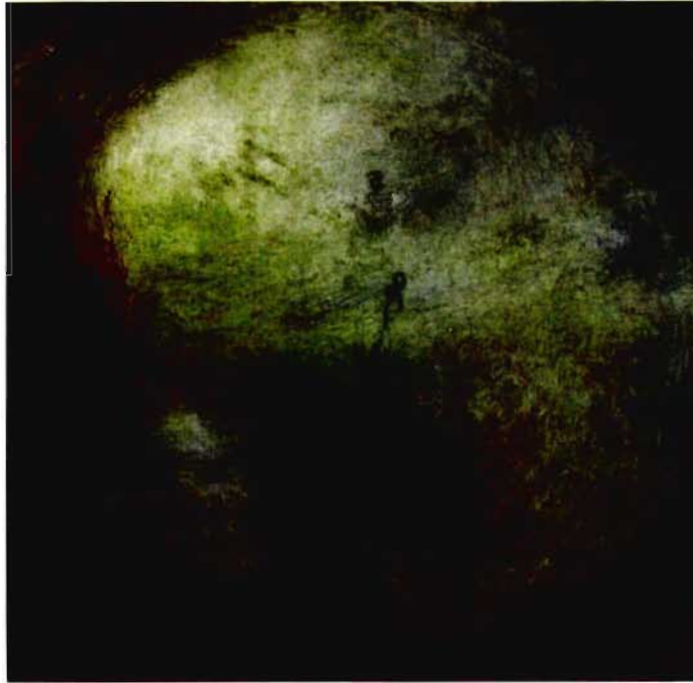


Figure 5. Joseph Mallord William Turner,
Light and Colour, (Goethe's Theory)-The Morning After The Deluge-Moses Writing the Book of Genesis, exh.1843.
Oil on canvas, 78.5x 78.5. Acq. No. 532.
Clare Gallery for the Turner collection, Tate gallery, London.
(Butlin 1980: 85).



Figure 6. Claude Monet,
Waves Breaking, 1881.
Oil on canvas, 60.6x82.6cm W767.
Fine Art Museums of San Francisco; Gift of Prentis Cobb Hale.
(Kendall 1999: 134).

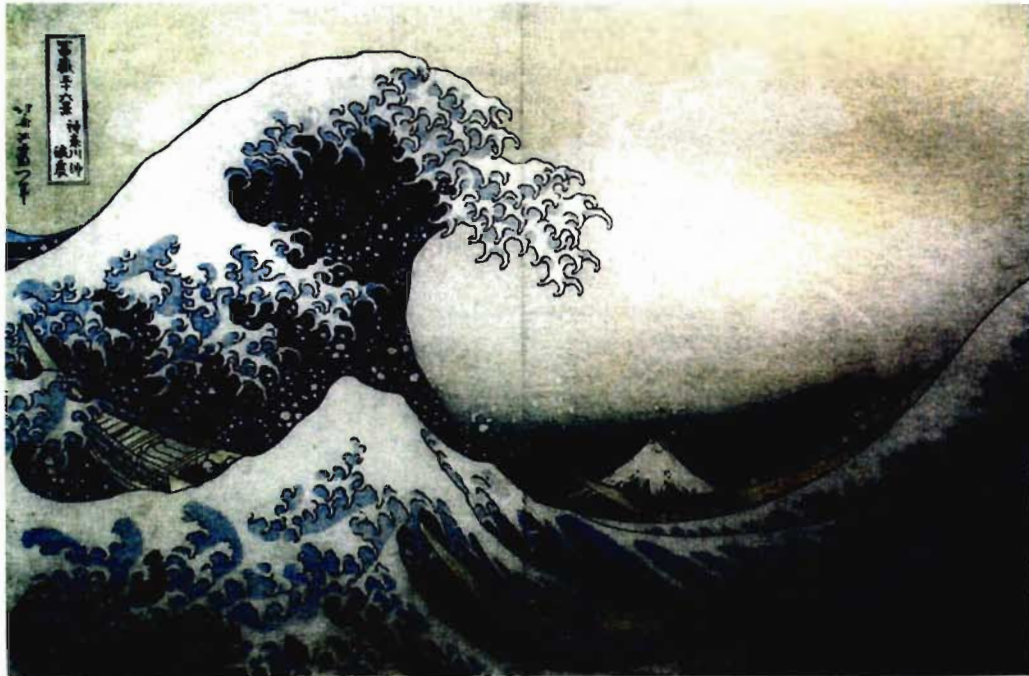


Figure 7. Katsushika Hokusai,
Under the Wave off Kanagawa,
c.1830-31. (cat.49) Coloured woodblock print, 24.6x36.8.
The British Museum, London.
(Green 2001: 122).



Figure 8. Utagawa Hiroshige,
*Picture of a large crowd visiting Enoshima
Shrine to worship an image of Benzaiten, the Goddess of Good Fortune*,
1847-52 (cat.85). Triptych coloured woodblock print, 37.6x 78.2cm.
The British Museum, London.
(Green 2001: 144).

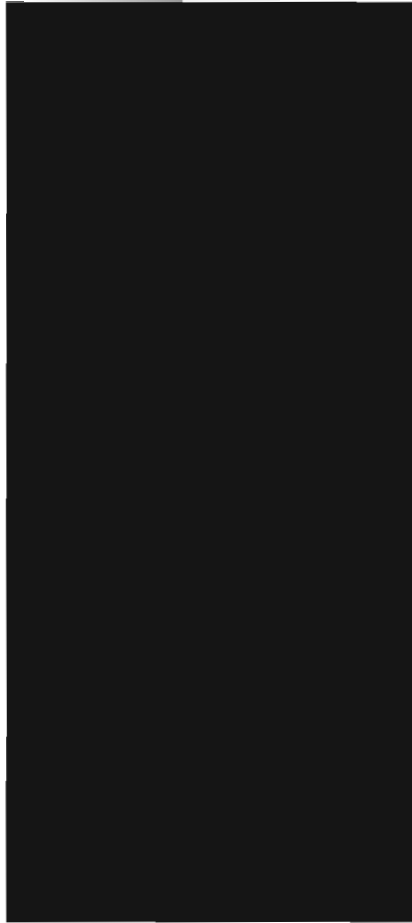


Figure 9. Ikeno Taiga,
Impressive view of the Go River, 1769 (cat.118).
Hanging scroll on paper; ink on paper. 129.9x56.1
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
Kansas City, Missouri.
(Green 2001: 164).



Figure 10. Claude Monet,
The Green Wave, 1865.
Oil on Canvas, 48.6x64.8cm W73.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(Kendall 1999: 40).

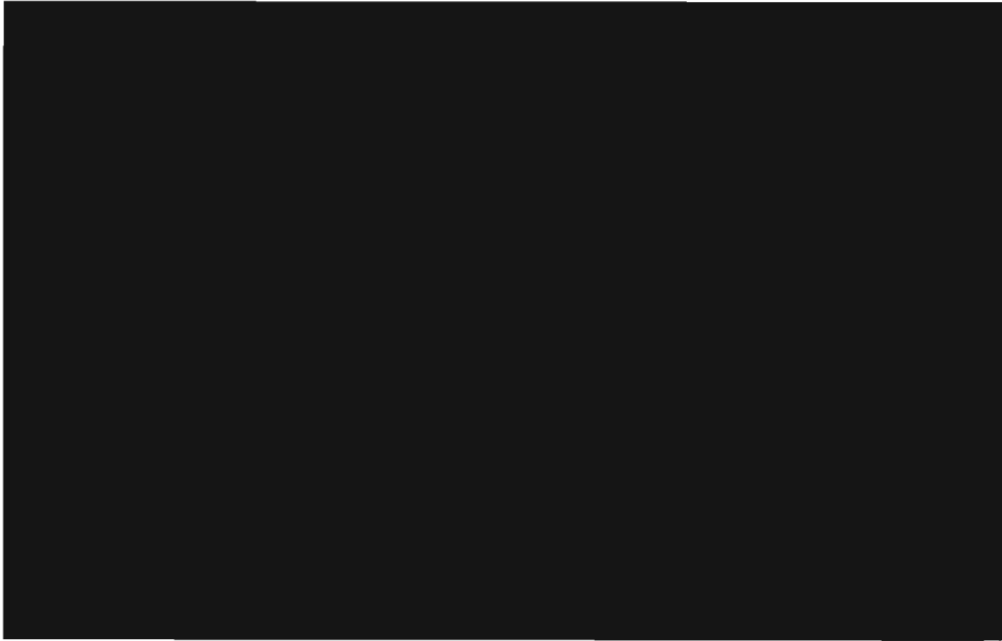


Figure 11. Gustave Courbet,
The Wave, 1869.
Oil on Canvas, 67.5x107cm.
Bremen, Kunsthalle.
(Green 2001: 32)

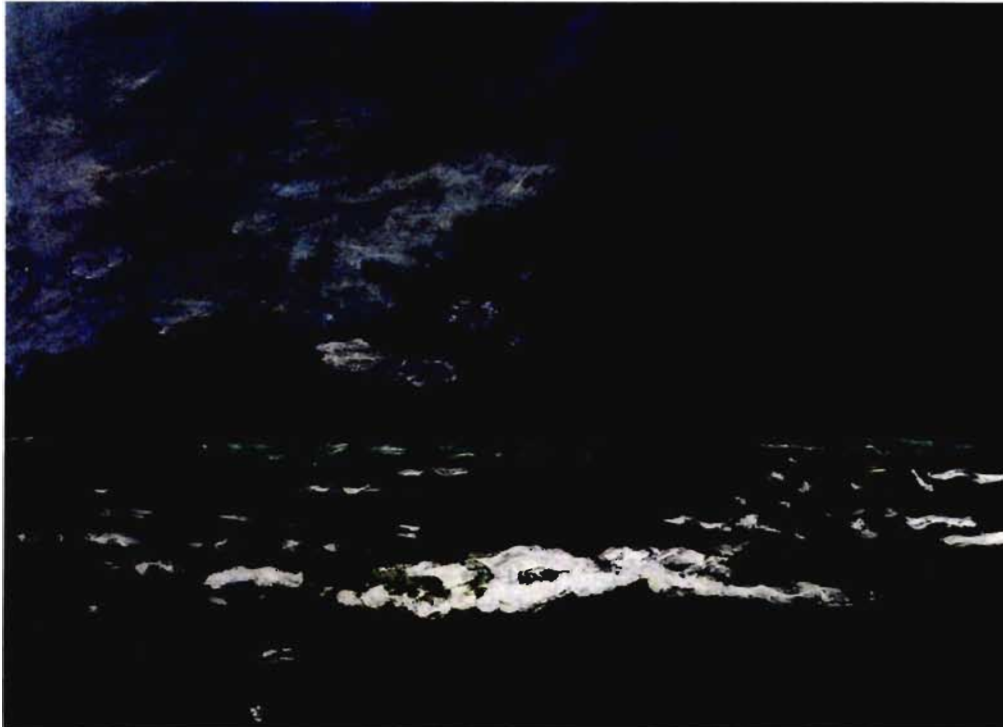


Figure 12. Claude Monet,
Seascape Storm, 1867.
Oil on canvas, 20x42 cm W86.
Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts.
(Green 2001: 41).



Figure 13. Claude Monet,
Regatta at Argenteuil, 1872.
Oil on canvas, 48x75cm W233,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
(House 1988: 111).



Figure 14. Claude Monet,
The Regatta at Sainte-Adresse, 1867.
Oil on canvas, 75.2x101.6cm W91.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(Kendall 1999: 42).



Figure 15. Joseph Mallord William Turner,
Sketch for 'East Cowes Castle, The Regatta Beating To Windward', 1827.
Oil on canvas, 45x60.5cm. Acq. No.1994.
(Butlin 1980: plate 37).



Figure 16. Claude Monet,
Storm on Belle-Isle, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 60x73cm, W1117, Private Collection.
(House 1988: 71).

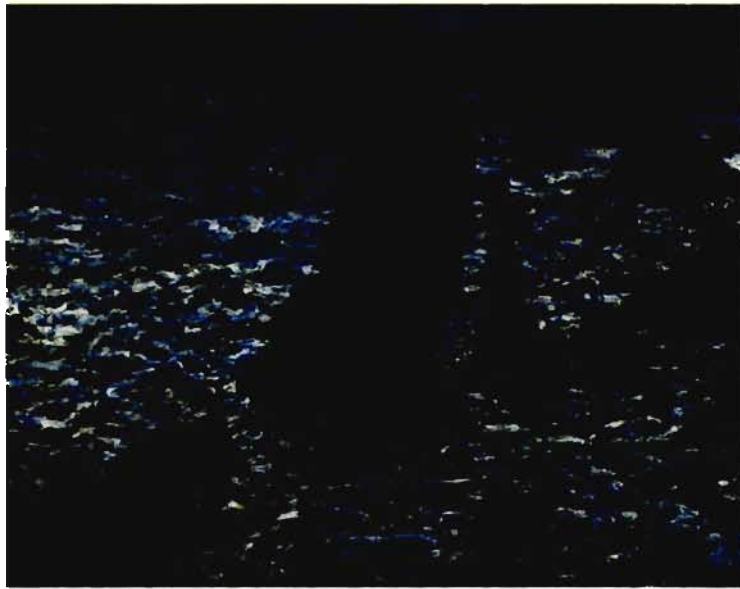


Figure 17. Claude Monet,
The 'Pyramids' of Port-Cotton, Belle-Île-en-Mer, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 59.5x73cm W1086 Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen.
(Kendall 1999: 156).



Figure 18. Utagawa Hiroshige,
'The Twin Sword Rocks' in Bō Bay in Satsuma Province, c.1853-56 (cat.95)
Engraving. 36.2x25.1. Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.
(Green 2001: 150)

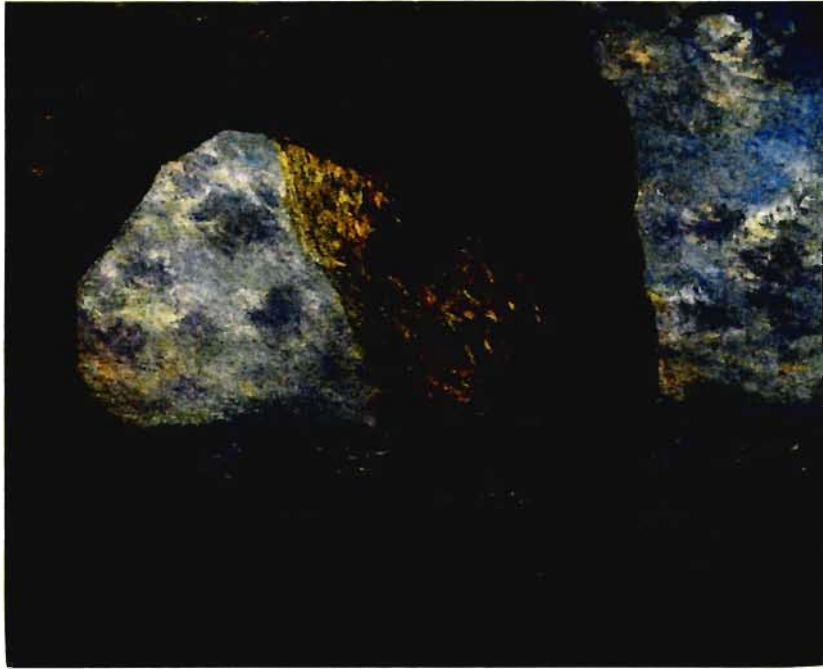


Figure 19. Claude Monet,
The Manneporte, Etretat, 1883.
Oil on canvas, 65x81, W832, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(House 1988: 90).



Figure 20. Utagawa Hiroshige,
Seashore at Izu, from 36 Views of Mount Fuji,
Woodblock print
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
(House 1988: 57).

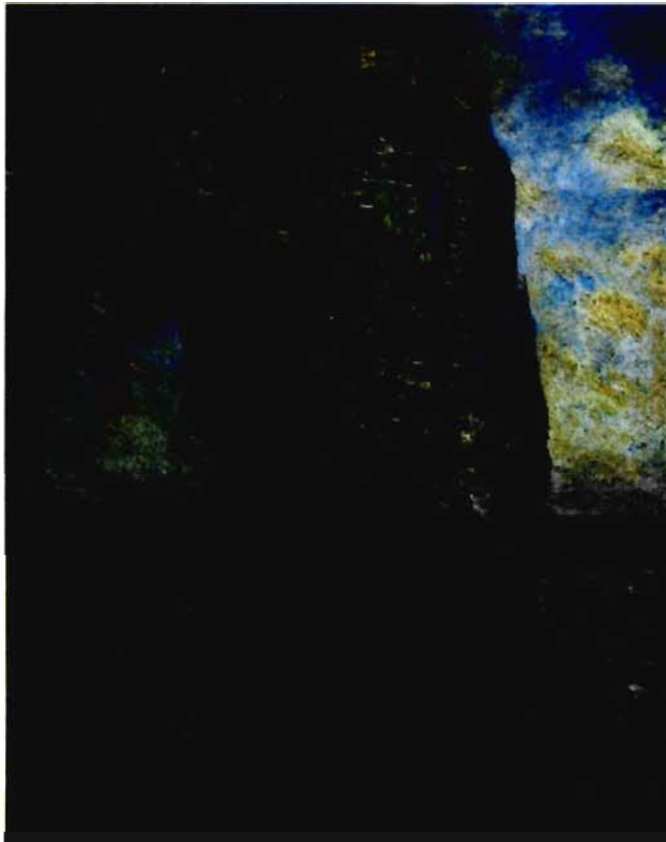


Figure 21. Claude Monet,
The Manneporte, Etretat, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 81.5x65.5cm W1052,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(House 1988: 91).



Figure 22. Claude Monet,
The Manneporte Etretat, c.1883.
Oil on canvas, 73x92cm W1036,
Private Collection.
(House 1988: 57)



Figure 23. Claude Monet,
Rain, Etretat, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 60.5x73.5cm ,W1044. Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo.
(Kendall 1999: 143).



Figure 24. Claude Monet,
Cliffs at Etretat, 1885.
Oil on canvas, 65.8x82.4cm 1034 Sterling and Francine Clark Institute,
Williamstown, Massachusetts.
(Kendall 1999: 142).

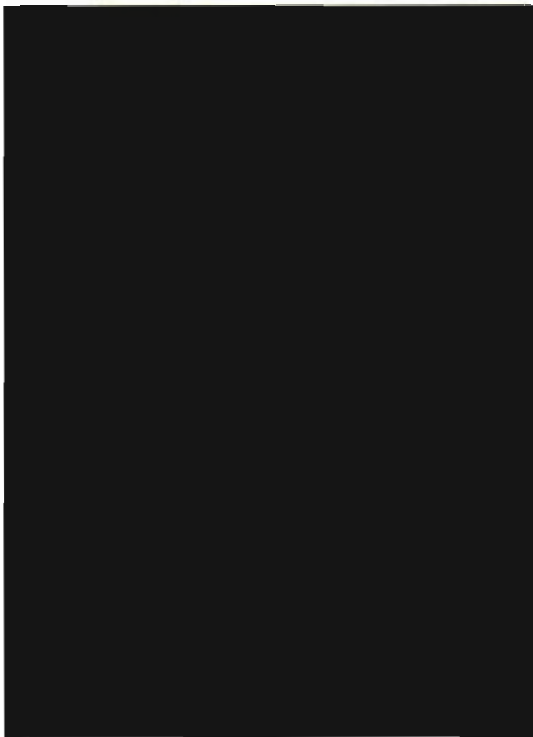


Figure 25. Claude Monet,
Water-Lily Pond, c.1907.
Oil on canvas, 101x74.5cm W1715.
Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishihashi Foundation, Tokyo.
(Kendall 1999: 277)

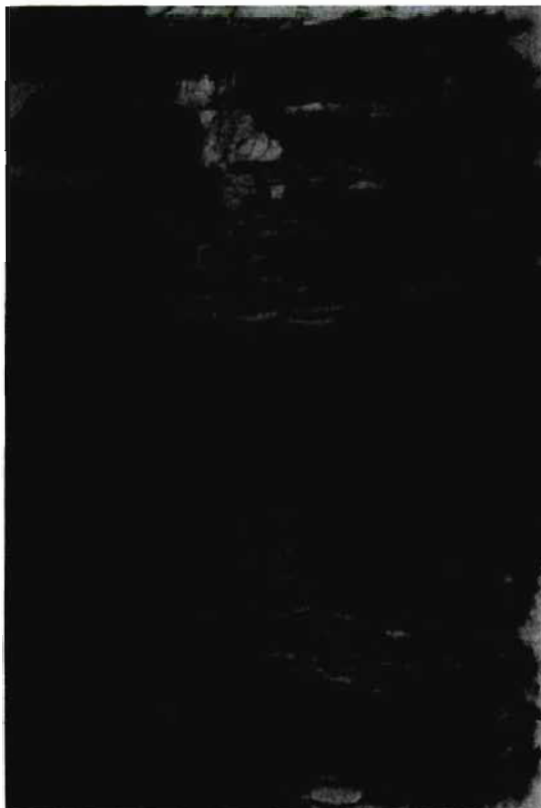


Figure 26. Claude Monet,
Water-Lilies: Study, c.1907.
Oil on canvas, 105x73cm W1717.
Musee Marmottan, Paris.
(Kendall 1999: 279).

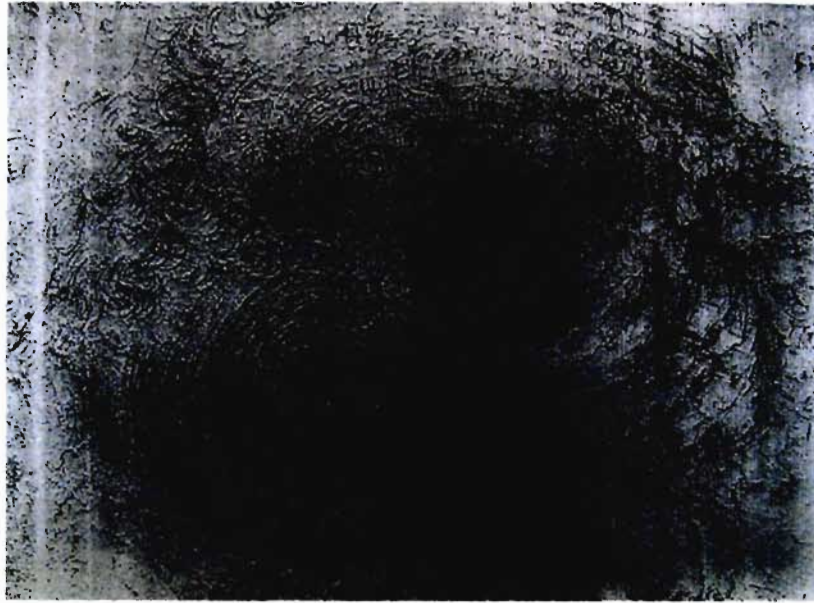


Figure 27. Leonardo da Vinci,
Cloud Burst, c. 1514.
Black Chalk, 15.8x20.3.
Windsor Royal Library no. 12,377. U.K.
(A.E.Popham (ed.) 1953: 293).



Figure 28. Pat Steir,
Curtain Waterfall, 1991.
Oil on canvas, 351.8x303.5cm.
Private Collection.
(McEvelley 1995: 138)



Figure 29. Pat Steir,
First Wave after Hokusai in Blue, 1986.
Oil on canvas, 243.8x243.8cm. Collection Martin Sklar, New York.
(McEvilley: 120).



Figure 30. Pat Steir,
The Moon and the Wave Series: Japanese Moon Wheel, 1986-7.
Oil on canvas, 213.44cm diameter.
Collection the artist.
(McEvilley 1995: 126)



Figure 31. Joseph Mallord William Turner,
Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps, exh.1812.
Oil on canvas, 146x237.5cm. Acq.no. 490.
Tate Gallery London.
(Butlin 1980: plate 25.).

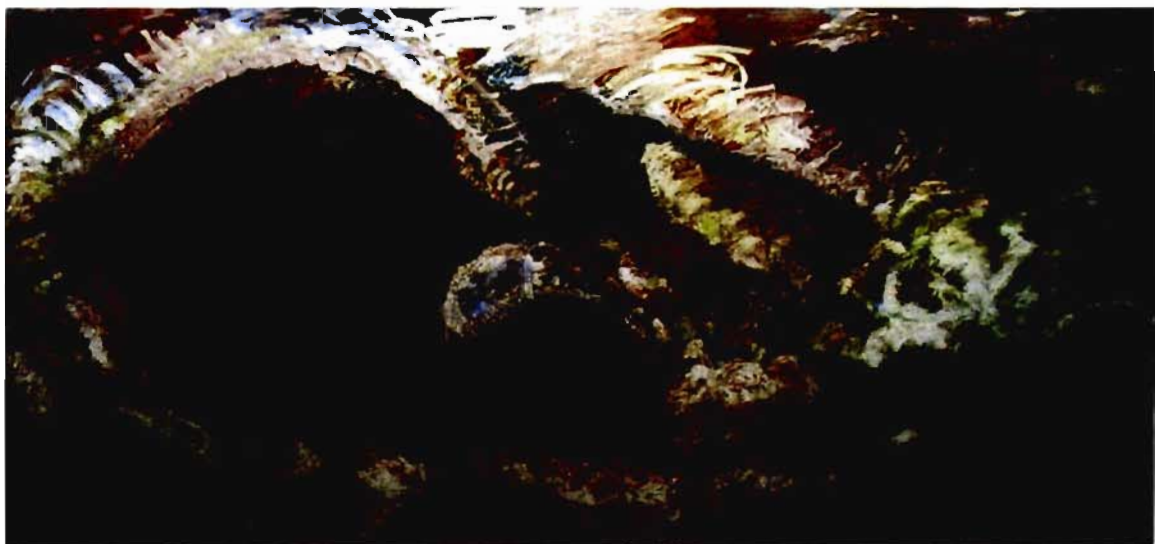


Figure 32. Pat Steir,
Autumn: The Wave after Courbet as though painted by Turner with the Chinese in mind, 1985.
Oil on linen, 213.4x451.7cm.
Collection Eric Franc.
(McEvelley 1995: 121).



Figure 33. Pat Steir,
Summer: The Wave after Courbet as though painted by Monet, 1986.
Oil on linen, 213.4x365.8cm. Jacksonville Art Museum, Florida.
(McEvelley 1995: 124).

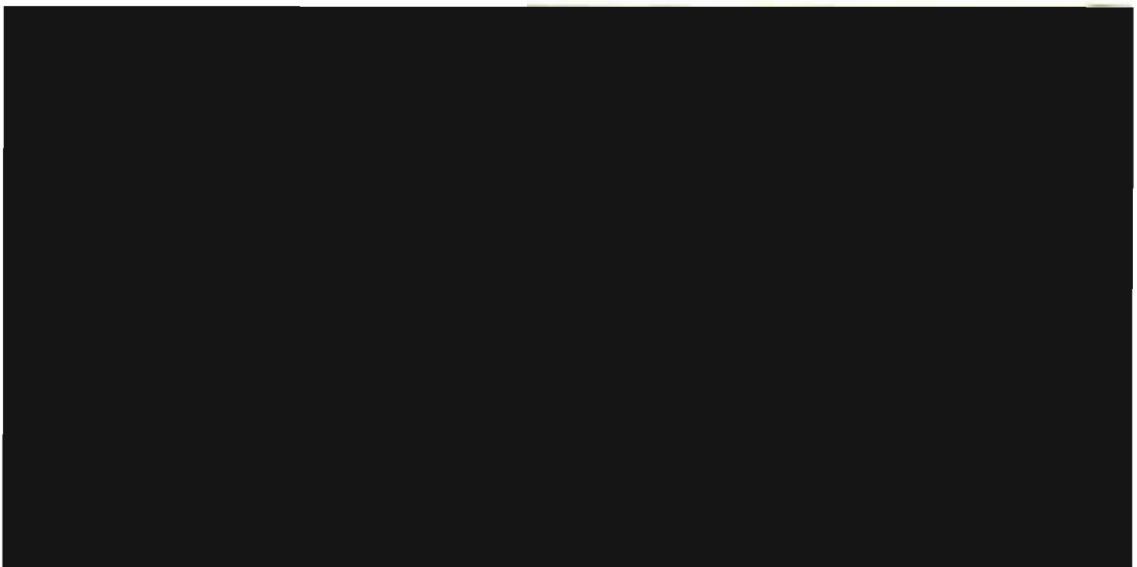


Figure 34. Pat Steir,
The Moon and Wave Series: Victor Hugo's Boat, 1986-87.
Oil on canvas, 193x411.5cm. Collection Peter Lewis, Washington, D. C.
(McEvelley 1995: 122).



Figure 35. Pat Steir,
The Last Wave Painting (Wave Becoming A Waterfall), 1987-88.
Oil on canvas, 198.1x383.5cm.
Collection the artist.
(McEvelley 1995: 129).

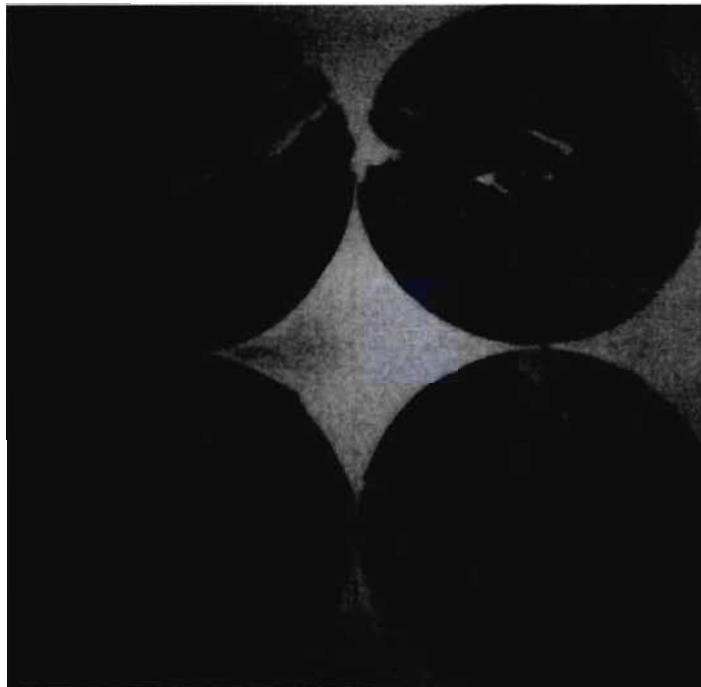


Figure 36. Annette Henderson,
Sea Movement in Four Circles, 2003.
Acrylic on canvas, 100x100cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

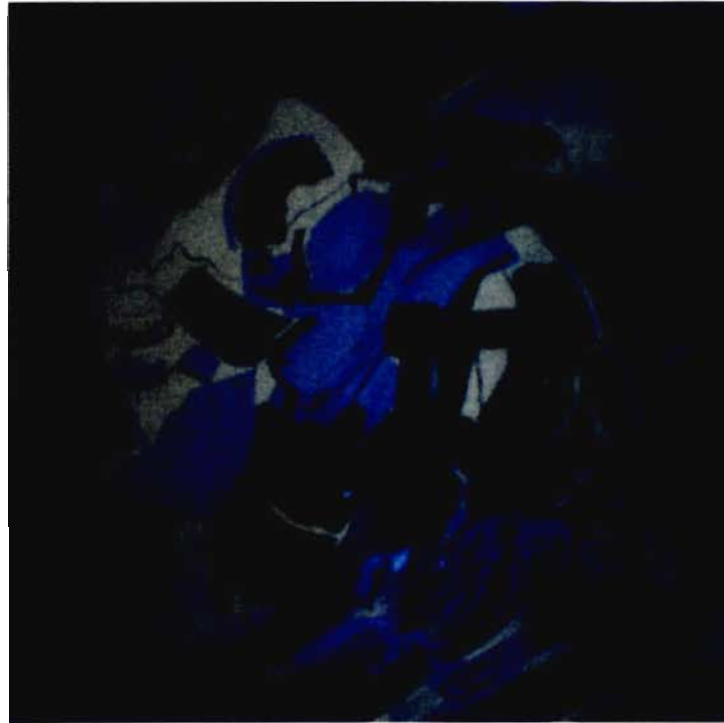


Figure 37. Annette Henderson,
Wave Movement, 2003.
Acrylic on canvas, 120x120cm.
Collection photograph: the artist.

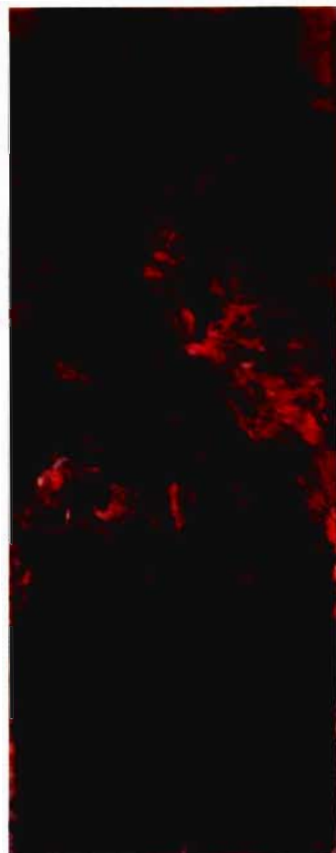


Figure 38. Annette Henderson,
The Red Wave.
Oil on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

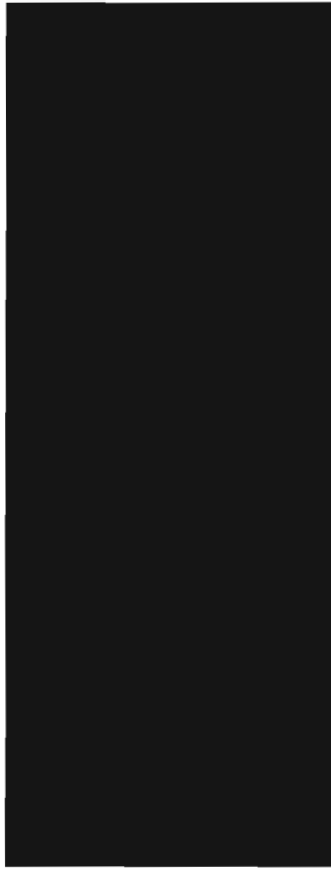


Figure 39. Annette Henderson,
Deep Recesses, 2003.
Acrylic on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

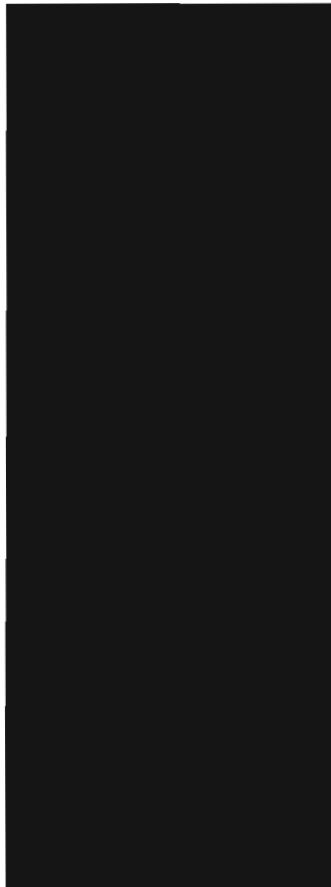


Figure 40. Annette Henderson,
Upliftment, 2003.
Acrylic on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.



Figure 41. Annette Henderson,
Yellow Wave, 2004.
Oil and acrylic on hardboard, 175x61cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.



Figure 42. Annette Henderson,
Rock and Sand Pool, 2003.
Acrylic on hardboard, 130x114cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

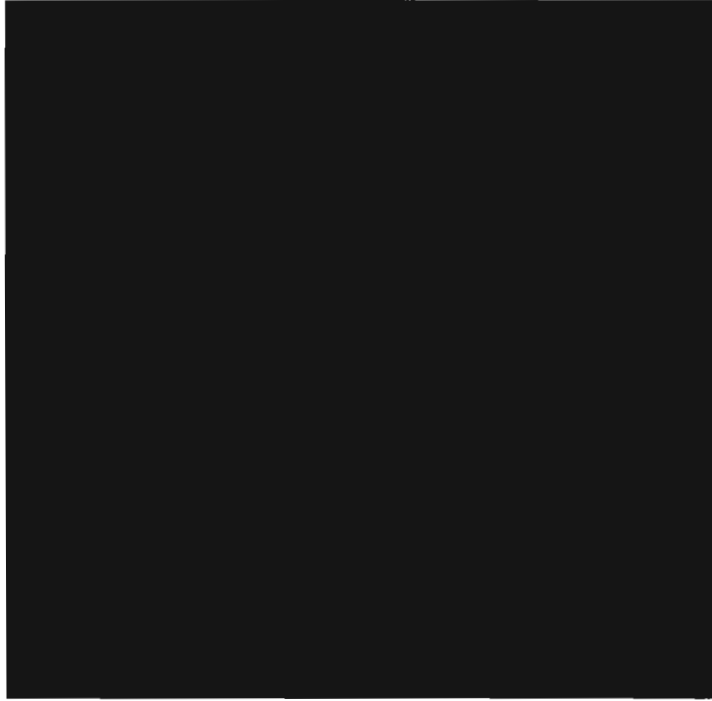


Figure 43. Annette Henderson,
Coral Pool, 2004.
Oil on canvas, 50x50cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

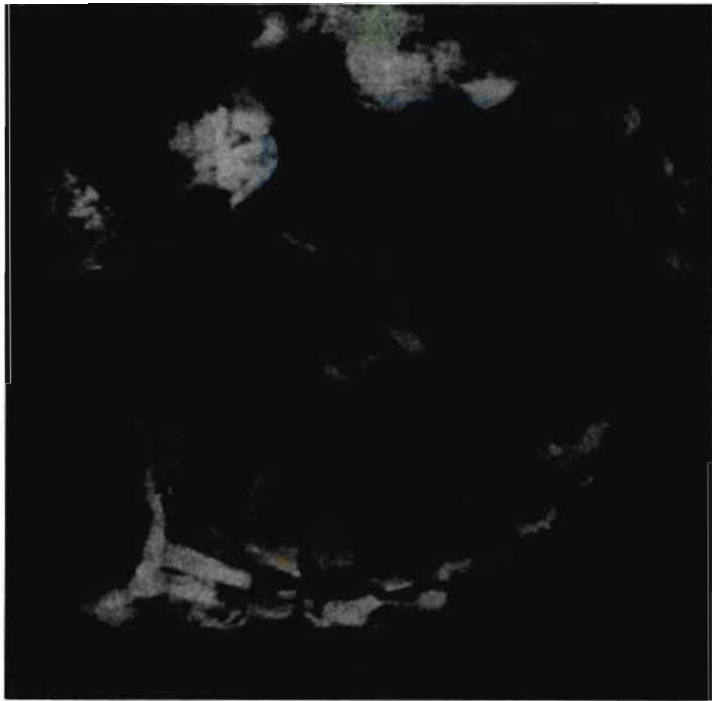


Figure 44. Annette Henderson,
Sheltered Pool, 2004.
Oil on canvas, 50x50cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.

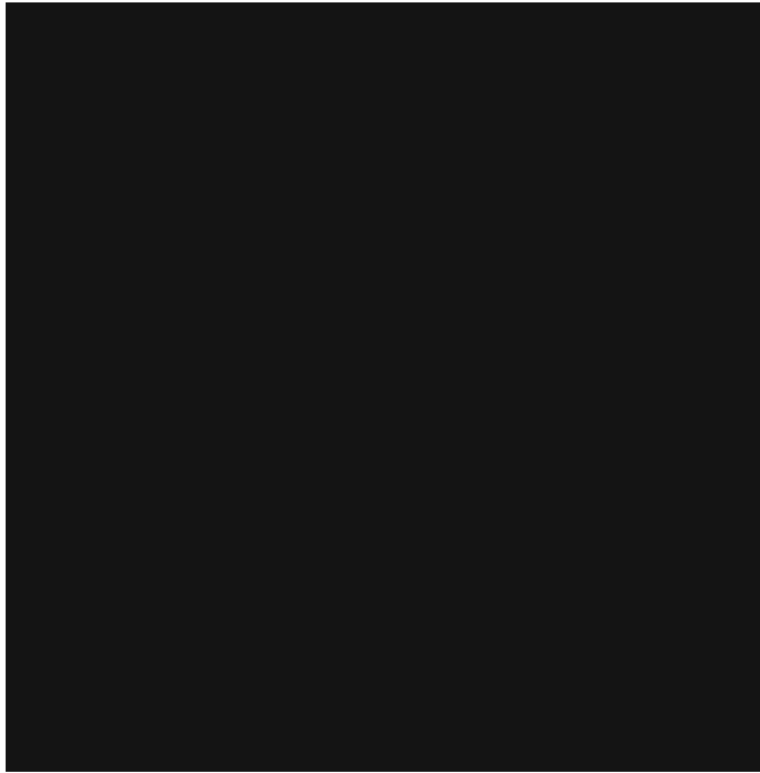


Figure 45. Annette Henderson,
Textured Pool, 2004.
Oil on canvas, 50x50cm.
Collection and photograph: the artist.