The Invisible Wall Between Private and Public: An artistic exploration of liminality.

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Art in Fine Arts, Centre for Visual Art,
University of KwaZulu-Natal: Pietermaritzburg.
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Declaration

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art in Fine Arts, in the School of Arts, Centre for Visual Art at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, South Africa.

I, Kyungeun Seo/ Debbie Seo, declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

a. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced

b. Where their exact words have been used, then their writing has been placed inside double quotation marks, and referenced.

5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References sections.

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Name and Signature of Supervisor

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20 June 2022

Acknowledgements and thanks

I give this honour to God, my spiritual supporter in bringing this research safely to completion.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr Jessica Lindiwe Draper, for helping me integrate my life and art through this research, and for her continuous sharing of her knowledge of practice-led research that enabled me to truly understand and pursue my research study with this methodology.

In particular, I would like to give my warm thanks to Jessica Steytler and Sheryl Thornton-Dibb le Tourneur for helping me overcome the anxiety in-between the invisible walls of language, and for translating and editing my writing with appropriate English expression.

My special appreciation goes to my family for encouraging me throughout this journey. Thank you to my boys, Jong-hyun, Do-hyun and Soo-hyun, who waited with patience as I spent many hours with my work. Thank you to my husband, Jung-yup Kim/Mark Kim, for his emotional and financial support during my completion of this research.

Abstract

This study is a practice-led research project incorporating practical and theoretical components that investigate the invisible layers that exist between private and public spheres in physical and digital spaces. The creative practice of the researcher, Kyungeun Seo/Debbie Seo is located in Oriental and Western painting traditions and expresses conceptual themes of liminality, private and public, membranes and ‘here and there’.

Practice-led research (PLR) provides both methodological and theoretical support that guides the direction of this project. The creative practice uncovered key themes, developing a theoretical framework that integrates theories of liminality, identity, social relationships and digital media, and locates the study. The practical studio-based component of silk painting plays a central role in uncovering these relationships and bolsters the theoretical interrogation. The researcher’s experience of sharing the creative practice through social media is additionally interrogated. The study of 'invisible layers' and liminal space between private and public, and the relationship between identity and social behaviour are considered in the fine art context of this degree. The practice of Sanja Iveković provides a framework for understanding the elision of private and public spheres through contemporary media. David Spriggs’ installations are referenced as works that make practical use of transparent materials and layering tactics. Buhlebezwe Siwani provides a South African context for understanding identity and social behaviour, while Do-ho Suh offers another perspective of living in a liminal space between South Korea and a new, foreign home.

This research project emphasises the integral relationship between theory and practice. The creative practice is discussed using a reflective and reflexive approach that records and demonstrates the importance of the unfolding process of the practice, and the connections between practice, concept and personal experience. Photographs are included alongside the reflective writings to illustrate the process and findings made through practice. Technical and practical issues that emerged during the final exhibition installation, and documentation and submission of the practical component during the COVID-19 lockdown are additionally examined.

Keywords

liminality, identity, social behaviour, silk painting, intersections, boundaries, immigration

Prefatory Note

The following procedures have been adopted

1. In this research the creative practice of the researcher, Kyungeun Seo/ Debbie Seo, is the focus of this discussion. As a result the first person is used when referring to my own work and concepts, and when incorporating my own experiential knowledge into discussions.
2. The Harvard short form of referencing and citation is used in this text. A list of references cited in the text appears at the end of the dissertation.
3. I use double quotation marks for direct quotes from written sources, but single quotation marks for emphasis or expressions adopted as my own or quotes within quotes.
4. This dissertation consists of four chapters with subsections, in which text and images are combined.
5. I, Kyungeun Seo/ Debbie Seo, have taken all photographs of my work; for all other photographs the photographer is credited in the caption, except in the cases where the photographer is not cited and/or unknown by the original source. Drone photography of my work was done by my husband, Jung-yup Kim/Mark Kim.
6. Dimensions of complete works are included in the captions of the images as they appear in text. Measurements are given in centimetres in the order Height x Width.
7. In-text images are labelled as 'Figure' while images that appear in Appendix 1 are labelled as 'Illustration'. Figures and Illustrations are numbered consecutively. A List of Figures and List of Illustrations are supplied after the Table of Contents.
8. When referring to my private studio, I refer to my home studio in the town of Hillcrest, Durban, South Africa.
9. During the reflective process of writing, my own journals were referenced as primary sources. These journals are included as primary sources in the List of References at the end of the dissertation. They are unpaginated and therefore not cited in-text. These were included in the final exhibition of works for examination.

List of abbreviations

MAFA-R: Master of Art in Fine Art - Research

PLR: Practice led - research

MRI: Magnetic resonance imaging

2D: Two - Dimensional

3D: Three - Dimensional

AI: Adobe Illustrator

KZNSA: The Kwazulu Natal Society of the Arts

CVA: Centre for visual art

UKZN: University of Kwazulu Natal

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

This written dissertation is to be considered along with the body of artwork produced during my practice-led research (PLR) towards a MAFA-R. The practical component is presented here by an accompanying catalogue, which documents my final exhibition. This research developed through my exploration of the liminality of private and public artistic practice and the invisible walls that arise between the two spheres. My interest in this threshold arose from my curiosity about my behaviour in conducting and sharing my creative practice, and how it would change when moving through the invisible walls between private and public spaces. This study considers the liminal space that exists between 'here' and 'there', the invisible layers that arise when I find myself in the liminal middle ground, and my private artistic practice and research on public social media platforms.

Chapter one provides background context for the research and presents my aims, objectives and research questions followed by a survey of literature consulted. After that, I will present the theoretical framework of PLR that supports this research and the resulting methodologies and methods I intend to use to carry it out. Chapter two will provide further theoretical frameworks relevant to my research including private and public spaces, art and social media, liminality, transparency and identity. In chapter three I will examine artwork by four artists that enrich my research conceptually and artistically and reinforce the themes discussed in chapter two. I will discuss my own artwork in chapter four as it relates to and synthesizes the theories and artists discussed in previous chapters. Finally my conclusion will sum up my PLR experience and highlight discoveries and key learnings.

1.2 Background

My background working as an advertising and graphic designer for an agency made a significant impact on my research inquiry. As a designer I created branding and marketing materials for different companies; these materials were essentially “artworks” that expressed the voices of businesses and corporations, rather than the individual voice of an artist. Over the years conflict between creative/private and corporate/public caused an “invisible wall” to grow between my role as designer and the public output of my designs. This invisible wall describes the experience of feeling a boundary between my creative capacities as an individual and the expectations and constraints of my job. The invisible wall divided my creative world into two realms: my private realm, where I could express my voice as an individual, and my public realm, where my creativity had to fit in with corporate structures and regulations.

Similarly, I exist in a constant liminal space as a Korean living in South Africa, feeling neither here nor there. These feelings can also be triggered unexpectedly- when I find myself in a parking lot on a rainy afternoon breathing in the blended scent of rainwater, tar and smoke transports me back to Seoul. While I have lived in South Africa for some years now, I still sometimes find myself searching for the Korea I know, gripped in time by memory and emotion that I do not always fully understand. I do not deny where I am now- this is my second home- but I always find myself somewhere in between, somewhere liminal.

It is as if the boundaries of emotion and memory, the “invisible wall” between Seoul and Durban, are more like a fence than a wall. My family cannot compartmentalise these locations and experiences, but we can peer through to the other side and occasionally slip through. This experience of our boundaries reminds me of a cell membrane, protective and enclosing yet semipermeable, and we exist somewhere on this membranous border.

My curiosity and desire to understand more about this perceived invisible wall has developed through my painting and installation practice, and this project thus arose through and is grounded by my artistic process. In order to carry out this research project, the research aims

will therefore need to reflect the qualitative and subjective nature of PLR, allowing for an intuitive and dynamic approach that considers my practice as research, and inextricably integrates my art-making and my theoretical exegesis. The aim of this PLR project is thus to examine the overlaps between private space and public space, and how art and social media influence these intersections.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

My main research question is 'What layers exist where private spaces and public spaces overlap, and how is this expressed in the relationship between my private artistic practice and the sharing of it in public spaces (online or physical)?'

The sub-questions which will allow me to begin exploring this main question are:

1. How can theoretical concepts around private and public spaces inform my artistic practice, and the sharing of this practice via social media platforms?
2. In what ways does my identity remain flexible in moving between private space/artistic practice and public spaces/social media?
3. What occurs when the boundaries of art as private space and social media as public space overlap?
4. How does my artistic practice reflect on the liminal space where private, public and the identities tied to them intersect?
5. How does the work of the artists I am studying contribute to and assist in contextualising this study?

The objectives of this study are therefore to:

1. Understand concepts of private and public spaces in order to explore the correlation of artistic practice and social media with private and public.
2. Consider and reflect on how I maintain and project identities and personas between the private space of my artistic practice and public spaces like social media.
3. Explore what arises in the intersection and overlap of artistic practice/private space and social media/public spaces.
4. Determine how my creative practice reveals new insights into liminal space in the intersections of private and public.
5. Locate my creative practice and research in a wider discourse of liminality.

1.4 Literature Review

In order to carry out this research, I have consulted scholars who have written on the subjects I wish to investigate. To gain understanding around theoretical and methodological applications of PLR I have consulted Carole Gray and Julian Malins' *Visualizing Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* (2004), Hazel Smith and Roger Dean's *Practice led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts* (2009), Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt's *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (2007), and Graeme Sullivan's *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (2004). PLR enables the advancing of knowledge through individual creative practice in dialogue with research of existing texts, concepts and the work of other artists. The above texts provide insight into the theories and frameworks of PLR, and the processes of applying it as a methodology to my research process. Together they emphasize the importance of creative practice as a key player in my research.

Gray and Malins' (2004) terms 'reflective practice' and the 'reflective practitioner' are useful for PLR's process of bridging the practice of artmaking with investigation of theoretical concepts. The space of the practice-led researcher, between artmaking and theoretical research, echoes my experience of 'in betweenness' between private and public and as a Korean person living in South Africa. This sense of liminality is a source of continued

inspiration and reflection in my artmaking and research. Gray and Malins' (2004: 108) description of visual research methodology, which includes non-textual modes of documentation and thought processing, such as diagrams, 3D models or video technology, directly supports my modes of conducting and recording the practical component of my PLR and endorses the visual methods I will employ.

Smith and Dean (2009: 160, 75) support this theorizing of practice as a valuable form of academic research that has the ability to produce new knowledge. This is because PLR "draws on elements of both experimental and conceptual traditions. Like the experimental traditions our research creates hypothesis, builds trials and judges their success by evaluating the outcomes 'in the wild' through practice. Like conceptual research our digital systems and aesthetic fitness measures are constructs of the collective imagination, with all the inherent recursiveness and provisionality that characterise dynamic cultural contexts" (Smith & Dean 2009: 156). In other words, the authors underscore PLR's capacity to establish, evaluate and judge a hypothesis through creative practice and tacit knowledge. Particularly pertinent to this exploration of liminal spaces, they speak of the importance of gaining confidence in direction in this place of ambiguity and tension between theory and practice as a question is pursued. Their recognition of an invisible inner wall between practice and research is important to me in navigating my liminal positionality. In particular, through my research I consider that similarly ambiguous spaces exist between the processes of artmaking, recording and researching. This layering is something that I explore.

Similarly to Gray and Malins and Smith and Dean, Barret and Bolt (2007) argue for practice as research in and of itself. [Although works of art are articulate in their own right, the "generative potential of process" is its capacity to reveal insights to both the practitioner and, through articulation, the reader. This endorses the role of this dissertation to play a complementary role in revealing my works of art (beyond explanations of practice or interpretations of contextualization) (Bolt in Barrett & Bolt 2007: 31)]. Furthermore, the creative act is described as a "double movement" of decontextualization and recontextualization (Carter in Barrett & Bolt 2007: 15), which is reflective of my experience as an immigrant and encourages the establishment of new associations and structures of

meaning in my artmaking. Importantly, Haseman in Barrett and Bolt (2007: 153) uses the language of the eye to describe what he calls simultaneously "'looking in' and 'looking out'". This metaphor is used to explain the reflexive process through which the practice-led researcher must look inwards in their art making and outwards with their research. Barrett argues for the interdisciplinary nature of artistic research, as knowledge cannot be separated into discrete and compartmentalized fields (Barrett in Barrett & Bolt 2007: 8). "Conceptual and theoretical frameworks provide a means through which to discuss practice as research and to locate the studio enquiry within the context of historical, social, political and contemporary ideas relating to practice" (Barrett & Bolt 2007: 193). This supports the overlap between PLR and the other theoretical frameworks I explore.

Sullivan discusses artworks themselves as "carriers of meaning", which to me implies I can reference an artwork as a form of visual 'literature'. A work of art conveys, communicates, and connects meaning within a community, where art is interactive and "meaning is continuously negotiated" and performed according to different perspectives and in a multiplicity of ways. In art production, the artist's "personal vision" and "public voice" coalesce together as a form of agency, and this contributes to a dialogue within a community context but one that is also open to other interested parties; private/individual and public voices communicate with each other, creating and sharing a dialectic of stakeholders. (Sullivan 2008: 160). For me this is relevant in my artmaking within the context of exploration of private and public and art and social media.

Sullivan speaks of the importance and agency of artist-theorists within cultural politics and what he calls the "Making in Systems, Making in Communities, and Making in Cultures" (Sullivan 2008: 150). He includes art-making practices that are complex and exploratory because they transcend disciplines to open new perspectives and structures to disciplines, knowledge and skills in the "Making in Systems" (Sullivan 2008: 150), whereas "Making in Communities" includes the capacity for connection, communication and reinterpretation among individual perspectives, public issues and wider histories. "Making in Cultures" is where artists intentionally challenge and critique cultural perceptions through their artmaking. The first two apply to my personal quest to explore a personal voice and create dialogue.

Sullivan's statement that the "creative task is to create forms of representation that have the capacity to reveal, critique, and transform what we know" challenges my perspectives and private practice and links it conceptually to the transformation of a silkworm, the metaphor used in my artmaking (Sullivan 2008: 168). In a cultural context, the task of an image-based researcher - theorist is to generate, interpret, and process visual information, and to enable visual images to be contextualized. Sullivan argues that doing so creats a culture that harnesses the potential of visual images to help reveal a critical understanding of human concerns (Sullivan 2008: 168).

To advance my exploration of the intersection of private and public areas and art, I have turned to liminality theory, with particular reference to Arnold Van Gennep (1960), Paul Stenner (2017) and Homi K. Bhabha(1994). Van Gennep (1961 [1909]) refers to rites of passage and the stages of a ritual in which a person transitions one state of being to another, from an old world to a new world for example, in rituals related to marriage or to death. The stages include preliminary, liminal (or threshold) and post liminal rights, or "separation", "transition" and "incorporation" (Van Gennep 1960: 11, 20, 21). Of particular interest to my research on liminality is his discussion of merging and overlapping stages, places and processes in rites of passage, especially in relation to his discussion of the use of veils (Van Gennep 1960: 68). This is of significance to my creative practice which explores veils as a symbol for liminality.

Turner (1969/1995) draws on Van Gennep's theories, speaking of the ambiguity of these 'betwixt and between' spaces, framing them as situations in which cultural change take place, and new structures such as time and space are created in the 'liminal moment'. Stenner (2017), on the other hand, proposes that there are endless intersections between the liminal and the public and refers to an observable 'turning point' from one state or side to another. In speaking of in-between areas, Bhabha (1994) specifically refers to the liminal identity of an immigrant, which is significant to my context as a Korean in South Africa. He splits "the difference between the binary oppositions or polarities through which we think cultural difference" (Bhabha 1994: 182), in order to focus on the "between" areas. In other words, the spectrum becomes the liminal space in between binary opposites which exist on either end of

that spectrum. This frames my discussion as feeling somehow "Other". Binaries need each other in order to affirm their own identity – us/them, insider/outsider for example, so being somehow both – existing in this liminal space – subverts the binaries on which particular social constructions depend. He speaks of finding ourselves "in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (Bhabha 1994: 182), which is something I explore.

Jennifer Heath's (2008) compilation contributes further to my discussion on liminality, transition and veils by speaking of the historic and cultural significance of veils as expressions of the sacred, as relating to the sensual and emotional, and their socio-political significance. Heath's intention was to "widen our understanding of the veil's vast significance for individuals and in larger social and spiritual contexts" (Heath 2008: 3). Part of these functions of the veil include serving as a shield (Koslin in Heath 2008: 160), distinguishing between married and unmarried women in conservative cultures (Carrel in Heath 2008: 49) and as symbolic of the journey of the dead into the afterlife (Heath 2008: 112). Veils, made of transparent fabrics, link to my use of silk in my layered artworks and screens.

Relating to Heath above, Deepa Nath (2005) and Helen Watson (2015) inform my understanding of the cell membrane, explaining that they have a selectively permeable nature. This means that cell membranes are sometimes porous, and sometimes impermeable depending on the particular context. Similar to this selective permeability, my layered silk paintings interact with each other in particular ways, depending on where they are installed, what is around them, what light is available, and other innumerable environmental factors. As we have seen, this physical layering, overlapping and porosity (of cells, of veils, of silk) also occurs in the conceptualisation of particular socio-cultural spheres. Michael Warner's *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002) and Kerry Bystrom & Sarah Nuttall's *Private Lives and Public Cultures in South Africa Cultural Studies* (2013) contribute to my inquiry into the differentiation private and public spheres, and concepts of space.

Warner (2002: 30) defines the private as that which is 'related to the individual, especially to inwardness and subjective experience' and private space as that in which there is no transmission or access to the public, yet argues that it is difficult to separate private and public. As opposed to seeing them as two sides of a coin (or as binary opposites as Bhabha would argue), he sees them as interwoven. Again, the potential for interweaving, layering and ambiguity offered by the acknowledgement of a liminal space (neither here nor there) relates strongly to the concept of private and public space communicated in my artwork, its mode of display, and my intricately woven silk screens as I will discuss in Chapter Four.

Bystrom & Nuttall (2013) argue that private spaces can be made public depending on context. Juxtaposing "intimate" and "exposure" they speak of the phenomenon of "entanglement" which describes an awkward intimacy or "uncomfortable closeness" that takes place when certain 'private' acts or objects are revealed in a public space (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 324). This heavy reliance on context relates once again to the process of producing and exhibiting my own work. As addressed in the writing to come, the exegesis of my work depends always on the particularity of context.

In considering the boundaries of private and public space in the context of the Internet and social media I have consulted a number of authorities. Zizi Papacharissi's *A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age* (2010) argues that the development of the Internet has ultimately resulted in the boundaries between private and public spaces ceasing to exist. Legewie & Nassauer (2018) deal with issues of people's permission, access, ownership and restrictions of information on social media platforms, revealing the complex layers that exist in online platforms. These issues affect my private creative practice in various ways, for example needing permission to use certain images or viewing access being denied, and so contribute to my discussion of art and social media.

Further contributing to the discussion of social media and YouTube, and my exploration of artmaking and video recording, are Kevin Allocca's *Videocracy* (2018), Jean Burgess and Joshua Green's *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (2009), Karim Amer

and Jehane Noujaim's documentary, *The Great Hack* (2019), Nicolas Legewie and Anne Nassauer's *YouTube, Google, Facebook: 21st Century Online Video Research and Research Ethics* (2018), and Mingyi Hou's *Social Media Celebrity and the Institutionalization of YouTube* (2018).

Allocca's documentary, focussing on the positive elements of YouTube, observes peoples' interactions and influence on each other's everyday lives through YouTube, for example by sharing personal videos of practices and processes that have educational value for others. This illustrates the overlap between people's private content and public consumption on YouTube, one of the platforms I intend to upload videos of my practice to. Burgess and Green examine the fluidity of YouTube with its dual function as both a top-down platform for sharing news and popular culture, and bottom-up platform for individual users' content. Although bottom-up allows me to upload personal videos, the top-down model also allows for control and censorship of material. Amer and Noujaim's documentary, *The Great Hack* (2019), demonstrates how social media does not have transparency with its customers and users. For example, Facebook has not been transparent about what it does with individuals' private details and brings the issue of privacy into play when engaging with these online platforms. This deepens the discussion of liminal spaces between private and public and reinforces my discussion of veils.

Legewie and Nassauer's text includes a background of online videos and looks at the social and physical aspects of how individuals curate their character in private and public spaces. In contrast, Mingyi Hou's position is that social media is a place that can genuinely show real life, which suggests to me that social media can provide a platform for sharing behind the scenes videos of my art processes and challenges. The documentation of my work on social media is a key, virtual form of journaling where the blurring of public and private space reflects the liminal nature of my practice.

Just as this virtual layering provides an appropriate platform for my process, silk as a material provides a physical representation of these layered states of in-betweenness. K. Kris

Hirst's *The History of Silk Making and Silkworms* (2019), Boyoung Lee and Hyo -Seon Rye *Studies on Sized Silks for East Asian Painting Background* (2019) and Diana Tuckman and Jan Janas' *Creative Silk Painting* (1995) provide important insights into silk as a material. Hirst (2019) discusses transformation by linking it to the metamorphosis of the silkworm into a moth. Silkworms produce silk cocoons as they prepare to metamorphose into moths. This generates in my creative practice a fascination with silk as a transparent material and medium and as a symbol of liminality. Lee and Rye (2019) discuss, in particular, the transformation of silk from its original state to a surface on which to paint. Tuckman and Janas take the discussion one step further by addressing the practicalities of working with silk as a medium on which to paint, including stretching and priming. This is a core practice in my artmaking process, and provides the artistic fulcrum through which I explore the liminal/ spaces in-between. Interestingly, their discussion of process provides the link between working with the stretchy medium of silk, and the psychological tension of creative expression.

Further context is added to my discussion of liminality, art and social media and artmaking materials by considering the creative work of four artists. I consider their artistic practice itself, not just their perspectives as artists, to be part of my 'literature' consulted in this PLR. These artists share thematic and practical similarities with my work and help to contextualise my PLR. They are David Spriggs, Sanja Iveković, Buhlebezwe Siwani and Do-ho Suh. Each one contributes to and enriches my artwork and writing in various ways.

Spriggs' website (https://davidspriggs.art/portfolio/transparency-report/) provides images and discussion of his work. The artwork *Transparency Report* (2014) explores ideas of transparency. This not only applies to my work with silk as a transparent material, but the concept of transparency in society and public spaces. Spriggs links transparency to power, as he considers how governments control individuals by demanding transparency and honesty, specifically in airports, which are public spaces 'in between' countries or cities. This connects to my thinking about spaces between private and public and also refers back to the concept of the silk cocoon as a liminal space or 'in between' state of being. In discussing Iveković, I refer to both her website (https://www.theartstory.org/artist/ivekovic-sanja/) and her book

Sweet Violence (2010). Her website provides me with her thoughts on her artwork about private and public spaces and her book adds further insight, including the discussion of the identity of women and their 'process of getting ready' to go from a private to public space. This supports my own thinking and practice regarding how public and private spaces merge and how the work changes in the varied environments.

Siwani, from South Africa, and South Korean Suh, who emigrated to America to study, speak to my trans-local context. Siwani's website (Samson 2018) speaks of her personal experiences with liminality. She uses her own body in performance art to explore correlations between shifting identities and movement between private and public spaces.

Suh's website (Sauer 2020) gives his perspective on moving country, adapting to a new culture and forming an identity as an immigrant. It also provides images of and insight into his transparent fabric artwork in which he recreates his various physical homes to scale as installations. These airy, translucent, life-sized architectural sculptures, replicas of places in which he has lived, moved and established memory and identity, are relevant to me as an immigrant and help me to understand and explore the material aspects of using silk materials.

1.5 PLR as foundational framework

PLR is the primary theoretical framework that I will be adopting for this research (and which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 2), because it forms the basis of the methodology below, allows for simultaneous artmaking practice and theoretical research and ensures a link between the two (Gray & Mallins 2004: 1, 2). PLR takes advantage of the creative process to extend existing knowledge using new perspectives. It establishes a hypothesis or research question and uses both existing theory and creative practice to investigate this. Multiple sources are drawn upon, including literature, research and the work of other artists, in a dialogic process which yields insights into the artwork being produced, and the questions being explored (Smith & Dean 2009: 75). The research process of practice is driven by personal experience and desire to actively contribute to learning; this extends to the

integration of theory and new information in the course of the practice unfolding (Barrett & Bolt 2007). The PLR process leads to the development of new knowledge, spanning both theory and practice, as well as new questions to explore (Candy 2006). Gray and Malins (2004: 25) state that PLR leads to a more distinct and orderly way of thinking, as it applies criticism and reflexive action for a clear and exploratory approach through the unknown. Artists explore the possibility of knowledge between theory and practice and provide a theoretical framework for pursuing issues and ideas beyond limited discipline and limitations (Sullivan 2004).

The space of PLR, moving between theory and practice, can be one of ambiguity and tension, relating strongly back to the focus of this study. Smith and Dean (2009) describe the challenge of finding "confidence in direction" (Smith & Dean 2009: 160), between anxiety and stability, as a question is pursued. Reflective practice by a reflective practitioner is key to finding and maintaining this direction (Gray & Malins 2004). Reflective writing or journaling is an important tool in both documenting and interrogating the PLR process, and is a crucial part of this research. Reflection on the artmaking process and self-reflexivity stimulates the researcher to draw on past experiences, readings and observations in considering the research questions, and developing their responses. The practitioner, through 'real world research' applies trial and error in practical and theoretical research, allowing solutions and direction to emerge (Gray & Malins 2004: 72). It also allows the researcher to clarify their personal, tacit knowledge, and to discover where they are located in literary and research contexts (Hasel & Roger 2010). According to Smith and Dean (2009), these reflections and observations constitute data or evidence which may be used by researchers. The reflective process involves looking both inward (at one's own memories, thoughts and experiences) and outward (at literature and the creative work of others) (Barrett & Bolt 2007). It also entails a reflective loop between observing and experiencing, developing new understandings, and applying these insights back to theory and practice (Barrett & Bolt 2007).

PLR theorists agree in considering theory and practice impossible to separate (Gray & Malins 2004, Barrett & Bolt 2007). Sullivan (2004) explains their relationship as a process of

communication through which creative practice connects with scientific inquiry, allowing a constructive interpretation of otherwise abstract art and knowledge. This dialogue is considered fundamental to PLR (Barrett & Bolt 2007). Although practice and theory overlap in PLR, the recognition of an invisible inner wall between practice and research (Smith & Dean 2009: 160, 75) is important to me in my investigation of the space between them as a liminal space in PLR, mirroring the liminality between private and public, here and there, South Africa and Korea. However, while PLR is conceptualized as occupying an overlapping space between theory and practice, and between inward and outward looking, it does not seem that concepts of liminality have been applied in this field. I perceive the position of the practice-led researcher as a liminal one in itself but will explore this further in chapter four. PLR acknowledges that knowledge in various fields cannot be separated into discrete compartments which allows for me to research other fields of theory within this research (Barrett & Bolt 2007). Research that attempts to move beyond the distinction between theory and creative practice has been visualised and led by contemporary artists (Sullivan 2004: 152). The theoretical frameworks of PLR determine the methodologies available to me in this project.

1.6 Methods and Methodologies

As stated above, along with providing the basis for the theoretical frameworks, PLR offers particular methodological insights as well. For this project, I will use and adapt methodologies from the 'visual research methodology' detailed by Gray and Malins (2004: 94). The research methodology and methods offered by PLR encourage deep investigation in both studio and theoretical research. Although these methods provide a solid framework, they also allow for fluid, visual and tacit thinking.

PLR plays both a leading and complementary role in conducting theoretical and practical work. As a theoretical framework and methodology, PLR is a significant guide in making research discoveries as I observe my artistic practice and the invisible layers that exist between private and public spaces. PLR assists in establishing, defining, and answering the

first question: What layers exist where private spaces and public spaces overlap, and how is this expressed in the relationship between my private studio space and artistic practice and the sharing of it in public spaces, online and physical.

PLR allows for research that is qualitative, subjective and interpretative (Gray & Malins 2004: 130). I will use qualitative methods in the investigation of books and other literature to understand and support my work. I will also apply qualitative methods to draw out the findings of my experience and this study (Gray & Malins 2004). Because the processes of practice-led and arts-based research are inherently subjective; triangulation will assist in counterbalancing this subjectivity. Triangulation requires the study of multiple sources and application of a variety of methods to result in more diverse outcomes and findings (Gray & Malins 2004: 31). Triangulation reduces bias and increases the veracity of the findings (Anney 2014: 277). Triangulation will be facilitated by the various methods of visual note-taking and recording I will use, as discussed later in this section.

PLR methodology sets up an essential approach for my arts research and reinforces the significance of the creative practice in the formal research process. Researching in the field of practice is a form of action research (Candy 2006: 1). PLR emphasises action and reflection through practice. Creative practice plays a key role in uncovering questions that arise from the practical process as mine do, adding to the existing knowledge surrounding the practice and building it into an advanced study (Gray & Malins 2004: 160). I will approach the practical and theoretical components of my research using an ‘action and reflection’ method (Gray & Malins 2004: 2). The ‘action’ will be the creation and display of my creative works; ‘reflection’ will be the process of drawing out my findings using a reflective journal, sketches and drawings, photography, video and social media as follows.

1.6.1 Test paintings

Preliminary "test" paintings gave rise to my main research question/s; as I painted I set up a semi-transparent screen in front of the canvas to block out parts of the painting and meditated only on the unobscured features. My creative practice is an essential process for me to generate the experience of liminality by moving through the stages of a developing painting (Stenner 2017: 176). I experience the breakthroughs of the unfolding process and the knowledge uncovered through technical methods and application. This practice becomes linked to the theories I pursue, and both components of my research project feed into and develop each other. Viewing my work in this way ultimately led me to my questions regarding the layers and spaces between private spheres and public spheres.

1. 6.2 Display works (3-D Models)

The way in which my work will be displayed will impact on how it is received by viewers and will have significance in allowing my theoretical reflections to take up physical space. Because there are number of approaches I could take to displaying my artwork, various modes of display in various contexts and locations will be considered. One way in which I will experiment with the possibilities of display is by making preliminary virtual models of my intended work. These smaller 3-D models of my screens and canvases will allow me to process my ideas regarding the structure and placement of my larger, final pieces. (Gray & Malins 2004: 112)

1.6.3 Reflective journal and mind-mapping

I will use a reflective journal to record my experiences and thoughts about my creative studio practice (Gray & Malins 2004: 59). This method will serve as a platform for dialogue with my work and research, and provide an opportunity to uncover new questions, epiphanies and unique aspects that come from self-reflection and practitioner experience. Creating artwork can be a very emotional process and these journals will also allow me to process my thoughts and responses to my practice and process with the aim of gaining critical distance. The reflective journal will provide direction, guide me in becoming more open-minded, reach new understandings during the process, and provide perspective in investigating my key research

questions during the creation of my artworks. The reflective journal will also assist me in contextualizing my practice by allowing me to reference other artists and concepts. I will be able to visually and creatively approach my theoretical research by drawing mind maps that link these concepts and artworks to thoughts and questions about my work. Keeping a journal will allow me to record in detail the experiences, processes and 'evidence' that come out of PLR (Gray & Malins 2004: 63) and conduct it in an integrated manner.

1.6.4 Sketches and drawings

Figure 1. Digital mockup of installation. © Seo (2020).

Sketching and drawing are reflective steps before moving ideas into action (Gray & Malins 2004: 58). Sketching will help me to consider certain structural or spatial issues that could arise that I might not have been able to visualise otherwise. I will sketch in my visual journal and also make use of digital mockups. In particular, the use of Adobe Illustrator to create mockups will save time by allowing me to compose realistic images before moving onto making the large-scale artworks; it also gives me the advantage of envisioning my installation and exhibition space.

1.6.5 Photography and videos

Photography and videography will allow me to clearly record what happens during my practice in an objective and visual way, as proposed by Gray and Malins (2004: 108- 110). By 'objectively' recording what happens during my practice, I can capture the actual context, processes and materials of my work. Later I can edit the accumulated videos, adding in sections that were previously excluded, to create a unified representation of my process. The photographs and videos of the process are, in turn, helpful in determining the direction of the work that proceeds from that point in my practice. They are also complementary to the reflective journal, providing clearer and more detailed records of my PLR.

1.6.6 Social Media

I will upload videos of works in progress on my Instagram and YouTube channel and make my personal works accessible to anyone who wishes to watch them. This method will make my research process more transparent and also act as a method for reflecting on the use of private and public space. Through my Instagram and YouTube channel my works will be communicated to audiences through "digital layers" of private and public space. It is important to note that any communication with audience members through comments or messages on these platforms will not be used in or influence the research process, findings or outcomes of the work.

1.6.7 Exhibition display virtual trail run

Through the exhibition of my final works I will further reflect on and engage with concepts of private and public spheres. Although the unfolding process of the research will determine my final exhibition, I envisage creating a space that is reminiscent of a private living room, displayed in a gallery and open to the public. I visualise including my drawings and YouTube and Instagram videos, where visitors can see the creative process from start to finish. I will create a visual dry run of my exhibition to conceptualise my display. This set up will blur the boundaries between private and public space and create the arena for "private" artworks to be viewed and consumed by the public.

Figure 2. Digital mockup of layered exhibition space. © Seo (2020).

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced my research topic, aims, research questions and objectives in context of my background as a designer wanting to explore what I have perceived as an invisible wall between private and public artmaking practice. I have also provided a review of secondary sources consulted in this research (including the four artists whose artworks I will explore in Chapter Three), and have discussed the methods and methodologies by which I intend to carry out my PLR.

I discussed PLR as underpinning both my theoretical framework and my research methods and methodology because of its validation of both studio practice and simultaneous research of texts and other sources. I validated PLR as an appropriate framework for this research project because it emphasises 'reflective practice' (Gray & Malins 2004) as a means of navigating the space between practice and theory. This fluid and interactive process of 'overlapping' (Warner 2002) of research and practice, private and public, and the invisible socio-cultural layers correspond to and will support my intended practice-led art-making process by inviting reflection on the process as a 'liminal moment' (Turner 1969/1995).it is impossible to accurately anticipate in advance exactly what these invisible layers will be, and how they will change and be changed by the specific private/public spaces in which they are eventually to be exhibited, through the presentation of my creative production.

In order to further question what layers exist where private spaces and public spaces overlap, Chapter two will expand further theoretical frameworks relevant to my research. In particular, I will focus on private and public spaces, art and social media, liminality, transparency and identity.

Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider the conceptual frameworks beyond PLR, that I have drawn on to form the theoretical framework of this research. The themes link to each other and support my PLR methodology. I begin with the discourse on public and private spaces, as this was the starting point for my curiosity and experiences that led to this research. The overlap between the two leads to a discussion of liminality theory and symbols of liminality which include thresholds and entranceways; veils and membranes; silkworms, metamorphosis, cocoons and silk, and finally artmaking as a liminal experience. This is followed by the consideration of art and social media as this is not only relevant in 2021, but because of the personal significance importance of sharing my artistic practice through social media platforms. Additionally, I discuss invisible layers and finally, identity and social behaviour, specifically the fluidity and flexibility of my identity in the liminal places of my personal experiences and artmaking.

2.2. Private and Public Spheres

Private and public spheres have traditionally been regarded as separate and discrete spaces or spheres of life. Their relationship is, however, a more complex and inter-related one. It is through this lens that I seek to carry out my research, due to my initial perception of certain modes of my work as personal and private, and other modes of my work as public.

Warner (2002: 30) defines the private as that which is 'related to the individual, especially to inwardness and subjective experience'. Physical space and the body are central to the idea of the private, as well as personal inner feelings, emotions and beliefs (Habermas 1991: 46). Private space also includes our homes, the spaces we create for ourselves to feel safe, be vulnerable and allow our personal thoughts and beliefs to exist. In private spaces we can operate according to our own rules and regulations. This space is kept separate from the public domain, with a sense of enclosure and exclusion. Public space refers to areas freely

accessible to members of the public, being characterized by openness and inclusion. Public spaces may be considered more objective in nature, while the private tends to be subjective. At the same time, the private and public overlap to some degree, and are not dichotomous or necessarily opposed to each other. Individuals can move through the boundaries of private spaces into public spaces (Papacharissi 2010: 63). So, although private and public meanings appear as distinct as the two sides of a coin, they are interwoven in many ways (Warner 2002: 27).

The overlapping or intermediate space between public and private is determined by place, situation and time (Downey & Kinane 2016: x). This research project focusses on the inner, subjective world of the individual, and the ways in which thoughts and emotions from the private space overlap into the public, in both physical and online spaces. In this overlapping or in-between space, separation of the public and private becomes difficult, and it appears that what is private cannot always be kept from the public space (Warner 2002: 30).

Bystrom and Nuttall (2013: 308) describe what happens when the private (including feelings, experiences and stories) is transferred into the public space. They use the term 'intimate exposure' to capture the ways in which our private activities, personal behaviours or appearances are exposed to others, generating unsettling and uncomfortable feelings (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310). The psychological discomfort arising from exposure is described as entanglement. As one's personal content moves from intimate space to public space, it may be experienced and interpreted in completely different ways – both by oneself and by others. This study is interested in this experience of transferring the private into the public space in different ways, and the emotional and thought processes which arise as a result. The overlap between public and private and potential entanglement that can take place at their intersection requires further investigation of the overlapping, or liminal, place between these two extremes.

2.3 Liminality

Liminality, from the Latin word *limen*, refers to the threshold, passage or space between two places; liminality is a variable intermediate structure between stable and dynamic frames (Ratiani 2007). Downey, Kinane and Parker (2016) argue that liminality can arise through intersecting, multidisciplinary conversations of time, culture and space. Stenner (2017) proposes that there are endless intersections between the liminal and public events that take place. By adopting theories of liminality, I will use the space between the boundaries of private and public spaces as a lens through which to analyse and understand the phenomena of the 'invisible layers between' that I have experienced. My experience of liminality is significant in my interpretation of the 'middle area'. Moving from South Korea to South Africa forced me to adjust to a new private and public space. In addition to this, there is always the feeling that I am somewhere in between- physically here in South Africa but emotionally in South Korea.

Explorations of liminality emerged in the work of ethnographers studying the ceremonies and rites of passage practiced in different cultures (notably Van Gennep 1961, Turner 1969). Van Gennep, and later Turner, theorized that there are different stages in life, from adolescence and pre-marriage to marriage, pregnancy, and birth. The transition from one such stage to the next marks a critical period in the development of personal status, and changes in group membership and belonging (Turner, 1969). Rites of passage are cultural practices which mark these turning points, and are found to share common characteristics or features across different cultures (Van Gennep 1960: 191, Turner 1969). Van Gennep (1960: 21) divides rites of passage into three stages: preliminary rites (rites of separation), liminal or threshold rites (rites of transition and transformation) and postliminal rites (rites of integration or incorporation). These stages move the individual through a process of passing from the old state to the new, and is characterized by new possibility, uncertainty, confrontation (between old and new) and sometimes confusion. The 'merging stage' or 'turning point' is paradoxically both dynamic and inactive (Van Gennep 1960: 3). This 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1969: 95) space between end and beginning is a highly significant experience, where both freedom and insecurity are present (Thomassen 2014). As the stage of incorporation is

also regarded as progressive, liminality may extend into the new stage or state of the individual (Turner, 1969: 95). This reinforces the concept of overlap in process, space, time, and state. Yet, in spite of the relationship between previous and subsequent stages, Stenner (2017: 25) speaks of a 'turning point' between one side or space and the other.

Early theorists conceptualized these practices of liminality as framed within fairly static social and cultural structures, which shaped the roles and behaviour of individuals. More recently, ethnographers have shifted towards a more open view of stage change, recognizing that structures themselves are subject to movement and change, shaped reciprocally by the individuals themselves and other factors over time (Stenner 2017).

Since the 1960's, concepts of liminality have been developed and applied more broadly. Areas of transition are identified not only in human life stages, but between other overlapping socio-cultural spaces as well (Downey, Kinane & Parker 2016). As social structures come to be seen as more fluid and dynamic, liminality is recognized where different structures collide and new, contingent social forms arise (Downey 2016). Historical time periods are also characterised by perceived stages and transitions. In historical timelines, ancient and modern times are bounded and defined with the Middle Ages between them. Human development moved us out of ancient times, through the Middle Ages and into the modern age. This historical or time-based boundary can be described as a hypothetical limitation (Downey & Kinane 2016: ix).

Downey and Kinane (2016) posit that the concept of liminality lies somewhere between space and place. The two terms are distinct, but they are also inextricably interrelated, such that it is difficult, even undesirable, to speak of one without reference to the other (Downey & Kinane 2016: x). In both time and space (or history and geography), the phenomenological subject is situated in the middle, which is itself determined by imaginary limits that can be taken for spatio-temporal boundaries. One cannot imagine the Middle Ages without some sense of an anterior Classical Period and a posterior Modern one; likewise, one cannot imagine a middle

ground without reference to areas to the left or right, above or below. In some very real sense, we are always in the middle, as times and zones are envisioned as boundaries surrounding this essentially intermediary position (Downey & Kinane 2016: x).

This concept of liminal experience between time and space also relates to play and role-playing. For example, as a child I expressed a major interest in role-playing. I could 'become' a character I might have wanted to be in the future, and I would play out scenarios with my friend in her own character role. Huizinga (referenced in Thomassen 2014: 105) identified five characteristics that play must have. Play brings freedom, and is free from the constraints of real life. Play is not limited to geography or time. There are certain rules within the world of play; play is not linked to profits (Thomassen 2014: 150). For example, two children playing might take on the roles of 'parent' and 'child'. Each child has a clear role within the game and expects themselves and their friend to uphold the rules of their particular role while the game plays out. Through play, we experience and reproduce real situations before they are experienced in reality (Thomassen 2014: 105). This concept of play and its' importance links to my thinking around my creative practice and points to the importance of liminality in daily life, growth and social behaviour, as well as our conceptualization of history and identity. In terms of separation, transformation, and union, perception translates from the realm of reality to the realm of the mind. Jung spoke of the subliminal and how perception arises below the threshold of consciousness. Forgotten thoughts are not actually forgotten but enter a subliminal state and can spontaneously arise back into consciousness. That perception emerges from the unconscious after subliminal absorption speaks to an overlap of conscious and subconscious, liminal and subliminal (Carl G. Jung 2011: 74). According to Jung, potential can consist of impulse and intention, perception, intuitively rational and irrational thoughts, conclusion induction, and emotions of all kinds (Jung 2011: 79).

Liminality also has a significant bearing on personal identity. According to Appiah (2018), identity behaves as a 'living guide' that influences our behaviours, as well as determining expectations of roles in the relationships between individuals, and the criteria that others' behaviours should be tailored to. The distinction between our identities in private and public

spheres is dependent on how we define ourselves in terms of external factors. Most people do not exercise their identity from a purely internal, authentic place uninfluenced by the external world. Griffiths and Prozesky (2010) use the term ‘social imaginary’, to describe how people see themselves fitting with their larger society, how they maintain and meet expectations of their social existences, and the beliefs that underpin these expectations. Because identity is defined to a greater or lesser extent by such external factors, our identities may be constructed differently in different spaces. This application in distinctions between private and public space, and the different ways we may experience identity between the two is at the core of my creative PLR.

Bhabha (1994), a post-colonial theorist, applies the theory of liminality in discussing how individuals construct and convey their identity. He posits that the postcolonial subject exists between particular temporal and socio-cultural spaces, between inclusion and exclusion, in an overall sense of being ‘in between’. This is of particular relevance to my research, for the ways in which my experiences span the two spatio-temporal worlds of South Korea and South Africa. Immigrating has had a significant impact on my life, not only through the change in geographical location, but also in the overlaying of new cultural and social expectations within me (Griffiths & Prozesky 2010).

With regards to identity and liminality, feminist Luce Irigaray speaks metaphorically of the liminality of time and space between self and others, identity and difference. She criticizes the dominance of masculine perspectives in Western academic thinking (Irigaray 1993b: 6) accusing it of ‘cultural matricide’ or ‘the murder of the mother’. She argues for the re-integration of female perspectives into western philosophy, for a recognition of liminal, connected or overlapping experience, using the placenta between mother and unborn child as metaphor. Rather than being a barrier between them, the placenta is a means of sustaining and interacting with the ‘other’ (Irigaray 1993a: 39). Irigaray’s perspective of an 'unforeseeable nature of contact with otherness, beyond its own limits' emphasizes acknowledgment of otherness beyond human existence itself (Irigaray 1993b: 211) and speaks to ethical aspect of liminality. More recent theorizing of this perspective is provided by intersectional feminisms.

The term ‘intersectionality’ was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who wanted to make feminism more inclusive of varied race, class, religion, gender and identity (Hawk 2016). Intersectionality is defined as the “overlapping and interdependently connected characteristics of an individual or group, such as class, race or gender” (Lexico 2021).

2.4 Symbols of liminality

2.4.1 Thresholds and entranceways

‘Threshold’ is the literal meaning of the word *limen*, and the doorway is a common symbol of liminality. Thresholds and boundaries have important meanings in Dutch artworks of the 15th and 16th centuries, and home and privacy came to play an equally important role in the art that followed in the 17th century (Jacobs 2018). In the architectural spaces of the time, the exterior of a building in the Netherlands was typically connected with the interior via an antechamber, which represented the threshold between public and private life. The concept of an entrance or starting point of a building and its limits and boundaries plays an important role in creating meaning in my studio practice. The wooden frames on which I stretch my silk to paint have come to symbolize these thresholds in my artwork, and the silk stretched over them like a veil or membrane serves as another symbol of liminality.

2.4.2 Veils and membranes as liminal borders

Rites of passage tend to make use of symbols of liminality. Veils, symbolizing liminal borders, have been used in funerals and marriage ceremonies across different time periods, and various cultures, and are of particular significance to my study. Cairns (2002: III) examines the cultural significance and liminal symbolism held by veiling in Ancient Greek, especially in weddings. A wedding veil, from a traditional and conservative perspective, historically identifies the bride as a participant in a liminal space of the rite of passage of marriage. A veil, typically made of fine fabrics such as thin, transparent silk or linen, covers and obscures the bride’s face from others but does not debilitate her senses (Koslin in Heath

2008: 164). A bridal veil can be seen as a second skin, which is for a short time part of her, as she walks the liminal space between unmarried and married. Located between the poles of maiden and married, the bride moves through invisible layers in her transition. In contemporary Korean weddings, due to the influence of Christianity and western culture, it is common practice to use western ceremonies and clothing, including a bridal veil. Although traditional Korean weddings do not use a veil for the bride, special embroidered silk clothing is worn by both bride and groom in liminal transition into married union.

Covering the heads of married women has also been a tradition across many cultures and times. Head covering was so strong an indicator of marriage status in ancient Babylon that the Talmud indicates married women were banned from leaving the home without a veil over their heads (Koslin in Heath 2008: 160). In this context, women were regulated to exist within the enclosed private space of the household; the veil served to replicate this boundary when women entered public space (Cairns 2002: 11) by acting as a form of shield (Koslin in Heath 2008: 160) and fulfilling both symbolic and functional roles that distinguish between married and unmarried women (Heath 2008: 6). Veiling separates one physically from others and can symbolise the liminal experience (Cairns 2002: 91). Interestingly, this traditional use of the bridal veil and head covering both link to the social roles of women, and this type of veiling does not traditionally apply to the man getting married or married man.

As the veil symbolizes a rite of separation, transition, and incorporation (Van Gennep 1960: 106), it is also used in funerals, where it represents a process of transition and integration into another place or world – that of death (Van Gennep 1960: 157). A veil on the dead is symbolic of their journey into the afterlife, a passing through a threshold (Heath 2008: 112). In Korean culture, a deceased person is dressed in special funeral clothing made of unbleached natural silk or linen, *suuibog*, showing only the head of the deceased for recognition by the family, but ultimately completely wrapped, like a pupa, before burial or cremation. Entrance into the realm of death is veiled and shrouds separate the dead from the living, but this separation can also be perceived as a temporary one, separating the physical

world and the dimension/ realm of the spirit or the afterlife. In this temporal separation between states of being (living and dead), the veil represents a state of limbo and helps facilitate resolution and acceptance, providing meaning in death (Heath 2008: 112). The veil can also metaphorically indicate the lack of understanding or experience of what is beyond death to those who have not passed through it. The concept of a 'tunnel' that connects one side to another is associated with death, indicating it as an 'intermediate process' of separation, not forever, but for a moment.

The concept of the veil as symbolic of separation or integration also translates to a membrane. (Henderson 2018: 181). In biology, cellular membranes are 'active boundaries', selectively allowing and preventing substances from passing through to the interior of the cell (Nath 2005). Cellular membranes are composed of a selectively permeable double layer of lipid, protein and sugar molecules (Nath 2005: 577). The main functions of cell membranes are to provide structure to the cell, separate the interior and exterior of an organism, and control the movement of substances through to the interior of the cell (Watson 2015). Additionally, membranes enable communication between cells by processing, sending and receiving electrical and chemical signals (Watson 2015). Hormone signals, for example, are received by cells via their cell membranes. The transmission of these messages depends on external and internal stimulation of the cell. While both veils and membranes are semi/selectively permeable, a veil is transient and impermanent as it can be removed to suit the social setting/rite of passage, while a membrane is a permanent cell border.

Both membranes and veils are significant in my own creative practice where my transparent screens made with silk serve as metaphors for them. I also literally layer my silk screens to symbolize liminal layers. My silk screens, individual or layered, depict a state of in-betweenness and selective permeability to represent my personal experience of liminality between Korea and South Africa, and to contrast and interweave public and private. This will be looked at in more in depth in context of the reflective discussion of my creative practice in Chapter Four.

2.4.3 Silkworms, metamorphosis, cocoons, and silk

I have mentioned that veils and *suuibog* are often woven from silk and silk is at the centre of my own creative work. Silk is a natural fibre that is produced by silkworms. They prepare for metamorphosis by producing and spinning silk into protective cocoons. As the insect undergoes this transformation into moth form it also experiences its own version of liminality. There is a point in the metamorphosis process where the caterpillar body has chemically dissolved, yet the body of the moth has not yet formed- the pupa within the cocoon is neither caterpillar nor moth (Zhang & Li 2013). It appears to be a place of limbo but is in fact a place of utter transformation. It is significant to my research, artmaking, experience and process that silk as a material comes from a process of biochemical liminality. Silk offers rich metaphors of liminality in relation to not only metamorphosis, but membranes and veils when I consider how silk cocoons originally served as a breathable yet protective shield around the silkworm.

2.5 Art and Social Media

Development of online technologies has created a new space where public and private exist together, in a virtual rather than a physical world (Papacharissi 2010). Early communicative media such as papyrus, stone and ceramics had limitations in their movement from one place to another because these materials are fragile and/or cumbersome and heavy. This meant that they were only able to be viewed at a particular location. This is much like a library, a physical place people could access information or written materials once paper and printing became the norm. However, with light weight paper and various mail services, communication and transportation across space and time became easier. Ease of communications further developed with telephones, then faxes, then email, then sms, and now multiple communication platforms and social media innovations. Today electronic media, the internet and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp can be accessed at any time, day or night, and from most locations in the world (Meyrowitz 1984). This form of electronic media has an intangible nature, which is different from the innate physicality of historic media. The sharing of art through the Internet introduces yet another space in which art is not only public, but also private as recorded in the context of the studio. A brief synopsis of the development of social media platforms will provide background for

further discussion of liminality as relating to social media with the introduction of social media, the way artists approach their audiences has changed too. Prior to the Internet, galleries were the pulse point where connections were created between artist and public. Artists living in the current era of social media have the power to make connections with the public themselves, from their private homes, sharing their art processes from start to completion in a form of interactive digital display and communication. This sharing of the process and not just the product links back to PLR as a means of advancing knowledge (Barrett in Barrett & Bolt 2010: 163). While the presentation of my videos does act as a sort of online journaling, it also allows me to share the rituals of my process, which are an integral part of my creative production. Using these various social platforms also allows me to access an additional dimension in my exploration of public and private, as these digital spaces also involve an overlap and layering of the two extremes.

2.5.1 Relationships between people and spaces

These changes in media thus far have had a significant impact on the relationship we have with places and people around us, as it is possible for artists to instantly communicate messages and images electronically from one part of the world to another. After relying on physical materials and in-person gatherings to communicate information, the move to utilising electronic media has eliminated the physical and geographic boundaries of socialising and connecting, and removed the interface of the traditional physical gallery (Kluszczynski 1998). This form of electronic media with its intangible nature is different from the innate physicality of historic media. In terms of 'relationship', the media has become more open to 'connection' than before. Relational connection in media is divided into 'direct connection' between members of the same group and 'indirect connection' that refers to responses to works or photos. Direct connection is seen as the connection between two users because they are 'friends' on social media or members of the same group, whereas indirect connection is seen as mutually commenting on the same picture or post (A M P & G in Khaya & Alhajj 2019: 90). The sharing of art through the Internet introduces yet another context in which art. recorded in the context of the private studio, is not only private and public but exists in the liminal place of the technological 'cloud' (within cyberspace?) between sender and audience.

2.5.2 Boundaries, consent and permissions

The public spaces we use, whether in existence in real life or on the various social media platforms mentioned above, are marked by physical points that mark boundaries. Structures like fences, walls and doors and the placement of security measures represent limitation of access and restrictions surrounding public spaces (Legewie & Nassauer 2018). Access to these physical places in turn can correlate to people's permission and restrictions on information and socialising (Legewie & Nassauer 2018). For the purposes of this discussion, it is interesting to note that these physical structures allow an artist working in his/her studio to selectively allow other people to access to his/her space and work. This access can be granted or denied after a request is made, or the artist could extend an invitation. Furthermore, in art galleries where exhibition viewings are hosted, audiences must gain access to the gallery to view the artwork and connect socially with others. The gallery can limit visitor access with a schedule and/or ticket purchases, thereby creating a threshold between inside and outside.

Unlike physical art galleries that the audience must visit, with digital media an artist's work can be transformed into video and photograph formats that can be shared on online platforms. An installation, painting, or any other artwork can exist in a different way. Legewie and Nassauer (2018) argue that the physical backgrounds of photographs and videos can be connected to the expression of physical space and the overlapping nature of public and private on social media. What is included or excluded in these forms of digital media differs depending on which platform they are uploaded to and the level of access the owner wishes to allow (Legewie & Nassauer 2018).

On the other hand, state Legewie and Nassauer, there is an 'invisible wall' caused by a lack of consent of information from private people in public spaces that becomes accessible on online platforms (Legewie & Nassauer 2018). The actions and recording of people in the background of photos and videos made in public places and uploaded online, potentially raises questions about whether these people have consented to their use. This 'invisible wall' is also about access between individuals and the public. When an individual's records or actions in public

places are uploaded to the Internet, they have a sense of openness to all and yet restricted to some. This invisible wall on the Internet can be considered in both terms of consent and access in connecting private and public places.

2.5.3 Sharing process as product and voice

Social has also shifted the ways in which artists are able to engage with their audiences. By sharing their work online artists can allow additional insider perspectives of their work, such as by showing the processes and stages of the creative process. This maximizes the 'visibility' of artistic activities filmed in private spaces to the public (Legewie & Nassauer 2018). The artist can also choose to share parts of themselves and their life through social media to communicate with their audience, thereby becoming their own spokesperson and representative. In this way, art can now be communicated in a bottom-up direction, and not in the top-down way it would be shared and received within a gallery framework (Jerslev 2016).

What is notable about this process of extending an artist's private space beyond physical space and into a virtual one by means of the Internet is that the walls of the physical boundaries disappear. This is because in the media environment, the boundaries between private and public situations are becoming 'blurred' (Jerslev 2016). Other restrictions, however, now come into play (Meyrowitz 1985). Restrictions and allowances particularly apply to how online content is shared with either free or paid access and relate to my practice through my referencing of free-to-use photography (photographs which are free and available download and use online) in the development of my paintings.

2.5.4 The uncanny

Although not the focus of this PLR, social media and the internet also present the issue of the 'uncanny' and the unexplained. The term 'uncanny' relates to aspects and situations which are mysterious, unsettling, and obscure (Freud 2003: 299). The 'uncanny' in social media relates to the strange or uncomfortable relationship between human-like avatars, androids, and animations and the unsettled emotional responses these can evoke. In their quest for

heightened realism, animators usually find themselves creating, on the one hand, realistic or lifelike ‘humanoids’ which are at the same time paradoxically ‘un-human’ and disturbing. This has led to the term ‘uncanny valley’, the chasm between the attempt at a realistic human robotic or animated representation and the sense of repulsion or unease they evoke (Cherry 2020).

If the uncanny by definition also includes the mysterious and unexplained, this can also relate to many videos of paranormal, mysterious, other-worldly appearances and occurrences in photos or video footage uploaded onto social media platforms. These include the presence or appearance of strange or even invisible beings, unexplained events, and the possible warping of time. These introduce questions of the nature of reality and the Newtonian concept of space and time as linear. They present the possibility of parallel universes and the quantum concept of entanglement, which lie outside the scope of this particular PLR project.

Social media platforms certainly introduce great complexity and overlap between private and public and vastly expand on and problematize the invisible layers between the two. The theorizing and visualizing of invisible layers are an important aspect of discussion as it relates directly to my artistic practice.

2.6 Invisible Layers

When speaking about invisible layers, I describe them as graded zones with varying expectations, behaviours, boundaries and locations which exist in the space between two spheres or poles, in this instance private and public. Their boundaries are somewhat like cell membranes in that they are selectively permeable- we pass through them all the time. These grey zones between private and public in digital space are also reflected in the physical space of our private homes, for example the difference between an entrance foyer or lounge and an artist studio or private bedroom within the home (Sue 2014). Outside of the home, these invisible layers and spheres can be indicated by physical objects like buildings and signage.

In terms of a form of signage for the navigating between a known and an unknown space, Turner adopts the term “chijikijilu” from the Ndembu, a tribe in central southern Africa who have been studied closely, particularly in regard to rituals. Turner describes them as a people ‘aware of the expressive or symbolic function of ritual elements’. “chijikijilu” signifies a ‘beacon’ or ‘landmark’ for connecting known places and unknown spaces in order to help hunters find their way back home (Turner 1969: 15). They can "blaze a trail" into the unknown by, for example, slashing marks onto trees or breaking branches, which later help them navigate their return journey. These beacons also serve to metaphorically connect the world of sensory perception and knowledge, structure and order to the unstructured, chaotic and invisible realm or world of shadow and the unknown.

The process by which an individual’s communication and artwork can be shifted from a private environment to a public domain is described by Papacharissi (2010: 140) as a “mobile nomadic life”. This is made possible in a non-fixed, flexible way through digital and online media. The artwork in the form of an image passes through invisible layers to reveal the artist’s voice as the image of this artwork can communicate and form relationships between the artist and the public. These relationships can be understood in the same way as the symbiotic relationships found in the natural world. The artist/public relationship has the potential to be mutually beneficial (mutualism), beneficial to one side with no impact on the other (commensalism), or beneficial to one side and damaging to the other (parasitism) (Brenner 2018).

There is a set of standards tacitly considered when individuals upload images of their work and studios to social networks. For example, certain images of artworks may not be suitable to share, while other images may contain content too secretive to reveal. If these are not within the scope of what is considered professional, it can lead to the judgment that they are inappropriate. When an individual shares images or videos, they might consider how ‘image A’ is acceptable to upload, while ‘image B’ is inappropriate to share. Individuals have their own standards when weighing up the appropriateness of the content they put online. These standards are not explicitly visible in their images, but rather implicitly embodied within the

content itself. The selective filtering process of sharing private images in public spaces becomes the creation of an invisible layer.

The veil of digital image filters currently used in photo-editing software and on social media platforms can be likened to invisible layers. Previously, airbrushing and editing were used exclusively for professional models or celebrities, whose photos were altered and enhanced for publication. Now, however, anyone can edit their photos using any number of editing apps on their phones and present themselves or their artworks as looking significantly different online than they do in reality. This altered photo is enhanced with a digital veil, sharing information through a selectively permeable digital membrane. The extent of the digital veil or membrane applied influences the messaging and information within the image.

A transformation of the artist's work can take place as a result of him/her opening up his/her practice to the invisible space of the Internet, beyond material physical space. When an individual's artistic creation moves into an open public space, the grey area through which the artist and the artwork move can affect the work. The work itself becomes re-considered and so transformed as it moves from a private studio space to a public space. Moving through these middle processes is likely to influence the work both positively and negatively.

The grey areas of liminal space in the artistic process of presenting work on social media are also a platform for intersubjective perspectives, the meshing of different fields of thought. This grey space - a state of transition, instability, ambivalence – is also one of possibility in that it 'opens up new possibilities in a binary system' (Downey & Kinane 2016: 31).

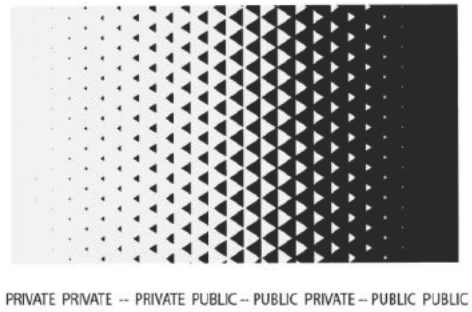

Figure 3. Layers in shades of grey between private and public, inspired by Sue (2014) © Seo (2019)

I created the diagram above (Figure 3) in an attempt to visualise and describe the invisible layers between private and public. The white zone on the extreme left indicates the private world and the black zone to the extreme right represents the public sphere. The gradients or levels between the two poles are divided according to the relative 'intensity' of either, or the degree of overlap.

Figure 4 below is a diagram I designed to illustrate how the artist and his/her artwork meets these invisible layers as the artist posts images of her/his work on social networks. As the work is created and shared, it moves from layer 1 (private) to layer 4 (public), and each invisible layer meets and melds with the digital artwork, essentially becoming both part of the artwork and a lens that influences the absorption experience of the artwork.

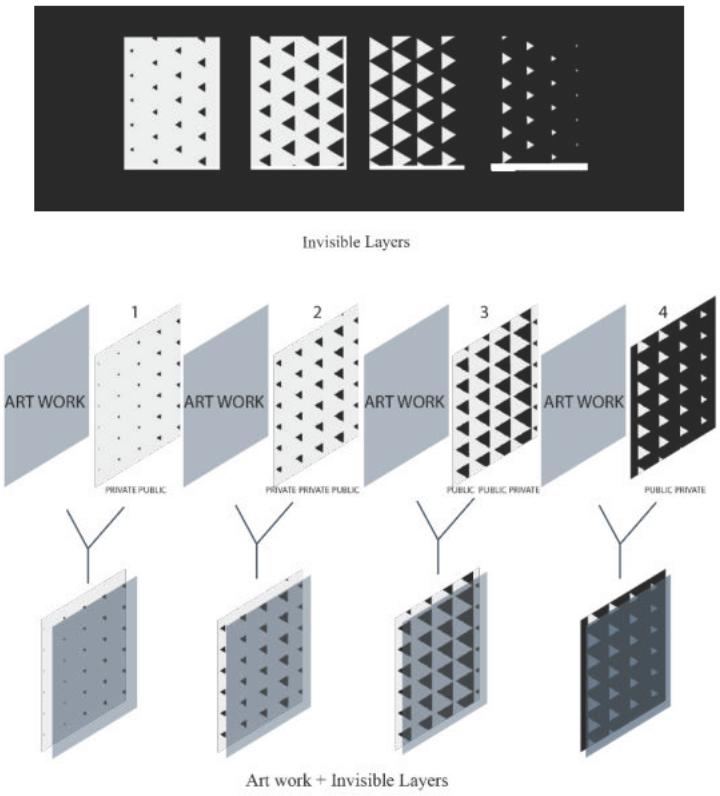

Figure 4. Layers in shades of grey illustrating artwork moving through invisible layers between private and public. © Seo (2019)

Video filming can capture the creative process of the artist working in their studio seemingly objectively and without editing or filtering. However, if the artist thinks about uploading these videos onto social media networks, the videos can be added to, or edited, and additional intentions and motives articulated. An invisible intention and plan emerges and materializes when recorded images or videos are shared from the absolutely private space (studio) to an absolutely public space (eg. YouTube). These plans can be described in gradated and progressive steps of invisible layers influenced by the artist's background and situation, social class, sense of identity and motive, for example, a drive for achieving profit and fame. These invisible layers transform or are reinterpreted in the intent and direction of the work. Prior to the everyday use of the Internet, introducing and promoting art primarily took place in spaces such as galleries and museums with the expertise of a curator. Through the Internet, a sense of common place and belonging and 'emotional connection' are promoted through improvised and calculated language (Papacharissi 2010). A marketing representative of the gallery would promote the exhibition and artist using traditional printed media, such as newspapers, posters

and flyers. Living in our current hyper-connected Internet age, however, artists have greater power over the exhibiting, displaying and even marketing of their work, and are free to explore and live in the areas between the invisible space of the Internet and the physical space of the gallery and studio. By sharing his/her work directly with public social networks in an approach alternative to presenting work through galleries, the artist can feel the subtle changes that come from communicating directly with the public. Unlike when works are displayed in a traditional gallery, social networks receive immediate response and interaction from the public. Changes in creating arise through dialogue and engagement of the audience provided by these invisible layers and open windows in the relationship between an artist and the masses. The liminal and invisible spaces of the technological 'cloud' and cyberspace are topics too broad to focus on in this project. This includes discussion of the recreation of a virtual world based on the real world, which leads to the possibility of re-creating individuals. This would provide a flexible invisible space for users with infinite creative possibility, and research on cyberspace in invisible space is ongoing. This cyberspace concept would also expand the discourse on identity.

2.7 Identity and social behaviour

According to Appiah (2018) identity behaves as a 'living guide' that influences our behaviours, as well as determines expectations of roles in the relationships between individuals, and the criteria that others' behaviours should be tailored to. The distinction between our identities in private and public spheres is dependent on how we define ourselves in terms of external factors such as the perception of others. When leaving home and entering a public space, one's behaviour and boundaries change as one moves through gradually more public layers. Public spaces are provided and made accessible to members of the public, with the condition of meeting and respecting behavioural expectations and boundaries. The boundaries of public spaces can also be active if they regulate who enters the space.

I have mentioned that liminality infers a journey, a transition, and contains a turning point where there is a process of separation and transformation. On a more internal psycho-spiritual level, this place of disorientation can also lead to shifting perceptions of personal identity.

Bhabha describes these places of turning within liminal space as a stairwell (Bhabha 1994: 2, 6). In a stairwell, there are gradual and incremental shifts in direction and perspective. Bhabha states that identity is always ambiguous between 'shadow and substance' and these in-between spaces 'provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity' (Bhabha 1994: 2). These new perceptions of identity are not only renewed perceptions of selfhood but renewed perceptions of the communal, of society itself. This expansion is due to the overlap and displacement of different domains within liminal space. At intermediate points, liminality prevents severe polarization of individual identity, based on for example class, race, nationality, gender, and opens up possibilities that are not fixed. Since there is always a distance between the image and the ideal in situations and reality, the space between them is always fluid. Rather than leaning towards one side, there is expansion and the forming of a different sense of identity and community through a stairwell concept.

The sense of a shifting liminal identity also links back to my interest in play and role-play. The different roles or identities that children take on during play (Thomassen 2014: 105), whether playing with toys or other children, are immersive experiences that not only reflect internalised perceptions of the various roles or identities taken on during play but fluidly shift between various roles or identities. The shifting of identities and interplay of social expectations on identity also link to my discussion of rites of passage. Specifically, as relating to my experience, in the context of bringing different families together through a marriage. Van Gennep (1960: 139) aptly describes marriage as a 'social disturbance' that involves several groups of people and modifies numerous elements within relationships. These changes disturb equilibrium in the individuals and groups as new relational connections and roles are established and identities shift. These social disturbances are most apparent in small communities, not in large cities. My experience of this, and the social expectations associated with it, have been affected by emigration.

My ethnographic liminality and sense of 'in-betweenness' (between South Korea and South Africa) is the main focus of this research. In her picture book, *Figures in a Foreign Landscape: Aspects of Liminality in Shaun Tan's The Arrival*, Melanie Otto described her

sense of identity, belonging, and isolation through her experiences of migration and settlement (Downey & Kinane 2016). Through this, she establishes her identity in the midst of migration and settlement, and expresses the position of 'limitation' and 'intermediateness'.

In this way, Downey and Kinane argue that cultural identities are not static but are continually evolving and are fluid in nature. South Koreans adopted many practices associated with Western civilization, trading outdated Japanese colonial values for more liberal Western values (Jung 2019). With these values, the South Korean economy grew at a rapid pace and showed remarkable economic development (Kim 2017). Citizens still enjoyed the results of new liberal principles and equality, but it also brought on the pressure to live a life of materialism, authority and expediency (Jung 2019). This dualism of values led me to develop my own guidelines and boundaries to create a sense of stability. With my own principles I could choose to keep myself rigid and contained when necessary, but open and flexible when I desired. I could create my own ideal identity and explore more diverse aspects when in complex situations. The cultural diversity that comes from Korea and South Africa and the 'entanglement' within it (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 326) is a topography in which the concept of an 'intermediate region' is established and a new identity and common self-strategy emerge (Bhabha 1994: 2). The 'middle region' creates a new sense of identity in the process of separation and transformation and in the uncertain self.

2.8 Conclusion

Chapter two presented the interconnected themes that are present in my creative practice and this PLR, and the theories that support these themes. Identifying these themes became possible through the connections between and the overlapping nature of the ever-open creative possibilities of my practice and the exploration of a framework of existing knowledge to support it (Smith & Dean 2009:48). The initial concept of private and public as discrete was explored but, due to the overlapping and increasingly less polar nature of the two, developed into the discourse on liminality. Liminality theory provided a greater understanding of my experience of 'in-betweenness' as not only a Korean in South Africa, but as a practice-led artist/researcher and one who uses the social media interface. Symbols of liminality which are relevant to my creative practice were theoretically explored and have enriched my process and thinking. These symbols of liminality include thresholds and entranceways, veils and membranes, and silk, the product of biochemical liminality - the metamorphosis of the silkworm. I discussed and graphically depicted invisible layers of liminality as relating to my perceptions and creative process and presentation. I also presented the concept of social behaviour and a fluid and shifting sense of identity and in the movement between places, people and spaces in time and space.

My research of these theories has challenged my perception of separating personal and private work as I recognise areas of liminality and overlap, and this will be evident in my own creative process discussed in chapter four. It has also expanded my understanding of and provided language for my sense of 'in-betweenness' as a South Korean living and studying in South Africa.

The invisible wall is just that, invisible, but my understanding of the relationship between outer and inner spaces surrounding by the invisible layers, the liminality between here and there, has deepened. It developed further than the simplicity of dictionary definitions of veils and membranes. The invisible space beyond the physical, my private personal space, my creative process in the studio, was moved to a public sphere through the Internet and social

media. Perceptions I had about my practice and myself have been expanded to include invisible layers of identity and meaning.

Physical space and the body are central to the idea of the private, as well as personal inner feelings and emotions (Warner 2002). Private space also includes our homes, the spaces we create for ourselves to feel safe, be vulnerable and allow our personal thoughts and beliefs to exist. In private spaces we can operate according to our own rules and regulations. This space is kept separate from the public domain, with a sense of enclosure and exclusion. Public space refers to areas freely accessible to members of the public, being characterized by openness and inclusion. Public spaces may be considered more objective in nature, while the private tends to be subjective. At the same time, the private and public overlap to some degree, and are not dichotomous or necessarily opposed to each other. Individuals can move through the boundaries of private spaces into public spaces (Papacharissi 2010).

The overlapping or intermediate space between public and private is determined by place, situation and time. This research project is focused on the inner, subjective world of the individual, and the ways in which thoughts and emotions from the private space overlap into the public, in both physical and online spaces. In this overlapping or in-between space, separation of the public and private becomes difficult, and it appears that what is private cannot always be kept from the public space (Warner 2002).

Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three introduces the artists whose practice support my research and assist in contextualising the theoretical and studio-based aspects of this PLR project. I will discuss germane works by these artists and illustrate how they influence and guide my research questions and findings. The information drawn out in this chapter will provide depth to the theoretical research and offer a point of reference in reflecting on my creative practice. The artists whose practices share thematic and practical similarities with my work and help to further contextualise this study are David Spriggs, Sanja Iveković, Buhlebezwe Siwani and Do-ho Suh. I will discuss their work with particular reference to the frameworks outline in Chapetr 2, specifically notions of private and public, liminality and the subliminal, transparency and identity, the migratory and metamorphic nature of relocation and movement through invisible layers and thresholds.

3.2 David Spriggs

Canadian-British artist David Spriggs uses transparent materials in his creative practice to explore the question of how governments control individuals by demanding transparency. Working in two and three dimensions, Spriggs creates individual pieces that are composed to form larger 3D installations. Dominant themes in his creative practice include space-time and motion, phenomena, colour, visual systems, surveillance, strategies and symbols of power, and the lines between form and perception. Spriggs' approach to composing installations with individual 2D elements contributes significantly to my considerations of practical compositions and layout; I am able to visualise my work in three dimensions and transform 2D silk frames into 3D installations. The transparency of Spriggs' work plays a key role in inciting interpretations of identity and the intermediacy of concepts of transparency.

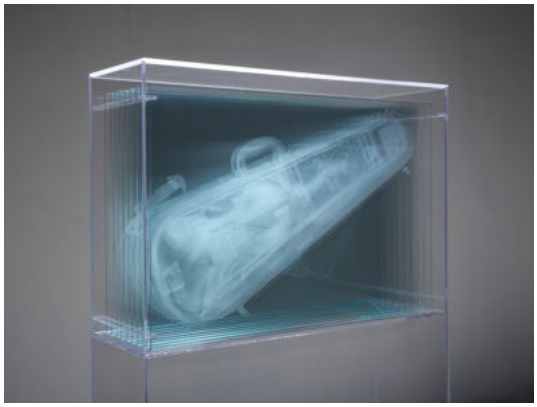

Figure 5. David Spriggs. *Transparency Report- Profile Type D- Violin*, 2013. Engraved glass sheets in display case. 56 x 28 x 152 cm. © David Spriggs (Spriggs 2014).

In his installation *Transparency Report* (figure 5), Spriggs presents the notion that concepts of transparency can help us to understand the relationship between vision, knowledge and power. The installation is composed of four individual 3D works representing luggage bags and their contents. Created with layers of transparent engraved glass, each bag with its contents becomes a unique "Profile Type": A, B, C or D. This reminds me of the process of stereotyping or polarizing whereby the identity or personality of someone is profiled and categorized according to for example class, race, nationality, or gender as discussed in Chapter Two. Luggage, usually made up of people's personal items such as clothing, toiletries, wallets, gadgets and various other personal items, also represents liminality as it is carried by people in transit. The display and arrangement of the works suggests that the bags are under surveillance at an airport luggage control system. Airports are in themselves liminal spaces for all travellers passing through them and consist of various thresholds, for example: check-in, luggage check and boarding platforms. As spaces between places, transient locations between starting points and destinations, known or unknown, airports, or other border-crossing points, directly link to issues of emigration, immigration, diaspora and relocation, and can represent the 'mobile nomadic life' referred to in chapter two. They are also spaces in which there is, as in the rituals within rites of passage, a blend of movement and activity, and passivity and inactivity, for example inspection points, conveyer belts and waiting areas. Areas of access and restricted areas are also present in airports and border crossings in spite of them being channels for the movement of persons (the public) and goods, and this parallels the movement of digital identities and material on online platforms.

Spriggs (2014) states that requiring transparency is not a consensual agreement but a means of power control. This work urges me to consider how transparency plays a role in the social, legal and institutional aspects of our lives. Spriggs' concepts of transparency lead me to consider theories surrounding identity in public and private spaces and how our private and public realms exist in several layers with invisible spaces between them. These invisible spaces, and our position in relation to them, affect our perceptions of the various transparent layers. Spriggs' concepts of transparency and practice encourage me to consider more deeply the meanings of transparency in my work, and address my concerns regarding empty space, boundaries and visibility in the transparent layers of my paintings, for example Figure 22 discussed in Chapter Four.

Spriggs' sculptures *Holocene* (figure 6) and *Stratachrome Green* (figure 7) offer me more clarity in the layering of my work. The 'Holocene Era', or 'Age of Man', which is said to have begun around twelve thousand years ago at the end of the Paleolithic Ice Age, is regarded as the current geological age in which we live (Bagley 2013). Spriggs' *Holocene* (figure 6) speaks directly to this phenomenological experience, expressing the ambiguity of the meeting of illusion and scientific observations in *Holocene* (Spriggs 2011). For me, the work connects concepts of time (past, present and future) and space in the liminal now. The arrangement of individual parts creates the illusion of *Holocene's* curved tunnel, embodying the infinitely extended existence of human beings. Each transparent layer of *Holocene* can be perceived and experienced as an individual image that forms part of the whole. The intersections between each layer demonstrate the spectrum of liminal space

Figure 6. David Spriggs. *Holocene*, 2011. Painted layered transparencies and metal framework. 170 x 335 x 289 cm. © David Spriggs (Spriggs 2019).

between two points in time and space, and the distinct individual parts that constitute a greater whole. I see this as a reflection of identity: the unique, evolving, and infinite layered identity embodied in each individual, which together constitute the whole. Furthermore, our perception of these individual and inner or private aspects of our identity, and the overarching whole or perhaps public identity, generates our social behaviour. Just as the larger images perceptible in *Holocene* are formed by the smaller components (Spriggs 2011), each silk frame I make is a part of a greater whole, as discussed in chapter four to come.

Stratachrome Green focuses on both the individual components and the structure of the installation as a whole (Spriggs 2010). In the centre of the exhibition hall, Spriggs installed large transparent layers (figure 7) in green light that, when composed together, form images of human figures, the masses, the military, the arts, society and technology, and objects of contemporary power (Spriggs 2010). The goal of the installation is to both 'fuse and confuse' the imagery, both focusing and distracting visitors' attention. Conflicting subjective experiences and emotional disorientation, as mentioned in chapter two, are often generated in liminal spaces or rites of passage. This way of presenting visual information draws on how technologies can conveniently display an infinite series of images and shift our grasp of reality. The images contained in an individual layer might be difficult to understand without the context of the whole installation; at the same time, the audience is likely only able to take in a fraction of the whole installation at any one time.

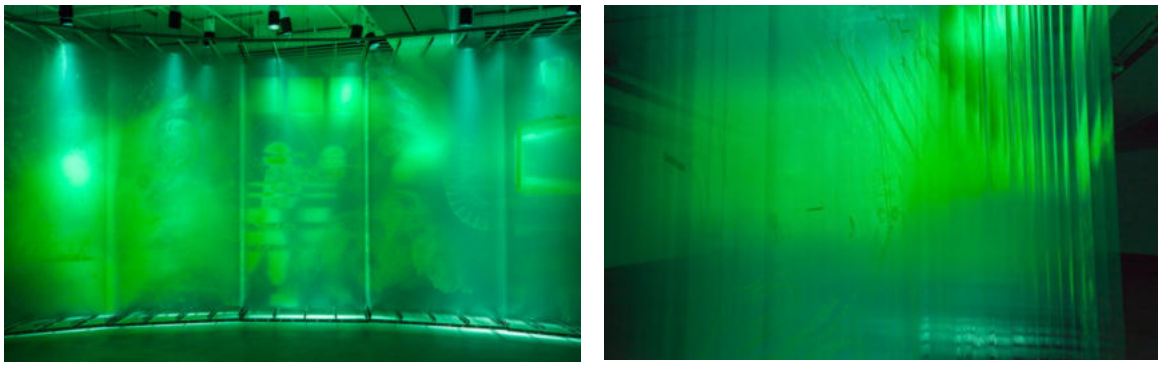

Figure 7. David Spriggs. *Stratachrome Green*, 2010. Chroma-Key green paint on layered transparencies. 170 x 335 x 289 cm. © David Spriggs (Spriggs 2020). David Spriggs (left), and close up of *Stratachrome Green*, 2010 (right).

The experience is presented in layers, like MRI scanning, each layer arranged one in front of the other, but to be taken in as a whole, the overlapping transparent layers need to be seen together (Spira 2008: 12). This idea of individual images, specifically of human figures, society and culture, forming part of a greater whole relates to my understanding of my social behaviour playing into expectations of public spaces, thereby contributing towards the structure of the theoretical framework. Spriggs' expression and illustration of the layered experience, and creation of an inseparable whole image and object, further bolsters the framework. This work brings me to a deeper understanding of and capacity to frame liminality as a subject. Furthermore, it validates my understanding that the experience of personal identity, and the narratives that for them, could change and adapt depending on location and positioning (Thomassen 2014: 92).

Spriggs' deep exploration of transparency in his practice leads me to reflect more intentionally on the many symbolic possibilities of silk. Transparency and transparent materials are importance in the framework and understanding of silk materials in my creative practice, and expand on how my artwork can be curated and received and interpreted by individuals and society.

3.3 Sanja Iveković

Like Spriggs, Sanja Iveković brings up discussions of transparency, liminality, identity and the relationships between perceptible and invisible layers. Iveković focuses more closely on the aspects of the individual, the private sphere and movement through the membrane between private and public, individual and institution.

Iveković is a Croatian photographer, performer, sculptor and installation artist whose work is primarily concerned with issues of women's identity, media and consumerism. Iveković's video art shares performances of private activities in ways that imply voyeurism or public view, emphasizing the communicative elements of media art, and how private autobiographical materials are incorporated into the public domain. In one of her earliest works (Figure 8) *Double-life 1975-1976 (documents for autobiography)*, Iveković pairs her

self-portraits with photographs of models from magazine advertisements to emphasise similarities such as pose, activity, location and overall appearance of the images. Iveković studies the essence of self-identity through these similarities (Kluszczynski 1998: 3). By interfacing images that correlate, Iveković posits that society exists and operates in many different locations along the spectrum of private and public. Unique experiences in individual lives can overlap within the same public occurrence or event. The situation can be directed or curated, but the history and meanings of the individuals' experiences are subjective and personal and cannot be replicated. This copying of staged scenarios relates to the extremely layered and superficial nature that images in visual media can have, particularly where photo-shopping and editing take place. It also connects to the 'Uncanny Valley' spoken of in chapter two, where there is something disquieting about the human 'copy' that cannot replicate the life or essence of the original, even amongst humans. An individual's identity is defined not only by that which he or she projects of their inner layered complexity but also by the things around him or her (Kluszczynski 1998: 4). Iveković states that there may seem to be external similarities between her private setting and the models' curated scenes, but they can be interpreted differently from either the context of private or public (Kluszczynski 1998: 3). This creates a more fluid understanding of presence in space.

Figure 8. Sanja Iveković. *Dvostruki život / Double-life 1975-1976 (documents for autobiography)*, 1975–76. No. 21 from a series of 64 plates. Gelatin silver print, magazine page, and typewriting. 60.3 x 80 cm. Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York © 2010 Sanja Iveković (MoMA 2019).

Another way in which Iveković's work influences my perspective is the realisation that the way artwork is produced transforms between private and public spheres, and depends on how

and where it is shared (Warner 2002: 30). Iveković's work influences the choices I make when revealing my work, for example via YouTube or via exhibition (gallery or virtual), relating back to my research questions considering how the artwork might change when it is moved from a private studio into a public place.

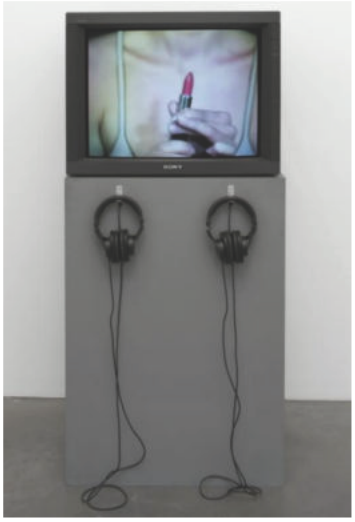

Figure 9. Sanja Iveković. *Make-up – Make-down*, 1978, Video, monitor, colour. 09 min with sound. © Sanja Iveković (Tate 2020).

M*ake-up - Make-down* (1978) (Figure 9) is a self-portrait-like video piece showing the artist intimately and suggestively caressing makeup and applying it to her mostly unseen face (Tate n.d). The artist brings focus to an everyday, private activity present in the lives of many women, adds layers of meaning to it, and makes it publicly viewable through the medium of video.

Irigaray speaks of the socially accepted concept of women as "beautiful (and) slim" (Irigaray 1993a: 110). Because of social pressure and value placed in appearance, it is accepted practice for women to undergo certain rituals before they leave the privacy of their homes. These rituals, including applying make-up and choosing an outfit and accessories, may differ depending on the occasion or the intended destination. In this way, women prepare both physically and mentally for the process of moving between the layers of private to public through emphasising and concealing various aspects of their identity. Although I tend to only make use of sun-cream and eyeliner when going out, the process of getting ready, applying makeup and attending to one's overall appearance before leaving the house demonstrates the imminent entry into public space, and the physical and mental changes required to move from place to place, in this case, literally crossing a threshold. The question of whether the makeup is intended to mask one's true self or to create an enhanced self (The Art Story n.d.) has raised questions about my identity in both external and mental aspects. The layers of one's various identities show a spectrum of moving from one aspect of one's identity to another through the act of applying make-up in a private room.

I tend to associate *Make-up – Make-down* with Sprigg's *Holocene*, in which individuals can view one inner layer of the work through, and in relationship to, the next in order to appreciate the whole. I see them both as visual layering and recording of identities and experience, where the individual or private layers and experiences together generate the whole. This whole relates to the artwork itself but is representational of social behaviour and public identities. This reiterates the concept of a multiplicity of layered identities and the complexity of personal experience and of human history.

Iveković's sharing of private moments and acts in public realms, and the creation of self-reflective space has a major impact on developing the conceptual framework of my creative practice. The display of Iveković's private realm is a form of 'intimate exposure' (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310), placing the artist in a position that may be considered inappropriate within the public context. This positioning opens her up to potential misunderstanding and rejection, and the exposure creates psychological discomfort or 'entanglement' (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310). For Iveković, the process of applying her makeup may be embodied and familiar, but when this process is relocated to the public space it upsets internalised expectations and regulations.

This raises questions about how I, as an artist, experience identity, behaviour, emotional changes, as well as communication and encounters with the audience, especially when displaying or releasing my artwork into public spaces. For me, my artwork exist differently when in the smaller private space of my studio, versus the larger public space of the gallery. When my work is met by an audience in the public space, their reactions, responses, interactions and feedback become part of the work and exhibition. If layers of personal memories are present in my work and then exposed on a public level, do these layers present in my work become part of the public?

My video presentations of my creative process are similar to Iveković's practice in the sharing of apparently personal routines as public display, or for public consumption, but differs in that my videos do not seek to be suggestive or overly intimate. I focus more on the processes and experiences of being an artist doing PLR, navigating the liminal spaces between practice and

theory, and private and public. As such, I am aware of the many ways I can record and share the daily activities and processes within my studio through video, which is something I would not have previously done, and of the many people across digital worlds that I can make my processes and work accessible to. With this awareness, I focus on the process of moving from one end of the spectrum, the private studio, to the other, the public platform, as I relocate my work from the privacy of the studio to the visibility of the digital realm (Stenner 2018: 159). I remain cognizant of the selectively permeable invisible and overlapping layers in the movement through time and the space between these spheres. In this movement through the liminality of my practice, there are always thresholds between private and public and the layers behave as very thin membranes, unseen but still affecting one another.

Iveković's use of video and other digital technologies in her practice bolsters my desire to investigate the connections that my own creative practice has with online technologies and social media, and the psychological challenges, perceived vulnerability, and shifts that this generates. The process of creating *Make-up – Make-down* transformed a private and personal action, and the act of applying make-up, into a deliberate and conscious process and message. The application of Iveković's make-up can be interpreted as an area or process of liminality and layeredness between this side and the other, the private and the public, the liminal and the subliminal.

Another performance piece by Iveković, *Inter Nos (Between Us)* (Figure 12) done in the 1970s, explores social relationality through video (Marcoci 2011: 19). Three rooms, all with television screens, are set up in such a way that the audience enters the first room as a group but can enter a second isolated room individually by choice. From the second room the viewer can see the artist in another isolated room, which is inaccessible to the audience, as the two isolated rooms are connected by closed circuit televisions without audio. The artist can't see the individual but can manipulate and control the live video they receive, potentially inciting a desire for communication and interaction from them, but always without direct/face-to-face communication. In the first room, the group of individuals receives the visual of the single audience member interacting with Iveković on-screen.

This form of live communication and exchange between the audience and the artist (Marcoci 2011: 19), *Inter Nos* is another suggestive piece by Iveković and is described as 'an interactive, melancholic and eroticized work' (Kontact n.d). Perhaps Iveković assumes viewer consent by virtue of them being there, but her manipulation and control of the video is reminiscent of the selection process of inclusion or exclusion that takes place on social media platforms and the grey areas of the digital world. It also speaks to voyeurism that can be fed by video and social media platforms, but this is not the focus in my PLR.

By using this set up for *Inter Nos (Between Us)*, Iveković causes her audience to react in the first room without herself being able to see them, or them being able to see her (Iveković 1977: 4). This form of virtual relationship is amplified in the age of the internet. Sharing art through digitally interactive media furthers the possibilities of communication, direct and indirect, and the relationship of exchange between the audience and the artist. Two-way interaction is possible in a passive way in which artists show pictures/ videos and the audience accepts. This concept leads me to consider the possibility and means of communication between artist and audience, as I intend to create an array of paintings that would encourage an audience to engage both psychologically and physically. Iveković establishes certain conditions as points of communication between herself and her audience; this methodology can be strongly associated with the South African artist Buhlebezwe Siwani.

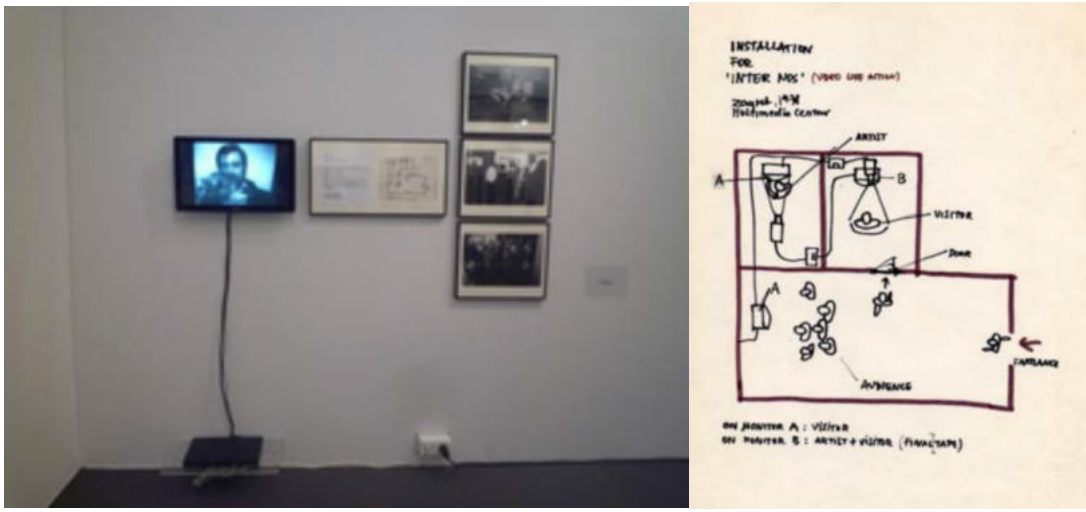

Figure 10. Sanja Iveković. *Inter Nos (Between Us)*, 1978. 3 Photos (40 x 26 cm), 1 Drawing (26 x 26 cm), 1 black and white video on monitor (60 min) with sound. Edition of 5 + 2AP © Sanja Iveković (Artsy 2020).

3.4 Buhlebezwe Siwani

South African artist Buhlebezwe Siwani uses her body through performance and photography as a means of communicating her personal experiences and journeys into understanding the liminal character of the self. This includes her journey into 'ubungoma', an ancient healing tradition of her ancesters. Additional issues such as race, history, colonisation, apartheid, and language are weaved through Siwani's use of liminality, to engage the audience (Samson 2018).

By using her body, Siwani implicates her own experience and identity in the narratives of her practice (Samson 2018); this critical facet of Siwani's practice can be compared with Iveković's use of her face and body in engaging with the correlations between her identities and movement between privacy and publicness. Simultaneously, the approaches both artists use in addressing matters of identity, space, and invisible walls dovetail with my own creative conceptualisation of invisible walls and perceived boundaries within liminal spaces.

Siwani's exploration of liminality contributes to my understanding of my own contemporary South African context and experience. Furthermore, a critical exploration of the liminal processes and identities of my own creative practice, which has taken on deeper and more nuanced meanings while living in South Africa, is encouraged. *iJoowish (all the girls in pretty dresses)* (Figure 11) is a performance and installation piece by Siwani in which she wears a long white dress, which is as transparent as a veil over her legs. As the artist moves through the performance, climbing onto a rocking chair and iron scaffolding-like installation, the appearance of and movements made with her legs through the filmy fabric of her dress strongly contrast against the scaffolding and chair. Her legs, partially obscured by the long dress, represent her inner identity as a woman, and the cracks, harmony, and anxiety of womanhood that show through the veil of the feminine costuming of women. The transparent layer looks somewhat awkward overlaying her precarious climbing and the instable positions she assumes. The strength of her legs is revealed in the process of climbing up the installation, generating for Siwani a liminal space of both beauty and anxiety.

Figure 11. Buhlebezwe Siwani. *iJoowish (all the girls in pretty dresses)*, 2016. Live performance (Carlos Marzia Studio 2016).

Siwani's multi-layered focus and approach inspire my own exploration of transparent silk to help illuminate concepts of identity entwined with private and public spheres. Her onstage performance of her experiences and background encourages me to continue referencing my internalised memories and history and draw them out onto a public stage through my painting. This process leads to my interpretation of an artist's work as transcending his/her psychological, emotional, and inner state, into an external state of material beauty.

Siwani's expression of personal narratives, through the use of embodied performance, serves as a reminder to me to continue prioritising my identity and personal histories in and through my practice. The questions Siwani raises about the connections between disparate countries throughout history encourage me to critically engage with my personal experiences of relocating to and living in South Africa as a South Korean. Through reflective writing, using the simultaneous flexibility and limitations of expression in two different languages, I can consider and reveal my experience, encounters and the process of self-healing through adaption, assimilation and the recentring of myself in a new home. By painting on multiple layers of transparent silk, a material that connects my work to my Korean heritage, I can express and explore the questions and uncovered experiences of linguistic barriers and the challenges of living and studying in different yet overlapping cultures and contexts.

In conjunction with Siwani's related inquiry into liminality and personal identity, the works of South Korean artist Do-ho Suh connect particularly closely to my experience of locating myself as at home in two different cities and exploring my identity in the liminal space between them.

3.5 Do-ho Suh

Artist Do-ho Suh's *Home within Home within Home within Home within Home* (2013) is a large-scale installation based on his childhood home. Constructed with polyester organza and almost life-sized, the sculpture is light and transparent, a stark contrast to the solidly functional walls of the house it is based on (Haslla 2016). Suh's spatial experiences of living away from Korea are very similar to my own, and his practice plays a role in opening me to exploring and understanding my own sense of identity in different liminal spaces. Like Suh, I have been able to consider my hometown of Seoul in South Korea in terms of historical, environmental and spatial meaning. These concepts are reflected in Bystrom and Nuttall's idea of the social imaginary and dwellings: depending on the society in which individuals belong, spatial life experiences are likely to overlap and encompass many factors (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 322).

Suh utilises transparent polyester organza for both its functional and conceptual offerings. As a translucent fabric, organza conjures up a weightless sense of movement, permeability, and lightness. At the same time, the constructed form of the house still evokes the same emotion, feeling, and memories of the physical building it is based on. The way transparency is used as a conceptual device by Suh forms a strong link to my ideas of transparency as a signifier of the constantly moving and evolving boundaries we live within. Suh states that the transparent fabric of his house is closely related to how well he survives his unique and highly mobile situation by quickly adapting to movement and changes around him (Sauer 2020).

Moving between locations and adapting to new cultures has and always will be a challenge for people, past and present (Sauer 2020). My definition and understanding of 'home' are no longer fixed concepts, but rather constantly changing. Both homes contain memories and

moments of my life. I liken moving between my two homes to the patterns of migratory birds travelling across the equator and through liminal locations before settling down at their destination of relocation. I have to be constantly open to shifting boundaries in order to physically move from place to place and mentally adjust and settle down at the same time. Adaptation to a new location, whether in South Korea or South Africa, requires that one does not hold on to a rigid sense of identity, but rather allow for my identity to change and remain flexible as I enter new and additional layers and intersections of public and private space. Like the metamorphosis of a silkworm, my identity shifts in the movement along the spectrum through the middle liminal area between here and there.

Figure 12. Do-ho Suh. *Home within Home within Home within Home within Home*, 2013. Polyester fabric and metal frame, 1530 x 1283 x 1297 cm (Vázquez-Concepción 2014).

This has made me more acutely aware of where I live and where I have lived, and offers a deeper look at life in South Korea and the social behaviours that I have adapted to and adopted in two different spaces. Suh's piece (figure 12) deeply influences my approach to the installation of my paintings. Through displaying the private space of *Home within Home within Home within Home within Home* in a public location, like an art gallery, Suh offers various interpretations of private and public space. The goal of my final exhibition is to use my silk paintings to generate a sense of liminality within the display area, curating a situation that locates the viewer between here and there. Additionally, as an international artist, I am curious about the potential responses and engagement from my audience - might a South

African audience receive my work differently to how a South Korean audience would? Considering Suh's South Korean context, his discussion of liminality and use of silk as a material in his work offer deep theoretical, spatial and material support to my research.

3.6 Conclusion

The discussion of four artists in chapter three provides context for this research, grounds the theories discussed in chapter two, and illuminates several aspects relevant to my creative practice. Iveković's works offer deeper insight into ideas of private and public spheres and the concepts of overlap, entanglement and 'intimate exposure' (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310). For me they also allude to the potential superficiality of social media staging, the creation of the uncanny through imitation, the subliminal, and the psychological challenges and shifts evoked by these phenomena. Iveković's use of video and digital media has offered me interpretive flexibility as I attempt to peer through invisible layers of my practice and reveal some of them. It has also introduced me to the concept of artist – audience communication, whether direct or indirect. In the context of public display, Spriggs' works have enabled me to explore the liminal space of overlap and 'in-between' states of transition, thresholds, relocation and the 'nomadic life'. They also help me understand transparency and layers, and interpret the meanings of transparent materials. This includes the link between transparent layers and the revealing of identity. Spriggs' practice has offered me confidence and direction in taking advantage of the transparency of silk and the liminality it embodies in my creative practice. The practices and artworks of South Korean artist Suh and South African artist Siwani have assisted in my understanding how my personal experiences, ideas of identity, history, transparency, and thoughts on movement through regions and spaces can come through in my creative practice. Like me, both artists make use of transparent fabric. Siwani's performances allow for veiled physical movement and expression and Suh specifically speaks to his experience of living away from South Korea, mobility and making a home away from home. The following chapter will explore my own artwork in more detail.

Chapter Four

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the processes and products of my creative practice in context with the theoretical frameworks that support my investigation, making critical connections between the two. My reflective journals serve as primary source material for much of this chapter as they provide insight to my personal reflexivity in relation to my practice. I will discuss the liminality of PLR in relation to my own work and themes and in context of my background as a designer and as an immigrant.

I will initially focus on the symbolism of silk and silkworm in my work as this underpins my practice and is one of the ways in which my work links to my Oriental roots as a South Korean. After that I will provide a deeper look at working with silk as a medium in my private studio practice. The discussion of liminality will be expanded to consider layers and sharing, both in the physical and digital dimensions of my PLR relating to private and public spheres and linked to the work of my research artists Spriggs and Iveković. This will be followed by a discussion of my experience as an immigrant 'in between here and there' and link my work to that of the artist, Suh. Following that, I will take a look at the concept of 'playscapes' as inspired by my childhood and the experience of exhibiting my work at a joint exhibition and observing audience engagement in 3-D space, referring here to artist Siwani's performance piece. After this I will give a perspective on 'Lockdown' and my participation in a virtual exhibition which leads on to a section on merging and meshing ideas in final artworks, a discussion of dimensional thinking and culminating in a look at my final exhibition.

4.1.1 PLR as a Liminal Space

The entrance point to this PLR project was a personal sense of conflict between my roles as a 'private' artist/creator and 'public' corporate designer. As a designer I produced work in a creative field, but in reality I was designing imagery and functional packaging that served company objectives and needs rather than expressing myself as an artist. An internal 'invisible wall' seemed to grow in between my roles, dividing my creative world into two realms: private and public. The initial perception I had of these two realms was that they were completely distinct and separate from each other, although my designs seemed to exist in a 'middle area'. As an artist, I own the work done in my private studio but I use contemporary media to share my thoughts and creations from my private space and allow them to move through the spaces of social networks. Researching the theories of private and public was the access point to thinking more deeply about the overlap between the two and introduced me to the concept of liminality.

On another level, while working as a designer, I had also become interested in the concept of layering as this was part of the process of creating designs on Adobe Illustrator (AI). Using the layer facility within the program, I would generate various layers or components of a design separately. These separate layers, although each integral to the process, would gradually be superimposed over one another and merge into the final design, becoming 'invisible' as layers to the viewer. These 'in between' stages or layers, I recognised, are liminal places in the process.

As I embarked on my research, I began to realise that PLR was also a liminal space, a mode of research that exists between theory and practice, reflection and action (Gray & Malins 2004: 2). This mirrored my own experience of liminality as an artist and meant that PLR could successfully provide a platform for my investigation of the invisible layers that exist between private and public spheres in physical and digital spaces/ art and social media. My artistic process is central to this, and so I will explore this in some detail below.

As a practice-led researcher, occupying the boundary between the personal and the public, my own work and the works and ideas of others, and looking both inwards and outwards to explore a question, reflection on my sense of identity was generated and recorded in journals (Seo, Personal Journal 2019). Due to my own experience and identity as a Korean living in South Africa, and frequently travelling between the two countries, I had the perpetual sense of being neither here nor there but somewhere in between, somewhere liminal. Located in time and space somewhere in-between as an individual, and as an artist located in both Oriental and Western painting traditions, I began to realise that the 'invisible wall' between Seoul and Durban was more like a fence than a wall. Rather than keeping them compartmentalised and separate, the boundaries between the two were permeable like cell membranes or veils and my identity has become a liminal mix of East and West.

Because this chapter is largely a reflective discussion of my practice as it intersects with the discourse already underway, the writing style is more appropriately subjective and personal in the writing that follows.

4.1.2 The Symbolism of Silk and Silkworm

As silk is the predominant material used in my physical artwork for this research, and because its symbolism is a rich and important thread that runs through my practice, I will discuss it at the outset. Silk originated in China (Britannica 2019) and has been used in traditional art of the East for many centuries. As mentioned in Chapter Two, silk is a natural substance produced by silkworms to spin their cocoons, from which they later emerge as moths. Silkworms prepare for metamorphosis by producing and spinning silk into protective cocoons. As the insect undergoes this transformation into moth form it also experiences its own version of liminality. There is a point in the metamorphosis process where the caterpillar body has chemically dissolved, yet the body of the moth has not yet formed- the pupa within the cocoon is neither caterpillar nor moth (Rolff & Johnston 2019). Just as the caterpillar moves through this liminal space of transition slowly and steadily, so must I in my creative process.

As the product of biochemical liminality, silk serves more than purely practical functions in my work; it offers rich metaphors of liminality in relation to metamorphosis, membranes and veils when I consider how the silk cocoon originally served as a breathable yet protective shield around the silkworm. The characteristics of silk fabric, particularly its varying grades of transparency, gauze and weight, make it significant to my creative practice. Screens and veils made of silk can also represent private space while still allowing visibility, like net curtains in windows that serve as thresholds between private and public (Seo, 1 October 2019). Veils sometimes reveal and sometimes conceal. In the case of my screen, this allows me to play with the levels of transparency. I can sometimes choose to conceal areas by painting over them, or I can choose to emphasize the transparent nature of the silk. The more screens that I layer together, the less visible the last layer becomes.

Silk as a material has the capacity to be stretched, but it is also delicate and can easily tear which becomes symbolic for my own identity 'between here and there', with conflicting experiences and emotions of both strength and fragility. Silk easily absorbs moisture or paints and can be primed or prepared in order to be painted on, a little like my own need to prepare or prime myself for various steps, processes and requirements in moving through different thresholds between private and public, whether socially or in terms of my artistic practice.

The historic, artistic and emotional link between silk and the Orient made it ideally placed to carry these concepts through to my creative explorations. Whereas in my undergraduate years I majored in Western painting and media, I was now drawn to using Oriental painting materials. For me as a Korean, they embody a deeper meaning, sense of identity and expression of my concepts (Seo, 1 October 2019). In this way, silk offers rich symbolism along with unique material qualities ideally suited to my creative practice in this research project, in a way that other fabrics are not (Seo, 1 October 2019).

4.2 My Creative Practice

My PLR provided an opportunity for me to experientially and theoretically explore the layers that exist between private and public spaces in my creative practice. I could start to navigate their overlap and identify the interconnected relationship between my private artistic practice and the sharing of it on public spaces. This had emerged as my key research question for this PLR project. The discussion of my studio processes and completed works has been categorised by the themes that emerged through my practical and theoretical research. The organisational themes used in this section are silk painting, layering of objects, inbetween-ness, playscapes and lockdown. These themes are not necessarily a chronological presentation of the work.

4.2.1 A deeper look at silk painting materials

In this section I provide a deeper look at silk as a material for painting on, the invisible layers of preparation of silk frames for painting and the technical and emotional challenges they present.

Figure 13. Close up of pure silk

My search for a material that could represent my sense of liminality brought me to silk. Just as my creative process is ever fluctuating and unfolding, my research and experimentation with silks is ongoing. Silk fabric comes in many forms, untreated (raw) or treated, and natural, bleached, or coloured. It also comes in various thicknesses, gauzes and transparencies (figure 13). As mentioned, these characteristics of silk, particularly its varying grades of

transparency and weight, are not only of practical but symbolic significance in my artmaking. *Nobang* is a pure/raw untreated silk that I frequently use because of its high transparency. It is somewhat like transparent plastic and alludes to misty "in-between" areas of liminality. It can also be treated with *Agyo* to prepare the surface for painting. *Agyo* is an animal-based glue, able to be purchased at Insadong, a market neighbourhood in Seoul where traditional art materials are readily available. The process of treating the silk with *Agyo* is called *Agyo-Bansu*. When the glue dries on the fabric surface, the surface turns into a film-like material that can be painted on (Lee & Rye 2019). In contrast to *Nobang*, silk can also be purchased pre-treated. Pre-treated silk is stiffer and thicker and more opaque than raw silk (Lee & Rye 2019), more brittle and easily torn, similar to thin tracing-paper. Many Oriental painting materials that come in powder form can be painted onto treated and untreated silk. Treated silk allows a deeper saturation of colour, makes the painted surface more durable, and seems to prevent discoloration of the pigments over time.

Silk is usually stretched on a frame before it can be painted on. I use wooden stretcher frames: the smaller ones I bring from Korea or purchase locally in Hillcrest, and the ones for larger works, I construct by myself in my garage. The process of building larger frames and the process of stretching the silk are very meticulous and disciplined procedures and cannot be done in a hurry. These processes require patience and objectivity and form the foundation of my practice of painting on silk, even though they remain unseen layers to the viewer of the final product.

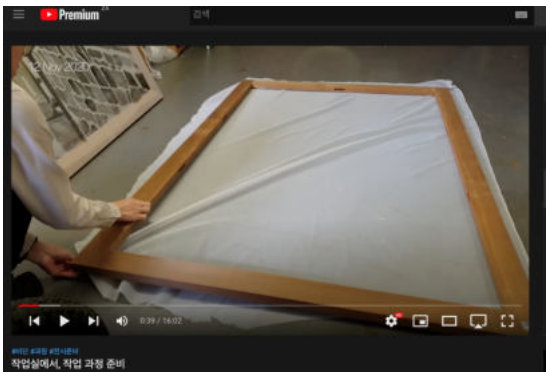

Figure 14. *Silk Frames* in progress: Still from video on preparing large frame in garage [Online]. https://youtu.be/RlCRhLHsqKg

Preparing the wooden frames, particularly the large ones, and stretching them with silk (figure 14) is one of the most elaborate and difficult processes of my practice, and the least forgiving. Although I love getting started and working with speed, I know that launching in to stretch a new piece of silk onto a frame in a hurry will make the process far more difficult than it needs to be and bring me back to square one. At this stage I often think about how much easier it would be to paint on a canvas or drawing paper instead.

The wooden frame needs to be accurately built with corners of ninety degrees and lie absolutely flush on the floor. If any of the angles are twisted or slightly off, the frame will shake in the early stages of applying silk and the silk will not stretch evenly on the frame. This increases the risk of the silk tearing as it dries on the frame. Inevitably, hastily prepared frames result in the silk needing to be cut from the wooden frame and I have to start over. Also, because I install my paintings in front of each other in several layers, if a silk stretcher frame is roughly put together or warped it becomes difficult to evenly space the works during installation and the fragile silk painting can still tear at this point. In terms of appearance, any parts of the silk canvas that are sloppy are intrusive and detract from the image that I want to express.

Figure 15. Still from video on preparation of silk frames [Online]. https://youtu.be/nCNkIJ84ANE
a. Gluing back of frame **b.** Stretching silk and attaching to glue

To stretch the silk onto the wooden frame, firstly the silk needs to be sprayed with water. The frame is placed face down on the wet silk and painted on the back with wood glue or flour and water glue, depending on the size of the frame (figure 15a). The silk is then pulled around the frame and pressed onto the glue (figure 15b), paying careful attention to stretching the silk

evenly and folding the corners neatly. In this precise and repetitive process, it is necessary to attach the silk well to the inside and outside corners of the frame (Tuckman & Janas 1995: 53). Another very important part of this process is to make sure the silk remains clean and does not pick up dirt or dust.

Figure 16. Preparation of silk frames: silk drying on frames.

The silk is then allowed to dry, shrinking and tightening onto the frame as it does so, to provide a tight flat surface on which to paint (Figure 16). All artists who paint with oil on canvas or with ink on paper will know this, but surface work is extremely important. This is a time-consuming process and because I need to allow each stage enough time, I have realised that it is better for me to work on various frames simultaneously. I start one frame, cover it with silk, and then proceed with the other work while the first silk canvas is drying. This invisible simultaneous/layered approach to my work is similar to its later visible layering in terms of imagery and screens. In the preparation of screens, my whole studio becomes messy with canvas and silk pieces, but with time, patience and precision the work moves forward, and several screens are completed at once (Seo, 7 October 2019).

Many unexpected things can happen during these early stages of my work and so although I am eager to get painting, I have to be patient and work in a planned and disciplined manner to minimize the possibilities for accidents to happen. I also need to keep the environment and the silk clean as my work relies on the clear and translucent character of the silk. As such, the first steps in preparing of my layered silk paintings is arguably the most important as it serves as the foundation for all the work that ensues (Seo, 7 October 2019). This entire process, however, becomes an invisible layer in the finished work.

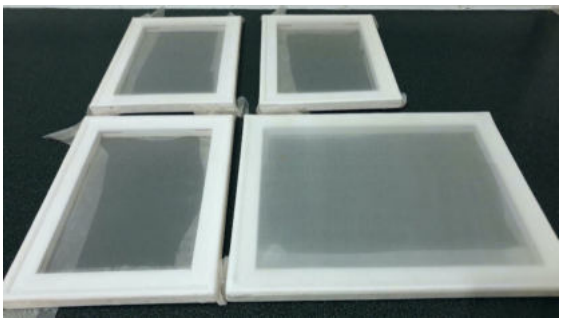

Figure 17. *Silk Frames* in progress: screens to be trimmed and neatened, note colour of the frame consistent with silk.

The finished screens are then trimmed and neatened when they are dry. It is important that the colour of the frame and the silk are consistent so that they appear to be moulded (figure 17). These stretched silk canvasses are now ready for painting. The transparency of silk, its weight, texture and whether the silk is treated or not affects the painting process in different ways. My processes vary, depending on the needs of each painting. These also become invisible layers of my creative process.

When one of my double-layered paintings calls for a background image that is visible through the foreground of stretched silk, I use transparent *Nobang*. Sometimes, when painting background nature scenes, I paint directly onto the *Nobang*. Sometimes I apply *Agyo* only to the area that the foreground image will be painted on, leaving the rest of the silk raw and untreated to preserve the transparency of the silk, as treated silk is more opaque than untreated silk. The ratio of *Agyo* and warm water are balanced carefully, so it is not too sticky and does not crystalize on the silk. The prepared surface or ground allows me to paint with acrylic, oil paint or watercolours on the silk. Other times, when I want less transparent surface, I paint on pre-treated silk.

Figure 18. Close up of Watercolour
a. on Pre Treated Silk. **b.** on Half Treated Silk. **c.** on Untreated Silk Pre Treated Silk.

With these various approaches to individual paintings, I can layer paintings to create a sense of depth by creating a clearer foreground with a vivid focal image, and a softer background image that appears be far off in the distance or covered with mist. I use the technique of applying *Agyo* on *Nobang* only on the area to be painted for the foreground image if I want more transparency, whereas if I want to create a more misty appearance, the foreground painting is done on pre-treated silk. The background image is sometimes painted on stretched paper.

Silk is quick to work on because of its fast drying time but being close to water can easily hydrate it. The hydration of silk is significant because, as I paint, the colour is absorbed into the fabric, unlike the overlay effect when using oils and acrylics. When the brush touches the silk, I can explore the various effects of rubbing the bristles and paint into the fabric. Experimenting this way with the interaction of the paint and surface is not as achievable with *Jangji* (the particular paper I use) or other fabric materials. The speed of my working process was also really important for me in my PLR because of the need to create and install a considerable number of paintings. If the medium dictates a slower process it leaves the window of experimentation open for far too long. During my practical research I wanted to work as fast as I could as the sooner I could see the results of my experimentation, the sooner I could reflect on the processes and be guided by the direction of my practice (Seo, 1 October 2019).

Figure 19. Close up of watercolour on untreated polyester silk alternative/organza.

In some of my works I use different transparent fabrics like organza, a polyester silk alternative, to replace pure silk (Figure 19). This is due to difficulties in obtaining pure silk fabric, and delivery delays. Painting on pure silk has advantages in terms of absorption and expression of the brush's stroke. However, I thought it was more advantageous to consider materials that I could substitute for silk and access easily in South Africa, rather than having to import; this allowed my research to be much more sustainable. The polyester organza feels significantly different from silk when painted with acrylics. The combination of adequate water and acrylic paint and the degree to which the fabric holds water makes a difference in the final painting, depending on whether the surface is pure silk or polyester material. This is because the fibres used in weaving the fabric determine the drying time and the degree of absorption.

In addition to experimenting with fabrics and surfaces, I also experiment with other non-Oriental painting media. Mixing materials always takes me through different creative processes and accidental results can bring up some interesting new avenues. For example, acrylic paints spread beautifully over *Agyo* and become merged with it like a layer of glue. Experimentation generates many iterations and mistakes and means it can take some time to produce what I consider a completed work. In contrast to the meticulous control required when stretching silk, working with watercolours and being able to use my paintbrush to manipulate the flow of paint on a silk screen allows space for spontaneity and coincidence in

my work (Seo, 7 October 2019). The water absorption of silk and the way the paints "flow over and through" the fabric fibres during the dyeing or painting process (Tuckman & Janas 1995: 6) also relates to my theoretical framework of liminality and movement through the 'in between spaces' between private and public because silk operate as a permeable membrane. This extends the meaning of "flow over and through" to include layering, whether on individual or multiple overlapping frames, or sharing and layering my artwork between private or public spheres. It can also allude to my personal experience of movement and identity between Korea and South Africa.

My investigation of the transparency of silk and alternate fabrics in combination with different painting materials will continue, and I plan to keep exploring, observing and recording the combination of materials as well as how they are impacted by the environment and weather.

4.2.2 Sharing and layering objects

Within this theme I will discuss my private studio practice and my experiences and findings in producing it and sharing it on digital platforms, along with the sense of liminality experienced between physical and digital spaces. To understand the private and public relationships of individual creative activities and social media, I consider the correlations between artistic practice and privacy and social media and publicness. My understanding of the connection between private and public in relation to physical buildings serves as a platform for the discussion and is applied metaphorically to invisible or virtual spaces. Just as individuals can cross the borders of private spaces into public spaces (Papacharissi 2010), I can enable my creative practice to do the same. As I work within the private sphere of my studio, I am mindful of my movement as I reposition my work within the exposure of the public digital sphere (Stenner 2018: 159).

The meaning of 'public' relates not only to physical spaces that are open to the public, for example art galleries, but also to our access to digital platforms that are contrary to the privacy of our personal lives (Warner 2002: 30). Whilst in my private home I have access to a

multitude of images and information through the internet and social media platforms. I can also share my work from my physical private space with others and determine whether access is restricted or not.

While there are many nuanced definitions of private and public, the more obvious meaning of privacy as relating to the space within the walls of a building (Warner 2002: 26, 30) still plays an influential role in my creative practice. Private spheres enable our right to be alone; to have privacy. Exercising the right to be alone requires respect for privacy and private spheres (Zizi 2010: 132). I have come to interpret the actions and outcomes of the processes of artmaking in my studio as internal reflections and subjective private areas. This was the starting point of questioning whether my creative practice offered new insights into the marginal area at the intersections of private and public spaces. Revealing the results and processes of my art on social media opens my artmaking experience and is in fact a move from an inner place to an outer space, or an overlap of private and public, and brings about the issue of transparency.

My research of Spriggs, and his layered transparent artwork, brought awareness to the symbolism of transparency and inspired the question of whether the layers between private and public are open and transparent to anyone. Transparency, present in both my and Spriggs' artwork and practice, is key to understanding and answering this question. I consider how adopting transparency around oneself is necessary and required when entering the physical public sphere (Spriggs 2014). Similarly, choosing to engage with the digital public sphere through social media generates a form of transparency and visibility. Through connecting my practice with theory, together with the insight gained from Spriggs' work, the translucent silk cloth that I paint on acquires these meanings of transparency.

When I engage with an artwork in a digital or physical public space, I often wonder how the artist created it: what are its hidden processes, plans, and secrets? Established exhibition practices do not always reveal or share all of this information or illuminate the private processes of artmaking. As the creative component of this research unfolded, I considered how I could both display my completed works and bring transparency to my studio-based

processes as a whole. Like Iveković, who emphasises the communicative elements of media art, and how the private can be incorporated into the public domain, I decided to adopt videography as a tool for transparency. Unlike Iveković, my approach to filming the mundane is to provide a more objective perspective of my creative practice and allow for a fluid discussion of my practice with online technologies and social media (Iveković 1978). This act fuses something of my autobiographical personal data as an artist with public discourse. This art is no longer found in the space *between* private and public, between artists and audiences, but in the area of the personal itself (Kluszczynski 1998).

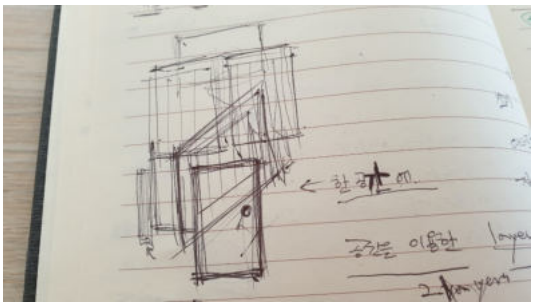

Figure 20. Sketches in journal considering layering frames, 2019.

In my practice, I like to roughly plan new artworks with a sketch or design. (Figure 20). Unlike a building plan, this plan can be followed or flexibly changed as the creative process unfolds. While my refined and complete paintings are significant artistic products in themselves, there are important nuances of the creative process that are not evident in these finished works. By recording parts of my processes done in private, I capture evidence of the layered creative process practically, and interweave it with theories of liminality, invisible walls and the spaces between here and there.

In recording the layers of my practice as an attempt to generate some transparency, there are many variables that affect the quality of these videos, such as when I use one hand whilst working. Usually, I set my camera up on a tripod. I anticipated that the process of my work would be interesting for me to observe with the distance created by the video recording. Through watching the playback of the recording, I could also identify key points and

significant moments that serve as thresholds in my process and bring the work to completion, for example stretching and gluing the silk onto the stretcher frames (figure 21).

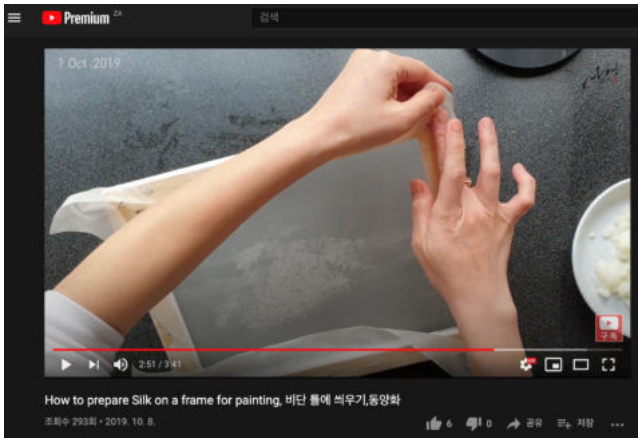

Figure 21. Screenshot of *Silk Stretching* process video shared on YouTube channel [Online]. https://youtu.be/nCNkIJ84ANE

I regard my work as existing in four forms. At first each piece starts in my studio as a painting or series of paintings. I record the process and final outcome, transforming the piece into digital photo and video form and adding an extra layer to the work. Beyond that, I share the photos and videos online, further transforming the work into a publicly accessible, online digital form that appears to have no boundaries. Finally, there is the physical exhibition of my art work in a public gallery space. These various forms each represent different layers of my practice.

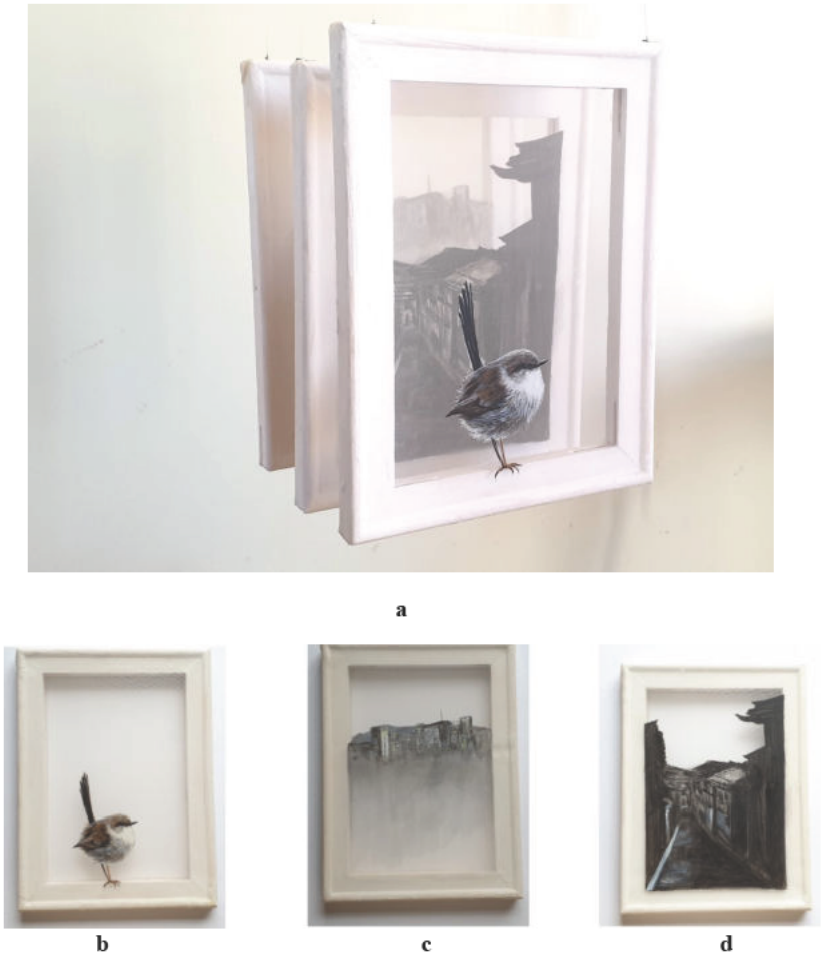

Figure 22. *Between here and there*, 2019. Acrylic on organza fabric, transparent hanging thread. 18 x 24 cm. Painting process of the bird in this piece is available in video [Online]. https://youtu.be/l_mxNExXWIo

Between here and there (Figure 22) is a prototype created to explore the possibilities of layering silk paintings to conceptually represent transparent liminal layers between private and public. Inspired by Spriggs' transparent layered work, I wanted to experiment and see how various painted transparent layers would interact.

Identifying with my Korean heritage as my starting point, I layered images of a traditional Korean residential building and urban landscape with the contrasting, organic image of a bird floating in front of both (Figure 22 b, c, d). I imagined the bird flew from afar and stopped to rest on the stretcher frame, representing a threshold, between there and here, looking out towards its next destination. Birds, in my artwork, become repeated icons of transition through the invisible layers of liminality and metaphors of me moving between spaces. The

layering of the silk paintings of Korea in their frames with the bird in front, represents my concurrent connection to and distance from Korea and the sense of liminality I experience. This piece was created at a scale much smaller than I typically work. Due to the costs and logistic challenges involved in obtaining some of my materials, including silk, it was more practical to test my ideas on a smaller scale. Smaller sized works require less financial outlay and small stretcher frames not only cost less but are less arduous to make up and stretch silk on. For the sake of financial saving, I also used organza because, as mentioned, it is more reasonable than silk and more easily accessible locally (in South Africa). Smaller works also provide more ease in recording and sharing my creative process on social media in a shorter time frame.

Additionlly, *Between here and there* became an exercise that allowed me to anticipate how I might later install layerered paintings more effectively when I finally came to curating my work on a large scale and in a large space. I suspended the paintings from the ceiling to better understand how the work connects and communicates not only as layers but also with the space around the work. The floating effect added to the sense of liminality, like a pupa suspended in space and time.

This reveals that my work developed directly out of reflective practice and the integration of theory into my artmaking process (Gray & Mallins 2004: 108) and that the sharing and layering process of my artmaking relates to more than the liminal spaces between private and public. Parallel practice and theoretical thinking guide my artistic and creative activities and help me to be more conceptual and impartial. It assists with developing a form of critical distance when reflecting on my artwork and enables me to generalize, record and apply specialised theories (Smith & Dean 2009: 5), demonstrating how PLR is especially suited to the creative arts in which human cultural and physical materials interact (Smith & Dean 2010: 156).

Figure 23. *Between waiting and starting,* 2019, Watercolour on silk, 18 x 24 cm.

Between waiting and starting (Figure 23) is another prototype I made, developing the theme of birds and thresholds. It symbolizes the shift between two states, waiting and starting, whether in the creation of a specific artwork or any other activity or process, and the invisible liminal space in between.

Personally, I prefer birds with neutral colours that don't have brightly coloured plumage. As my painting is an intimate process, I have to feel a connection with the images I paint, and so new silk paintings only begin after much consideration of imagery (Seo, 1 October 2019). In my creative practice I often source reference photos on the Internet from public, free-to-use platforms like Pixabay and Unsplash. The original images of the birds in this piece were sourced from Pinterest, another online resource providing free access to users. In a similar vein to my research, photographers conduct their private craft and then use the Internet to make it accessible in a digital public domain. Countless layers of images and photographs present themselves to me through my computer screen, as though presenting themselves as potential subjects for my work. Some images seem to have a stronger pull on my imagination and intuition. In this moment of accessing and referencing my chosen source images out of the multitudes available, I have an invisible, private exchange and sense of connection with the photographers in the digital realm (Seo, 1 October 2019). This sharing again forms an unseen layer of my work.

These shared images are then transformed to suit my own needs as I paint them with acrylic and watercolours onto silk. Much like my design experience working on AI, this process becomes an invisible layer to my audience. In my collation of source imagery, different images that wouldn't ordinarily meet can co-exist in a new physical space and, once uploaded, a digital space as well. In this process of re-making the image, layering it, and sharing it on the Internet, I experience a space that transcends my own private studio space and the physical display wall. Social media and other digital public platforms have made possible this type of semi-private interaction in which individuals communicate with society through selectively private media and public platforms from their own private, physical places (Papacharissi 2011: 306). It is possible for me to communicate messages and images electronically from Durban, where I live, to be received moments later in Seoul and almost anywhere else in the world. Similarly, I can selectively allow other people digital access to my private space and work without my work physically leaving the studio.

By using photos and video recordings in my studio I can create bite-sized insights into the layered routines and actions of an artist living and working in our contemporary history. I can capture any moment of the creative process on camera, and the gestures of my hands in the video can communicate with the viewer about technical aspects of my work. Before, no one could see what only I could in my studio. Now, a shared video can become an exhibition that extends beyond me, my studio, and my visible space, and, whether I as the artist am asleep or awake, can at any time be viewed from other unseen and unknown spaces via digital media. My attitude towards videos of my work has changed considerably since the start of this project, as I have recorded and shared them with the world. In this era, where the walls between culture and space are continually being broken down, artists are placed in a situation where they are simultaneously in the creative online community while working in the studio, with a participatory attitude from the audience who is doing the viewing (Sullivan 2004: 161). Having my work environment on display to an unspecified audience generates a feeling of liminality and vulnerability. My attitude towards the creative process changed dramatically when I recorded myself working. I cannot ignore the fact that my intention when recording the process is to share the final video with my online audience, and this influences me to present myself and my studio in a way that I feel is acceptable for public view. In this act I

identify another invisible layer generated as a result of my preparing to enter a digital public space.

Figure 24. Double cameras: Image of Seo filming process painting. Image: Jung-yup Kim

In terms of the overlap between private and public, if I choose to share an artwork with only a small group of close friends or colleagues, I intend for only a level of private disclosure, remaining close to the private end of the spectrum. However, if my work were to be promoted with social media or a large gallery, this would be a move to the opposite end of the spectrum, located more squarely in public space. As stated by Warner, depending on the context and intention of sharing, an art object can remain private or become public (Warner 2002: 30); therefore the work created in my own studio may remain private in my space or relocated to be open publicly on digital media.

Connected to the understanding of private and public in relation to physical buildings, art galleries have traditionally been the platform for public display of private artwork. A gallery is a public space where artists have the opportunity to share their artwork and also a place where people gather to view it. PLR supports diversity in not only my production of creative works but also requires me to consider the many other ways to open to audiences beyond established methods (Smith & Dean 2010: 158).

At first, I was very reluctant to upload a video of my work in a new space, on the Internet. Uploading my creative process to social media felt like a form of 'intimate exposure' (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310). 'Intimate exposure' refers to the ways in which our private activities, personal behaviours or appearances are exposed to others, generating unsettling and uncomfortable feelings (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310). Although I was not exposing intimacies, but rather artistic processes usually done in private, it none-the-less evoked feelings of vulnerability and exposure in me, not the audience, as it brought up questions of how the audience would react to and evaluate it.

The anxiety about uploading my work and paradoxical desire for feedback perhaps links to my persistent fear that the work I create is not 'finished'. In my perfectionism I can sometimes hyper focus on a small, less refined area that could appear as a gap in the work and get stuck there. However, if I allow myself to become immersed in the work I am doing, then my intuition knows when I have finished a work. Despite my pursuit of perfection, I still somehow allow myself to mindfully experience the unfolding of the creative process. My emotions around my work crossed the spectrum: these were times of calm and enjoyment in the creative process, and other times when I could not even upload the work due to the crippling anxiety.

With my work accessible to unspecified millions of people on the Internet, all with different ideas, the audience can play a part by sharing feedback around how they understand my artwork. There are numerous sites and social networks on the Internet, and each naturally varies in their user experience and purpose, providing vast potential for me to find my online audience. In the public realm of social media there are ever-changing trends and approaches to sharing one's art, and I feel a sense of anxiety that the concepts and medium of my work do not meet the expectations. Much of the time I spend producing paintings is filled with apprehensions that the work will be devalued or negatively received by others. Still, I push through the anxiety to reposition my art in a digital public sphere that is not limited to time nor geography. My work is open to an unknown, undetermined audience. This thought provokes my sensitivities to other people's reactions, and can have me checking my cell

phone for comments and responses. Once an artwork has been shared online I relinquish my control over it, and it takes on a life of its own beyond me and my studio space.

In contrast, the feelings of displaying work in a gallery are quite different. The immediate response and feedback generates greater synergy and the potential of moving on to further developed creative projects. Although the feedback received within the gallery setting can shape my future creative directions, it can potentially cause confusion around the processes and progress of the project. Interactions within a gallery exhibition can be experienced by the artist as vulnerable due to their face-to-face nature, yet those who comment on work in person in the gallery are held responsible for these comments since they are not part of an unspecified majority. As this setting is direct and not anonymous, feedback can be gathered from the audience's body language, such as through their gestures and the amount of time they spend in front of a work; layered information that cannot be received through digital media, although digital media offers other forms of feedback.

The online public platforms I have made use of in the sharing and layering of my artwork and otherwise invisible processes are Instagram, YouTube and a personal website. This is what I call the third form of my artwork, existing in the public place with greatly expanded boundaries. Motives for placing artwork on social media vary, from, for example, a desire to share a product or a concept with others, to a drive for achieving profit and fame. To better understand the artistic actions and work generated in public and private spaces, I had to immerse myself in practice and started sharing my own creative practice on social networks to experience and study online interpersonal frameworks and the artist/public relationship. By sharing my work on social networks, I actively react to the invisible layers both within and outside of myself, and then project this back out. When uploading and sharing images or videos online, I make a judgment as to whether I edit the content or not. I realised that my intention in producing work can change when I move from my private space to a digital platform because as I become more aware of the viewer and the sense of being viewed, I shift from a private to public state of self-awareness. So, although my intention was to show my 'real life' context and process behind my art making (Hou 2018), the realization was that I found I needed to curate to my own space (Legewie & Nassauer 2018).

My increased awareness of my own feelings reminds me of Bystrom and Nuttall's (2013: 307, 308) statement that artists and "culture-makers" increasingly use "personal offerings of the self and private experience in the public realm". The articulated expression of private subjectivity and emotion adds to the layers of sharing between private and public.

4.2.3 In between here and there

This theme relates predominantly to the sense of liminality generated in my experience between countries, between private and public realms and also as an artist engaged with PLR. Although I have introduced a series of artworks titled 'Between Here and There', I now discuss my experience as an immigrant, starting with an excerpt from my journals.

> "I am neither here nor there…Feelings of both joy and pain in my memories bring up some conflicting emotions. When I find myself in a parking lot on a rainy afternoon, breathing in the rich blended scent of smoke and rain water(, it) transports me back to where I used to live. Now I am here in Hillcrest, South Africa, while my memories and feelings are in my past home of Seoul. I sometimes find myself here searching for this Korea I know so well, gripped by this memory and emotion that I don't always fully understand. But I don't deny where I am now- this is my second hometown. However, my feelings and emotions still live in Korea, in Seoul" (Seo, 16 October 2019).

Hillcrest, where I live I currently live, is eighteen hours away from South Korea by plane. It is a peaceful and natural region abundant in hills, grasslands, green trees and birdsong. I love these things and yet still somehow miss the complex, crowded streets of Seoul, the sprawling stores, cityscape, nightlife, and the sounds of countless people's stories and footsteps.

> "I don't always understand how or why I look back to these elements that feel so separate from nature. Still, this is what I miss about my first home city, even though moving to South Africa has given me the opportunity to appreciate living in nature. Why on earth is this? Would returning to Seoul make me forget everything I love about living in Hillcrest? So I went to Seoul. The emotions and sensations that I experienced there, where I lived for decades, have changed. While in Seoul I found myself missing South Africa. Perhaps it is myself who has changed" (Seo, 16 October 2019).

This journal entry expresses the conflicting and contradicting feelings and thoughts within me as an immigrant. Whereas I first perceived the two countries, and my emotions and memories associated with each place as separate, I now perceive them as overlapping and interwoven. Where I saw the boundaries between the two as walls, I have come to see that they are more like a fence. These locations and experiences cannot be strictly compartmentalized. Although I initially perceived South Africa and South Korea as a duality, I have come to appreciate and recognize the overlapping and entangled multiplicity not only between the two countries but within each one. I seem to peer through and occasionally slip through the metaphoric membrane between them. The membrane of experience encircling and enclosing me is semipermeable.

> "In cells the membrane serves to regulate what enters and leaves the cell (Nath 2005: 438). This active, breathable membrane does not form a solid barrier between the interior and exterior of the cell, but rather allows communication and exchange between either side. On the wall of memory, we make it possible for the feelings and emotions of our past and present life to communicate. This metaphorical wall of memory is so thin that it can be penetrated and we can move from one side to the other. It is like a very thin sheet of oil (tracing) paper or a veil" (Seo, 16 October 2019).

It was these thoughts and "feelings of here and there" that led me to use silk as an artistic medium for my work as it simultaneously embodies the memory of the place and the place itself. My artmaking and writing have always been a way of unravelling and resolving my thoughts and feelings (Seo, 16 October 2019). The subtle ivory colour of silk evokes memories for me and the capacity to layer silk images is almost like double exposure photography, speaking to the feeling of being in two places at once. The process of painting provides an emotional link and sense of connection to moments of pain or joy that are embodied in each screen. It is my hope that these paintings transcend beyond the barriers of time, space, place and memory and that the viewers of my paintings can feel this (Seo, 16 October 2019).

Experiences of liminality can provoke anxiety, and I encounter this in my creative process too. At times I find myself lost in thought or overwhelmed by too many options. Sometimes I feel stuck in between the multitude of theories and options, not knowing what path to choose

or action in my work. Sometimes holding a brush and painting even the smallest marks feels like a strange and unfamiliar act. In the early stages of the creative process my thoughts can cause me to leap ahead in the work, sometimes losing sight of the overall painting and over focusing on a small area before the big picture has emerged. Sometimes it feels safer to focus on the known and the small details than feel overwhelmed by the big picture and the enormity of options and possibilities. I often fall into the unknown world of feeling my work in transit, a liminal zone of the art-making process. Focussing on details sometimes serves as an intermediate step, but when I see the big picture and gain a sense of direction then I move forward with a sense of relief. (Seo, 31 March 2020). This relates to the sometimes inactive, sometimes active stages of movement through rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960: 3). These are the 'merging and overlapping stages' and processes of my artmaking, represented by layers of silk veils (Van Gennep 1960: 3).

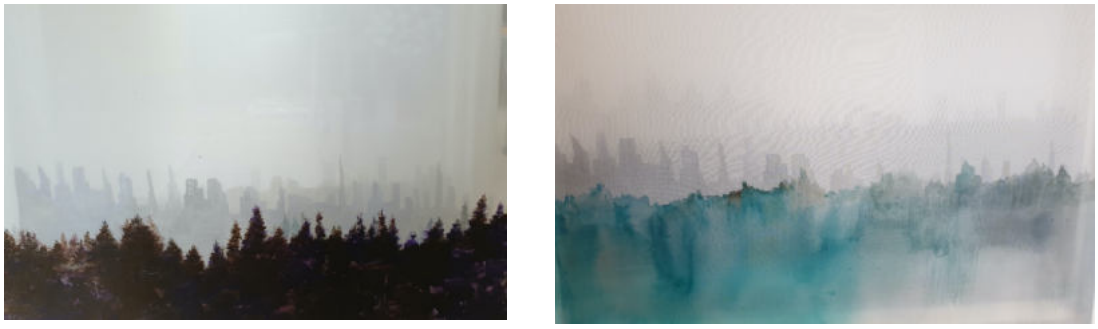

Figure 25. Two close up views of *Same and different places*, 2020. Acrylic on silk.

Same and different places (Figure 25) is composed of four frames overlaying silk paintings of mountains and cities. Each painting represents a location that is personally significant to me, and I aimed to create a multi-layered image that visually expresses the experience of 'the middle area' as I move between built-up city and forested suburb.

There is always a difference in how I anticipate an idea and how it finally comes to fruition in my artwork. As I try to express the changing nature of my residence on the silk layers, the forest and mountains represent 'here', my new home in Hillcrest, South Africa, while the foggy city in the background is 'there', where I used to live in Seoul.

In this work I specifically used untreated silk so that the pigment would stain right through the silk, “flow over and through” (Tuckman & Janas 1995: 6) the fabric fibres, and be able to be equally seen from both sides. So ultimately, when all the layers are suspended together, it depends on the side it is viewed from, as to whether the viewer is looking through layers from Hillcrest to Seoul or vice versa.

Figure 26. Four layers of *Same and different places*, 2020. Acrylic on silk.

The result of layering the silk is a more muted and indirect visual experience and also creates a calming atmosphere that makes me think of hills covered by morning fog (Seo, 1 October 2019), like the misty months in Hillcrest.

This piece also captures the moments when my identity in private and public places is uncertain and also reflects PLR. My experience of artmaking sometimes reminds me of a childhood experience I had with my brother in rural South Korea. We were walking through the darkness on a country road at dusk, the smoky grey sky washing over us. Familiar with the bright lights of Seoul, we were not used to these unlit rural roads. As we made our way back home from playing outside with the local children, we found our eyes could gradually adapt to the darkness to identify the stone alley and surrounding houses and landmarks to find our way home. Like learning to trust our eyes as they slowly adjusted to the dim lighting, so I have learned to give in to my artistic intuition, which gradually takes over and guides me through the unknown.

When I work in the studio, I sometimes lose my way through various thoughts, which results in my practice leading me into the unknown. This sometimes feels like I am “blazing a trail”

to new territory (Turner 1966: 15). At times, I find myself moving in the wrong direction but by linking theory and practice, I find that I regain a clearer sense of direction. This has been a beneficial aspect of applying, transforming, and integrating new practice methods (Sullivan 2004: 151). Barrett speaks of PLR as a tool for advancing knowledge (Barrett in Barrett & Bolt 2010: 163), in other words, leading a researcher into new territory or the unknown and bringing new insights.

This concept of territory and movement links to my practice. *Same and different places* represents my experience of immigration and my journey through liminal spaces between here and there in a similar way that Suh's *Seoul Home,* a light and moveable structure, communicates his position as a person living in a foreign country and moving between homes. His use of sheer fabric, used for its' light and portable qualities, support my own choice of silk to depict my status as a Korean in South Africa and allude to the sense of liminality that immigration generates. The way Suh suspends his work and allows the fabric to move also speaks to a sense of impermanence and transition experienced by an immigrant, and inspired my use of suspended screens.

In both Suh's installation and my own practice, the supporting frameworks of the artworks imply boundaries or borders, but in contrast the transparent silk fabric contributes a sense of lightness and transparency that suggests that the works are moveable or even permeable. However, there are still limits to this mobility. The sense of being decontextualized and recontextualized in physical space and in understanding the overlapping nature of the realities is depicted in the overlapping layers of my art work (Carter in Barrett & Bolt 2010: 15). As mentioned previously, I have attempted to express the possibility of transitioning through the invisible layers between here and there, through the iconography of birds which have taken on symbolic meaning in my work.

Birds are able to fly around with almost boundless freedom. The 'walls' of their realm are not clear, but they know where to go and fly with internalised directions. When birds migrate, their aim is to fly for as long as necessary to find new grounds and adapt. They are still physically present in the here and now, but it is as if they know that they must leave soon and

arrive at "there". The birds I choose to paint, sourced from the internet, are not necessarily species familiar with the regions I live in, as they are chosen for reasons of visual and personal appeal. As such they may seem displaced, but this adds to the layered meaning of my work. Awareness of my own sense of decontextualization and recontextualization (Carter in Barrett & Bolt 2010: 15) of being an immigrant enabled me to find different ways to interpret, negotiate and accept the liminality of my immigration status.

a b

Figure 27. *Between here and there* series, 2019, Depicting looking out and looking in
a. Bird looking out Acrylic on organza fabric, 18 x 24 cm
b. Bird looking in Watercolour on Silk and Paper, 24 x 30cm

The various birds painted in the *Between here and there* series also depict my experience of "looking in" and "looking out" (Haseman in Barrett & Bolt 2010: 153), not only relating to PLR, but for me more specifically, as an immigrant in transition between here and there. Figure 27 depicts one bird that has flow 'out' from images of Seoul, and one that looks 'in' towards images of Hillcrest. This represents my sense of being between 'here and there'.

As I have moved between cities and countries, through different time zones and spaces, and private and public spheres, I've always felt as though I remained the same while the situation and context around me changed. In these situations of change, I find myself wanting to hold onto an invisible framework that maintains some form of constant stability. Is it human nature that drives me to pursue a consistently stable life? Or is this drive anxiety that locks me back behind a fence of safety? At times when I sense that it is right for me to move forward, I

experience conflicting feelings about letting go in order to take the necessary steps. I feel guilty to leave behind my home, even though it means the hope of finding a new site, the potential of moving to an unknown space. My position requires me to settle down and make a new home, and settle from the physical and mental upheaval. The migratory bird is me, physically and psychologically. Physically and mentally I find myself longing for my past home. Stenner (2017: 25) speaks of a 'turning point' between one side or space and the other, and I experience this both inwardly and outwardly, emotionally and physically.

The birds in Figure 27 **a** and **b**, temporarily resting on the picture frames, or thresholds, prepare to fly into the sky without spatial restrictions. Airports are thresholds from which humans literally 'take off' from the earth in flight and are a regular part of my experience living between countries. This is why Sprigg's work depicting transparent/ scanned luggage resonates with me and is so significant to me.

My layered paintings operate like the layers of culture, belief, education, and even local atmosphere that overlap and communicate with each other, both within individuals and in the external environment around them. These layers influence and determine how individuals interact with one another and society. These layers are not static, and with this comes a change in thought, in psychology, and in behaviour. Leaving your home and moving to a new country heightens that change and difference.

When I first moved to South Africa I didn't want to stand out in public in any way. I was so worried about doing something 'strange' that I felt I needed to correct my normal behaviour. I wanted to hide the feeling of being the only Asian in the place. I wanted my behaviour to become assimilated enough to fit in because my skin colour and language stand out so much. Similarly, when in Korea, there are certain 'codes of conduct' that I really did not want to stick to, but I also did not want to behave differently to everyone. I walked fast, swiftly got in and out of the car, urged my children to board and leave quickly when we took the bus, and I constantly kept them from running around and playing loudly to prevent noise traveling

between the floors of apartments. I did not want to constantly police our behaviour like this, but I felt I had to (Seo, 28 January 2020).

I often feel that my usual appearance and behaviour is quite low-key and understated, so it can be quite a surprise to catch myself behaving differently. It was when I arrived back home in South Africa after a three-week vacation in Korea that I felt compelled to write about what I experienced and reflected on being between my two homes (Seo, 28 January 2020).

> "South Africans in general seem to be comfortable and warm with others in public and I often witness and experience friendly, helpful people here. On the other hand, although I've become accustomed to this more open behaviour, I still find myself behaving coldly in Seoul as I learnt growing up. Passing through crowds of people, I realised that I act differently depending on which country I am in. Why (and how) do I move between these different modes of behaviour and appearance?" (Seo, 28 January 2020)

When we moved to Durban I maintained the Korean etiquette I was accustomed to, and being approached by others was a strange experience. It is especially alarming to share a small elevator with a group of strangers with very different personal boundaries. When that happens, I try to just smile and enjoy the ride. On the other hand, in Seoul people quietly get on the elevator, a public space quickly dial the floor number, and then there is an awkward silence. Everyone focusses their eyes on different spots in the elevator, as though the people there have silently vowed to avoid eye contact, or they all fiddle with their cell phones. I did the same thing. It looked natural for some reason as everyone seems to do the same thing in unison (Seo, 28 January 2020).

I experience similar social situations all around the world, but how I behave in those situations differs according to the social customs and etiquettes of different countries and cultures. I felt especially conscious of the behaviour I saw in my surroundings and imitated them to fit in (Seo, 28 January 2020).

I have become aware of theories of the social imaginary and dwelling through my PLR. The social imaginary relates to how people see themselves fitting with their larger society, how they maintain and meet expectations of their social existences, and the beliefs that underpin these expectations (Griffiths & Prozesky 2010: 30); I live with the invisible framework of social imagination in South Africa as a Korean. Leaving South Korea and attempting to assimilate into a South African society has been a challenge for me, and this move required that I reorganise my social imagination to manage the struggles of the process. The overlaying of new cultural and social expectations within me, possibly more than the change in geographical location, is part of the significant impact that immigrating has had on my life (Griffiths & Prozisky 2010: 30). This has led to changes in my personality and a readjustment of my identity as I grow accustomed to the different social layers present in South Africa. I have found a sense of harmony and meaning in understanding the liminality within me.

Figure 28. *Between Seoul and Hillcrest,* 2020, Acrylic on Silk, 18 x 24cm, Depicting final piece on left and separate layers right.

Between Seoul and Hillcrest (Figure 28) recreates the spatial situation of existing in both Seoul and Hillcrest on the scale of a small photo album. Small albums used to be how photographic visual memories were stored for ease of access and travel before the digital era. This piece references the idea of holding onto memories that overlap in layers. In this particular piece depicting memory between two spaces, I have introduced a vivid green representing the natural surrounds of Hillcrest. Again, it is overlayed by a greyscale painting of Seoul and overlapped together they express one double exposure image. Turner speaks of the 'betwixt and between' spaces, framing them as situations in which cultural changes take

place, and new structures such as time and space are created in the 'liminal moment' (Turner 1969: 95).

Figure 29. *Inside and outside*, 2020. Watercolour on silk. 24 x 30cm. Silk screen damaged by Vervet monkeys.

Sometimes the boundaries or veiled membranes between places are disrupted or violated. *Inside and outside* (Figure 29), damaged by Vervet monkeys that came into my studio, is evidence of the breaking of the boundary between inside and outside. By simply leaving the windows open, I experienced something that I never could have in Seoul. I considered this accident a symbol of encroachment by life from the outer world into the private sphere of my art studio. Through this interference, a transgression of boundaries that resulted in my clean painted silk screen being dirtied and torn, I realised that it is easier for the outside to move through the border to the inside than I originally believed. This incident relating to my personal and private art making practice served as a visual reminder and another symbol, embodied in the fragile treated silk, of the permeable nature of boundaries between private and public spheres, and my psychological experience of liminality between Seoul and Hillcrest.

Similar to the liminality between here and there are the liminal phases that everybody lives through; merging stages or overlapping processes of life (Bhabha 1994: 2). We experience adolescence between being children and adults; during the months of pregnancy the woman is

neither a mother nor ‘not a mother’; before marriage we go through the transitional phase of betrothal or engagement. We experience this middle space, the transitional leap between the steps (Stenner 2017). This space between beginning and end of a stage is a significant experience and it opens up the possibility of a shift to another phase and transformation (Seo, 31 March 2020). My experiences of childhood often influence my approach to artmaking and inspired the exploration of the concept of playscapes.

4.2.4 Playscape (play + landscape)

In this section I explore my concept of ‘playscapes’ inspired by my experience at the CVA Staff and Student’s Works in Progress Exhibition at the KZNSA Gallery in 2019. The word “playscape” combines ‘play’ and ‘landscape’ and is typically used to refer to natural playgrounds and adventure parks or constructions designed for public enjoyment. In my creative practice I have started using the term to describe my approach to setting up and reconstructing my layered silk landscape paintings within an exhibition space. The 2019 exhibition, with the theme and title ‘Instæruption’, served as my own initial playground for the conception of this playscape idea and my pieces in this exhibition later became a focal point for me to develop the combination of play and landscape.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, play and role-play were an important part of my childhood experience and represent a liminal exploration of role and identity. In my attempt to rediscover the original joy and pleasure of pursuing this research. I returned again to the concept of play. Children’s play areas can be seen as playscapes of liminality, where young children enter the play space and experience another sphere where they learn the regulations of the larger world. Perhaps my experiences and lessons of childhood moved into the public sphere as I became an adult (Thomassen 2014: 143).

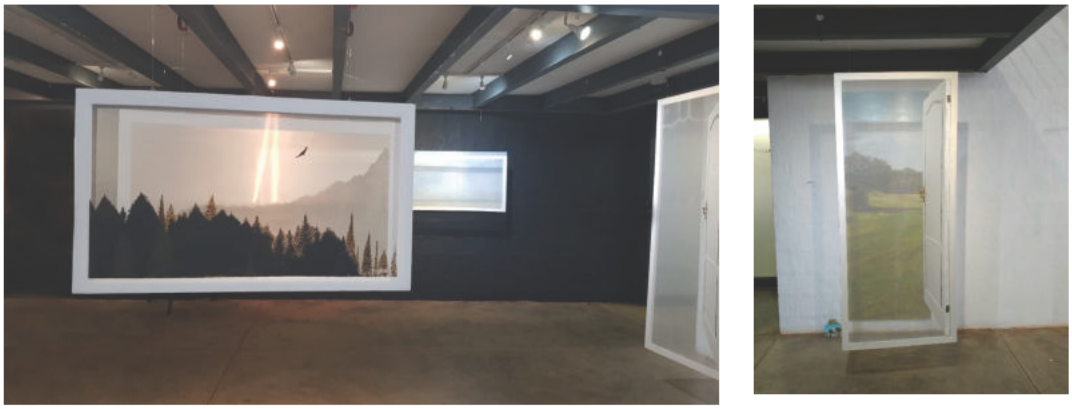

Figure 30. Installation views at KZNSA Gallery showing *Can you see that?*2019, *In front of the window* 2019 and *Landscap e and Door 2019*

'Instæruption' is itself a play on two words: 'installation' and 'interruption'. The exhibition provided an opportunity to explore the installation of several of my larger artworks in the space provided (figure 30). It also functioned as a conduit for showing what occurs when I share my work in a public space, specifically revealing how the public engaged with my work.

I had begun working on larger pieces of artwork that replicated a life-sized window and door superimposed over landscape scenes. The initial concept of these works was to further explore thresholds and boundaries between private and public. *Landscape and Door* (Figure 31) and *In front of the window* (Figure 32) are made up of two layers: a background landscape in vivid colours on traditional canvas, and the foreground image painted on organza. Both are painted in oils. I had painted in oils in my undergraduate years and these life-sized pieces were part of my continued experimentation with materials and the mixing and layering of new combinations.

Figure 31. *Landscape and Door,* 2019. Acrylic, glue and oil on canvas. 225 x 78 cm.

In *Landscape and Door* (Figure 31), the life-sized door depicting a threshold also acts as a conduit for opening and closing to experiences on either side (Jacobs 2018: 9). It expresses shutting off and opening up from the private sphere to the public sphere beyond the threshold. Symbolically, the door makes it possible to open the boundary to the field from the space on this side of the door. This narrative is depicted by a simple open white door and a calm landscape paradise accessible just beyond it. However, this landscape is just an illusion, and although the image is of an open door, simultaneously the fabric membrane veils it from me. Standing in the real world, I want to move into this idealised landscape, but it is part of my invisible inner imaginary world. This paradox reminds me of the ambiguity Turner speaks of in the 'betwixt and between' spaces (Turner 1969: 95).

Figure 32. *In front of the window*, 2019. Acrylic, glue and oil paint on canvas. 73 x 301 cm.

a. Installation view at KZNSA Gallery. **b.** Close up view of detail on front layer

In *In front of the window* (Figure 32), the alignment of scenery in the background and the window frame that indicates the boundary of the house, replicates what is experienced when we gaze out of a window from indoors. I wanted to make the interior/organza painting, which includes a still life with a vase of flowers and a teacup on a book feel as if it were there in real life and create a visual illusion, like a trompe l'oeil. A trompe l'oeil is an artwork created to trick the eye into perceiving the image as a three-dimensional reality and are often painted on a life-sized scale (Griffith 2015).

This is a form of creative play in my practice and links to imagination and the games I used to play as child. For example, I used fantasy-play being an adult and learnt through imagination, emotion, and observation, creating positive memories along the way. Emotions and experiences with fun or positive associations can be reinforced in our memories for a long time and develop our potential for deeper positive growth without us even being aware of it. Through this series of work I discovered deeper understandings of play and dimensional thinking; it was a process that strengthened my PLR, which encourages the intersection of practice, play and theory (Sullivan 2004: 152). By displaying my large pieces at a public gallery, I was later able to flexibly transform my thinking from a two-dimensional page to envisioning a three-dimensional space. It was also an opportunity for me to learn more about working with silk materials, to understand the relationship between painting, surroundings and space, and to think about the possibility of exhibition and scenery working as a stage set.

I could then approach my work with the intention of generating active participation between painting and audience, enabling the audience to observe each painting from various positions and perspectives. My paintings of landscapes not only express an image that holds the potential to become a playscape, but the paintings as objects themselves become playscapes when they are displayed in 3-D space, suspended from the ceiling of the gallery, or even just allowing space for the audience to move through between the layers of my work. Embracing the concept of playscape in the creative process removed the constraints of simply installing my work flat against a wall, and I was able to draw on the freedom found in the liminal space between work and play.

Watching the audience engage with my work, or 'play' and get photographs taken between the layers, was extremely insightful. The act of childhood play can be a physical engagement with surroundings and environment, encouraging active outward expression of processing and feeling. A flat landscape painting, or painting of any genre, does not manifest such external physical engagement or expression of processing the work; rather the experiencing of a painting typically calls for an internal and personal process of understanding. Combining concepts of play with how I construct and install my paintings can transform my audience's experience from passive appreciation to active participation.

The sense of play within a space was reinforced in my thinking about Siwani's performance, (Samson 2018). Her movement through space and climbing on and off the scaffolding with her veiled legs invited me to think more about my use of space and my layered silk artwork as installation pieces within a space that can provide a "playscape" for the audience.

Play was present at the beginning and the end of each day of my childhood. The level of immersion and joy in play was beyond description. It could lead me into another unknown world, evoking long-forgotten experiences in the subliminal of my childhood (Jung 2011: 74). I think the process of making and developing my work is also a type of play. Now that I'm an adult, though, I feel I can't be playful about work when it is a task that I have to do. However,

the moment my work becomes ‘work’, when it becomes a task, it is no longer a pleasure to do. As joy is important to experience, I wanted my audience to be able to enjoy my work when it is hung in a gallery at the end of this PLR.

Figure 33. *Modified screen,* 2020. Acrylic and watercolour on silk. 69.3 x 60.5 x 10 cm

Once I had begun consciously engaging with the idea of play, I could also playfully explore some other creative concepts linking to themes within my work. *Modified Screen* (Figure 33) is what I call a picture sculpture, created by transforming my usual rectangular wooden stretcher frame into something else. I added a stand to a frame with dimensions referencing an actual computer monitor, and stretched silk over this structure. I then painted a realistic image of an apple within the centre of the silk screen, as a playful reproduction of my iMac which I use in my private studio. Although it is not a physically layered artwork, it links to the layering and sharing of images in the form of photographs and videos in digital form on social media through technology. Recording the process of work is important as the focus of my scope of research is based in this, and the challenges, solutions and thoughts that arise from the process would feed into the research (Gray & Malins 2004: 60).

Playscapes began me thinking more three-dimensionally, playfully and with greater interest in audience participation. My participation in the KZNSA Instæruption exhibition was a great catalyst in this process. Another exhibition that provided an opportunity for learning was the CVA online postgraduate Works in Progress exhibition.

4.2.5 A perspective on 'Lockdown Works in Progress: Virtual Edition'

In late 2019 the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a global health crisis, affecting every continent except Antarctica. To curb the spread of the virus most countries imposed strict lockdowns and social distancing regulations. During South Africa's on-going lockdown many students at the Centre for Visual Arts (CVA) felt isolated and disconnected from our creative community. 'Lockdown Works in Progress: Virtual Edition' was our digital response to these difficulties we were experiencing, and our goals were to showcase the diverse creative productions of 10 postgraduate CVA students, foster connection, and encourage conversation.

As the editor of our virtual exhibition video I had the opportunity to experience and learn from the process from a novel perspective, even though I was using Adobe Premier Pro video editing software which I had used to use as a designer. I found that the role of editor came very naturally to me and I could lean intuitively into my task of showcasing distinct yet united creative practices. The input process involved collecting each artist's video clips by email, and as I did this, I was able to view each artist's private studio space through a layer of digital media. I collated these work videos, including my own videos of processes I usually did in private (stretching silk canvasses and painting on silk), and edited them in my private studio into one video that was then uploaded to YouTube. At this point the process became one of output through digital media layers that were open up to the public. Although each artist was focused on their own creative practices in the CVA in both semi-public and semi-private workspaces, this layer of digital collaboration developed and connected each creative practice in the artists' private spaces through the processes of input and output when shared on digital public spaces.

This exhibition of virtual space demonstrated possibilities for our regular group exhibitions within the context of lockdown and social distancing. This approach allowed us as artists to communicate and display our work in new and innovative ways, as well as open up more channels of communication and engagement from our audiences. Another aim of the virtual exhibition was to simultaneously show the art-making processes in which the artists were engaged, bringing about a deeper understanding of and communication with the unfinished works.

Our lockdown period was implemented with very short notice, and, as a result, I didn't have much time to prepare for it and the new editing project that was in the pipeline for the virtual exhibition. My first goals were to learn about the different concepts behind each artist's work and research some strategies to showcase such diverse art in video format.

The editing process created its own momentum. Each time I rendered a new edit the results offered so much guiding feedback that it wasn't necessary to pre-plan the whole project before launching. Too much thinking can delay work and I sometimes overthink the process and way forward, to the point of feeling helpless where I don't want to do anything. Planning is indeed important, but it is usually only once a project is in action that we see there is a clear way forward to reach the goal.

Under 'normal' circumstances these works would be displayed together in a physical gallery. With experience of the CVA and its gallery layout, it would be possible to visualise how and where each artist's works would be set up in the physical space. Each individual's work rises to the occasion and contributes to the conversation of the exhibition by visually communicating with the other works on show. A physical exhibition has the advantage of being able to view artworks as a whole.

On the other hand, virtual video exhibitions allow for a single editor or group of editors to create a video or other digital content that displays the entire exhibition to an audience of unlimited numbers. Although, with video, these works can only be viewed sequentially, in the

order in which they have been included in the video. A good grasp of simple video editing software or even more complex programs is necessary. A limitation of video exhibitions is recreating the opportunity for live conversation and interaction with the work. Comments, direct messages, and e-mails certainly do facilitate the creative conversation, but the power of face-to-face connection at an exhibition should not be overlooked or unnecessarily replaced. While there are numerous exciting and challenging aspects of showcasing art on digital platforms, including creating a virtual space online that serves as a 360degree virtual tour, our virtual exhibition video was born from a simple idea and some key questions. How can we, as a group of artists, share our current works with the public during the lockdown period? How do we tie our practices together in a piece of digital media that showcases our work effectively? And how do we execute this in a short period of time? 'Lockdown Works in Progress: Virtual Edition' was our first of many possible answers to this question.

This experience provided me an opportunity to develop my editing skills and to reinforce my PLR investigation of art and social media, private and public spheres and the overlap between them. I was also in the process of producing large scale final works that would serve as a culmination of my research for my own exhibition.

4.2.6 Merging, meshing and intersecting moments

This section looks at the final works I did in my PLR as culminating, merging, meshing and intersecting ideas and processes within my research before the staging of my final exhibition. These are large scale reiterations or reconfigurations of previous works, generating yet another layer in my work.

Figure 34. *Seoul and Hillcrest,* 2020. Acrylic on silk. 60.7 x 120.7 cm. Installation view in Jack Heath Gallery above images of separate layers.

Seoul and Hillcrest (Figure 34) is a larger-scale execution of concepts explored in the *In between here and there* series, with views of Korea and Hillcrest, and re-incorporates the use of multiple transparent layers. Unlike previous works that referenced images found online, these painted layers reference images of the actual areas of Seoul and Hillcrest in which I live/d, representing places in my memories and embodying them in real silk, not organza. The greyscale tones represent old pictures to symbolise the intersection of past, present and future

places. The tonal values of black and white were rendered by referencing a value chart I had made in my visual journal, which is based on a method for dyeing with black-and-white, done by adjusting the saturation of black (Tuckman & Janas 1995: 49). This method of painting allows for creating a sense of visual distance (atmospheric perspective) through the use of varied tonal values and by contrasting areas of clarity (painting onto dry silk) with blurred areas (painting onto wet silk).I used untreated raw silk to allow the dyes to soak right through the fabric fibres to reinforce my concepts of flowing 'over' and 'through' and liminality between places.

Figure 35. *Stop and move*, 2020. Watercolour on silk, 112.1 x 162.2 cm. Installation view through layers on left and separate layers on right.

Stop and move (Figure 35), was painted with the same materials and processes as *Seoul and Hillcrest* (figure 34), apart from the introduction of a brownish black. I felt this colour was needed to create a sense of warmth in depicting the chair from my private art studio. This chair, used for painting or researching in my studio, is a place where I can be still and mull over my thoughts. Like my original prototype, *Between Here and There* (figure 22), *Stop and move* has three layers. The inanimate chair replaces the bird in first layer of the original. The chair overlaps layers depicting a Seoul road and a Hillcrest landscape. *Stop and move* is about movement and stillness within public and private spaces and also refers to the active and inactive phases of movement through rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960: 3). My studio chair represents the seemingly inactive phases of movement through rites of passage while, in

contrast, the background painting of a road in a South Korean city, where people have to move constantly without stopping in place, represents movement through a place or space. The stillness of the chair is disquieted with the presence of the road, while the movement of the road is punctuated by the pause of the chair. The landscape on the back layer again depicts a quiet, although now outdoor/public, space.

Figure 36. *From here to there***,** 2020. Acrylic on organza 162.2x224.2cm

The last artwork I created in this research process is *From here to there* (Figure 36). It depicts the same narrow Seoul alleyway and cityscape that I originally used in two separate layers in the *Here and There* prototype (figure 22), but now compresses them together onto one merged layer of meshed memories and experience. I created it in two parts, side by side like a diptych, for the purpose of transportability as it is the largest piece I made. Together the frames unintentionally also look like a glass door or window which symbolize thresholds. This piece became key in understanding the, sometimes unintentional, ways in which I have

drawn on PLR. PLR allowed for studio-based production to serve as an active research tool and method, and my practice further expanded my perception of the spaces I looked at (Barrett & Bolt 2010: 186). *From here to there* represents the intersections of private and public, imagined and real, acting as a virtual private space that allows me to visit Seoul while living in Hillcrest. The painted image on the surface could be seen as a barrier on the silk screen, but in fact, it acts like an interpreter, or semi-permeable membrane, communicating between the "here and there" on either side of the screen. The silk screen embodies the liminality of the middle space, that space of the transforming pupa, and compresses memories into the one moment of the now.

Figure 37. Process of projecting image onto silk screen, 2020. 224.2 x 324.4 cm.

As part of my private studio process with this and other paintings, I projected images onto my empty screens (Figure 37). Like the pupa in metamorphosis, this process only takes place once the once the silk had been stretched and made ready and in my darkened garage. Within this liminal space of transition and transformation, the images and light from the projection appear on the silk screens, but also pass through the silk layer onto the wall as well, creating a double image. The images from the computer are transformed through the light of the projector, manifesting, like an emerging moth, as entirely new images in layers of light and

space that communicate and interact with each other, like the moth's twin wings. It is also interesting to note that when I am painting these project images onto the silk I have to stand between the projector and the stretched silk canvases. In doing so, the images are projected images onto me and cast my shadow onto the silk and wall beyond. I become somehow merged with the images and submerged into the space between projector and screen, the image and the artwork, the concept and the process. The communication of my concept initially revolves around the silk layers I paint in my private studio space. Through reflecting on my process, however, I can see that the content, whether video or image, not only literally projects beyond these silk layers but metaphorically also extends beyond the walls of my studio and into public places crowded with Koreans, South Africans and other people via social media. This process and discovery later inspired the layering and projecting of my work and processes in my final exhibition, as well as the creation of 'private' and 'open' spaces within it.

4.3 The Exhibition: Process, preparation and reflection

Having explored my creative practice and PLR, I arrived at the point of synthesis of the project in the form of the curation of my final exhibition. In this section I explain the critical reflection and 'dimensional thinking' that provide a scaffolding for the curation process. I then discuss and illustrate my exhibition "The invisible wall between private and public places: an artistic exploration of liminality".

4.3.1 Critical Reflection: Dimensional Thinking

The curating of my work in real and virtual public spaces increased my awareness of the layered complexity of my practice. Enriched by my learnings about curation from my experience at the KZNSA and in editing the online Lockdown virtual exhibition, I began focussing more specifically on the curation of the final exhibition for my PLR submission. The concept of dimensional thinking had been a growing part of my practice with the interface between two dimensionality and 3-D space. Three dimensional scenes and objects become 2-D images through the process of being photographed. After being uploaded online by the photographer, these photographs they are downloaded and re-interpreted by me in paint

on my canvasses, still in 2-D form. By layering these painted screens in real space, the images again take on a form of three dimensionality, expanding my dimensional thinking and causing me to consider my work in multiple dimensions at once. (Root-Bernstein, Robert & Michèle 1991: 238, 241). My own expression of 3-D space, or 2-D thinking in 3-D space, can now be interpreted quite differently than before.

Through reflecting on and considering how we appreciate and take in artworks I have realised that I seek to go beyond simply displaying my painted images on the walls for visitors to view. I consider not only the 2-D space of the canvases, but also how they will be placed in a variety of 3-D spaces. This interaction between 2-D and 3-D space generates communication between imagery, frames, and the environment. Furthermore, the considered alignment and distance between frames and positioning of images lends itself to leading the viewer through a story. Standing alone, the imagery in my layered paintings expresses my thoughts and experiences, but cannot fully communicate the immensity of my concept of invisible layers. Like archaeologists who study the age and history of real life by looking at footprints or fossils in the ground and doctors who analyse the inside of a person with an MRI scan (Root-Bernstein, R. & Root-Bernstein, M. 1999: 241), these approaches to dimensioned thinking gave me the power to reinterpret real-world creativity and to further push my ideas. Spriggs demonstrates this as his work excavates the many layers that are present through past and present human existence. Spriggs sought to convey the essential meaning of these phenomena through the composition of small fragments of material brought together in transparent layers. This conceptual excavation furthered my interpretations of invisible layers, as I considered the many nuances not visible along the spectrum between the layers. I questioned the boundaries and layers between the private and public areas as raised by Iveković. This liminal area can be uncomfortable at times and has raised questions about my social behaviour in private and public spaces. Siwani' s performance piece, exploring the liminal sense of identity, and Suh's installation expressing his experience of immigration are also expressions of dimensional thinking that have contributed to my own.

The shift in thinking dimensionally is supported by the fact that I can use digital platforms to expand the development process and display of my work. My work itself has come to exist by

virtue of many digital platforms and then it also exists in varied digital forms and platforms. Awareness of both digital space and real life has led me to be conscious of dimensional shifts in my creative practice, and to evaluate and re-examine perspective and dimensions in my work.

Part of my practice, sketching in a journal, Figure 38, also enabled me to visually explore the layering of frames and dimensional thinking (Sullivan 2004: 180). These discoveries, made through practice, led to the development of the theoretical framework of this research. These discoveries within PLR link to the concept of childhood play and my desire to approach this research with that same sense of adventure and joy Thomassen 2014: 143).

Figure 38. Sketches in journal considering layering frames, 2019.

Another dimension of the work is added by introducing a viewing audience. When an audience enters my exhibition space, they also bring with them their own experiences and internalised invisible layers. As a result, their first encounter with my work will be through their own stories and lenses. Every individual has a unique combination of upbringing, society, environment and experiences. These elements become embodied through our memories, layered and invisible; these memories can be set off or triggered when encountering a particular event or moment.

My intention in my final exhibition of works for this PLR, becomes about creating a space where the audience can feel and experience their own layers alongside and through my paintings. The installation of canvases and silk screens will be arranged in such a way that some paintings will be 'open' enough to allow the audience to pass by or through, while others will be more closely positioned to hinder the movement of visitors. As a visitor, you would sense some sort of 'progress' through an environment by passing through an almost maze-like arrangement of paintings.

The 2019 CVA Instæruption group exhibition at KZNSA Gallery provided me the opportunity to test run potential installation for my paintings. I watched and considered how people reacted to and engaged with my work during the exhibition. Most people were cautious in front of the work as with any gallery show, but they also engaged more physically with it by moving in between and around the layers of my paintings. I saw my installation move from being static paintings for appreciation and meditation to becoming a 3-D structure in space that allowed and encouraged unique participation and experience. The audience created and added their own invisible layers to the work, taking photos and videos through the paintings and sharing them with friends. Again, communication and sharing can be made possible through play in a "playscape". Audience engagement adds a further unanticipated dimension to my work, and I later realised that I too can became another member of the audience, appreciating their reaction and performance in the distance.

Overemphasis of realism and traditionalism (particularly in landscape paintings in this study) in a gallery setting can result in a serious atmosphere. My sense is that this is because artists work from their private, personal and individual memories, experiences and feelings, but perhaps don't offer their audience a bridge to engagement or participation. If I am able to present the serious quality of my work in a playful way, the overall atmosphere and emotions experienced by the audience will be very different. I can transform my paintings into 3-D spaces where you can become subsumed and immersed, almost as though *within* the paintings themselves. Audiences can explore the space, moving and playing between works and experiencing the distance between themselves and others in the middle of the layered paintings. In the process of accepting and experiencing the space of play in seriousness, the

audience also experiences some form of liminality and an altered multi-dimensional experience.

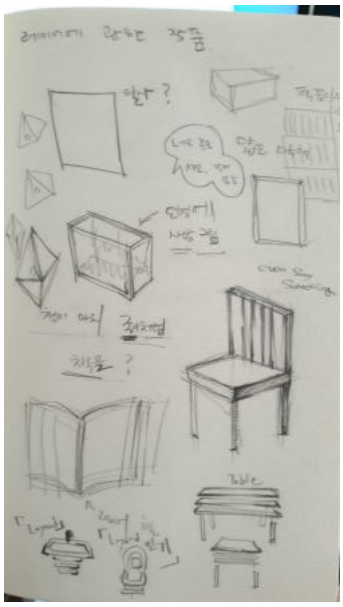

Figure 39. Sketches in journal considering exhibition display, 2019.

Multidimensional thinking led me to consider how I could include actual 3-D objects in my exhibition; pieces of furniture from my own private studio (Figure 39). I contemplated how I could create critical locations in the exhibition space depicting private and public spheres. I drew ideas about the final concept I had in mind that opened the way for me to visualise and bring to life my personal thoughts. My reflection allowed me to clarify my personal, tacit knowledge, by helping me to discover where I am located in literary and research contexts (Smith & Dean 2010: 163). With this idea to create spaces in my exhibition using furniture, I considered the significance of the boundaries and openings I could form. As mentioned in chapter two, thresholds and boundaries in Dutch artworks of the 15th and 16th centuries have significant meaning (Jacobs 2018: 193), separating public and private spheres, and I wanted to emulate an element of this in the curation of my work.

4.3.2 Exhibiting the Work

The final works were exhibited at the Jack Heath Gallery of the Centre for Visual Arts at the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. The space was divided into two parts: a main large area with natural light and a small tutorial room off the side. I intended the tutorial room would be set up with smaller works and pieces of furniture to create the sense of my own art studio for individuals to contemplate and feel as though they are peering into a contained, private space. I intended the main gallery to house the larger, layered works that needed natural lighting and sufficient space because I wanted my audience to be able to interact with and move around and in between them.

Figure 40. Initial view of *From here to there* from gallery entrance.

At the opening of the front main galley door, I suspended *From here to there*, my largest work, to look like an access point (Figure 40). *From here to there*, reminiscent of an alley that leads into the centre of Seoul, practically provides guiding power into the venue by allowing the audience to visually travel down the alley and through and beyond the transparent layer, and then physically being directed to move around either side of the image and down the sides of the gallery into the viewing space for the public.

Figure 41. Panoramic view of frames creating invisible layers in the gallery space. Drone image: Jung-yup Kim

Usually, this large gallery (Figure 41) is a public space that, when opened, invites anyone to enter. However, with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, access to the gallery by the public became strictly limited; anyone needing to enter the CVA or the Jack Heath Gallery had to acquire a permit. In this way, the space became semi-public, not private but still limited in the public context. Initially I imagined a public exhibition, but due to lockdown regulations, my exhibition was limited to a few CVA colleagues and staff.

Figure 42. *Stop and move* layers positioned after *From here to there*.

Behind *From here to there* the audience would encounter the three semi-transparent layers of *Stop and move* (Figure 42), layered sequentially like Sprigg's *Stratachrome Green* (Figure 7), but allowing for enough room to walk in between each layer. Suspending the artworks allowed for clear galley floorspace through which the audience could freely move and appreciate the painted images from both the front and back. The suspended images could also interface with each other and communicate with the light from the walls, floors and high ceiling of the surrounding space (Figure 43).

Figure 43. View of layers from ceiling of gallery. Drone image: Jung-yup Kim

To reiterate the layers and expand the sense of movement through space, I positioned *Seoul and Hillcrest* behind *Stop and move* (Figure 42).

Figure 44. *Landscape and door* and *Through window* installed alongside tutorial room door.

In front of the window and *Landscape and Door* (Figure 44) were installed next to the tutorial room doors. Positioning these paintings here emphasised the concept of thresholds. Doors act as a link between two regions and enable us to move from one site to another by passing through the threshold. The real door and the painted door have different meanings, but both played indispensable roles in this space. Though the painted door cannot physically move you from place to place, as an object it embodies the possibility of movement together with ideas, theory and fantasies. Through the actual door to the tutorial room, the viewer enters a space intended to be set up to represent a version of my private studio, creating a behind-the-scenes area, with paintings and works in progress.

Figure 45. The door to the tutorial room, the entrance to the 'private studio'

For me, the small tutorial room, dimly lit, represented a sense of private space while the large and well-lit main gallery with completed works represented public openness.

Figure 46. Projection of creative process videos onto silk screen in tutorial room.

The obscurity of the tutorial room is reminiscent of my garage during the process of transferring images onto my screens. This facilitated the 'double exposure' projection of process videos, captured in my private working space, onto large unpainted suspended silk screens and the wall beyond in a more public space than my studio, showcasing work I had uploaded onto YouTube. The tutorial room came to sit in the liminal space between private and public and embody the idea of an intermediate stage, not only because of the process videos it showcased, but because each day, for the safe-keeping of the projector and computer, this space would be locked.

Figure 47. View from private studio in tutorial room into gallery space.

Although my initial concept was to curate a personal, private studio-like space with my bookshelf and my studio chair in the tutorial room, it was moved to the outer gallery after making a situational judgment during the hanging of the exhibition. I wanted these items of furniture to be integrated with my smaller works, including the *In Between here and there* series of small screens with bird imagery. It was decided that, because of the obscure lighting needed in the tutorial room, it would be better to display the birds in a more light and open area that also allows for a sense of the birds' movement by means of suspension at varying heights. The small silk paintings of the *Between here and there* series were displayed on top of the bookshelf as well as suspended in the air from the ceiling, creating the sense of taking flight (Figure 48). The bookshelf originally held a collection of reference documents and books that I used during the research process. Displaying various small works on a bookshelf alluded to the overlapping of practice and theory that is supported through PLR. The presence of the actual studio chair, painted in *Stop and Move*, formed a point of connection and communication between depiction and the real and added to a sense of layered meaning.

Figure 48. Chair and bookshelf creating private space, installed with *Between here and there*.

Figure 49. Installation of layered works creating a "playscape". Drone image: Jung-yup Kim

Near to the chair and bookshelf, I placed the playful *Modified screen* (Figure 49), alluding to the virtual world of art on digital platforms. The juxtaposition, spacing and layering of pieces were intended to create a playscape for the audience. This area was arranged so that one silk layer could affect the others and audience interaction could occur at intervals and spaces between frames and objects. The layered work in this section proved to be more deeply connected and in communication with the surrounding images on display in the main gallery than it could have been in the tutorial room.

Figure 50. Panoramic view of exhibition space. Drone image: Jung-yup Kim

Unlike the grandeur of *From here to there* at the gallery entrance, the rather simple, small frames of the *Between here and there* series, small works, and *Modified screen* were intended to be more informal, playful and intimate. The smaller layered silk works, transferred to the larger frames, are connected together by their common media. The layers of work assert influence on each other and generate a sense of intersection and overlap. This repetition also connects with the video projection in the tutorial room and the sharing of images on social networks.

Figure 51. Chair and bookshelf creating studio scene (left), and layered work installed to create "playscape" (right).

In a way, the unanticipated situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a positive impact on my research, requiring me to extend and flexibly apply the use of digital media in recording and sharing my exhibition. Due to these restrictions I had to find an alternative way of showing my work. I chose to film a documentary style walkthrough of the exhibition in a way that still allows people to go back and forth between layers to appreciate the work. I decided to include drone footage (figures 41, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52) of the exhibition to link it to the concept of aerial landscape photography and expand the concept of a playscape by allowing my audience to view my work from different angles and perspectives. Using photography and video as a recording tool continued to play an unexpected role in the exhibiting of my work.

Figure 52. Layers of silk screens viewed from above. Drone image: Jung-yup Kim

The process of moving and installing the work in the gallery unfolded differently from my original plan. The dimensions of the space and appropriate locations for each work were difficult to estimate. Although I could have measured the exact dimensions of the Jack Heath and each piece of work to create an Illustrator mock up, the atmosphere and degree of light in the space, and the distances that the pieces had to hang from the ceiling were something I could only measure once I was in the space with the work.

Although the installation did not deviate much from my expectations, the overall success and atmosphere of the virtual exhibition were more positive than I expected. The moment of realising my goal, of sharing my work in the then semi-public space of the gallery and public space provided by YouTube, was an emotional and rewarding experience.

4.4 Conclusion

In this section I have introduced my creative practice and interwoven it with the theoretical frameworks that underpin it discussed in previous chapters. I have shown how I experientially and theoretically explored layers that exist where private and public spaces overlap and how this is expressed in the interconnected relationship between my private artistic practice and the sharing of it on public spaces. The discussion of my work intentionally and repeatedly weaves together the concepts of the existence of my work in three forms: physical, recorded (by means of photography and videography) and uploaded.

My work was discussed in context of my background as a graphic designer and my quest to explore the ‘middle area’ between what I perceived as my private work and space, and public forms and platforms. Through practice and immersion into the process, I came to realize that there are many overlapping areas between private and public in terms of my artmaking processes, products and platforms. Social media and the internet seem to have brought ‘the world’ into my private studio space as an artist and made my private art far more public via the uploading of photography and videos of my work and processes.

Iveković's video work, exposing private activity in public, caused the realization not only of my capacity to expose private layers of studio practice through video but revealed personal insecurities and anxieties in the process which I recognise as invisible layers behind the uploading of private work into the public digital sphere (Warner 2002: 30). I also realised that my intention was not to 'expose' myself in the figurative sense of the word, only to expose processes within my creative practice done within my private studio. Spriggs' use of layered transparency in public spaces supported the physical layering of my creative practice in 3-D with concepts of transition, relocation, the 'nomadic life' and the revealing of identity in public spaces (Spriggs 2014). I began to perceive social media as an invisible and empty public space that my private work transitioned into and that the invisible walls between private and public spheres are sublimated into my creative practice through my personal experiences of liminality (Stenner 2017: 203). My exploration of the liminal layers between private and public in my practice brought realizations not only in terms of materials and processes; 'spaces' or platforms (both digital and real); but also in terms of emotions, internal experience and socio-cultural imaginary (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 322). I felt affirmed in my own experience and artistic expression of immigration by Suh's suspended translucent artwork (Sauer 2020) and researching Siwani's veiled performance helped me to recognise my creative practice as an exploration of liminality and identity within space and time (Samson 2018).

Silk played a key role in terms of what it offers as a medium on which to paint as well as a metaphor for liminality due to its permeable, transparent, membrane and veil-like qualities and its link to the transformation of a silkworm. My layered processes with silk spoke directly to my experience as an immigrant living in between countries physically, psychologically and emotionally. Silk also served to embody the liminality I experience and link my work to my Oriental origins.

To balance the serious and representational side of my work I discovered a way of re-incorporating the concept of play through dimensional thinking and audience engagement in three-dimensional space. This changed my perception of my artwork as two-dimensional and influenced the curation of my final exhibition.

The lockdown situation during the final stages of my PLR and exhibition re-enforced the value and use of digital forms of sharing and the importance of flexibility within my PLR (Smith & Dean 2009: 47; Sullivan 2004: 174). By applying various video editing and photography techniques to upload the entire exhibition onto digital public space, I could in a sense reverse the limitations of the situation imposed by lockdown. I was able to focus more on objectively documenting the situation in which audience participation in the actual gallery was limited and appropriate my new-found understanding of the 'overlapping' of space (Warner 2002). Social media provided a meeting point of accessibility for exhibitors and spectators, an intermediate space or 'grey area' (Sue 2014) between the two.

Chapter Five: Concluding thoughts

The research question I posed to myself for this project was to investigate what layers exist where private and public spaces overlap and how this layered-ness is expressed in the relationship between my private artistic practice and the sharing of it on social media. This was explored by an immersion into PLR methodology, which allowed for simultaneous theoretical research and creative practice as research, synthesising artmaking with critical reflection and conceptual frameworks. The topic – The Invisible Wall between Private and Public: An artistic exploration of liminality - arose out of my background as a designer and the sense of disconnect between what I considered my private artistic practice and my public work in the field of design.

Looking at theories of private and public spaces served to inform my artistic practice and the sharing of it on social media in that I was provided a highly visual and expressive language of metaphors and symbols for the 'overlapping' (Warner 2002) of and liminal space between the two. Concepts such as rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960: 21), navigating a passage ,blazing a trail (Turner 1969: 15), thresholds (Jacobs 2018: 12), entranceways, turning points (Van Gennep 1960: 191), 'liminal moments' (Turner 1969/1995), 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1969: 95), grey spaces (Sue 2014), active and inactive phases (Van Gennep 1960: 3), 'looking in and looking out' (Haseman in Barret and Bolt 2007: 153), borders (Jacobs 2018: 3), membranes (Nath 2005), and veils (Koslin in Heath 2008: 164) enriched my PLR. These theories helped me come to understand concepts of private and public spaces as far more nuanced than I had initially realised, challenging previous perceptions of separation between the two and providing flexibility in movement across a spectrum. These concepts became part of my thinking, and merged with my artmaking practice by being embodied in it. In my writing, I chose to predominantly use language associated with buildings for these various private and public 'spaces', real and virtual, relating to my practice as an artist/researcher who uses the social media interface.

My exploration of liminal space extended beyond private and public to include that of my experience as a South Korean immigrant living in South Africa (Bhabha 1994: xx), my sense

of identity, and my experience of PLR as research methodology. PLR methodology has supported the use of my personal experiences as a springboard for my research (Stenner 2017: 262) and offered deeper understanding of integrating, absorbing and communicating those experiences that unfold in my private space into the wider public sphere. Through these practice-led frameworks, I have also uncovered layers of my identity. I realized that my identity is not fixed or unchanging and discovered ways that my identity remains flexible in moving between various spaces: both private space/artistic practice and public spaces/social media, as well as between cultures and countries. The passage of liminality made it possible to explore what I experienced as an invisible wall as a South Korean living in South Africa and recognise the fluid nature of my identity. I have additionally come to realize that South Korea and South Africa are both multicultural layered environments themselves, and not binary opposites as in my initial thinking. Living 'between here and there' I began to recognise shifts in my perceptions and behaviour where before I had thought of my identity as something fixed. I was able to open up to and question the flexibility and transformation of my identity in various spaces. In this way, my PLR artistic processes facilitated and changed approaches in my work and in my personal sense of self within the liminality and 'in-betweeness' I experience.

I reflected on and considered how I maintain and project identities and personas between the private space of my artistic practice and public spaces like social media as well as in different cultural contexts. These included changes in behaviour in different spaces and places, particularly due to a sense of invisible socio-cultural layers and perceived socio-cultural expectations, and an anxiety of standing out or being judged, misunderstood or rejected, either as an artist, immigrant or personally. My psyche and emotions at these invisible threshold points within the movement from private to public platforms revealed personal insecurities, perfectionism and self-doubt at times, and confidence and joy at other moments. I realised that my sense of identity as an artist is linked to the showing of my work and tends to shift me into a more self-conscious 'professional' persona with the pressure of performance, whereas in private I can be more child-like and present, without any need to perform. This means there is perpetual and fluid movement between these two poles in my experience. The one evokes feelings of stress and the mechanism of staging, whereas the other reflects a more

joyful and abandoned experience and approach which I have tried to depict through "playscapes". I realise in retrospect that my internal pursuit within this PLR was partly an attempt at finding a way to integrate the various parts of myself at work or play in my subconscious as hidden layers of my creative expression and practice.

In this way, through reflexive observation of myself during my creative exploration and research, I could observe what arises and occurs when the boundaries of art as private space and social media as public space intersect and overlap from a personal perspective (Warner 2002: 30). Apart from the emotional and psychological states mentioned, behaviourally I found myself avoiding uploading my work for fear of 'exposure' (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013: 310), obsessing over details within an artwork, or preparing or staging for a video shoot. From an artistic perspective, I realised that my private artistic practice was continually crossing thresholds between private and public spaces; from the sourcing of imagery to the uploading of videos online, there are constant intersections and overlaps. As such, my artistic practice reflects the liminal space where private and public, and the identities tied with them, intersect. This is achieved visually and conceptually through the metaphor of the silk screen - sometimes revealing, sometimes concealing - and the layering of painted screens that depict layers between poles and within 3-D space. Silk, as the product of biochemical liminality, depicts this intersection due to its semi-transparent permeable nature, that allows paint to flow over and through it (Tuckman & Janas 1995: 6), and its veil and membrane-like qualities that reflect rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960: 21) and transformation. The Oriental origins of silk (Lee & Rye 2019) add to its symbolic role, in embodying me as a South Korean in my art pieces.

In terms of liminal space, my creative practice revealed new insights about PLR as a liminal space in itself, existing somewhere in the "in-betweenness" of practice and traditional research of overlapping fields of knowledge. My experience as a PLR student navigating between theory and practice with negotiations of meaning made within context (Sullivan 2004: 156) echoed the liminal or grey space between private and public. The intersubjectivity of PLR provided a platform for "looking in" and "looking out" (Haseman in Barret & Bolt 2007: 153) which is characteristic of the layers between private and public. Immersion in the

PLR process helped me to gain confidence in direction within a place of ambiguity (Smith & Dean 2009: 48) and to keep pursuing a sense of joy in my practice. This was achieved through ongoing 'reflective practice' (Gray & Malins 2004) in visual journals. I experienced periods of stagnation, change, and passage depending on the stage and realized that PLR gave me a sense of direction and fluidity between knowledge and practice. I found that when 'stuck' in terms of practice, often it was engagement with conceptual frameworks or researching other artists that helped provide needed direction. Likewise, often when overwhelmed with theory, it was active engagement with my media that helped me move forward.

My research of the work of other artists Iveković, Spriggs, Siwani, Suh contributed to and assisted in the contextualising of my study by providing perspectives and artistic expressions from other artists that support, challenge, clarify and enlarge my own artistic vision and perspective. This helped me to locate my creative practice and research in a wider discourse on liminality, specifically with regards the widely experienced topic of immigration and the social imaginary, but also, as mentioned, as an artist exploring my practice within the liminal space of PLR and as a means of exploration of my own identity. This PLR has surfaced further questions as opposed to finding conclusive answers and I find myself as an individual and artist/researcher in a continued sense of liminality. With the application of PLR, creative practice in my private space became a transformative force with invisible relationships and domains in middle layers between private and public space. I recognize the potential of creative practice to facilitate transformation in dealing with issues of grief that I had come to recognize as sense of loss that I was processing through my artwork through this PLR process. I have come to terms with a sense of distance and separation (Barrett in Barrett & Bolt 2007: 9).

A significant unseen layer of complexity and grey area in this PLR project is connected to the difficulties in the expression of ideas between languages, which are extremely nuanced, layered and flexible. I do my writing in Korean and need assistance to articulate these ideas with clarity in English, particularly academic language. This process needs to be successfully

navigated but many times I experienced what felt like an invisible wall between Korean and English.

The concept of the invisible wall between the private and the public and the overlapping nature of the two can be extended into future research that explores invisible spaces and places. This could include a deeper investigation of internet and cyberspace theory and what occurs when the boundaries of art and layers exist in cyberspace, and how this affects real space. I would also like to explore how the invisible and unconscious affect my art that takes place in space and time and the ways in which my identity remains flexible in moving between invisible places and spaces. This exploration would include the investigation of quantum or non-Newtonian concepts of time and space as well as spiritual experience and expression.

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