

# in no particular order

'HE PRODUCES WITHOUT TAKING FOR HIMSELF, HE ACTS WITHOUT EXPECTATION, HIS WORK IS DONE, HE IS NOT ATTACHED TO IT, AND SINCE HE IS NOT ATTACHED TO IT, HIS WORK WILL REMAIN' !

A LONG TIME AGO I ASKED SIMÓN HOW I SHOULD KNOW WHEN MY WORK WAS FINISHED. WE WERE IN THE STUDIO EXCHANGING IDEAS. HE SAID I SHOULD JUST TURN IT AGAINST THE WALL AND LOOK AT IT LATER, AND AT THAT PRESENT MOMENT, I WOULD KNOW IF IT WAS FINISHED OR NOT. THE CONVERSATION AS REMEMBERED BEGINS TO TAKE ON A NEW SIGNIFICANCE 17 YEARS LATER, WHEN CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE QUOTE ABOVE AND TO THE WORK EXHIBITED NOW. IN HIS WORK, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO SUCH DILEMMA, AS THE PROCESS SET IN MOTION HAS A BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END. HE KNOWS WHEN IT IS FINISHED.

Meaning in painting reveals itself like osmosis and is deposited in layers over time. It percolates and presents itself via shifting treads that push down through matter then settle like sediment, only to shift and change again when disturbed.

This shake up is often created by read backwards and change again when disturbed.

Image and make a distinction between what is seen and known. Often partitions are opened and meaning becomes transparent momentarily. Then there is a disturbance and once again meaning is obscured.

Striving through the debris that its interpretation serves to make meaning more ungraspable. Time and retrospection are the basis on which critical debate is formed and the text is often scribbled, read and re read in different contexts away from the work, when the work is not present.

The idea of *presentness* is therefore problematic in relation to the creation of discourse in painting as to be truly present when reading the work requires an *awareness* of what you see at the moment you see it. The response to the work exists in the same way that you work exists at that moment, and then it is gone. You may see nothing or you may see a myriad of things, ideas, emotions, qualities etc. They just pop into your head together with the requisite unsaid rules about how to look at and talk about art.

You begin to head towards the impossibility of a literal approach to the idea of *presentness* and getting to the bottom of it and more towards how the making of the work, certain responses to the work and consideration of it can be emblematic of it. The text is therefore created around a series of incidental thoughts about the meaning and nature of artistic production/non production, the work and the reception of it. *Present and here* while writing (1/9/2007)

## Normally, repetition signals deadlock: imaginary, symbolic or real. However here repetition is impossibility.

The activity of painting, the process is a simple repetitive frame. But over time each approach and connection with this frame elicits a different outcome dependent on choice of brush, density of paint, quality of gesture and the subjective state of the artist. A process that starts with clarity and transparency becomes unclear and transformed. Only a method of interpretation as archaeology will decode it. (1/10/2007)

Graneli's work is made according to a process of limitation. Lines are drawn and layers are covered painstakingly over periods of time. Colour is restricted and unadorned. There is, in the making of the work, no room for change or deviation from the proposed activity. A plan has been made and must be executed.

What must it be like to endlessly repeat an activity? Painting becomes like a mantra and outside certain Western limits imposed on the making and reception of art. The actions to complete the work are therefore neither frivolous nor gratuitous. The end product is a kind of enigmatic residue of the activity, and each end product is the same but different.

I imagine that to be present in the making of the work for the artist is almost like being in a permanent state of forgetting about the end product, people or future works, marks, images, shapes and previous and present images, through not concerned with repeating anything, but simply making this mark and then the next, and so on. Allowance for disjunction and return in future works. The future pass, possibly to return in future works. The future

(1007/01/17) the past is no longer the past

What happens when the artist cannot produce or make? Can't even get to be *present* in front of a work? *Any work.*

Very little happens towards the making of the work but plenty of other things happen. In order to escape from the pressures of artistic production, they defer, avoid, and distract, intending to do anything but engage with the present and precisely the task they need to perform to produce. Even the writing of this text is in part an avoidance of the production of art.

With this in mind, the idea of process as a way of making becomes a delicious oasis in my own desert of non-production (a possible mirage however). I see process as a possibility for escaping my own double bind.

I imagine myself making paintings that start from a concept. I give myself some rules. I formulate a plan. I just want to get on with it, do it, and finally make

something that I don't have to worry about. That is not attached to me.

But what about the effort and discipline involved?

You don't have to be discerning in the same way about the end product. I don't know if I can be bothered to discipline myself to the extent required. I'm starting to feel uncomfortable about the constraints. I know I won't be able to do the same thing over and over again. I will start to get twitchy, careless, sloppy. Deliberately, like a child who wants to spoil because they can. Or perhaps I will feel that I can't be myself because of this prison sentence imposed on my creativity and intuition. I realise that my mental state will reflect on what I am doing.

I can't be 'present' in the making of the work. All the old works and the weight of their successes or failures push and pressurise on the making of the work and all the future work that might be.



THE LIMITED SIGNIFICATION OF THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE PAINTING SUGGESTS A CONNECTION WITH MINIMALISM AND ITS TRADITIONAL EMPHASIS ON THE LOSS OF THE REFERENTIAL TOWARDS THE IDEA OF THE GESTALT (THE SIMPLICITY OF THE WORK AND ITS CONCEPT HITS YOU LIKE A JOLT) AND ILLUMINATION.

DESPITE THIS THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE WORK IS REplete WITH A PALIMPSEST OF SIGNIFYING REFERENCES THAT ALLUDE TO:

**PAINTINGS AS ALLEGORICAL OBJECTS**  
HOW MUCH RESPONSIBILITY DOES THE ARTIST TAKE FOR WHAT THE VIEWER SEES WHEN PRESENT IN FRONT OF THE WORK? THIS QUESTION MAY SIGNAL IMPORTANT TENSIONS IN THE WORK BETWEEN THE POLYPHONIC ASSOCIATIONS RELATED TO THE MAKING, INTENTION AND RECEPTION OF IT. (14/11/2007)

I don't want my will to be secondary to the process.

But still.....this activity does not seem paralysing it seems liberating, partly because I envy it. I say hopefully to myself, it will set things in motion once again. It could be a seductive amusement or it could be monotonous to be repetitious to this extent. Perhaps to limit myself will force me to be resourceful, like a prisoner in solitary confinement. It will give me the illusion that I am doing something.

I think to myself: I must try to write this text in the same way. Set up a process; limit myself when writing as an experiment. But I find it impossible not to allow myself to defer from the rules I dream up to support the activity of writing.

I start with the idea that I will try to mirror the activity of painting by giving myself instructions and contained rules in which to write around. For example: writing 100 words per day, 20 times to make this text.

To complement the discourse created by the work.

This is ruled out automatically when I begin to understand that to make this text discernable and attempt to communicate meaning, alteration, revision and perspicacity is required. What if I can't use the words that I want? What if I write something and then realise that there are too many words? How can I face the shame of writing 100 words and not changing them if upon re reading they appear to be wrong? I don't like it because it's not letting me think. It is not letting me control the product and aestheticise my writing.

If I can control the aesthetic voice of the work then I can control to some extent how it is received. I think.

All this is taking me away from the here and now of making, but it is very much about a certain kind of letting go that Graneli participates in to generate the paintings. (7/3/2008)

My sense of his work and its location here in London presented itself in different contexts. At his studio, during a recent exhibition he was in, looking at reproductions of his painting in a book. There are different readings, which Foster's attention and history of Postmodernism and its relation to you see it, operates vertically. Things can go into detail or detail. However there is with the paintings a more horizontal sense of development. Literally and metaphorically they are floating, free, unburdened by time.

Despite this, the temporal nature of production is an important aspect of Graneli's work. It's important to the creation of the text also.

At each juncture where the painting and a context collide, little sparks of meaning and history presents, glitter sequentially. And slowly, adding the good ones out and throwing the bad ones back the text grows in the here and now to be read with the painting. As its space has been revealed.

he has made thinking about and making my own painting. I cannot avoid these things when thinking about what the paintings mean and their nature as objects in time and space.

From one year to the next there has been change between the lines, yielding to my experience of his painting and perception of it read to looking at other paintings, teaching visiting him and his family, remembering the other paintings he has made, visiting him and his family, remembering the other paintings he has made, thinking about and making my own painting. I cannot avoid these things when thinking about what the paintings mean and their nature as objects in time and space.

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Many of these props, supports and barriers to making have been removed to make way for a type of production linked to a meditative, controlled, limited activity where, as Sol Lewitt would say, 'the idea becomes the machine that makes the art'.

Despite this, the Ego has managed to slip in. There are subtle deviations from the plan each time. It can't be helped. (6/11/2007)

A myth exists around the creative act that has been perpetuated since the romantic origin of the idea of the genius within the western world and by Modernism: that the artist or writer is like a magician who conjures up in a great surge of energy and inspiration the work of art; the making of the text or object becoming an extension of the artist's self. The Ego pushing the artist to make tricks and errors towards a perfect, original, authentic end product.

Where is the Ego with this work, where is the anxiety, the deferred activity, the trial and error, the melancholia?

After thought;

The earth's surface and the fragments of the mind have a way of disintegrating into discrete regions of art. Various agents, both fictional and real, sometimes trade pieces with each other - one cannot avoid the muddy thinking.....one's mind and the earth are in a constant state of erosion, metal rivers near away abstract banks, brain waves undermine cliffs of thought, ideas decompose into stones of unknowing, and conceptual crystallizations break apart into deposits of gritty reason. Best moving facilities occur in this geological mismanagement and they more in the most physical way. The movement seems motionless yet it crushes the landscape of logic under olfactory reveries. This slow language makes one aware of the turbidity of thinking. Slump, debris, slides, avalanches all take place within the cracking limits of the brain. The entire body is pulled into the cerebral sediment, where particles and fragments make themselves known as solid consciousness. A bleached and fractured world surrounds the artist. To organise this mess of corrosion into patterns, grids and subdivisions is an aesthetic process that has scarcely been touched.....

Just before I finished writing this text I came across the above quote from Robert Smithson, which relates to him thinking about how meaning is formed. He uses metaphors around the formation of the natural world that also ask us to consider the hidden ideologies present in culture that shape our capacity to make and interpret art. I remember vaguely reading it at least 2 years ago when I was thinking about Graneli's paintings. At the time I read it, I put it aside and it nudged in the back of my mind, as being important in some way. Some of the metaphors and analogies I have used to write this text have probably been influenced by it and its imagery although not in a conscious way. The implication of what he says is relevant to the notion of *presentness* and interpretation; that being in front of the work is not necessarily being clear about what it means. And that this has always been the case. It seems to fit uncannily well at present. (20/9/2008)

1. Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Form*, University of California Press, 1991, p. 94  
2. Robert Smithson, *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, quoted in *Art in Theory 1960-1990: A History of Ideas*, ed. Jeffrey Meyers, Blackwell, 2004, p. 207

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A catalogue record of this publication is available from the British Library: British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data ISBN: 978-0-901196-33-0

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Published by: text+work, The Gallery the Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Produced by: text+work, The Gallery, the Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Printed by: FWB printing, WINCANTON [www.fwbprinting.co.uk](http://www.fwbprinting.co.uk)

#### Acknowledgements

Kathleen Abiker, Josepha Sanna and Simón Granell would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to the realisation of this project and exhibition:

The Research Committee, the Arts Institute at Bournemouth  
Violet McClean  
Professor Jim Hunter  
Sonja Stender  
Stephanie James  
Lisa Richardson

Special thanks go to Tom Marsh

Exhibition and publication supported by: Violet McClean, Gallery Officer, text+work, The Gallery, the Arts Institute at Bournemouth

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"Blandness not as the absence of defining qualities but as the harmonious union of all potential values - an infinite opening into human experience." (François, J. 2007)

It is the kind of art making that should come with a health warning. It is either going to do your head in or put a smile on your face. Until now the work has contained as many as fifty or sixty layers making up a systematic approach to counting the days taken to complete a work.

"Mirroring the scattering that occurs in thought when confronting art which refuses to answer in the normal way questions around meaning, the text proposes through a series of incidental speculations (related to non-western forms of writing) and explores the almost impossible notion of presentness with respect to meaning and the reception of the work, its formal properties and the process of making." (Abiker, K. 2007)

The idea of *presentness* is therefore problematic in relation to the creation of discourse in painting as to be truly *present* when reading the work requires an *awareness* of what you see at the moment you see it. The response to

the work exists in the same way that the work exists at that moment, and then it is gone. You may 'see' nothing or you may 'see' a myriad of things, ideas, emotions, qualities etc. They just pop into your head together with the requisite unsaid rules about how to look at and talk about art.

"The possibility of a resulting narrative converging between the art and the text around this idea is formed as the events that take place between the two create shifting and changing contexts and boundaries for the viewer and the reader to experience. Working with and without rules to characterise the idea of an encounter with art (for the artist, writer and reader) as incident, in the most ongoing sense of the word."

"A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces is not in principle governed by pre-established rules. [These] rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist or writer, then, is working without rules in order to formulate the rules that will have been done. Hence the fact that the work and the text have the characters of an event" <sup>1</sup>

1. de Oliveira, N, Oxley, N and Petry, M discuss these ideas in relation to time and narrative in *Installation Art in the New Millennium, Thames and Hudson, 2003*

2. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, 1984, p 81*

### Kathleen Abiker

Kath Abiker studied Fine Art at the Slade School in London and subsequently completed a research led MA in the History and Theory of Modern Art at Chelsea School of Art.

She is Course Leader for Art History at Ashford School of Art and Design and teaches on the MA in Contemporary Arts programme at the University of Kent, lecturing primarily on the significance of philosophy and postmodern theory in relation to contemporary art.

She is interested in the boundaries between theory and practice and maintains a balance between the two: painting, exhibiting, writing and theorising around practice and the relationship between thinking and making.

### Josepha Sanna

Josepha Sanna is the editor of *Word Matters* - a book of seminar transcripts about the interaction of language and art, which were hosted in Venice on the occasion of the 52nd Venice Biennale.

In 2007, she was appointed as Knowledge Transfer Catalyst Research Assistant (funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council) to bring the academic expertise of the Arts Institute at Bournemouth to the business enterprise of ArtsWay, a contemporary visual arts organisation in the New Forest.

She is currently working with both institutions and is a Studio Assistant for the painter Ian McKeever. She is also part of the 'Poole-based artists' collective Artworks, where she specialises in process-based sculpture. In no particular order is the first exhibition that she has curated.

### Simón Granell

Born in England in 1964, Simón Granell studied fine art at Falmouth School of Art and The Slade School of Art, London. He was nominated for the Picker Fellowship at Kingston University in 1991, and in 1992 was nominated for the Barclays Young Artist of the Year Award and shortlisted for the British School at Rome. He has exhibited widely in the UK and Spain, and has worked with artist Tania Kovats on the Drawing Quarters symposium at Bristol School of Art. He has also been Artist in Residence at the Escola Massana in Barcelona while also teaching on the Winchester School of Art European MA.

He recently collaborated on the project underground with Roger Ackling and Eric Butcher, in the basement rooms of Shoreditch Town Hall, East London, and took part in MEETING PLACE - Contemporary Art and the Museum Collection, a site-specific exhibition at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth.

## in no particular order

Kathleen Abiker+ Simón Granell  
Curated by Josepha Sanna

08 December 2008 - 23 January 2009

The Gallery invites you and your guests to the text+work event and drinks reception.

Event: Thursday 11 December 2008  
from 4.30 to 5.30pm

Lecture Theatre One, Institute House  
Followed by a drinks reception  
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or 01202 363351

[www.textandwork.org.uk](http://www.textandwork.org.uk)

## in no particular order

In no particular order: painting as metaphor for presentness, is an exhibition of paintings by Simón Granell with the writings of Kathleen Abiker and curated by Josepha Sanna.

The collaboration and exhibition is an exploration into the process of painting as metaphor for presentness and into what it means to be stuck, unable to act: a reason to create or a reason to stop. The work does not merely reflect the process of painting but is about the method of painting; it is evidence of an act, but of process interpreted by gesture.

Some of the paintings are reminiscent of macro or micro-landscapes: fields, layers, cross-sections or fingerprints, seen from a great height, or seen from close up. The exhibition proposes a series of paintings that, in their 'daily recording', chronicle existence and evoke the passage of time, complemented by a series of incidental speculations presented in the text.

The audience's role in these works is that of the archaeologist; retracing and deconstructing the history of a work. This process engages time, simultaneously connecting with the artist's activity and the impossibility of its full retrieval. Repetition and consistency give way to ambiguity.

A process that starts off explicit becomes uncertain and distorted, as does an everyday word whose meaning is lost through repetition, and whose beginning and end become blurred.

What must it be like to endlessly repeat an activity?

The first part of the project was an investigation into a series of paintings and a text that explored process in painting as metaphor for presentness. The second was the artist's personal reflections on being stuck, unable to act. Considering Stuck as a good thing or as a bad thing; a reason to create or a reason to stop. At the heart of this is what François Julien refers to as *blandness*:

text + work