

# CONSTRUCTING A NARRATIVE OF FASHION PRACTICE AS INQUIRY

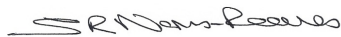
By Suzie R. Norris-Reeves

This thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of The Royal College of Art for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date 14/11/2014



RESEARCH 

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a written component of a thesis, which was developed and articulated over four years in the construction of a narrative of the fashion designer and their practice. The hypothesis developed by the fashion designer as practitioner, is that it is both possible and necessary, by careful notation and reflective practice, to arrive at a better understanding of the fashion design practitioners cognitive and behavioural reasoning through the creative practice process than exists in current literature and archive.

In comparison with the archiving of materials that testify to the complexity of creativity in painting, sculpture and orchestral composition, for example, the archiving of the process and practice of fashion design is negligible. Collections of designers' ephemera often constitute little more than 'the retrospective' or materials of celebrity culture that further mystify the 'author function' role (Foucault, 1969, p.113-138) of the fashion design practitioner. This research aims to suggest a critical visual method for and in support of constructing a narrative of fashion practice as it is lived towards a new culture of compiling, recording, noting, classifying and analysing the tacit process of the fashion design practitioners relationship to their practice. The practice therefore comprises the designing, draping, cutting and making of an eight-piece collection of fashion womenswear. The research comprises extensive documentation of the (research) practitioner's subjective-objective<sup>1</sup> dialogues as purposeful acts of thought (Burnette,

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<sup>1</sup> In arguing a theory of the *work* and in furthering knowledge of a lived reality of practice an 'inner subjectivity' that confronts and contextualises an 'objective outside' (Malpas, 1992, p. 191-199, 139-144, 225-228) gives rise to the author's exclusive status as author of a subjective-objective assembly in constructing a narrative of practice.

2009b) and action whilst developing a body of creative work. In addition to the researcher's journey this narrative inquiry extends documentation to include the responses of five other practitioners as willing participants in the project aim: to develop a new research method for documenting and understanding the fashion design practitioners cognitive and behavioural narratives.

Whereas there is a significant literature on design theory written by theorists and not necessarily practitioners, and a considerable literature on fashion as object of sociological, historical, cultural, anthropological, semiotic, psychological, political, philosophical, economic study, there exists almost no serious study of fashion design practice from the perspective of the fashion designer (as practitioner). This research aims, without artificial abstraction of the creative practice from its cultural and social milieu, to start a serious, scholarly, rigorous study of fashion practice as design method. It may be that such method will be met with reactions that it could meddle with the illusion of a designer's intuitive sense of knowing and that it is an unwelcome complication of what should remain an invisible or tacit (because as yet unrecognised) process. The aim of the research is to develop a method that can be customised and adopted by the fashion design and design research communities and fashion designers in training and in professional practice, to understand more about their creative practice process in both cognitive and behavioural terms.

To this end I use the forms of auto ethnography to collect data through sketchbook work, diarised journals, photographic and film reportage and interview in order to consider how a method of (doing) practice may refer to theories of practice. Literary theory of Bakhtin is offered as an example of a dialogical method to consider how the process of fashion practice can be considered as communicable knowledge. The Kantian philosophy of the 'a priori' knowledge and Foucault's relational systems of thought and knowledge are also offered as discourse and a foundation of thought that structures the tacit dialogues in the here and now as

a telling of a knowing of a doing of fashion practice. The written dissertation is a text, which co-exists with the narrative traced through the making and visual realisation of the collection exhibited and photographed at the viva voce (Figure I & Appendix H).



Figure 1. Authors Exhibition of Fashion Practice,  
RCA, Lower Gulbenkian Gallery.

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## **List of Accompanying Material**

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Narrative 1 : Living Portfolio (SNR.Narrative 1.pdf)

Narrative 2 : Thought Structure (SNR.Narrative 2.pdf)

Narrative 3 : Gaze of Practice (SNR.Narrative 3.pdf)

e-Exhibition : Spectacle of Fashion Practice (SNR.e.Exhibition.pdf)

Appendix : (SNR.Appendix.pdf)

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Click to play film.

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Suzie

### Authors Declaration

I AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

...That I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the Work [i.e. my thesis] is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge break any UK law or infringe any third party copyright or other Intellectual Property Right.

THE ME THAT I AM

I AM ME

SOMETIMES I MOVE OUTSIDE OF ME

MY PRACTITIONER-SELF ME

ME, THE SELF I AM

THE ME THAT CRAVES...

I AM ADDICTED TO ME

ME, MY-SELF, I AND THE OTHER

THE OTHER OF ME

I AM ALONE WITH THE OTHER OF ME.

WHO IS ME. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Extract taken from Norris-Reeves, S. (2012), '*Immortality of Sentiment*' (a work in progress), *Organdie Dress*, in *Frock Shock*, 2012 edn, Fairfield's Arts Centre Art Gallery, Basingstoke, p.8.



## Introduction

Whereas the growing literature on artistic research or practice-based (led) research in art and design has, in recent years led to a rise in the range of Higher Education Institutions offering postgraduate research degrees in art and design, comparatively little of this literature has directed its focus on fashion design (as practice). The reasons for the absence of fashion design or practice thinking from the discourse on 'design thinking' (IDEO, 2000) may be multifarious. Is fashion considered 'trade' rather than 'art', technique rather than cerebral? Does the origin of fashion within modern, urban, industrialised mass culture tend to complicate its status as 'high culture' or craft? Is fashion design considered an industrial and even proletarian specialism? Is the celebrity status of the 'signature designer' an impediment to the analysis of fashion design as a practice? Are the gendered attributes of fashion culture a deterrent to claims of serious scholarship or valuable knowledge? Prof Wendy Dagworthy was one of the first London designers to address this predicament of fashion design as both denigrated as 'rag trade' and valued as a creative industry. Founder of London Fashion week, Dagworthy is noted (Club to Catwalk, 2013) for pioneering the consideration of fashion design practice as a source of knowledge (Evans, 2007).

I began my journey of practice believing that it would be practice-based, with the intention of my practice drawing on Candy's (2006) view of an 'original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice'. As my journey of practice progressed, and then concluded, it became clearer that Candy's view of practice-led research might be more applicable? Candy describes practice-led research as research 'concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice'. Although, Candy comments further that, '...the results are fully described in the text form without the inclusion of a creative work' which is not considered a true reflection of this research as design method? If I am to argue a shift in a research paradigm for fashion practice as inquiry then perhaps my research can be considered more a hybrid or indeed (doing)

'practice as inquiry', as a research category of its own volition? My research is based, therefore, within a relatively specialised discourse of what might be considered practice-led through practice-based inquiry. This leads me to consider that there might be more work to do in terms of characterising what might or could be meant by *practice as Inquiry*? It is led by my practice in that the studio work, draping, modeling and cutting are the starting point, and indeed integral for the purposes of reflection and analysis. This distinguishes it from solely practice-based research that may have elements of practical work with a tangential or peripheral claim to originality demonstrated in relation to a written outcome. This practice-led come practice-based research project aims to establish a means of recording the process by which techniques of making and practices of looking become integral components of a research method concerned with (doing) practice as inquiry.

The hypothesis of this research is that new knowledge arises from the threshold interface where tacit knowledge is brought into being through reflective practice, and when some form of notation is developed to make a less ephemeral, more permanent, and critically, communicable record of the practices of the fashion practitioner, as designer, and as maker. This is the context in which I use the concept of 'narrative'. It is a notational form used as a method for representing and communicating the subjective-objective transformation of knowledge into conscious thought and into being. The aim of the thesis is to bring this narrative to consciousness and attention, firstly so that there will be greater recognition of the complexity of the fashion design process, as practice, and secondly as a way of offering a method for designers to use in making their own narratives.

It is not unusual for fashion designers to be interviewed by others, journalists, theorists, historians, friends, colleagues and for such interviews to function, in archives, as the only trace of the subjective process by which design is materialised in collections. Bath Museum of Fashion has started to archive the sketchbooks, journals, mood boards (Figure 2) and ephemera of

fashion designers such as knitwear designer Sarah Dallas, but few collections have the technical resources to record the length of duration over which a collection may be developed.



Figure 2. Example of a Practitioner Mood Board, Narrative 3, p. 13.

There appears to be little or no critical visual methodologies that have been developed from the perspective of the fashion (design) practitioner when engaging with their practice. Through practice and in assuming the 'author function' role (Foucault, 1969, p.113-138), I considered

that such an archaeology of a critical gaze<sup>3</sup> of practice could invite scrutiny for the purposes of constructing and contributing to knowledge of the discipline. As the principle research method to investigate the process of the design and development of an emerging fashion collection, I use action research methodologies through reflective practice inquiry to engender a way of seeing the 'complete oeuvre' (Foucault, 1969, p.23-33) (as displayed in the Portfolio of Practice) of my practice: a narrative space (Figure 41) where the practices of the fashion practitioner, as designer, could be placed under scrutiny.

For the purposes of this research I designed a collection (Figure 3) which was made over a period of four years, and I documented through photograph, film and recorded in sketchbooks and digital means the complex lines of thought, feeling, technique and serendipitous moments of discovery that took place in the transformation of idea into sketch, cloth into clothing and clothing into illustration, image and moving image.

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<sup>3</sup> An archaeology of a critical gaze of practice is argued to emerge amid the coefficient model (Figure 32: the spectator, practitioner and artefact) and the dialogic event (Figure 28: the visual traces, practice contexts and reflective interactions) as a discovery of *what is* in a knowledge universe (Figure 39).



Figure 3. *The Collection.*

As a collection of 'thinking's and doings', my aim was to consider if there was a way of seeing the practices of the fashion practitioner; a consciousness of seeing the oeuvre of a deeply engaged fashion practitioner when engaged with practice making and what we might learn or understand from such a tacit yet performative act? How do I as a practitioner do practice? How do I tell others and myself what I have done and how do I describe the moments when I just know something is right or aesthetically pleasing? Is it now time to consider that through a curated intervention of practice<sup>4</sup>, through visual display and by literary means, that such activity could be discerned as knowledge? Beyond social and cultural adoption what do we know of the cognitive and behavioural reasoning of the fashion practitioner when engaged with the

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<sup>4</sup> The notion of a curated intervention of practice draws on Frisa's (2008, p.172) claim of '*staging curatorial projects*' as a form of fashion design and communication practice.

design and development of a fashion collection aside from the histories being made of the spectacle, or theatre of the fashion design aesthetic (as clothing)? My research considers that the archaeologies of a future history of fashion design as practice are being made in the here and now yet sit dormant without reason, question or understanding.

### **1.1. Elucidation and Definition of Terms**

Fashion practice is used here to mean the studio practice of working with cloth on the mannequin (stand), on the toile, in the sketchbook, on the cutting table, with pattern pieces, at the sewing machine, in the studio and/or on the model, for the purpose of archiving and displaying the very moment that practice happens<sup>5</sup> (and therefore exists). Fashion as clothing, as body adornment, as cultural or social statement I consider established research disciplines that find record in the cultural and social histories of the discipline. In this (modern) postmodern<sup>6</sup> era the time is right to discern of fashion design and fashion practice as research domains of differing imperatives. What do we know of the 'creative agency' that Bancroft (p.71) refers, and can a scholarly approach to *a doing* of fashion practice construct the asset of knowledge to further our (and my) understanding of the practices of the fashion (design) practitioner when developing a body of creative work?

The concept of fashion practice used here does not refer to the social context of the wearing of fashion as signifiers of social status or identity, as is studied in the sociology and cultural

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<sup>5</sup> ...as experienced and perceived by the fashion practitioner.

<sup>6</sup> The burgeoning relativities of the immersive, the experiential, and the participatory are argued in this research context to be a modern postmodern construct engendering a truth to what is perceived in the here and now.

studies of fashion (Hebdidge, 1979) or the Fashion System (Barthes, 1983), because these refer to the cultural milieu of fashion as it is worn rather than the skill through which it is made. The concept of fashion practice is used to differentiate also from the adjacent concept of fashion design, which I use to denote the professional application of fashion practice within a specific commercial, professional setting or context such as designing for a collection to be mass manufactured for a retailer for example. The separation of these practices is to some, small, extent artificial and abstract, because the concept of fashion practice<sup>7</sup> is developed here, specifically for this research project, and few designers have had the privilege to direct such uninterrupted attention to their practice and furthermore, is rarely recorded and analysed.

Fashion is used rather than dress, costume, art, apparel or garment because I want to maintain the understanding of fashion as generated by industry, mass manufacture and is a term that remains active within a culture of urban modernity. Couture and art pieces have their place within this study, and I have included work of the fashion sculptures (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix A (v1), P.8-14) I was commissioned to make as a result of displaying this research. The garments designed are made in the traditional method of modeling on the stand, development of a toile (or series of), translation into pattern pieces (of which I remain fascinated with their complexity to this very day) (Narrative 1, p.66) and finally to the finished

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<sup>7</sup> The author, as fashion practitioner, is considered to be at the heart of the research endeavor, and as such distinguishes fashion practice as knowledge that exists through the cognitive and behavioural reasoning of practice: a body of knowledge contained within the context of the making, designing and developmental work assembled through practice making and resulting visual and literary narratives.

garment and is consistent with the design process for industrial manufacture rather than as 'one off' creations.

Fashion advances through the fast paced hyper social world of mass media dissemination. The four years I spent making my research diaries, narratives and collection saw the arrival and departure of some eight seasons' collections and some dozens of significant styles. I selected the theme of the 'language of flowers' for my collection and penned a number of personal anthologies (Narrative 1, p19), in the knowledge that this theme is already 'passé' and not 'in fashion' and that my focus was more concerned with how I arrived at such a muse or mise-en-scène (Narrative 1, p.4). It therefore stood outside of the neophilic pace of the real fashion culture, and allowed me the artificial sense of time standing still whilst I metaphorically (and often literally) unpicked my garments, toiles, patterns and finished garments in order to think about them some more. The interpreted Victorian Language of Flowers also invited allusions to the place of womenswear within a culture of feminine, and perhaps proto-feminist knowledge of emotional intelligences. Each of the pieces was granted an intimate relationship with the meanings and messages of such a romantic and poetic language (Narrative 2, p.11-25) and are considered whilst I was reasoning with my practice decisions and how others might discern of my thinking and doing?

## **1.2. Notes on Theory and Theorists**

Of what use is a method? If a method can be compared with other methods there is, by definition, a methodological study. This research aims to develop a method for documenting and analysing the process of fashion practice. To this end it is primarily descriptive and documentary. The written component of the thesis, the dissertation, contains much description and situating of concepts (Hamilton and Jaaniste, 2009) and also some speculative analysis and some reference to theories. Beyond acknowledging the methods of reflective practice, or researcher-practitioner, or action research, which have been developed in other fields of design



research, this dissertation also refers to some theory and philosophy in support of a transcendental representation of a lived experience.

I use Michel Foucault's concept of the 'author function' to question the distortions of fashion design practice brought about, if not overshadowed by the celebrity culture surrounding the fashion system. This use of Foucault is entirely idiomatic and personal and I make no claim to have integrated my own use of his amazing work within the highly specialist scholarship of Foucauldian theory, or post structuralist modern European philosophy. In fact this highly theoretical discourse seems to me to have been over used in the academic study of fashion over recent years with the effect of misrecognition, or perhaps even misguided discernment, of fashion practice for a complex socio political system.

I ruminate Kant's transcendental theories of the human experience and how the very reasoning of being (as doing in this study) is a perception of all that is: a perception of knowledge through reason that transcends a finite knowing of a doing of practice in both space and time. Moments of practice making were experienced as 'a priori' knowledge as the conditions of the possible became meaningful to me, as the practitioner, at the time of knowing. I also draw from Kant's ponderings of aesthetic measure (Narrative 3, p.83 & Appendix, E(v) p.109-111) to consider how the practice aesthetic might be meaningfully observed and understood in pursuit of a notion that my doing of practice, in its entirety, could be considered as a 'work of practice'. Further, Nietzsche's ponderings are considered as foundational to my concept of a consciousness of seeing as a reasoned knowing of a knowing knowledge together with his observations of the infinite that situate this seeing of *what is*, that this inquiry argues.

I use Bakhtin's literary theory of the dialogical in much the same way as Evans applies this to the work of Martin Margiela (Evans, 2007). Throughout the portfolio of practice (further described in Chapter 4.9) I explore the idea of a telling of a doing of fashion practice as a means of

developing an internal dialogue with the text and its conventions that allows me as an auto ethnographer to subvert convention for example. For example, I work with the toile as a method of telling a story in line and form: a way that results in a new kind of central back seam on the dress representative, or a romantic notion of, the male suitor rejected in his pursuit of unrequited love (Narrative 2, p.35 & 50). This asymmetrical seam then takes on the meaning of a 'backbone', which can be interpreted, in Bakhtinian hermeneutics, to allude to meanings of 'fragility' or 'damage' as well as innovation. Fashion is intrinsically dialogical in that it is very social and reciprocal, being generated and consumed within cultures where meanings, and sensibilities are shared and reciprocated. Bakhtin's work on the literature of the carnivalesque offers much to the practitioner, and I found his work to be worth reading in primary as well as in secondary texts.

A methodological study is, usually, used to compare systematic ways of collecting or organising data in order that these can be used to support or contradict a theory. Knowledge advances, in Popperian traditions of empirical science, by the testing and disproving of hypotheses. In Kuhnian terms, however, knowledge does not advance by the accretion of items of new, tested, provable, theories, but through 'paradigm shifts': the transformation of which may be catalysed by forces that are not observable to even the most assiduous historian and perhaps not even to the researchers themselves. It is only now, as I conclude this part of my research journey that I ponder if I have contributed, in some small way, to a new way of seeing the practices of the fashion practitioner? My research aim is to develop a method, or to contribute something to the collective understanding of developing such a method. It is not, in itself, intended to be a contribution to the theory of knowledge of fashion culture. I sense that fashion practice, like fashion thinking and fashion theory are undergoing something of a Kuhnian paradigm shift, if we can imagine fashion design as equivalent to scientific paradigms?

### **1.3. A Scholarly Context**

The changes, identified above, in the structure of UK higher education research in art and design practice are part of this transformation<sup>8</sup>. It is usual for undergraduate and Masters level students of fashion design to complete a dissertation or essay as a compulsory requirement for their degree, without necessarily considering the relationship of history and theory to their (doing of) practice. This convention, which is still hegemonic today, strikes me as curiously unsatisfactory and dysfunctional to the discipline. As with Norris-Reeves et al (2012 p.14-22) who identified the fashion community<sup>9</sup>, who questioned the compatibility of academic research in a commercial context, but surmised that more could be achieved to further what is meant or understood by scholarly research in a (fashion) practice context. The sample appeared uncertain when considering theory with their practice, and this suggests that more work is needed to fully engage the fashion practice community in understanding what is meant by scholarly research in a fashion practice context. My research, then starts from a sense that current education in fashion design is not working well enough, and the research question is to see whether it is possible, by using the principles of both practice-based and practice-led research, to develop a method of recording creative practice that might enable designers, to

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<sup>8</sup> In 1972 the UK upgraded its art and design education qualification from its humble status as Diploma (NDAD National Diploma in Art and Design) to an Honours Degree but this was proposed under certain conditions. First of these conditions was the requirement that students in art and design practice be required to complete at least 20 per cent of their study in some written form of scholarship. Known variously as Complementary Studies, Critical Studies, Art History or at RCA Critical and Historical Studies, these courses were a national requirement for degree level qualification in design practice. The curriculum was not specified and systems for evaluating the meaning, value, quality and success of this aspect of design education remain inconsistent to this day.

<sup>9</sup> The participant study by Norris-Reeves et al. (2012) highlighted a willingness of the practice community to engage in research through reflective inquiry, and argued a scholarly approach to reflection in and on action as a valid research method that could contribute to the maturing research discipline<sup>9</sup> concerned with fashion practice as a scholarly endeavour.

include the student designer and creative practitioners to bring their own experience and tacit knowledge into the field of cultural awareness, and therefore into academic scholarship.

This research is neither a theoretical study, nor does it aim to make a significant contribution to, say, the *Journal of Fashion Theory*, nor is it a pedagogical study claiming to contribute to the literature of learning techniques or the systematic evaluation of creative arts in education. These fields of research have certain shared borders with this practice-led through practice-based research (as Candy's definition of each refers) as do the adjacent fields of philosophy, sociology, the semiotics of the fashion system, the cultural studies of sub cultural capital or the design technique handbooks etc. However the sum of this project is more narrowly focused on developing a new awareness of the specificity of fashion practice within the wider field of design thinking (as a telling) and to consciously further our understanding of the tacit (a knowing) when engaged with the performative act of practice (a doing). It is apparent that the twenty-first century appears more curious of the tacit and of tacit knowledge and in finding ways in which such knowledge can be explicated. If we are to acknowledge a physicality of tacit knowledge and a materiality of a visual and literary language of fashion design as practice, then a methodological approach that explicates the 'tacit said'<sup>10</sup> appears to be fundamental to inquiry of the discipline? As a journey of discovery my research is therefore a constructed narrative of fashion practice; a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice that is considered for the purposes of inquiry.

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<sup>10</sup> The 'tacit said' of fashion practice is considered to be the multiple and unspoken dialogues of a reasoned knowing of practice and argued as constructs of what is seen, what is known and what is meant.

It is to be hoped and wished that my research may offer data, and evidence, if such is needed, to professionals and academics that choose to develop their own practice, the former in creative practice and the latter in academia. I would like the culture of fashion to include a more serious, but less over-theorised and less irrational dimension that makes sustained, longitudinal observation of the practices of the fashion designer and their creative practice process. The written component of the research outcome therefore takes the form of two volumes, the first is a written dissertation organised into 6 chapters that offer a narrative of the four years of practice (the research) and discusses the terms for the evaluation of the work. This is the document you are now reading. The second volume is perhaps more important, it is the collection of narratives 'through, in and of'<sup>11</sup> the development of a body of creative work (as a doing of practice as inquiry), as encountered through (my) auto ethnography and through interaction with other designers. Both volumes are intended to be appraised by having a prior knowledge of the exhibition of practical work (Figure 4 & 5, Portfolio of Practice, Appendix H, p.124-132) exhibited for examination in May 2014 at the RCA's Lower Gulbenkian Gallery or the very least with the volume of practice submitted (described as a portfolio of practice) and as included in the PhD documents.

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<sup>11</sup> The through, in and of contexts are discussed in terms of reflective engagement *through* practice (Narrative 1), *in* practice contexts concerned with theory and method (Narrative 2) and a consciousness *of* seeing concerned with the present (Narrative 3) and are discussed more fully in chapter 2, 2.4 & 2.6.



Figure 4. Authors Exhibition of Fashion Practice,  
RCA, Lower Gulbenkian Gallery.



Figure 5. Authors Exhibition of Fashion Practice,  
RCA, Lower Gulbenkian Gallery.

The hybrid quality of these multiple outcomes results from the complexity of the process of 'translating' practice into words and imagery. Tacit knowledge, by definition is silent (although generally accompanied, in fashion design, by plenty of noise, talk, music, gesture, interview, celebrity culture etc.) and written accounts of knowledge, in academia, are syntactic, conventional, systematic and, to be described as research in terms that are recognised by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council of the UK) and AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council UK) that must have 'rigour'. The question of how we might conceive rigour within the representation of the fast moving and ephemeral quality of creative practice remains contested, although it is not the main focus of my research here, it is however one determinant of the form taken by the dissertation and illustrative aspects of this thesis. The work is long (perhaps overlong?) and multiple because there is, as yet no single, simple narrative form, or convention, which is adequate to describe this relatively uncharted territory. I have constantly had to ask myself, where does my thinking about my practice stop, and my doing of practice start or even vice versa? How and when do I stop looking and at what point do I write what I think or capture what I see?

If methodological studies in the humanities and social sciences are considered as a means of serving a question of theory, then perhaps the case for fashion practice is different? Practice-led and practice-based research in both art and design have an extremely varied range of methods, since the subjectivity of the researcher is, generally, the most important component of the method or process. One aspect of method in fashion practice that often coheres the range of methods and research practices is the element of display.

#### **1.4. Display and Exhibition**

The research process and research outcome both integrate a number of forms of display and exhibition (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix A, H, e-Exhibition & Viva Voce Exhibition for

example). Fashion is, as a culture, generally considered a form of seeing and being seen. Even if 'dressing' is a rite performed 'on camera' or in private, it always carries meanings of some inter-subjective visual relationship, as 'appearing' to others. The function of appearance is something that fashion shares with other cultures of industrial modernity such as cinema, art, and sub cultural capital, and is often associated with youth and the 'rites-de-passage' (Gennep, 1960) of the ritual demarcation of social status. Fashion, like other ritual cultures, depends on being seen, understood and enjoyed by others. The garments I have made could certainly be placed within this environ and be critiqued, dissected, socially placed and discussed, however, this is not their purpose. The dimension of the visual appearance of the work from the start has a heightened meaning to the research in that I wish the individual pieces to be considered as beautiful, as intriguing and as symphonic arrangements of line, seam and form.

However, although this gives the work the characteristics<sup>12</sup> of which I consider to be significant to construct further knowledge as similar, this inquiry is concerned with how a fashion practitioner thinks and does practice and how this might be discerned, communicated and be considered as a research method concerned with 'a doing' of practice as inquiry.

Next is the element of aesthetic beauty which is also intrinsic to fashion womenswear, the appreciation of beauty often extends beyond the optical sense to include the feel or texture, drape and movement or sound of fabric and garments, but the visual sense plays a central part in this too. Whilst colour and surface decoration such as print and weave, are an important

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<sup>12</sup> The key characteristics of fashion practice require a unity and recognised style or handwriting that is to be evidenced by experiment, theory or concept and is further described in the conclusion.



part of fashion manufacturing, this research eliminates surface pattern and uses a narrow chromatic range in order to focus on the structure of pattern and form as the elements of *a doing* of fashion practice are to be analysed. The choice of fabrics, which range from starched cotton organdie to waxed linen and cotton calico, is based on my awareness of the different feel of fabrics, for constructing the toile and for the collection, and also the properties of certain fabrics and how they might become an asset to my muse. The semi transparent appearance of cotton organdie enables the garment to appear, in exhibition, as a diagrammatic image rather than clothes, further emphasizing the status of the garment as prototype rather than as costume.

A third aspect of the significance of display is the nature of the learning and transmission of tacit knowledge. Because tacit knowledge, by definition, has an uneasy relation to words, it requires a different form of representation. Lehmann (2012, p.11) describes this as the 'view over the shoulder' of the maker in the process of making garments. This journey of making required me as reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983), to position myself simultaneously 'within' and 'beside' myself: a moving in and out of experience if you like? The immersion in the process of reflective practice was either followed by a standing back to pause momentarily and look at what I had made or done, as a sort of thinking through doing, or an act of curating a whole sequence of made artefacts and imagery as an exhibition in order to receive responses from others.

However an exhibition of garments on mannequins, or sketches in a sketchbook, or pattern pieces, can only imply movement and process, and some viewers will be almost completely unable to understand the importance of movement, process and transformation in fashion practice. I therefore chose to make a short film (Figure 176, Appendix H, p.131), which exemplifies as well as illustrates my method of practice. In order to achieve this I acquired the software to teach myself filmmaking and editing and put together my archive of documentation

with a soundtrack that contained some reflective commentary, to make the idea of process as transformational and reflective, and more readily accessible within exhibitions and more conventional displays. For example, the film contains a study of the image of the fold, a poetic symbol of the tacit that is not yet visible. A short clip within the film has been edited from a conference I attended in Milan where I was invited to demonstrate how video could be used as a research method (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix Ai.). The film can accompany the dress, as artefact, as outcome, in many places of display, which enables viewers to glimpse the significance of the invisibility of the 'hidden' work invested in the object as artefact. Especially important in textile and fashion cultures is the foregrounding of the work of construction because, unlike engineering for example, this work is often overlooked. Conspicuous displays of handwork in fashion, such as elaborate beading, hand embroidery or even the tireless drawing and re drawing of the seam and style lines on the toile, are usually features of luxury and extravagance, which belie the history of the invisibility of the designer or seamstress (from Puccini's *La Boheme's* Mimi to the non-unionised sweatshops of Pakistan and China). All these aspects of the visual component of the research is, comprehensively, collected and archived in the volume of practice (Introduction, Narrative 1, 2, 3 and e-Exhibition). The volume of practice, which includes conversations with five spectator respondents who actively and critically engaged with my narratives of practice (Narrative 3, p.50-80, Appendix C & D), is the central component of the research outcome. The written dissertation is a supporting document, which maintains a parallel of explanatory relation to the volume of practice<sup>13</sup>, which both led the research and in which the research is based through. The two volumes are both

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<sup>13</sup> The 'Volume of Practice' is hence to be referred to as a 'Portfolio of Practice' to reflect industry terms of reference.

stored in digital form which enables them to be read in any font required by readers on computer, enlarged for sight impaired readers, and with universal access to text-to-speech software that can be accessed by dyslexic or the blind too. My ambition was to ensure that the three dimensionality of my work sustained and is therefore presented as an interactive piece where my garments can be viewed in 360 degrees (Narrative 3 p.40 for example) and where film and audio are integral to the narrative. Sadly, the need for digital archiving of practice-based or led research thesis precludes the tactile encounter with artefacts, a frustration I share with all the practice-based and led researchers in the RCA School of Material, and others.

Although many authorities make a simple distinction between definitions of 'word' and 'image'<sup>14</sup> as two realms of representation, this distinction is not altogether sufficient for fashion practice research. Whilst I have made use of images and film as a means of recording a narrative of seeing my process and practice, and have written on the toile and embroidered words on the garments (Exhibition, p.48-49 for example) in order to show the interpretation of these two forms of knowing, it is impossible to include the embodied, sensory, encounter with materials as the central medium for this practice as knowledge. What are the conceptual compromises of classifying 'material' beneath the taxonomy of 'visual'? A major distortion of the authority of the practitioners' knowledge is at stake and perhaps why I have mediated and been over preoccupied with (my) looking at practice (e-Exhibition, Practices of Looking); is it that the materiality is compromised and left to the spectator to imagine further and this has rhapsodised my visual ambitions? This constraint of dissemination has other implications for the

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<sup>14</sup> In this research context both word and visual image are used as constructs of a dialogic (as McIntosh's view: 2010, p.130) as the reflective interactions, practice contexts and visual traces, as a record of a doing of practice, are brought into being (discussed further in Chapter .6).

generic definition of research in the arts and design. Curators and exhibition designers confront this predicament when constructing exhibitions of fashion design and fashion practice. The research is still in its infancy as major museums in the UK have only recently started to curate fashion (Barbican, The House of Viktor and Rolf 2008; Embankment Gallery, Skin and Bones 2008; Museum of London, Fashion and Modernity 2005; Victoria and Albert, Street Style 2005; The Golden Age of Couture 2010 etc.). Whereas in museums the garments must not be touched, the tactile dimension of materials is nevertheless more readily discernable than in digital forms of dissemination. It is hoped that my engagement with such deep reflective practice (Portfolio of practice, 'This Voice') will go some way to explicate and sustain my encounter with the 'material'; at the very least my aim is to have constructed such an intangible asset, when held digitally as archive, to be more knowable.

### **1.5. Research Aims and Objectives**

This constructed narrative comprises three stages of examination (Narratives 1, 2 & 3), that aim to open out discussions concerning fashion practice as inquiry, to build on its theoretical maturity and to suggest a critical visual method that is concerned with creative-authorship, production methodologies and cultural dissemination of the discipline

This thesis aims to examine the practices of the fashion (design) practitioner over a four-year period during the design and development of a eight-piece collection of fashion womenswear in order to understand more of their thoughts and actions, tacit moments of discovery if you like, that contribute to the creative practice process and its visual ambition. A contribution to knowledge is developed through, in and of a visual and literary language of fashion practice that reconciles the tacit dialogues embodied within a knowing knowledge of practice: an archaeology of a critical gaze is argued, as a narrative of seeing emerges of a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice in a curated context of a dialogic method (Figure 28).

### **1.5.1. Research Aims**

- To further engage with the tacit dialogues embodied within the voice of the deeply engaged fashion practitioner.
- To argue a paradigm for and in support of fashion practice as inquiry through, in and of practice.
- To engage with a critical visual method to determine an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice.
- To construct a dialogic method as way of seeing a narrative of practice as inquiry.

### **1.5.2. Research Objectives: The Practice Project**

- To construct a portfolio of fashion practice as inquiry<sup>15</sup>.
- To design, develop and produce a 'collection' of fashion womenswear

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<sup>15</sup> ...to include sketches, drafted and finished works, crossings out, reflective thoughts, visual concept maps, contextual reference, discarded actions, handwritten and visual note-taking and all associated visual imagery etc.

- To communicate the cognitive and behavioural reasoning of practice when developing a body of creative work.
- To engage the spectator in a narrative space of fashion practice as inquiry.

### **1.5.3. Research Objectives: The Dissertation**

- To determine a mixed-methods approach to the research method to facilitate the practice as inquiry.
- To investigate an archaeology or thought structure in support of a way of seeing a narrative of fashion practice as inquiry.
- To engage with a critical gaze of practice as a method to describe a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice.
- To reconcile the tacit dialogues embodied within a reasoned knowing of fashion practice to construct a knowing knowledge of the discipline.

### **1.6. The PhD and Thesis Outline**

The introduction sets out the purpose of my research and describes the problem that is faced by the practitioner when it comes to 'doing' practice for the purposes of inquiry. Both academia and industry are consumed by the current status and norms of fashion being considered as trade or a cultural driver of social ambition and celebrity.

I discuss the difficulty in determining exactly what 'research category' (Candy, 2006) my work sits within and of my ambition to externalise the complexity of my thinking and doing of fashion practice (as inquiry). I have discussed the key terms that I have used and adopted for the purpose of this inquiry and acknowledge the uniqueness of these to my research intentions. References to Foucault, Nietzsche, Kant and Bakhtin are ambitious I know, but, as I ponder my thinking and doing journey amongst their great works I have somehow come to recognise my reflective-self.

As yet a research methods paradigm for, and in support of, fashion practice as inquiry does not appear to exist. Chapter one discusses both the relevant literature on fashion theory and the much contended 'what is design research' that Frayling (1993 p.1) and Friedman (2009, p.154) espouse (amongst others) so that I might prove, disprove or validate their claims through my own work. The aim of this research is to further the discussions of Breward (2003), Frisa (2008) and Evan's (2007) in order to distinguish between the visual cultures of fashion design and focus more specifically on the (absent) cultural phenomenon of fashion practice as inquiry and that this might contribute to the wider debate of 'what is design research' in a fashion (design) practice (as inquiry) context?

Chapter two discusses the research approach and the research methods that I use. I draw on Schön (1983) and Rose (2007, p.197-207), as both are key to my research methods and principles. Chapter three is concerned with the core activity: the portfolio of practice is placed under scrutiny to discern of a theory and method of the work and where I draw on the work of Burnette (2009), McNiff's (2007), Clandinin and Huber (2002) and Marshall and Newton (2000) to make sense of the sense-making (Kolko, 2010b, p.7).

Chapter four reviews and reflects on the findings of this constructed narrative of fashion practice as inquiry. A method of story telling that has resulted in my greater understanding of

what I think and what I do when practicing. I now understand why practitioners find difficulty in linking theory with their practice as the abutment of the empirical and rational appear as fundamental to the discovery I am about to make.

Finally the conclusion ponders a future narrative of practice as inquiry and of the characteristics of fashion practice that I referred to earlier. A research paradigm is argued to enable a deliberate observation of experience, perception, reasoning, cognition and behaviour, and as a consequence became an observable phenomenon and a theory-of-action (Argyris and Schön, 1974, p.5). The chapter concludes that there are many more conversations that are yet to be had and many more questions yet to be answered.

This was a journey of discovery.



## **I. Scholarly Research in a Fashion Practice Context**

This chapter is a discussion in two halves. It firstly leads a discussion on the relevant literature that informs the research from both authors and reviewers of fashion theory and who question fashion's position and place in a cultural landscape and then secondly, and more comprehensively, discusses the key readings drawn from the design research and philosophical scholars who have informed the research thinking and doing.

Key writers on fashion theory are discussed within an identifiable, and perhaps recognisable, cultural space such as Evan's (2007) views of the performance and contemporary fashion practices, Breward's (2003a) position of clarity whereby the limiting and singular theories of fashion are openly debated and Frisa's belief of a curatorial approach to fashion that could engender new ways of seeing fashion practice. The views of Martin (Beard, 2008, p.182) are considered and who openly claims the exhibition *SHOWstudio: Fashion Revolution* as a dynamic and new panacea of positioning fashion practice in a cultural space (considered a starting point for this practice as inquiry (Narrative I, p.18).

This chapter is informed by the scholarly debate as to what exactly is design research in a practice context? Lawson and Dorst's (2009, p.10) belief of a 'collection of skills', Tseëlon's (2001, p.436) claim that the (fashion) discipline lacks theoretical underpinning and Davies's (1985, p.116) discernment of a shifting research method, all suggest the design research discipline, and in particular fashion design practice, has some way to go in establishing a recognisable and accepted research path, never mind research tradition. Above all Friedman's (2009, p.154) contention of Frayling's view (1993, p.1) of design research as 'communicable knowledge' is the basis that this chapter (and thesis) takes further. This chapter considers the debate that is yet to be had on what is fashion practice as inquiry?

The work of other disciplines of which this practice as inquiry also draws (such as the medical research professions) is also discussed and drawn upon. The latter half of this chapter acknowledges Dash and Ponce (2005, p.2) and Niedderer and Reilly (2010, p.1) and others, compelling argument that new approaches to practice inquiry are fundamental. Schön's (1983) action research methodologies, reflective practice and the 'problem solution' space, Nimkulrat's (2007, p.1-2) suggestion of a 'conscious exploration of knowledge' and Norris-Reeves et al's (2012, p.9) belief of a 'process of intelligence that links both the process and the action' suggest an opportunity for translating a number of these arguments into a practice context for the purposes of practice as inquiry is considered.

Significantly, the context of the discussions around 'what is design research' are informed by Foucault's (1926-1984) relational systems of thought and knowledge and his essay 'What is an author?' (1969), Kant's (1724-1804) critical perception of reason and Nietzsche's (1844-1900) consciousness of seeing as knowing. It is the pondering of such brilliance that led the inquiry to assemble and organise how a doing of practice might be considered as an archaeology of which a critical gaze might emerge and be constructed.

### **1.1. A Cultural Turn**

Fashion practice, as discourse is a relatively new and emerging phenomenon. Breward (2003a p.14) has claimed that the discipline demonstrates a tendency to concern itself with singular theories of commerce, cultural, historical and social contexts. Fashion practice as a high-culture discipline is notably fixated on the creative endeavours of those practitioners who are renowned as key visionaries, and characterised by the domination of their scopic regime. In the twenty-first century fashion has assumed a position of theatre or spectacle that willfully emerges as an intrinsic monument in fashion's landscape.

Evans (2007, p.4) cites the trends of 'heroin chic' and the 'distressed body' of the 1990s as 'traumas' that were acted out through the contemporary fashion practices of the time. The early part of the twenty-first century witnessed McQueen's mastery of extravaganza and exemplary tailoring. Pugh's darker obsessions, on the other hand, concerned with abstract form and geometric obscurity, have consistently provided the rhetoric of many fashion retrospectives. Fashion design, as spectacle, as theatre, as exhibition, in the twenty-first century is testament to an intrinsic manifestation of the fashion practitioner's vision and these are consumed as monuments positioned and placed on fashion's landscape. The practices of Gareth Pugh, Rodarte, Dior, Martin Margiela and Vivienne Westwood, for example, are an inherently modern phenomenon of a postmodern visual culture that situates fashion as a discipline worthy of critical acclaim. Beyond the retrospective, what knowledge can be gleaned from these complex narratives, emanating visualities and tacit dialogues of the practitioner, their practice and of the discipline? What (how) do we know of the fashion practitioner's knowing knowledge and the physicality and materiality of their reasoning of practice? Such representations of conceptual or contextual metaphor construct the knowledge of the discipline, but are limited by their resolve rather than the relativities of the emerging narrative of (doing) practice itself.

To further engage with the fashion image and/or fashion artefact in a postmodern context<sup>16</sup> the manifestation of theme, experiment or symbolic representation continually take the form of abstract statements, sculptural forms or technological propositions, and are more often a

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<sup>16</sup> Postmodern in this context draws from the modern assumption of a universal truth and the construction of such truths as all that is.

cultural or social inference of something that needs to be said. The fashion practitioner's oeuvre remains elusive, and the narrative of a lived reality of practice (a doing) goes by unnoticed, and therefore unacknowledged, as knowledge of the discipline. These tacit moments of discovery as a phenomenon of fashion practice remain tacit until after the fact, leaving inquiry into the practices of (doing) fashion practice (as a discipline in its own right) without record or foundation.

The evolution of fashion inquiry is experiencing a 'cultural turn', as Breward has referred (2003a, p.9-11). Whilst the twentieth century made the transition from historical and cultural referencing to looking back to looking forward to an insatiable fascination with consumer culture and social identity, the twenty-first century now passages the curiosities of, and fascination with, the cognitive and behavioural concerns of the dialogues emerging from the fashion practitioner and their practice. Breward (2003a, p.232) has acknowledged the emergence of the 'spectacle' in the twenty-first century and the way that this has become a dominant trait and a medium or language by which fashion speaks. However, the spectacle, perpetually mastered by the eminent eyes of Galliano, Lagerfeld for Chanel, McQueen, Viktor and Rolf, Chalayan and others, outwardly manipulate the spectator to further debate issues concerning the historical, cultural and or social contexts that are perceived. This now commonly accepted visual language excludes any insights into the discourse of (doing) fashion practice itself. How can we engage and see further into the deeply immersive tacit dialogues of the fashion practitioner's thinking, the inner conversations that lead the practice aesthetic and of

the knowledge gained of the *visuality*<sup>17</sup> of fashion practice itself? The sad loss of McQueen's genius in recent times, Schiaparelli or Saint Laurent of times past for example, will mean that we may never know or begin to understand such intimate, intuitive or tacit moments of discovery, knowing if you like, that were experienced and perceived through their practice beyond the spectacle/s they have come to be renowned for? This is considered a loss for academia, the discipline and the industry, as we can no longer draw from their mastery or skill.

Penny Martin, Editor-in-Chief of *SHOWstudio*, in an interview with Beard (2008, p.182), talked of her desire to broaden the understanding and meaning of the processes and practices of fashion, and considered the creative intentions of the 2009 exhibition *SHOWstudio: Fashion Revolution* at Somerset House, London, to be positioned within a curated context that was inclusive of the cultural, social and political domains. The exhibition, although a retrospective, attempted to interpret the narratives of fashion process and practice through visual texts, audio and oral means and in doing so granted validity to the physical and material existence of practice. The exhibition experimented with the experiential and participatory dialogues of spectator, artefact and practitioner, and curated an insightful rather than critical or aesthetic comment, but notably assumed a curated context by which the language of fashion practice<sup>18</sup> could speak. Amid the narratives of practice a window of seeing emerged that would otherwise have not been seen. As a visual culture there appears more to be discovered about the knowing knowledge (discussed further in 2.6) that exists within fashion practice in this

<sup>17</sup> The *visuality* of fashion practice refers to the plurality bestowed of a voice that mediates the constructed image or artefact by visual or literary means.

<sup>18</sup> The author discusses and reflects further on the exhibition *SHOWstudio: Fashion Revolution* and can be found in the *Portfolio of Practice* (Introduction p.18 & 19).

modern postmodern era. This surge of activity and interest suggests that a curated intervention of practice<sup>19</sup> could place the discipline under scrutiny and that we might begin to place value on what it is that practitioners do when engaging with their practice. In a practice context, the (research) practice community is tasked with constructing a way of seeing fashion's narrative as reasoned and understood in a modern postmodern context to ensure that the cultural value of (doing) practice as a valid research activity is secured beyond spectacle and frippery. It is this curated intervention of practice (as inquiry) that this research situates a constructed narrative of (doing) fashion practice.

## **1.2. A Curated Intervention of Practice**

Bancroft (2012 p.77) has noted that in relation to haute couture, as a cultural phenomenon the high culture of fashion is no longer encountered as a mere business activity, suggesting a recent positioning of a cultural context (such as the museum or gallery exhibition) in the last decade or so that has afforded a meaning to fashion quite different from those intrinsic to when it may have been worn. The adoption of exhibition as a worthy position and place for fashion suggests credence is granted to cultural critique over economic success for fashion as aesthetic or fashion practice as artefact. Bancroft (p.78) goes on to suggest that '...the woman is quite literally left out of the frame' when fashion is exhibited in any form, alluding to a reckoning of creative agency and the fashion aesthetic (rather than a commodity to be measured by its commercial success, or social or cultural adoption as clothing).

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<sup>19</sup> The validity of curating fashion practice in this new museology context is argued as a triangulative model where the practitioners relationship to their practice and the spectator is placed under scrutiny and the tacit principles or points of reference are assumed (and generally understood) yet not central to the critique or validation; is it wearable, does it fit, is it costume, men's or women's wear or simply is it fashion etc. become secondary or immaterial in this context?

Frisa (2008, p.172) has suggested that through curatorial intervention a discourse of fashion (fashion practice in this research context) could be constructed to provide fresh points of observation that could challenge the boundaries often assumed in relation to the arts, architecture, design communication and the fashion industries. A curated approach to the infinite and complex trail of the emerging spectacle of fashion practice as inquiry, as an archaeology for structuring practitioner thought and action, is considered a research imperative toward constructing a narrative of fashion practice. Concurring with Bancroft's view, the authors' exhibition (Figure 6) and the portfolio of practice under review, suggests a detailed trail of the design and development of the practices of the fashion practitioner could facilitate opportunity for critical and cultural encounter to construct and communicate further, knowledge of (doing) practice.



*Figure 6. The Developing Practice Aesthetic,  
Authors Exhibition of Fashion Practice,  
RCA, Lower Gulbenkian Gallery.*

Fashion practice as inquiry, in this research context, concerns itself with a contemporary view, as Evans (2007, p.4) has argued, of a construction of image and meaning that resides 'at the edge' of commercial need. Therefore this practice, as inquiry, extends Evans view and makes a



distinction between fashion design<sup>20</sup> and fashion practice in that a collection or a collection of related artefacts may, in the first instance, be realised without commercial consideration and curated for the purposes of a scholarly encounter.

### **1.3. Scholarly Research in a (Fashion) Practice Context**

Much debate exists as to what actually constitutes a contribution to knowledge in a practice domain, and design research, as knowledge of practice and as a scholarly activity, is believed to be failing in its contribution to adequately build any knowledge of substance in the academic community (Dilnot, 1998, p.1-2). Lawson and Dorst (2009 p.10) have argued for the complexity of design thinking and as a 'collection of skills', believe that design, as research, remains one of the least fathomable cognitive functions. Much like Lawson and Dorst, this inquiry considers that scholarly expertise could be created if the practice community could find a more fitting way of learning to better understand design thinking and the expert<sup>21</sup> (fashion) design practitioner. Moreover, a highly critical review of fashion research by Tseëlon (2001 p.436) contends that the discipline suffers from an image problem, has failed to build a worthy body of knowledge and suggests a 'misuse of theory', with an overly complex mix of research methods being evident. It is the view of this research that Tseëlon's stark observations of the apparent lack of using theory as a platform to formulate research questions and of the little evidence to demonstrate the building on prior research work or empirical study exercises the

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<sup>20</sup> Fashion design, although it can and does exist at the edge of the discipline, prioritises commercial concern and therefore falls outside the parameters considered in this inquiry.

<sup>21</sup> Cross (2011 p.6) believed that an assumed characteristic of an expert (fashion) practitioner is a visible determination in achieving a desired aesthetic based on extensive knowledge of the practice discipline.

inadequacies perceived of the fashion practice (research) community? From this point of view alone it is clear that a more purposeful and engaging qualitative approach is needed that could confidently build a worthy body of knowledge in support of this emanating research discipline. Also, from these strikingly differing beliefs, and a view supported by Dally et al, (2004, p.2), it is evident that a consensus has yet to be reached by many of today's scholars of what constitutes scholarly research in a practice domain and for practice to be meaningfully considered as inquiry.

Davies (1985, p.116) discerns of the shifting reality of a research method as initially one of unity and acknowledges that the search for sense-making could sometimes overshadow the opportunities of the discovery as it unfolded. Davies' view suggests a trading-off, firstly from a position of being reactive and aware of the data being collected, and secondly from being conscious of the research objectives to ensure that the data collected is both purposeful and meaningful. Of general note is the ease of which this fashion practitioner and not necessarily as researcher or author got distracted whilst developing the collection as a body of work for the purposes of inquiry: a constant reminder was needed of the ultimate goal as not being the design idea or a resolved practice aesthetic but of reflection, of discovery or of something that needed to be said?

In Davies' (1985, p.114) summary of his findings there appears to be a growing ambition to share design experiences and any resulting discovery with others. Davies describes the excitement of the 'partial insights' that he observes during the data collection phase. This research identifies and has witnessed such partial insights (Figure 7) as an externalising of the tacit 'said' (Foucault, 1969, p.27) observed through the data collected from both the practitioner and the spectator (Appendix E(ii), p.90 for example).

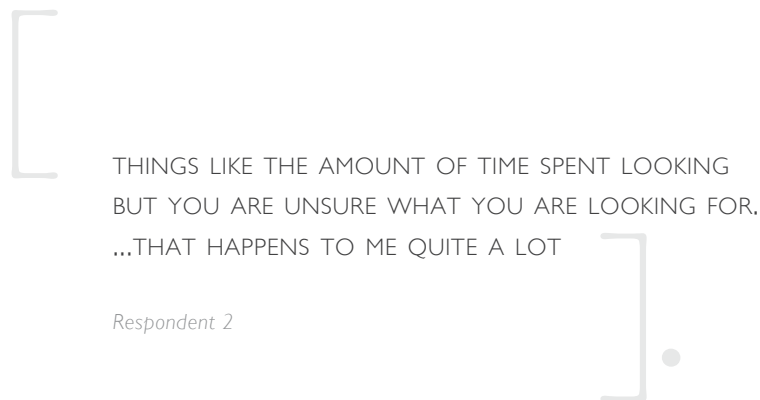


Figure 7. Example of a (shared) 'Partial Insight', Narrative 3, Respondent 2, p.57.

A necessary transparency (Coumans, 2003, p.64) is needed of practice-based (led) research of the practice process that integrates and exposes theoretical depth. More recently, Friedman (2009, p.154) argues that Frayling's view is problematic as research into, through and for design practice are research categories, rather than research methodologies. Friedman argues that design research practice relies on tacit knowledge that is inherently difficult to make explicit, suggesting that the lived practitioner experience (as a narrative inquiry of practice) requires theoretical maturity to explicate the embodied inquiry of practice, tacit or otherwise, as an unequivocal valid form of enquiry. Much can be learnt from Ajjawi and Higgs' paper *Using Hermeneutic Phenomenology to Investigate How Experienced Practitioners Learn to Communicate Clinical Reasoning* (2007) in exemplifying a research framework that may translate to the field of practice as inquiry. Although in a different subject domain, comparisons can be drawn from the clinical professions (as Foucault also drew upon in his *Birth of the Clinic* in 1963, on which this research draws), where clinical practice shares some commonality with art and design research practice. Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) explore an 'interpretive understanding' as a paradigm that is concerned with assessing meaning through reasoning in a clinical setting where no 'one' approach is deemed the right approach to either reasoning or communication of a given

problem or solution. Along with Davis (2008, p.73) this inquiry proposes that a new or novel research paradigm is needed in order to better understand the (fashion) design (practice) process and contemporary design practices and that an interpretive method may enable *doing* practice as inquiry to be made meaningful.

Although Boyer's framework is not explicit to practice, Boyer (1990, p.17-25) rigorously defends scholarship and proposes that a paradigm 'shift' is needed for redefining what is meant or understood by scholarly research in a practice context. Further, Marshall and Newton (2000, p.2) argue that there is scope for valid forms of scholarly activity more suited to practice such that a contribution to the 'collective understanding' of knowledge may broaden what has become a fixed view of what (fashion) design research as narrative inquiry of practice is or could become. Boyer's view challenges the conventional boundaries that characterise a common understanding of what is meant by the scholarship of research, and it is this repositioning of enquiry that supports Frayling's (1993 p.1) view of design research as 'communicable knowledge' constituted through cognitive and behavioural narratives of practice (as in the work of Clandinin and Huber, 2002) that this research argues for.

In the continuing debate on the nature of design research, Frayling (1993 p.5) suggests that differentiation existed amongst design research practice, and determines three distinct categories in support of art and design inquiry. Firstly, Frayling argues that research 'into' practice supports the historical, the cultural, the aesthetic and or the theoretical and/or investigative approach to practice inquiry: secondly, that research 'through' practice concerns itself with materials research, developmental work and/or the experiment, these 'through' practice contexts often being elucidated through action research methodologies, and thirdly, research 'for' practice, where the research is embodied within the artefact itself. Extending Frayling's view of research 'through' practice, this inquiry proposes that the consequential

contexts *in and of* practice authenticate and validate a narrative of practice as inquiry *through* a doing of practice.

#### **1.4. Practice as Inquiry**

Much contention exists about what design research is, and Frayling's (1993, p.1) view of design research as 'communicable knowledge' is still widely debated. It is generally acknowledged that fashion (design) practitioners are challenged by the linking of theory with their practice, as practice just happens, and is predominantly tacit until after the fact. The physicality of tacit knowledge in this modern postmodern era remains elusive, perpetuating the implicit and arbitrary nature of fashion practice and its high-culture status. A position of complexity exists in relation to fashion practice as inquiry, as the practitioner cognitively and behaviourally contextualises, conceptualises, visualises and *does* practice in an own version of reality. As knowledge, this version of reality, as a reasoning of practice, is primarily tacit and generally lost to a moment's knowing (experienced only by the practitioner) as it is lived. According to Barrett (2006, p.135), a dilemma is faced for researchers within the creative arts when writing about their work, given the subjective nature of the discipline. This research considers tacit knowledge (of a doing) of fashion practice passages several iterations of reasoning through, *in and of* practice with little or no evidence of its detailed, infinite or complex trail.

Interpreting Amulya's (2004, p.3) claim about the 'doing' that 'swallows up the learning', it is posited that in a practice context the tacit knowledge of fashion practice passes by as indeterminate, and hence unacknowledged. In this context Dash and Ponce (2005, p.2) and Niedderer and Reilly (2010, p.1) contend a compelling argument that signals new approaches to practice inquiry are fundamental if we are to advance research practice in the creative disciplines. The object-focused model of inquiry is transitioning to become an experience-centric model as the research and practice communities position the immersive, the experiential, the perceptual and the participatory (as a modern post modern context) as

integral to the construction and creation of knowledge. It is this situating of the immersive, the experiential, the perceptual and the participatory that this research considers a constructed narrative of fashion practice as it is lived. Could the notion of a living portfolio be reflected upon, (using on-line blogging, smartphone voice recordings, video diary and audio narrative for example.) to explicate the ethnographies experienced and perceived by both the fashion practitioner and the spectator of practice: an interactive and immersive dialogue that sustains beyond the moment of doing?

Friedman (2003, p.512) argues that design research can construct theory by asking questions in a systematic way, the principles of which may be hermeneutic, ethnographic, naturalistic or even drawn from medical methodologies suggesting a validity in adopting a mixed-method approach. Further, Friedman (2003, p.513) argues for scholarly research, in its most basic form, as a model: 'an illustration that describes how things work and the dynamic relationships that are active within the model'. However links have been made when examining personality characteristics and that creativity and design thinking can be intuitive (Durling, 2003, p.1). With this in mind, we must be cautious or cognisant of Durling's view (p.5), who went on to argue that designers fear a systematic approach to their practice, and that this could meddle with their intuitive knowing. If this is the case, then Cross's (2011) and others' attempts at systematising design creativity could be challenged as this could be perceived as damaging to the inquiry of practice itself?

The work of Burnette (2009a) discusses a belief that practitioners do understand their experiences, and suggests that an intention is formed during the process of practice. Perhaps linear models such as Burnette's (2009, p.4) 'Intentional Frame: Any Mode' would benefit from further in practice contexts to be more meaningful in the pursuit of what practitioners do, both cognitively and behaviourally? Although with merit, Burnette (2009, p.4) and Friedman's (2003, p.512) systematising of the mental and perceptual understanding of design practice resonated

with Durling's (1999) fear expressed earlier, their beliefs may well encumber the liberties associated with a truth to what is seen, what is known and what is meant (*as what is*<sup>22</sup>) that this inquiry posits.

Drawing on Ajjawi and Higgs' (2007) 'interpretive research paradigm', Burnette's linear model, and the need for further in practice contexts, this inquiry chooses to consider a process by which a visual mapping of the interpreted actualities of experience 'as story' could be perceived, described, contextualised, discussed and shared. This research argues a method, not necessarily for linear models such that Burnette describes, but for a method of visually mapping a perceptual record of experience that could affirm the layers of reckoning, reasoning and visualising as a doing of practice as it happens: diagrammatic comments<sup>23</sup> as they are perceived and reflected upon as a truth to *what is*, as it is lived lets say (an example of a diagrammatic comment can be found in Narrative 2, p.15 p.48 & p.50)? This method of visually mapping the concepts considered whilst *in* practice could conceivably explicate the very reasoning of practice that this research considers: a sense-making of the observed and perceived truths of practice negotiated 'through' (Frayling, 1993) a doing of practice for the purposes of what practice as inquiry is or could become: a method where discovery through reflection could be made meaningful to the research aim and this to be considered as data, both visual and literary, for the purpose of a 'collective understanding' (Marshall and Newton, 2000, p.2) or as 'communicable knowledge' (Frayling, 1993 p.1)?

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22 The notion of *what is* draws on Polanyi's (1966, pp.4-6) notion of 'thought and existence' and is discussed further in chapter 1.6, Nietzsche's observations of the infinite and Foucault post-structuralist thought systems (in Bouchard, 1977, p.17) also further discussed in chapter 1.7.

23 These diagrammatic comments feature throughout this thesis as visual concept maps of the interpreted and perceived theories of a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice.

### **1.5. Discovery through Reflection**

An accepting momentum in academia is evident of a model for reflection in action that could empower the empirical nature of the reflective practitioner in an *own* practice context. In 1983 Schön first posited action research as a valid research method and it is his concern for the experiential, the interpretive and of reflective inquiry that is considered as transforming for the practice-based and led disciplines. Such theories have been the source of many academic texts concerning the reflective practice process and of the reflective practitioner (Smith, 2001, p.3). However, there appears an inherent difficulty in translating and documenting reflective practice through action research methods when engaged with such a performative act of (doing) fashion practice due to the momentary, physical and material visibility of the discipline. Over the centuries it appears that observing (or reflecting upon) the empirical nature of 'fashion' has been over looked and has only ever been considered (valued?) upon its resolve (the fashion show, the shop window, the history book etc.).

In her own work, Yee (2006, p.70-73) refers to the 'rigour' of action research (Argyris and Schön, 1974, p.4) claiming that the method can elicit a rich and expressive dialogue. This reinforces the view of Bugg (2009, p.10) who finds that design practice embodied within a research method is empirical with an emphasis on reflection, whilst Dorosh (2007, p.60) discusses 'the process: from there to here' and reflects on the production of the artefact over time. In adopting action research methods and the 'problem solution' space that Schön champions, together with Frayling's espousal of practice-based (led) research as knowledge to be communicated, does advocate that such active dialogues gained through reflective practice could support and further construct knowledge of the discipline.



What if what I see and understand is abstracted (or constructed) from my reasonings and (as rational thought) becomes what is (meant)? Would this take the engagement of my practice beyond practice itself? In the simplest of terms, as a priori knowledge, is it that self critique (as reflective intent) is reasoned with by what I know and understand in the here and now of my practice.

A telling of my practice becomes what is as truth to the doing of my practice?

Extending the Narrative Beyond Practice Itself

Figure 8. Example of On-the-Spot Reflection, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.8.

This inquiry is to consider the complexity of (doing) fashion practice as inquiry; a research method problem of which a solution is to be contended. Through reflective practice and in adopting on-the-spot 'action and reflection' (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.20) that then leads to reflection 'in and on action' (Figure 8), similarly argued by Schön (1983) and his model of 'reflection-in-action', advocates action research methods such as these could contextualise the empirical nature of the practitioner's thinking and doing. Could this be an engendering of tacit knowledge's imperative in constructing knowledge of the discipline? By granting validity to the practitioners' reflections (as truth to what is), as empirical knowledge of a doing of practice is to enable the tacit said, which is never described nor put in to words, to come into existence. Should the very performative act of doing practice as inquiry be considered as a journey of discovery, a 'conscious exploration of knowledge' (Nimkulrat, 2007, p.1-2), then such situating

of reflective practice as inquiry through action research methods is to be argued as a method to enable a 'thick' set of perceptions and experiences to be made sense of.

### **1.6. A Knowing Knowledge**

Polanyi first contended the 'tacit dimension' in 1966 and argues the existence of a tacit knowing and, as knowledge, how 'thought and existence' (p.4-6) might bridge the discovery of what is perceived. Additionally, Polanyi also suggests that thought and existence are deeply 'rooted' in a knowledge universe and that human knowledge can 'know' much more than is ever said of the knowing. This reinforces James' view (2001 [1892] p.204) who had long ago argued for the general laws of perception, suggesting that what is reasoning but a train of associated thoughts of the practical and the theoretical as '*concrete*' (p.219). However, despite such provocative claims, the practitioner's oeuvre (as Foucault's '*complete oeuvre*', 1969, p.23-33) as a reasoning of practice, indeed as a knowing of their practice, still remains elusive. The inference that thought, action and the image of the mind's rationality (as *what is* in this research context) is a vastness and vagueness relating to the very dimensions of its existence is best described by James (p.203) as a 'volume of sensation' (p.204) that could be measured neither by surface nor depth. It might be that such a knowing knowledge, if it exists at all or can indeed be claimed as knowable, could be considered through a reasoned knowing of practice: a thinking and doing through the complex narratives, emanating visualities and tacit dialogues of a doing of practice somehow all at the same time. Is this the 'volume-sensation' James describes?

This research considers that a cognitive and behavioural reasoning as a knowing knowledge has yet to be visibly and theoretically adopted (recognised?) for the purposes of knowledge creation by the academic or fashion practice research communities and is perhaps why doing practice for the purposes of inquiry is viewed as ill defined? Friedman (2009, p.153-4) recognises tacit knowledge as an important knowledge category but argues that tacit knowledge's imperative is its endurance and clarity in processing empirical reasoning through

knowledge conversion. This view alone highlights tacit knowledge's requisite in becoming explicit for others to derive importance from. It is clear that a design research method, or an illustration of such a method, is needed to better understand and make explicit *the tacit* when engaged with a doing of practice. This is particularly so for educators in fashion design practice, those in professional practice and or where concern is for the tacit nature of a 'craft skill' (Wood et al, 2009, p.66).

This research is mindful of McIntosh's (2010, p.130) view, which suggests that metaphor, symbolism and dialogic, as comparable 'consciousness-raising experiences', could conceivably reveal a 'multi-voicedness' considered as unique discursive events. As references to a *knowing*<sup>24</sup> in practice are burgeoning, this research considers such a multiple dialogues as a dialogic method that could facilitate a bringing together of the constituent parts of a constructed narrative of practice. In this modern post modern era the time is right for such multiple voices of practice to be heard and a meaningful dialogue to be had and where doing practice as inquiry can come into being?

### **1.7. Archaeology of a Critical Gaze (A Way of Seeing)**

Significant to this inquiry is the work of Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, social theorist and academic who describes himself as a 'professor of the history of systems of thought'. Despite his political activism, evident in many of his works, this research drew on Foucault's intriguing brilliance in posing discursive situational and relational scenarios, almost thesis-like

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<sup>24</sup> A 'knowing' in this research context is considered to be a reasoned knowing of *what is*: what is seen, what is known and what is meant at the time of knowing.

statements that challenge the perception of *what is*. For example, Foucault (1969, p.27) claims an 'archaeology of thought' originates as a discourse of practice that shares a common understanding of a tacit 'said' which is in fact never said. Such a claim is difficult to ignore and as such this research considers tacit knowledge to be an important knowledge category and fundamental to practice as inquiry? In a practice context, drawing on Foucault's work<sup>25</sup> advocated to the author, as researcher, that a thought structure or 'way of seeing' (Berger, 1972) fashion practice might exist in understanding further the experiences, reasoning and perceptions of the fashion practitioner when engaging with their practice.

In the 1960s Foucault constructed intellectual thought that revitalised a cultural space that some believed led to the consolidation of the human sciences as 'active' knowledge (Bouchard, in Foucault, 1977, p.16). We could interpret Foucault's excogitations as a post-structuralist thinker and consider the possibilities of language construction and how language is capable of representing (doing) practice and how such reasoning further posits linkages to a consciousness of *what is* (Bouchard, 1977, p.17). Similarly, Foucault drew on Nietzsche's (1844-1900) *The Birth of Tragedy*, and his writings that were concerned with the sense and meaning of poetry that gave '...birth to myth' as a truth to what is seen (in Gay and Kaufmann, 2000, p.104-108).

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<sup>25</sup> Foucault's works include *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969)

If our understanding is to content itself with the perception of these analogies, we are reduced to a frame of mind which makes impossible any reception of the mythical: for the myth wants to be experienced vividly as a unique example of a universality and truth that gaze into the infinite (Nietzsche, in Gay and Kaufmann, 2000, p.107).

These claims give a sense that thought as a universal conversation can determine the existence of *what is*, and the perception of which is to be argued as an 'own' knowing of *what is*, at the time of knowing. We are now to consider Foucault's reorganising of common thought concerning medical perception and how this research assimilates (such thought) as pertinent to the fashion practice discipline. In his essay *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963) Foucault proposes the separation of firstly the patient 'as body' and secondly the patient 'as person'. The term 'medical gaze' became known as describing a field of knowledge through examination, and it is through this juxtapositional view of 'gaze' that this research contends a narrative of seeing fashion practice could exist. From this perspective we might consider Nietzsche's observations of the infinite and situate a seeing of *what is*, as universal and gaze by association as a unique 'own' experience of being? With Foucault's, Nietzsche's and to some extent Ajjawi and Higgs's positing of thought structures and of *what is*, such ponderings are considered to construct a perception of all that is seen, known and meant at the time of knowing (to become *what is*, in this research context).

Much like Foucault's 'archaeology of thought' (Gutting, 2005 p.32-34) this inquiry argues that 'several structures of inquiry' (Hardesty, 2002-2012, p.1) could contribute to the key concepts of constructing, organising and interpreting (archaeological) data in both situational and relational terms? Similar to Ajjawi and Higgs' (2007) views on clinical reasoning, a 'critical gaze' of the practitioner, the spectator and the practice aesthetic, as multiple dialogues of practice (Figure 9), could conceivably assemble all known knowledge to inform and aid in the determining of (doing) fashion practice for the purposes of further examination.

# Respondent 2

## THE PHOTOGRAPHER .

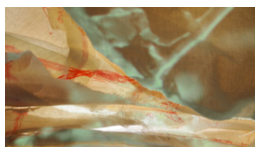


Figure 0. Respondent 2 (2012), Practice Response: Photographic Narrative



Figure 0. Respondent 2 (2012), Practice Response: Photographic Narrative

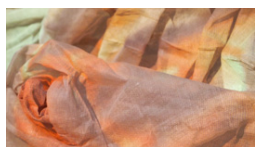


Figure 0. Respondent 2 (2012), Practice Response: Photographic Narrative

## Gaze of Practice

ITS ALMOST LIKE LOOKING AT SOMETHING UNDER A MICROSCOPE

Respondent 2

## Spectator Gaze

INTRODUCTION | NARRATIVE 1 | NARRATIVE 2 | **NARRATIVE 3** | EXHIBITION | APPENDIX

This Voice ...

Respondent Two refers to the fluidity and emergence of 'site specific' happenings'. In this instance the light introduces a different outcome, almost 'ethereal' they claim. The respondent begins to question 'why do anything as the images emerge and speak for themselves?'

It is no longer mine

This is my dress and yet it is no longer mine. The visual ownership has transferred. References to bone structure and three dimensional ultra sound are made willingly, knowingly and freely. The silences are shared once again as we simultaneously and separately experience in a knowing.

Practitioner Gaze

Figure 0. Practitioner Response (2012) Photographic Narrative

The respondent has determined that the seeing is light dependent. The dress sits ghost like hanging from the dress stand. It is still recognisable as my dress but the relationship between me and it has changed. I am now watching the spectator see.

Site Specific

Figure 0. Practitioner Response (2012) Photographic Narrative

CONSTRUCTING A FASHION NARRATIVE IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Figure 9. Example of Multiple Dialogues, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 3, p.54.

Drawing on the work of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, Foucault (1969, in Gutting, 2005 p.34-36) characterises the constitution of his work as *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.<sup>26</sup> This situating of thought as a constructed archaeology of knowledge is not concerned with history or chronological sequencing but of the 'here and now', as instances or moments experienced, reasoned and perceived of in space and time. Kant's (in Gutting, 2005, p.36) 'conditions of possibility' are also considered as situations of 'finite knowing'. Through a

<sup>26</sup> Foucault compared the archaeologist's monument (as artefact), for example the Egyptian Pharaohs (the spectacle), not as a singular entity to his findings, but as one of many findings that function in a larger connected system of inquiry (the stage), such as how it was built (process), the type of stone used to build the pyramid or the decorative features on the mummy (practice) and to ascertain why the utensils and treasures are laid by the Pharaoh's side (knowledge), etc.

transference of reasoning, as Boyer (1990, p.17-25) argued earlier, a critical gaze of practice is considered to extend beyond an empirical understanding, with explicit emphasis placed on the present: a reasoning of practice as it is understood in the here and now. An archaeology of a critical gaze of practice<sup>27</sup> places the author both inside and outside of the work and considers this juxtaposition to be where a theory of the work could exist and be told.

### **1.8. Author-Function**

In his essay 'What is an Author?' Foucault (1969) investigates, identifies and describes the relationship between the literary author and his or her text. The essay proposes that without a theory of the 'work' the author's exclusive status is unclear, or removed, as the text naturally and selflessly assumes an elevated status and a life of its own accord. The death of the author (Foucault, 1969, p.101, originally claimed by Barthes, 1967, p.145-6) is declared with the author entering into his own death. This positioning of the author is considered as significant to this inquiry and research aim as the privileging of the author's importance is deconstructed and their contribution to the text is located to an act of writing or practice. If we are to consider Foucault's claim of the author (practitioner), text (practice) and reader (spectator) as actions of equal intent and merit then fashion practice, as a body of work, could be superseded as a text in its own right.

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<sup>27</sup> The archaeology of a critical gaze externalises the situational and relational transferences of 'what is' as visible and discerned constructs of practice. The interconnectivities and knowledge relations of the practitioner, the practice aesthetic and the spectator are critically gazed upon for the purposes of a constructed narrative of seeing fashion practice as inquiry, the sum of which is discussed and contextualised further in chapter 3.

Further, the argument presented by Barrett (2006, p.135-146), drawing on Foucault's paradigm of the 'author as function', attempts to situate the practice aesthetic away from the idea that the artefact is solely to be seen as product, and towards more of an understanding that central to the studio inquiry and process of practice is the author's role of significant attribution, the paradigm being that the role of the practitioner is advocated not as a sole protagonist of the emerging fashion narrative but one that positions the practitioner, as author, as a performed function amongst many other performed functions when constructing knowledge of practice.

We are led to consider, or ask the question, as to why there is concern about individual authors (as practitioners in this context) as opposed to groupings of text (as practice) or ideas that encourage discourse by association?<sup>28</sup> If we consider practice as a 'work' and the complexities of 'what is an author?' to be a cognitive entity amongst many other constants or instances as functions of *what is* then this leads the inquiry to consider that a theory of the work (without the author) could exist. The coefficients of the practitioner, the practice aesthetic and the spectator of practice are to be viewed more as a constructed set of experiences, perceptions, thoughts and actions, multiple intelligences<sup>29</sup> if you like that draw on Hardesty's view in constructing, organising and interpreting a knowledge of practice where thought (cognitive) and action (behavioural) can come into being: a witnessing of philosophy in

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28 Foucault proposed four characteristics of the 'author function' role (1969, p. 111) as criteria for determining author authenticity (Narrative 2, p.34). The work of a particular author is to be considered as belonging to groupings of text or ideas that encourage discourse by association and therefore inclusions and exclusions apply.

29 Barrett and Bolt's view (2007), founded on '*multiple intelligences*' (p.2), suggested that studio-based research often arrived at unquantifiable outcomes of which this inquiry also posits. Barrett and Bolt (p.6) further advanced the notion of multiple intelligences as emergent thinking that positioned the practitioner in a milieu where genuine novelty could emerge.



action (Barrett and Bolt, 2007, p.10) (Figure. 10) and where the author-function (Foucault, 1969) role can construct a narrative of practice.

Figure 10. Example of Philosophy in Action, Narrative 2, p.8.

In support of Foucault's theories this inquiry concurs with Barrett (2006, p.135-146) who describes the practitioner as having 'several selves' and is not as a singular role. The author-function role, as posited by Foucault (in Rainbow, 1984, p.108), is concerned with critical gaze and the 'what' and not the 'who' for the purposes of discourse creation. Consequently, in a practice context, and whilst the practice remains in a 'virgin state' (Norris-Reeves et al, 2012, p.10), appropriation is assigned to a doing of practice and of *what is*, with the author metaphorically entering into his or her own death.

## **1.9. Summary**

Schön, Frayling, Lawson and Dorst, Ajjawi and Higgs, Davies and others, are perhaps pioneers in their consideration and ponderings of the context in which practice as research can be considered. As a coefficient activity the research contends the practitioner, spectator and practice aesthetic are to co-exist in a narrative space and where a knowing knowledge can be reasoned with (and therefore exist) for the purposes of knowledge creation?

The ultimate ambition is to contextualise Foucault's works in relation to a thought structure and a way of seeing fashion practice, with particular reference to Foucault's essay 'What is an Author?' (1969) and the situated attribution of the author-function role that can come in to being through reflective practice. Further, through a mediating of *what is* in the here and now that draws on Kant's 'conditions of possibility' (in Gutting, 2005 p.36) and the multiple dialogues towards a constructed dialogic method, an archaeology of a critical gaze is argued that can construct a knowing knowledge of the discipline.

As long as a full and frank questioning of practice takes place, then, as Bouchard (in Foucault, 1977, p.17) declares of Foucault, this can construct the 'value of our values' and thus an archaeology to build the conversion of knowledge and the knowledge of practice. There is so much more thinking to be done if we are to reconcile both Foucault's and Nietzsche's ponderings as infinite moments of knowing and place value on the values of (fashion) practitioner thought and action.

## **2. Overview of How the Practice was Investigated**

This chapter draws on the suggestions made in both the introduction and chapter 1 that a critical visual method for, and in support of, fashion practice as inquiry is lacking and that a methodological approach is needed to further develop knowledge of the discipline. The methods that are referred to are drawn from the design research community, clinical practice and the usefulness of an interpretive understanding gained through reflective practice.

This chapter is again in two halves: firstly a discussion takes place that is concerned with locating the research design and the research approach and secondly a discussion of the spectator-function role and the method of eliciting respondent data (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix D, E & F). A review on Yee's work on Practice-Based Design Doctorates (2010, p.14), Rose's (2007, p.13) belief of a critical visual method and Ylirisku and Buur's (2007, p. 19) 'thin description<sup>30</sup>' is contended for the purposes of understanding the research approach and the methods of others.

The chapter reflects on and describes the research approach as an engagement with the empirical, rational and phenomenological range and how the narrative inquiry aims to adopt action research methods using reflective practice inquiry, visual concept mapping and (future)

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<sup>30</sup> Ylirisku and Buur (2007 p.18-19) argue that a 'thin description' provides a fair and commensurate understanding of the studied practice.

design ethnography<sup>31</sup> to facilitate the data collection. The method is introduced as narratives contained within the portfolio of practice and assembled as an Introduction, Narrative 1, 2, 3 and an e-Exhibition. The notion of an intensive method is discussed and argued as an ethnographic (re)presentation concerned with the present. Schön's (1983) model of 'Reflection in Action' is considered within a problem-solution space (Figure 12), Trochim (1989, p.1) suggestion of a conceptual mapping and Rose's (2007, p.197-207) 'compositional interpretation' leads the discussions that underpin the methodological approach to this inquiry.

Each of the three narratives contained within the portfolio of practice is described as research 'through', 'in' and 'of' practice discerning of Friedman's (2003, p.511) discussion on 'theory construction in design'. The methodological approach (Figure 49) aims to provide a visual mapping of the research journey of this (fashion) practice as inquiry. Drawing on Ylirisku and Buur (2007, p.153), Shanklin (in Davies, 1985, p.106) and Willener et al's (1976, p.9) views on interviewing designers, the spectator-function role is described in detail.

## **2.1. Locating a Research Method**

In Yee's study 'Methodological Innovation in Practice-Based Design Doctorates' (2010, p.14) 66% of researchers cited reflective practice as one of their research methods. However, 100% of researchers cited between two and seven methods used, signaling the negotiation of a multiple or hybrid approach to the inquiry method in practice-based or practice-led research.

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31 (Future) design ethnography draws on Ylirisku and Buur's (2007 p.164-166) 'Ethnography of the future' as the participants (both practitioner and spectator) of the study assume authorship of the data and argues that these ethnographic '(re) presentations' need to be recognised and understood as a distinctive research method concerned with the present (rather than an anthropologist's view of humanity per se).

This is certainly true of this inquiry as three distinctive research methods were identified as useful to the research aim. Further, the practice exegesis model discussed in detail by Hamilton and Jaaniste (2009) suggests that a pattern of content and structure is emerging in support of creative practice research documents (or exegesis) classified as introduction, situating of concepts, the practical contexts, the researcher's creations and finally the conclusions drawn, of which this inquiry found as a useful starting point in considering a methodological approach. In locating the research method, and drawing on Yee's study, this inquiry adopts a phased approach that comprises an assembly of research methods that are realised through action research and contends that multiple conceptualisations, as unplanned discoveries, are as a result of a research hypothesis that evolved as the practitioner researched. Therefore Schön's (1983) organising of knowledge through reflective practice inquiry has been assumed to be a valid action research method to construct a portfolio of practice and provide the data for the purposes of this constructed narrative. Significantly, the locating of a research approach (Figure 11) could only be determined after the fact as the author reflected in and on the action of (doing) practice as inquiry.

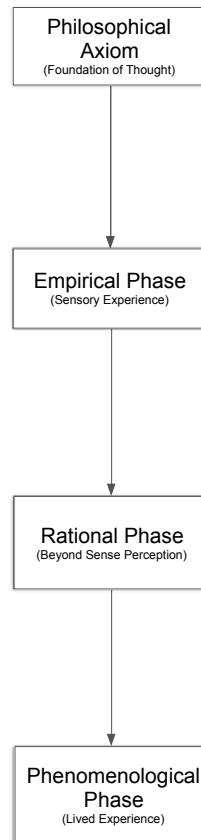


Figure 11. *The Research Approach.*

The research approach was found to engage with the empirical, the rational and the phenomenological range of research methods in support of a theory and method of the work. Employing philosophical foundations, as situated concepts (Hamilton and Jaaniste, 2009) this practice inquiry found the emphasis to be on discovery, firstly as perceived and experienced by the practitioner's sensory experience (empirical), secondly acknowledging the existence of a

conscious other as a reasoning of a beyond sense perception<sup>32</sup> (rational) and finally a lived reality of practice (phenomenological) that is concerned with the present (as experienced and perceived by both the spectator and practitioner).

Action research methods were considered as foundational to the empirical, rational and phenomenological phases. It is worth noting at this point that reflecting on the active and reflective dialogues did appear to happen simultaneously and it was not until reflection of the 'whole' took place that a hypothesis (for the purposes of determining a research method for fashion practice to be considered as inquiry) could be considered. With no particular order or merit, a process of reflective engagement is documented 'through' (Narrative 1) a doing of practice by the author as fashion practitioner. As a result of this reflective practice, the author reasoned with the 'in' (Narrative 2) practice contexts concerned with theory and method and visually mapped the constructed contexts of a narrative of practice as inquiry. Thirdly a consciousness 'of' (Narrative 3) seeing a (future) design ethnography that is concerned with the present was reckoned with as the data emerged of a lived reality.

These principal research methods were located as 'active' elements (Bouchard, in Foucault, 1977, p.16; Friedman, 2003, p.513; Yee, 2010, p.17) of the studied practice and considered as a way of seeing, or reasoning with, a truth to a doing of practice as it is lived. In this research context, and as a coefficient activity, such active elements are to provide insight into the here

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<sup>32</sup> The notion of a 'conscious-other' and a 'beyond sense perception' draws on Bakhtin's triangulative model (in Holquist, 1990, p.26-33 & Lehmann: 2012, p.11) who suggests that the self, as author, can somehow be both inside and outside the work and this somehow transcends a sense perception experience (discussed further in chapter 4.2 & 4.5)

and now of (doing) fashion practice: what was seen, what was known and what was meant (as *what is*) are elicited from the situational and relational instances to see further into the tacit dialogues, firstly of the practitioner and their practice and secondly of the active and critical reflective interactions of the spectator. The research design is rooted in Foucault's philosophical axiom of 'author-function' and considered to be where a theory of the work could endure in support of the research aim and to further a collective understanding of what fashion practice as inquiry is or could become.

## **2.2. The Research Design**

In order to achieve a contribution to, or a 'collective understanding' of knowledge, as Marshall and Newton argued earlier (2000, p.2), a case study approach characteristic of a qualitative research study is used. The validity and authenticity of the research design as a means of data collection is considered suited to this interpretive and intensive approach to fashion practice as a scholarly endeavour. Inculcating a value to the conversation (as performative visual and literary utterances of practice) intense levels of conscious raising experiences are conceptualised (discovered) through a deep and reflective engagement with the studied practice (firstly by the practitioner and latterly by the spectator). Drawing on Foucault's philosophical meanderings of 'What Is an Author?' (Foucault, 1977, p.113-138) the research design constructs a knowledge gained from the problem-solution space (Figure 12) as the interconnected functions of (doing) fashion practice are made sense of. As a coefficient model (further discussed in chapter 4) the author-function paradigm situates the fashion practitioner, as author, as a performed function of practice amongst many other performed functions (this to include a functional-other as conscious-other, the spectator-function and the practice aesthetic-function itself) to transcend and translate a truth to a doing of practice.

In the context of Ajjawi and Higgs' (2007) 'interpretive research paradigm' and Ylirisku and Buur's (2007, p.21) 'fluent collaboration', the practitioner and the spectator are to cultivate a



narrative of practice that is to be considered as a phenomenon to be critically observed. Both the spectator and practitioner emerge as key stakeholders who engage in a situational and relational transference of a narrative of fashion practice as it happens. Such active engagement is to be considered a raw form of subjective-objective visual and literary data and is described as a 'thin description' (Ylirisku and Buur, 2007, p. 19) of an interpretive experience, or indeed a perception of a lived reality of fashion practice. However, this practice inquiry drew on the 'enactment' (as opposed to a re-enactment) relative to what is seen, known and meant in the here and now of a lived reality. This view does not necessarily align with the findings of Ylirisku and Buur's 'thin description' but more an intensive and 'thick' description of practice enactment.

To construct the complex visualities of this fashion practice as inquiry the research paradigm of author-function, through an interpretive research method exploits the notion of reflective interactions, conversations if you like, in the form of performative utterances<sup>33</sup> (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p25; Malpas, 1992, p.191), often fleeting moments of thinking, doing and knowing that appear to 'happen' all at the same time: in part due to a simultaneous separateness (Figure 56 and discussed further in chapters 4.5 & 5.5) that is claimed to be experienced and perceived. As such the visual and literary conversations of practice are considered as performative; an enactment brought into 'being' as a way of seeing a narrative of fashion practice in the here and now.

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<sup>33</sup> Fischer-Lichte (2008, p25) believed 'a performative utterance' addressed a community represented by the people present in a given situation.

The author-function (practitioner) and functional-other (conscious other), the practice aesthetic-function (collection of fashion artefacts) and the spectator-function (spectator respondent) roles engage with a dialogic method, a 'multi-voicedness' (McIntosh, 2010, p.130) to construct a subjective-objective narrative of a seeing of fashion practice as inquiry: a methodological framework that emerges as 'communicable knowledge' (Frayling, 1993, p.1) is constructed:

- I. Conversations with the author (as fashion practitioner) as self and conscious other.
- II. Conversations with the practice aesthetic (as studied practice) and its evolution.
- III. Conversations with the spectator (as spectator respondent) and their engagement with a narrative space of practice as inquiry.

The introduction, three narratives and the e-Exhibition are an assembly of all such conversations to comprise the visual traces, reflective interactions and practice contexts. A 'community of meanings' (Figure 48), perhaps similar to Foucault's (1969 p.24) 'collective consciousness', is to emerge of the lived practitioner experience to construct and contextualise practitioner thought and practitioner action as entities to be gazed upon, as moments or instances<sup>34</sup> of a knowing and of a doing lets say.

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<sup>34</sup> Norris-Reeves et al's (2012 p.13) mapping of lived instances as thought, action, synthesis and knowledge suggesting that a foundation of thought existed and a critical gaze of practice could construct a discourse of practice.

### **2.3. The Research Method**

The synthesis of practice in a problem-solution space is often an assumed characteristic and method of practice of an 'expert [fashion] practitioner' (Cross, 2011, p.6), as opposed to a more scientific problem-solving through analysis approach. To some extent this fashion practice as inquiry is an example of this in that the synthesis of a constructed narrative, as a problem that needs to be solved, is being considered in order to provide a foundation for critical and cultural debate and for fashion, as practice and as inquiry to be considered in a high-culture context.

#### **2.3.1. The Problem-Solution Space**

Schön's (1983) concern for a model of 'Reflection in Action' is action-orientated with a lived and cyclical experience that frames the practice problem. A continual cycle of reflection amidst the practice development, practice response and practice conclusion is considered as inherent entities (as action) that both frame and connect the practitioner's narrative of reasoning through, in and of practice. This research considers the problem-solution space (Figure 12) to be both cognitive and behavioural (as perceived and experienced), as practitioner reasoning simultaneously and separately frames and re-frames the practice problem that results in the discernment of a practice solution.

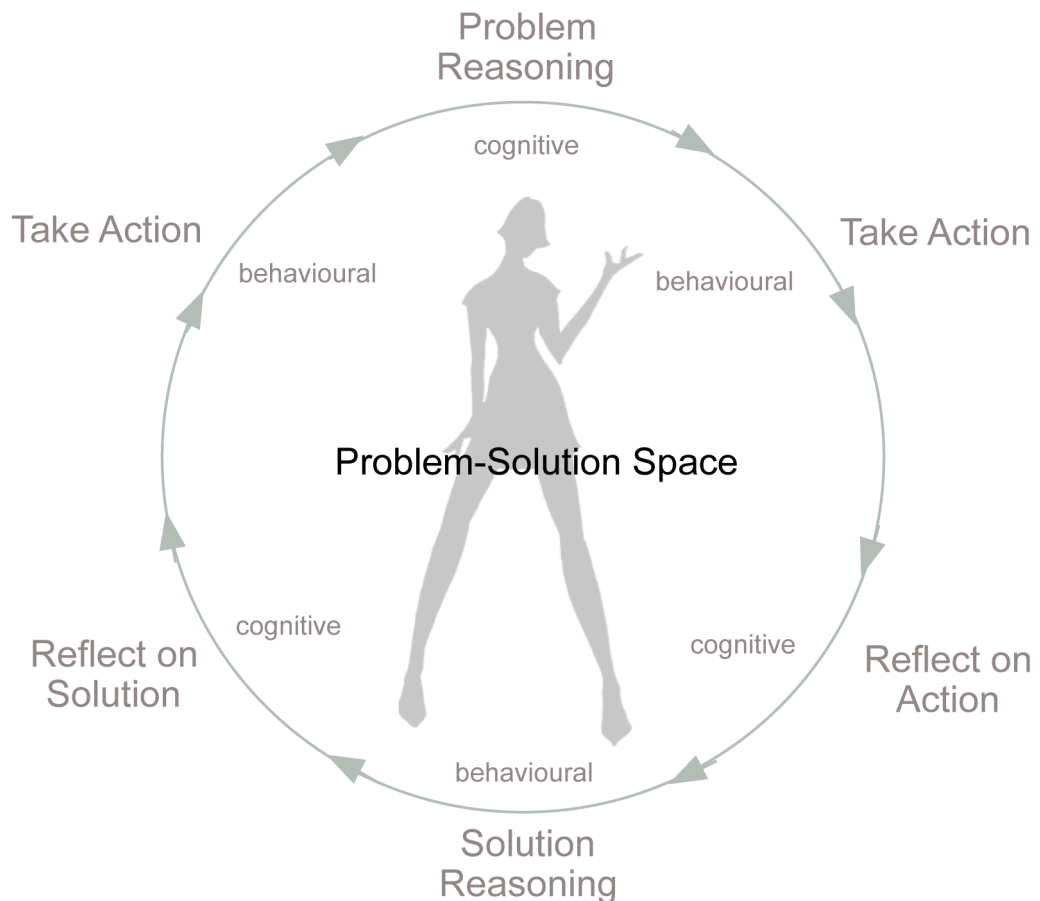


Figure 12. Problem-Solution Space.

In adopting reflective practice in a problem-solution space a process of conceptualising, or visually mapping the theories being considered is thought a useful method to help make sense of the data being collected.

### 2.3.2. Constructed Conceptualisations

Clandinin and Connelly's (2000, p.87) 'moving in and out of experience' is considered in support of the method of data collection, as is Trochim (1989, p.1) who suggests concept mapping as a method of visualising ideas. A visual picture or a mapping of visual and textual conceptualisations is argued that could contribute to, make sense of and inform current and

future discourse on a given topic for example. In this research context the practitioner articulated, whilst in practice, a conceptual mapping (Figure 13): a 'structured conceptualisation' (Trochim and Linton, 1986 in Trochim, 1989, p.2) as a method to mediate and visually construct the archaeologies of a narrative of fashion practice as inquiry.

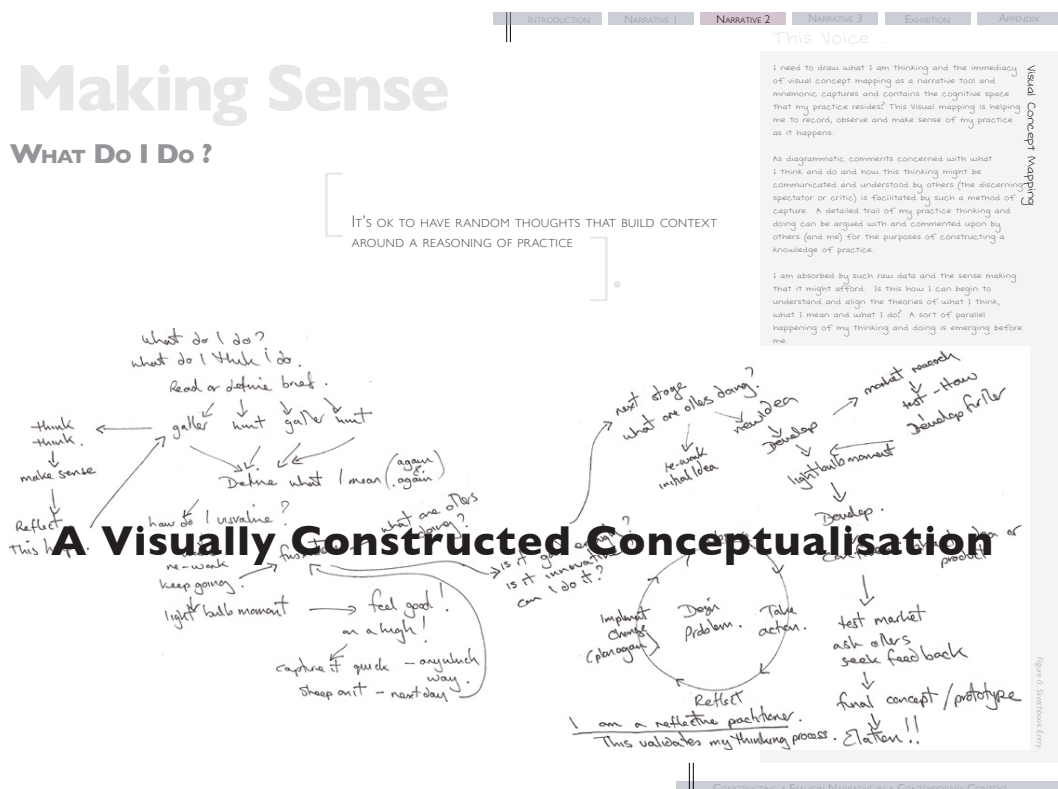


Figure 13. Example of Conceptual Mapping Process, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.4.

This practice inquiry actively engages with a method of visualising the unique taxonomic relations of practitioner thought (cognitive) and action (behavioural) to be seen through a correlative mapping of a narrative that visualises and contextualises the theoretical concepts being considered of practice as it is lived. Goddard (2007) describes a similar research method and contextualisation as an 'extension of practice', and it is this extension of practice that this

research argues as a seamless transition of understanding from practitioner experience and perception to spectator engagement and response. This method of 'sense making' (Kolko, 2010b, p.7) reckons with the cognitive and behavioural functions of practice that are dynamically experienced and perceived through, in and of practice.

### **2.3.3. An Ethnographic Approach**

Rose's (2007, p.197-207) claim of an uninterest in audiencing argues that an ethnographic approach could construct meaningful contexts as a 'compositional interpretation' of the visual image. Analogies can be drawn from Fischer-Lichte's work (2008, p.16-19) *The Transformative Power of Performance*, as the subject-object relationship (experience-centric or otherwise) was transformative for the spectator, the artist and the aesthetics of the cultivated script. In a practice context this transformative experience took the form of a triangulation of performative utterances between the spectator, the practitioner and a curated intervention of practice. McIntosh's (2010, p.129) view of dialogism further builds on this triangulative model, conveying both the implicit knowing of the practitioner and the spectator role and the explicit seeing of the developing practice aesthetic.

Through a lived reality of practice (as an own version of reality), a visual and literary language is considered to exist in relation to the practitioner, the practice aesthetic and the spectator. In this research context the active critical engagement, as reflective interactions and practice responses made of practice, tasked the dialogic to explicate the ethnographies perceived in the here and now of a living portfolio (as it is lived). The dialogic privileges the visual and textual representations of the studied practice, and in doing so, challenges the existing hierarchy of image and word. The time is right for the ethnographic nature of research into creative thinking to be recognised: a 'universal assumption' as Davies (1985, p.111) argues of *a priori* knowledge with little or no pre-conceived idea of expectation in regard to the outcome. Moreover, Maynard (2005, p.60) claims to have experienced two kinds of ethnographic data,



knowledge into a narrative space and acknowledges both visual and textual dialogues as communicable knowledge. From the data being collected it is evident that a critical visual method is needed to provide a framework where the visibility of practice can be observed.

#### **2.3.4. A Critical Visual Method**

Rose interrogates Foucault's (1969) post-structuralist thought (Rose, 2007, p.142) and similarly questions the language of fashion practice as knowledge that needs to be charged with a persuasiveness of how knowledge in a practice domain is understood. If we are to construct a narrative as discourse, as Foucault and Rose both argue, then a compelling argument resides with the persuasiveness of the visibility of fashion image or artefact and the way that fashion practice, as constructed visual and literary texts, might be discerned.

As a performative act and to mediate the visibility of (doing) fashion practice, Rose's (2007, p.13) discussion of 'sites and modalities' suggests that a critical visual method is needed to interpret the constructed image or artefact. Extending Rose's view, a narrative of seeing, as a critical visual method of practice (Figure 15), is to be contextualised through the process (practice development), knowledge (practice response) and practice (practice conclusion). The practitioner's mediated doing (of practice) as process, as knowledge and as practice (through, in and of fashion practice) is argued to be a critical visual method of situational and relational transference (evidenced in Narratives 1,2 & 3).



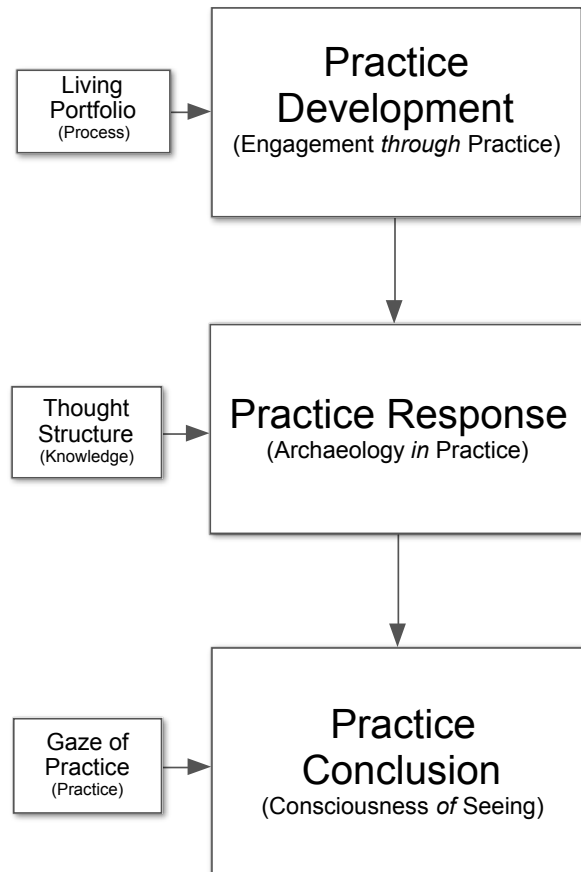


Figure 15. A Critical Visual Method of Practice.

This narrative inquiry assembles the process, knowledge and practice responses that culminate in the narratives constructed in the portfolio of practice (Figure 16): 'A Future Now' (Introduction), 'Living Portfolio' (Narrative 1), 'Thought Structure' (Narrative 2), 'Gaze of Practice' (Narrative 3) and 'Spectacle of Fashion Practice' (The e-Exhibition) and are further described in the portfolio of practice (Introduction p.6, Narrative 1 p.1, Narrative 2 p.2, Narrative 3 p.1 and e-Exhibition p.2).

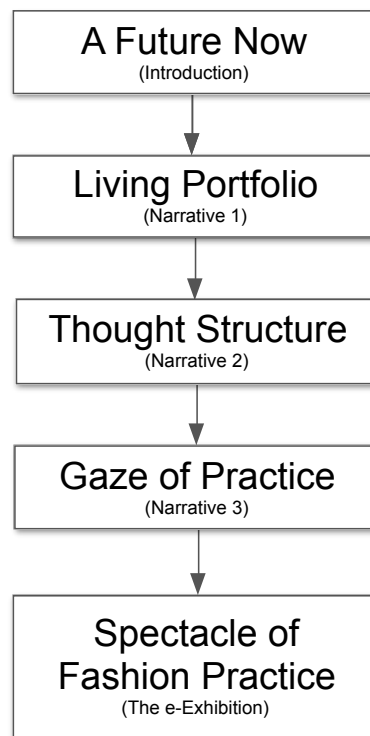


Figure 16. A Portfolio of Practice

This intensive methodological approach facilitated discovery through, in and of a doing of practice witnessing a visual and literary language, as a discourse of practice and producer of knowledge to emerge and to be considered as a future ethnography of the discipline. Therefore, authorship of the data (cultural contexts, visual traces and reflective interactions) is assumed as an ethnographic (re)presentation concerned with the present and adopted as a distinctive research method.

#### **2.4. Knowledge Conversion**

As the practitioner, as author, as reflective practitioner, consciously explored, questioned, found, considered and pondered the practice problem, the construction of (what felt like complex) theories and knowledge led to the consideration of (a number of) solutions that were considered through multiple cycles of intense reflection. Such intense reflective activity aligned with Marshall and Newton, who argue a 'knowing-in action' (2000, p.3) existed and for

Schön (1983) and Dally, et al (2004 p.2) a 'way of knowing' came about as a result of the reflective practice process; a knowing, as experienced and perceived whilst 'in action', is to be encountered through reflection in this study. This was found to be the case during the data collection phase of the research project (after the fact), as a knowing knowledge, through a reasoning of practice came into existence (Portfolio of Practice, Introduction, p.10, 'Reasoning with my Knowing' & Appendix, E(ii), p.91 for example). From this perspective Norris-Reeves et al. (2012, p.9) also suggests this transparency enabled a depth in framing the practitioners' narrative of thought and action and believed this to be a 'process of intelligence that links both the process and the action of practice as an enabling method toward theory construction'.

The author considered the three primary research methods chosen and how the data could be collected and analysed. Firstly, the cyclical nature of reflection in and on action (Schön, 1983) positions the author, as fashion practitioner, at the heart of the inquiry and through sketchbook work and electronic journal entry, a comprehensive set of data was captured (Appendix, sketchbooks 1-24, p. 15-38 & 'This Voice' recorded via a personal 'blog' and evidenced throughout the portfolio of practice). The data collected was to be unedited and unabbreviated in any form due to the practitioner being unaware of what might be considered as significant at the time of doing and knowing. Importantly, this raw form of data was captured and recorded in the here and now of a lived reality; every moment or instance was an opportunity to reflect in and on the practice under consideration. Of note (acceding that the hypothesis was unknown until after the fact) is that the practitioner, as author, is still to this day unaware as to what extent the data might be considered as useful to other researchers, practitioners and academia (hence why the portfolio of practice might be considered as overly long?). It would appear erroneous and contrived to edit what might be considered as useful to others whilst making sense of the sense-making of this very narrow study?

Secondly, the practitioner discerned a number of thought structures, as visual concept maps, in support of a theory and method of the work. Such practice intelligences were captured through sketchbook work (Narrative 2, p.47 for example) and in some cases digital form (Narrative 2, p.44 for example). However, the author noted that once the concept maps were drafted in digital form they were somehow rendered as concrete and it was often considered too early to determine such visual conceptualisations as absolute. The practitioner therefore continued with hand crafted visual concept maps using sticky notes, doodles, sketches etc. This process of visually mapping is synthesised more fully and offered as a digital response once the author began to make sense of the sense-making and is evident in chapters 3 & 4 of this dissertation.

Finally, (future) design ethnography (Ylirisku and Buur, 2007 p.18) and the ethnographic conversation is concerned with the present: a consciousness of seeing and responding to practice in the here and now by both the practitioner and spectator. To some extent this method applies to the research approach as a whole but is specifically acknowledged to exist through active and critical engagement of practice as a lived reality (rather than a reflective and recorded set of thinking and doing). Often tacit, often active, often responsive and is concerned with the immediacy of capture using photographic narrative, film, oral and audio capture. An ethnographic record concerned with the present is argued as a future ethnography that extends the spectacle of fashion practice as an 'own' version of reality comes into being (that might not have otherwise existed).

## **2.5. Mapping the Methodological approach**

Designers, practitioners, craft makers, often talk of the muddle in their head and how so many ideas and random thoughts appear to come and go all at the same time. This 'muddy middle' (Kolko, 2010a, p.7) of the design process highlights the importance of navigation and of using appropriate visual and literary languages for others to reason and understand design practice as

a phenomenon to be understood. Leedy and Ormond (1989, p.3) argue research practice needs to have a 'specific plan' as it proceeds. However, as articulation of the research practice journey begins with clarity, reflection both in and on action was found to result in a revised method or approach as taxonomies and hierarchies emerge. A situational and relational transference of reasoning, as an interpretive and evolving research paradigm, draws on a grounded approach (rather than a grounded method) with no preconceived hypotheses from inception. In this context, the research methods activity (Figure 17) is to be reconciled by the methodological framework through an interpretive research paradigm.

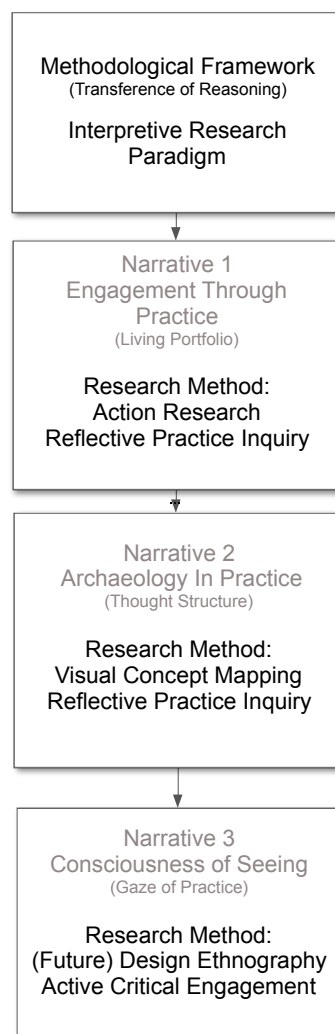


Figure 17.

*Research Methods Activity*

### **2.5.1. Engagement Through Practice**

Narrative 1, with purposeful engagement 'through' practice, adopts action research methodologies and reflective practice inquiry to investigate the complete and unabbreviated oeuvre<sup>35</sup> of the developing practice aesthetic. As an 'own version' of reality the practitioner empirically constructs a living portfolio during the development of a body of creative work (practice development).

### **2.5.2. Archaeology In Practice**

Narrative 2 considers the 'in' practice contexts to construct a foundation of thought in support of what is known at the time of knowing. Through reflective practice inquiry, and supported by visual concept mapping, the interconnectivities of the empirical and the rational offer an archaeology that determine a theory and method of the work (the practice response).

### **2.5.3. Consciousness of Seeing**

Narrative 3 materialises as a consciousness 'of' seeing that emerges as a way of seeing by both practitioner and spectator. These future design ethnographic (re)presentations, as a lived experience concerned with the present, actively, reflectively and critically engages with the fashion practice aesthetic (the artefact) and the portfolio of practice (the practice conclusion).

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35 Much like Foucault's (1969, p.23-33) claim of the 'complete oeuvre', the practitioner's 'unabbreviated oeuvre' is argued as a unique set of experiences, reasoning and perceptions of practice that comprises a finished artefact or published work that needs also to contain 'the author's sketches, early drafts, crossings out, discarded works, notes and conversations leading to up to and including the published works.' (Norris-Reeves et al. (2012, p.4).

The research design and the research methods activity inform a critical visual method of practice that has resulted in a research output (Figure 18) comprising two volumes and an exhibition: the practice aesthetic (the fashion artefact/s) and a portfolio of practice (an Introduction, three narratives and an e-Exhibition), a dissertation (a 25,000-40,000-word document) and an exhibition held at the RCA.

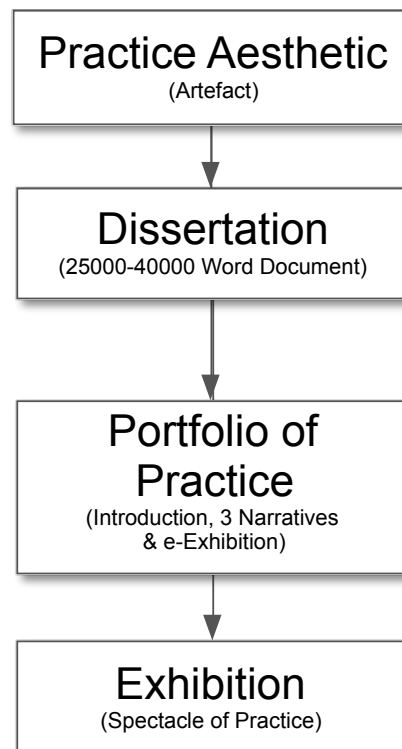


Figure 18.

Research Output.

Friedman (2003, p.511), in discussing 'theory construction in design', suggests that one of the designer's roles is as a critic to ascertain that 'the right problem has reached the right solution', during both the design process and the 'post-solution analysis' stage. Solving a design or practice problem was a dynamic, reflective, incremental and interpretive process, of which solutions were sought within variable contexts of hierarchical and longitudinal perspectives (the practice journey). Foucault's post-structuralist theory concerned with the formation of systems

of thought (as in Friedman, 2009, Burnette, 2009a), is considered as a useful research principle for visually mapping (or making sense of) advanced concepts relating to a doing of fashion practice as a scholarly endeavour. After several iterations of mapping the methodological approach (Figure 19), a non-linear approach is evident in this research study that visualised, made sense of and made explicit the taxonomies and hierarchies of the practice journey (as it happened).

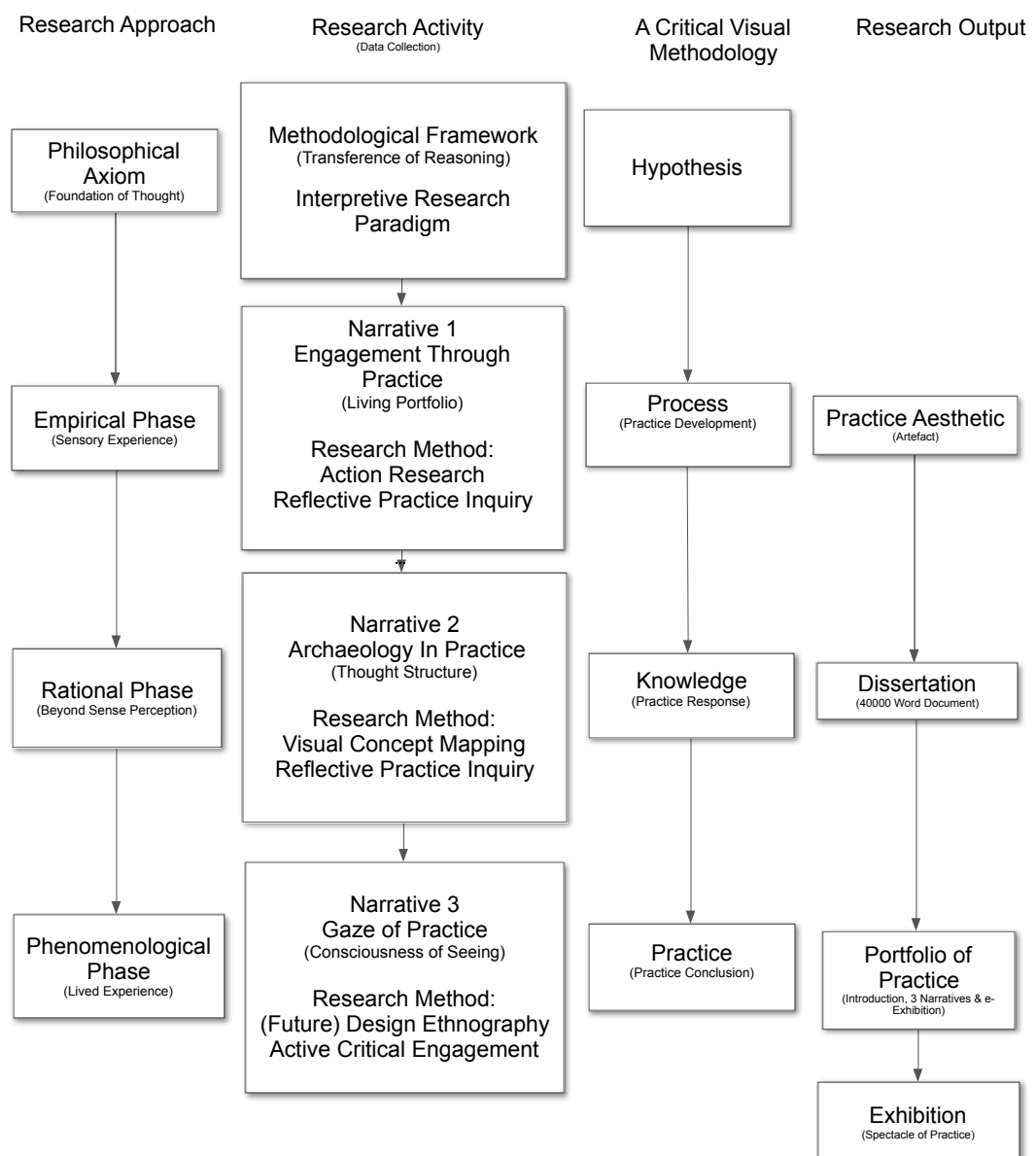


Figure 19. The Methodological Approach.



In defending (or making sense of) the methodological approach, it is useful to consider what the research method is, or is not. This inquiry does not seek to measure or provide an analysis between the variables or processes of practice, nor does the investigation concern itself with experiment, social or scientific measure. This practice inquiry acknowledges and responds to the key characteristics of a doing of fashion practice and the practices of the fashion practitioner (described in 6.2.) and in granting authority to a dialogic method and a curated context with which to construct a narrative of practice (as it is lived), and this not to be confused with the aesthetic measure of the practice aesthetic itself. The methodological approach is, however, concerned with the imperative of determining a hypothesis that assimilates the visual culture and literary reasoning of (doing) fashion practice as a scholarly endeavour.

## **2.6. Spectator Engagement**

This inquiry argues against a systematising of fashion practice as inquiry, and is more concerned with a method of a construction towards a future knowledge, culture and understanding of the practices of the fashion practitioner. Principally, the criterion for this inquiry argues for a set of key characteristics (referred in the conclusion) of the fashion practitioner and their practice and that this could provide a measure in comparable terms and it would be these terms that could construct future knowledge as commensurate. For example, in the context of this inquiry, the research ambition is to mediate a constructed narrative and to declare 'this is what it is like for me' and to ask the question 'what is it like for you?' and to consider further how this might be

told? The spectator's engagement with the studied practice is therefore vital to the validity of the research method.

In ascertaining a characteristic of an expert<sup>36</sup> practitioner is a 'recognising of opportunity' to make things happen (Davies, 1985, p.122), this gives a sense that the practitioner is to be an active participant in creating fortuitous happenings and in bringing things or events together (ideas, knowings, contextual references etc.). Selecting respondents (as a spectator-function role) who are considered experts as creative individuals may not have brought typicality, but did bring together a *type* of respondent for the purposes of data collection. There were a total of five practitioner respondents (the spectator-function role) in this ethnographic study and were from a range of (fashion-related) creative industries and considered as a type of expert. Although this method of intensive conversation might impose a necessarily generalist concept and that this may sacrifice a great deal of information (Davies, 1985, p.113), such a method did enable a level of data to be comparable and to be considered as similar.

In designing the research method, this inquiry concurred with Willener et al. (1976, p.9) who argues that the authenticity of the interview grows as the relationship develops, and the possibility of playing back the tape to the interviewee stimulates discussion and leads to a 'hyper-reactive' reaction. Notably, in this study a hyper-reactive reaction is evidenced through the spectator's dynamic engagement with the studied practice as each of the respondents appears to respond more than once and indeed often going beyond expectation (Narrative 3,

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<sup>36</sup> As Cross's (2011, p.6) notion of expert.

p.51-52 for example). Ylirisku and Buur (2007, p.153), hypothesised that people such as designers felt uncomfortable in front of a video camera, and proposed that a playful or creative situation needs to be achieved and a 'willingness to cross the border of rationality' is fostered. There is also some research to suggest that practitioners can become more self-aware, and that the use of video encourages deeper inhibitions, questioning the validity of the method. Shanklin (in Davies, 1985, p.106) argues that the 'trick' is to become an accepted part of the session and/or studio environment of which this research felt was fundamental to the success of the research aim

Conversations about a way of seeing fashion practice were conducted with the five spectator respondents (the spectator-function role) over a period of six weeks (Appendix D & E). Each respondent was invited to actively and critically engage with and respond to the portfolio of practice<sup>37</sup>. The respondents were asked to respond through individual practice response (completed in their own time and without the researcher present), to complete a questionnaire (an online survey completed in their own time and without the researcher present), to record a personal audio response (using a smartphone in an intimate diary setting, without the researcher being present and whilst engaging with the portfolio of practice) and to also take part in a recorded conversation with the researcher that was open and unstructured.

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<sup>37</sup> The author's portfolio of practice was assumed to be in draft at this stage of the research journey to facilitate, record and consider a double loop seeing (Figure 43) of practice as integral to practice as inquiry.

During each of the recorded conversations<sup>38</sup> the camera/audio equipment was placed unobtrusively in the natural work environment, such as the studio or workspace, where practice discussion (or creative thinking) normally took place for the expert practitioner (as spectator respondent). During an open and unstructured interview, taking the form of a conversation, a rapport between interviewer and interviewee enabled a free flow of discussion and debate, rather than having an inhibiting effect. An 'open approach'<sup>39</sup> (Davies, 1985, p.119) was embarked upon as respondents were invited to engage with the portfolio of practice and provide clues as to their own ability to engage with the curated context that was presented.

The view of Willener et al (1976, p.9) of 'playing back' the tape was interpreted further as the spectator was invited to view and engage with the portfolio of practice and respond through their own practice (the practice response). The spectator was then invited to complete an online questionnaire and to take part in a one-to-one interview, in the form of a conversation, to discuss their own experience and perception of (doing) practice and their practice response. Before the interview started the spectator was provided with a smartphone to record, in an intimate diary setting, their cognitive thoughts (however momentary) as they engaged with the

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38 The conversational analysis can be found in the appendix C, p.39-42 and data analysis found in appendix F, p. 113-120.

39 Davies (1985 p.97), when interviewing a group of eminent designers using an unstructured interview approach, adopted an interview guide that was not so much a questionnaire, but a checklist with suitable mnemonics to maintain the line of enquiry. Davies led the questioning in three main areas of interest. The first was biographical, the second about career development and the third concerned with the generating and implementing of ideas and in particular issues related to the 'illumination stage' of being creative (Davies 1985, pg.95). Davies (1985, p.96) argued an open approach meant that the interviewees were willing to talk freely and suggested that interpretive interviewing techniques developed a respect that was mutual between both researcher and respondent. Davies discovered two major themes emerged, described as 'Life-at-work' and 'Life-at-home' each dependent on the other and related to a 'state of being' that was alluded to during the conversations (interviews). What emerged out of Davies' research was that a biographical approach was a way of earning mutual respect, eliciting individual interpretation and given time all respondents discussed the topic of creativity and the important place it has in their lives. The proximity of life and work are such that the practitioner melds the two with this perceived sense of appearing indeterminate in relation to place or time.

portfolio of practice in the here and now. As (re)presentations of gaze, as situational and relational discursive acts of truth, it is hypothesised that such situating of thought inculcated a double-loop seeing (Figure 43 and discussed in chapter 4.7) as discovery of 'what is' in a narrative space of practice as inquiry, unfolded.

## **2.7. Summary**

The research intention is to engage in both visual and literary dialogues of practice: an engendering of tacit knowledge's imperative in constructing knowledge of the discipline: a journey of discovery that determines a phased assembly of a research method in support of a theory and method of the work. The author, as practitioner, is considered to have been both inside and outside of the methods described. Firstly to develop a body of creative work and to reflect upon it (as a doing) and secondly to stand outside of the work to reflect and consider what has been done (as a telling). Being both inside and outside of the work are to be considered in the context of locating a research method for the purposes data collection in a narrative context.

The methodological approach suggests a 'way of seeing' (Berger, 1972, p.9-10; Rose, 2007, p.8) fashion practice could begin to create order and where theories and methods could be drawn and advanced upon. In the context of a narrative inquiry and in facilitating the data collection, the mediating of, and reconciling with, action research methodologies (reflective engagement through practice), visual concept mapping (in practice contexts concerned with theory and method), (future) design ethnography (a consciousness of seeing concerned with the present) locates a methodological framework from which a 'collective understanding' (Marshall and Newton, 2000, p.2) of a doing of fashion practice as inquiry emerges.

### 3. Constructing a Narrative of Fashion Practice as Inquiry

This chapter is a discussion on the core activity: a theory and method is hypothesised of what a constructed narrative of fashion practice as inquiry is or might become. The practitioner, as author, (again being both inside and outside of the work) reasons with their knowing knowledge and sets out how this might be discussed as 'a way of seeing' in narrative terms.

Once again, the chapter is set out in two halves. Firstly, the portfolio of practice is described in methodological terms (the practitioner being inside the work) and secondly, a framing of the narrative inquiry is argued as a narrative space where practice as inquiry can be reasoned with (the practitioner being outside the work). The work of Clandinin and Huber's (2010, p.3) '*Experience as Story*', McNiff's (2007, p.308) belief of an existence of a 'lived reality' and Marshall and Newton's (2000, p.2) 'collective understanding' in a practice context are all drawn upon in support of a modern proposition.

The discussion considers Burnette's (2009b) 'purposeful acts of thought', Kant's notion of reasoning and *a priori* knowledge (in Gutting, 2005, p.36; Kant, 2008), Polanyi's (1966 p.6) mooting of a tacit knowing and a coefficient model is hypothesised as homogenous with Bakhtin's interconnected thinking (chapter 4.4). The work of Lawson and Dorst (2009), McIntosh (2009) and Cross (2011) are discussed relative to the belief that a bringing together of theory and practice is emerging and that a critical visual method places the fashion (design) practitioner at the heart of both theory and practice. Clandinin and Huber's (2002 p.162) view of a three-dimensional space is extended, Rose's (2007, p.11) belief of a mediated seeing is contextualised and a 'double-loop' seeing (Figure. 25) similar to Argyris and Schön's 'double-loop' learning (1974, p.19) is argued in support of a theory of the work in the wider context of a knowledge universe (as Polanyi, 1966, pp.4-6 refers)

Throughout this chapter discussions are simultaneously described in both dialogical and methodological terms as the cognitive and behavioural activities are determined. As both visual and literary dialogues<sup>40</sup>, the portfolio of practice is discerned as a mediated journey<sup>41</sup> observed through reflective inquiry (as with Frayling's definition, 1993) and this is where the narratives of practice, as inquiry are determined.

The spectator's engagement with the studied practice is described and the chapter concludes the existence of a narrative space where practice can be meaningfully discerned: an archaeology of a critical gaze, in support of a telling of a knowing of a doing of fashion practice as inquiry.

### **3.1. A Modern Proposition**

This fashion practice as inquiry is concerned with a critical discourse of practice that structures a reasoned knowing as a knowing knowledge of practice within the wider context of a modern postmodern visual culture. A modern proposition of the digital, the immersive, the experiential, the perceptual and the participatory (Narrative 1, p.62, Narrative 3, p.13 for example), now *de rigueur*, is to expose the practitioner's reasoning to further engage with and understand the tacit dialogues of the fashion practitioner and of the emerging fashion practice aesthetic (as a collection of fashion womenswear and related artefacts). The construction of the portfolio of practice draws on available digital (Narrative 3, p.25 for example) and social media technologies (Figure 20) to construct the perceptions and experiences, as everyday truths of a doing of

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<sup>40</sup> Visual concept mapping is used as a method of visualisation in support of the concepts being described.

<sup>41</sup> Discussed in terms of a mediating of the through, in and of practice contexts .

practice in the here and now by the practitioner (and spectator) and in doing so aims to grant physicality to the tacit in this modern postmodern era.

# Respondent 3

## BLOGGING .

The art of looking, really looking

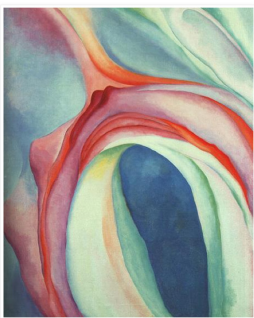


Figure 1. Respondent 3. Practice Response: Blog Entry

*If I could paint the flower exactly as I see it no one would see what I see because I would paint it small like the flower is small. So I had to reveal. I'll paint what I see - what the flower is to me but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it - I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers.*

*...Well, I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you bring all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower - and I don't.*

- Georgia O'Keefe

*I never imagined myself to be a writer. Writing is painful and frighteningly personal, a state where one is at war with oneself. I see myself as a designer. Designers get their hands dirty but they rarely end up bloodied, naked with their guts exposed. The interpretations of the work is retained on others. I like the associations others make. Writing is too explicit. And yet I write because I like to observe.*

Figure 2. Respondent 3. Practice Response: Blog Entry

### My first observations

Key words:

Sexual objects; reproductive organs; petals; colourful; beautiful patterns; markings; direction;

Skin; folding; creating; shaping; forming;

Marking; stitching; cutting; staining; slicing; surgery; cosmetic;

Fragility; soft; voluptuous; intimate

Attractor; repulsion

Sometimes looking this closely feels really personal. I am aware that I am observing something that is usually hidden. I want to turn my head away.



Figure 3. Respondent 3. Practice Response: Blog Entry.

IN THIS CONTEXT THE PRACTITIONER EMERGES AS THE CURATOR OF MEANING AND MESSAGE. THROUGH PRACTICE THIS CONSCIOUS SEEING EXISTS AS A DISCOURSE OF FASHION PRACTICE

Author

THE VISUAL AND LITERARY LANGUAGE OF THE SPECTATOR IS EMERGING AS A REASONED UNDERSTANDING OF PRACTICE

Author

Practicing with practice

I wanted to play, to tease with the practitioner, to engage in a private conversation. A moment that we could both share and where no one else was invited. I am a little scared. I wonder what the response might be? I don't want to appear pompous but a provocateur, a provocative messenger of thought beyond what is superficial, surface or assumed. I want to suppose a questioning of what might be. Let's see.

Figure 20. Example of Social Media Technologies being used (Blogging), Narrative 3, p.60.

As the practitioner remains inside the work and whilst the practitioner cognitively and behaviourally engages with a telling of a doing of their practice a number of journals were kept. The 'practice intelligences' (Norris-Reeves et al, 2012, p.9; Barrett and Bolt, 2007 p.2) of the design and development of the fashion practice (Figure 21) is captured and transcribed through electronic journal-keeping (blogging), digital and hard copy sketchbook entries, 3-D drawing using pin and pen, verse, illustration, soundscape, photographic, film and oral narratives, and so on, and recorded as purposeful acts of thought and action. Identified through an articulated framework of 'lived instances' (Burnette, 2009b, p.4) the journals capture the practitioner's innate sense of a reasoned knowing as a knowing knowledge, and are argued as



experiences and perceptions of situational and relational transference that could only be reckoned with once such lived instances of doing practice have happened.

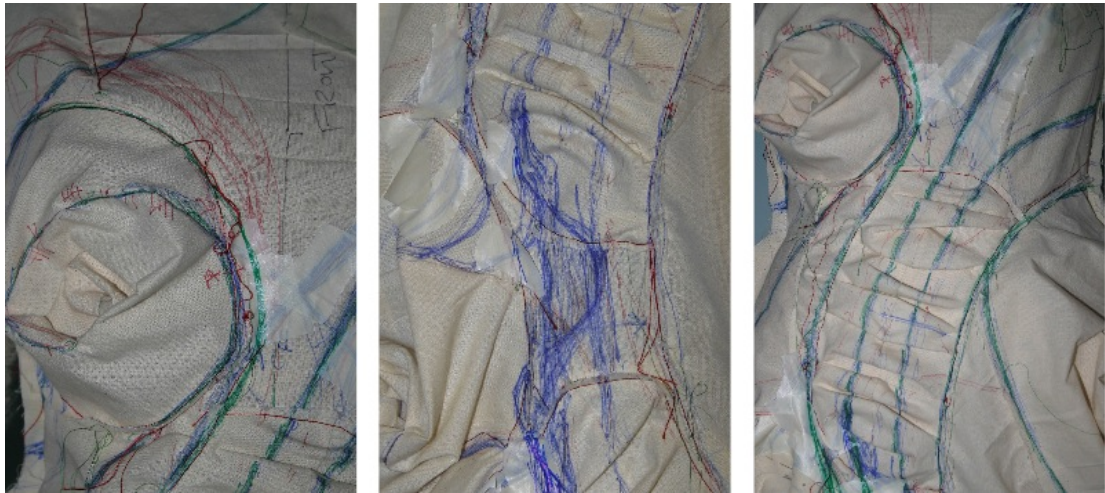


Figure 21. *Example of Visual and Literary Intelligences,  
Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.42.*

This visual and literary narrative approach draws on Clandinin and Huber's (2010, p.3) study of *Experience as Story* and McNiff's (2007, p.308) claim for action research experienced through a lived reality of practitioner reasoning and in this research context, the narrative emerges as a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice. Through reflective intent (Figure 22) the construction of a portfolio of practice comprises an introduction, three narratives and an e-Exhibition and became the practitioner's stage and monument to their fashion practice. The three stages of examination set out firstly to consider a doing of practice *through* reflection (Narrative 1), secondly the *in* practice contexts that are concerned with both theory and method (Narrative 2) and thirdly a consciousness *of* seeing that is concerned with the here and now (Narrative 3), and that this might purposefully arouse notions of a discourse of practice.

Significant to this inquiry is the equal attribution assigned to the distinct and discerning conversations with the author as fashion practitioner (as a telling), the artefact and its evolution (a doing) and the spectator and their engagement with the practice under consideration (as discussed in Chapter 2.2) of which a knowing could also be told.

As I move through this practice journey I am situating myself in a state of conscious reasoning. These tacit moments or happenings or reasonings are integral to my practice.

I am no longer singular to the telling of my practice. The other of me is emerging amid the telling of a knowing of a doing of my practice.

This voice of my practitioner self moves outside of me. I am connected to this voice that is no longer me for it is the other of me.

I am addicted to the other of me.

A State of Conscious Reasoning

Figure 22. Example of Reflective Intent, Narrative 1, p.38.

Through an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice a critical visual method, as process (practice development), as knowledge (practice response), as practice (practice conclusion) is considered to be a thought structure that is unknown until after the fact.

### 3.2. The Portfolio of Practice

This practice inquiry considers a narrative of seeing that is both infinite yet finite of a knowing knowledge: instances of a cognitive and behavioural knowing (as a seeing of practitioner thought and action), as Yen et al (2002, p.1) also describes, that empowers the practitioner's own version of reality in a narrative space. As a record of a lived reality of practice this

narrative inquiry is concerned with the practitioner's unabbreviated oeuvre observed through reflective inquiry (as with Frayling's definition, 1993). The reflective interactions that exist *through* practice, the practice contexts whilst *in* practice and the visual traces liberated of practice (Figure 23) are experienced as situational and relational instances of *what is*.

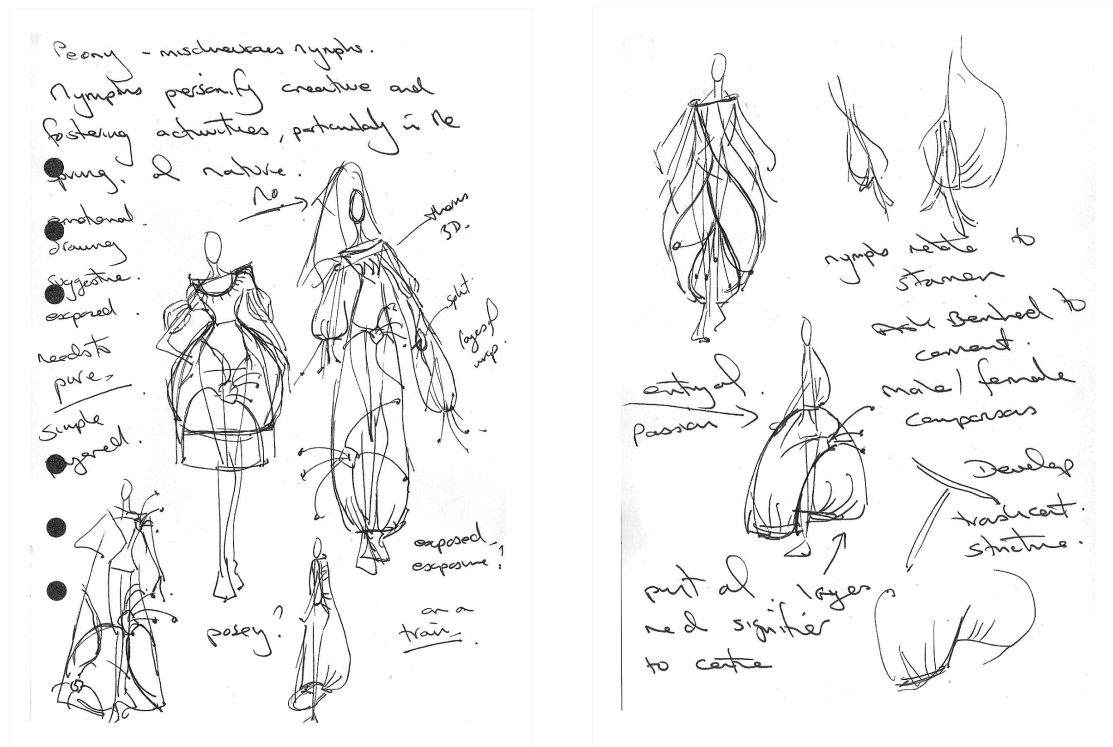


Figure 23. Example of Liberated Trace of Practice,  
Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.21

The Portfolio of Practice comprises firstly of an introduction and this is considered to be a preamble to a constructed narrative of practice as the voice of the deeply engaged fashion practitioner mediates a journey of what might be. Narrative 1 is concerned with the process or engagement through a doing of practice (as practice development). The voice of the deeply engaged fashion practitioner interprets a journey of visual and literary note-taking 'through' a doing of practice. Narrative 2 considers the multiple thought structures (Narrative 2, p.3 for example) that could be discerned as knowledge, an archaeology whilst in the moment of doing

practice (a practice response). The 'in' practice contexts aim to contextualise a theory and method of a telling of a knowing of a doing of fashion practice as it is experienced and perceived. Narrative 3 assumes gaze as a commodity of practice. Practices 'of' looking (practice conclusion) are engaged with to consider a continuum of seeing rather than a summation of practice.

Finally the e-Exhibition engages with the practitioner as 'other' and is a construction of the spectacle beyond what is seen to what is meant of fashion practice. Representative of 'this voice' of the deeply engaged fashion practitioner and what it is that they see, the practitioner acknowledges that seeing is an act of choice (Figure 24) and often comes before words.

The unabbreviated oeuvre of the constructed narratives are to comprise conversations with the practitioner (a lived reality), conversations with the artefact (a living portfolio) and conversations with the spectator (a reflective response). Such conversations (Narrative 3, p.50-80 & Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C-F) extend a consciousness *of* seeing to become a way of seeing; a construction of all that *is*, is argued.

# Emotion and Tease



Figure 24. Example of 'Seeing is an Act of Choice', e-Exhibition, p.15.

In this context the practitioner's stage, the *mise-en-scène*<sup>42</sup> (Figure 36) of the practice aesthetics' conscious regard for cultural, historical, emotional and or social inference, and so on, ('The Language of Flowers' as evidenced in Narrative 1, Portfolio of Practice, p.18 for example) become an entity, a muse (Figure 25)<sup>43</sup> that bears a limited semblance of the expert practitioner's claim of their doing (or seeing). However, the inference of a *mise-en-scène* as a creative power of practice is not the focus of this inquiry (or indeed scholarly practice in this

42 This practice inquiry was not concerned with aesthetic measure, but does recognise the practitioner's ambition of the *mise-en-scène* of the practice aesthetic to be integral to the practice outcome.

43 The practitioner's muse is often portrayed through a mood board: a collage of suggestive and thematic visual and textual comment that leads the spectator to ponder what is meant of the *mise-en-scène*.

research context), but does provide a medium or language by which the fashion practice aesthetic can speak.



Figure 25. Example of a Practitioners Mise-en-Scène, Narrative 1, p.22.

The performing of freehand drawing, sketchbook work (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix B, Sketchbooks 1-24) note-taking, 3D sketching using pin and pen, diarised journal entries, voice recording, sticky notes or methods of visual capture such as photographic or filmic reportage etc. (Narrative 1, 2 and 3 of the Portfolio of Practice), as a bringing together or grouping of the constituent (lived) instances of practitioner thought and action, are to become authored functions embodied in a narrative space and representative of the complete and unabbreviated oeuvre of practice as it is intensely reflected upon (Figure 26).

The narrative of my practice, as a lived reality, appears as momentary. It is these moments that I place value on because they are real to me. I am often caught unaware of what I know at the time of knowing and I surprise myself as I begin to discern that I know more than I have ever said or considered of my practice?

Is it because no one has ever asked or is it because I have never asked? I know now that I have never said? I am deeply engaged in the doing of my practice and a critical self awareness is emerging that is engaging with the truths of my practice.

A Lived Reality

Figure 26. Example of Intense Reflection, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.7.

Arguably, such a curated intervention of practice that is to comprise of multiple and interconnected (lived) instances of practice, as a constructed narrative of practice augments the through, in and of practice contexts to exhibit a defining capability in creating a record of experience. The tacit dialogues of practice appear complex and challenging to externalise as explicit knowledge but through the immediacy of a telling of a doing of practice, a way of seeing fashion practice as inquiry is considered as knowable. Significantly, as the practitioner moves outside of the work, the dialogic is tasked with how to externalise the practitioner's knowing knowledge.

### 3.3. The Dialogic and a Knowing Knowledge

Integral to the construction of the portfolio of practice, the dialogic event<sup>44</sup> (Figure 27) is afforded notoriety and finds its root in the reflective interactions, practice contexts and visual traces of practice to posit all that is: a reasoned knowing, as a knowing knowledge that exists through, in and of practice: a point at which the abounding existence of practitioner thought and action *does* practice. The dialogic is argued as a way of seeing what is said and understood relative to what is known and what is meant.

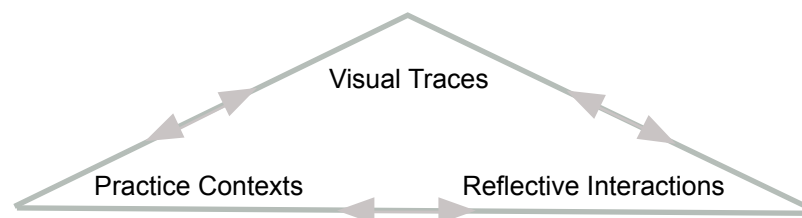


Figure 27. A Dialogic Event.

Furthering Polanyi's (1966 p.6) mooted of a tacit knowing, this inquiry hypothesises that tacit knowledge exists at the juncture at which thought and action collide (or meet, depending on your view). This inquiry proposes that this juncture is at the centre of an interconnected knowledge universe (Figure 39) bound only by space and time, where a tacit space of a knowing knowledge (Figure 28) as an own version of reality exists.

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<sup>44</sup> McIntosh (2010, p.129) argued that dialogism was relational: a representation and positioning of what is said and understood relative to what is known and what is meant. This research, as a way of seeing fashion practice, interprets this to be a dialogic event.



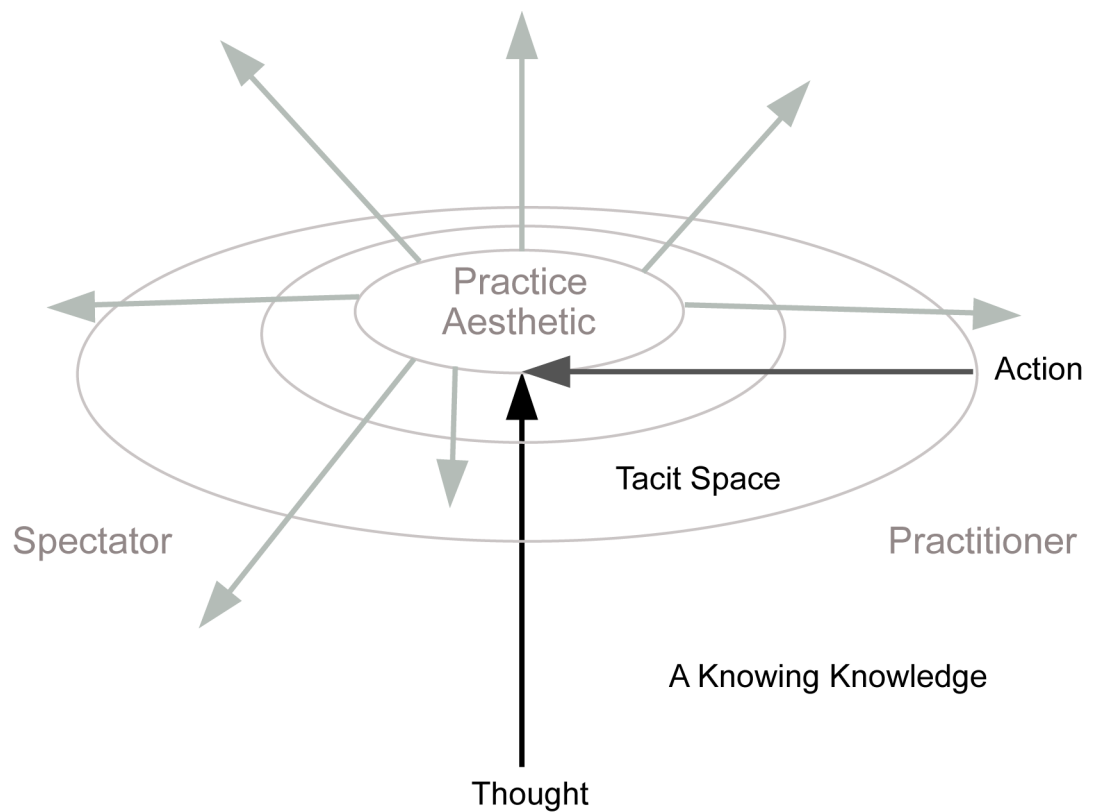


Figure 28. *A Tacit Space of a Knowing Knowledge.*

A juncture at which theory and practice abound is posited as a discovery of an own version of reality: a version of a lived reality that is determined by the simultaneous but disparate relativities of reason that exist through, in and of a doing of practice. This research does not address the whys and wherefores of such relativities, but, in the simplest of terms, assimilates

instances of thought and action to the cognitive and behavioural activity<sup>45</sup> of a reasoning of practice that aims to determine the existence of a theory of practice (Figure 29).

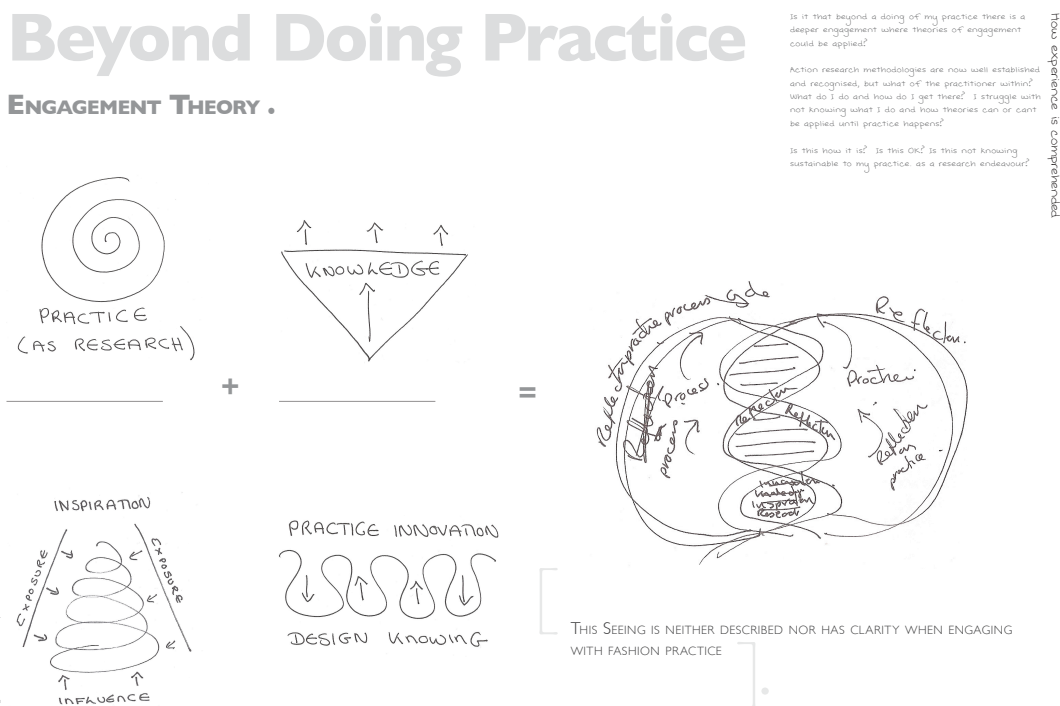


Figure 29. Example of a Determining of an existence of a Theory of Practice, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.2

A moment that is finite yet that exists with infinite complexity of what is seen, what is known and what is meant at the time of knowing. A knowing knowledge is argued to exist 'through' a

<sup>45</sup> Identified through an articulated framework that is homogeneous to some extent with Burnette's 'lived instances' (2009a) this research considers the cognitive and behavioural activity of the practitioner to be a perceived and experiential reasoning of practice grounded empirically in the here and now of a lived practitioner experience.

doing of practice in support of the 'in' practice contexts argued of a critical gaze of practice as a consciousness of seeing emerges of the dialogic (Figure 30).

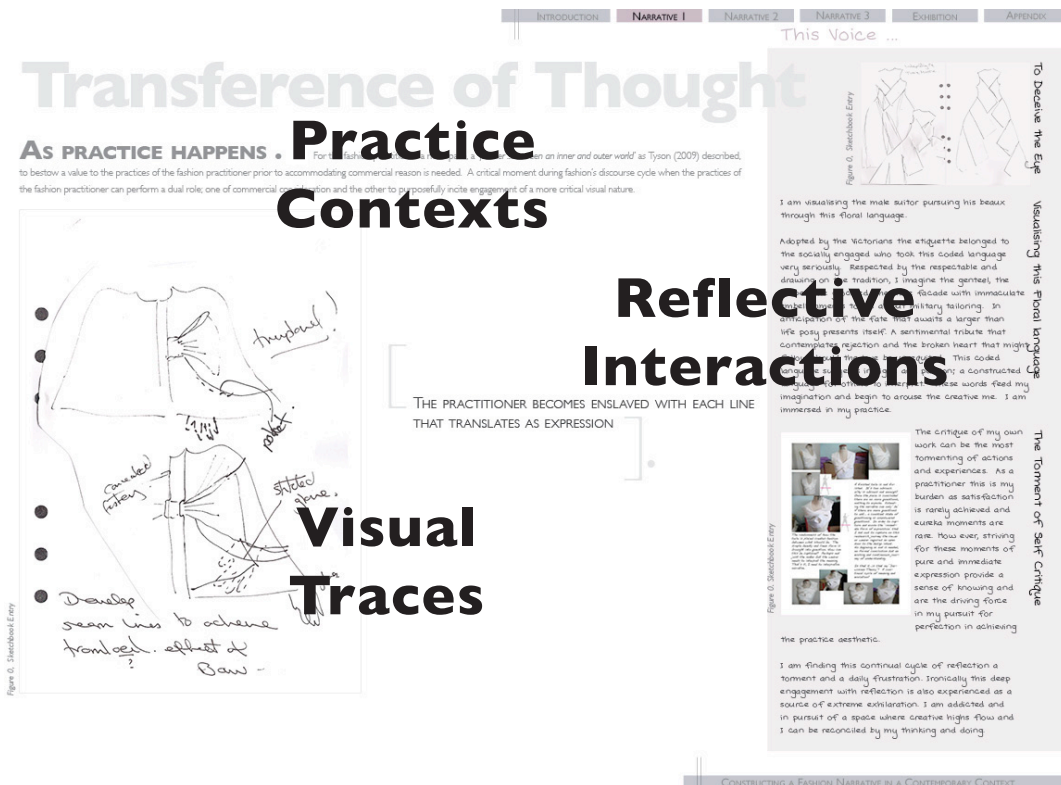


Figure 30. Example of a Dialogic, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.25.

A cognitive and behavioural instance of a doing of practice is argued to exist as an interconnected knowing knowledge that is never said or never put into words because it exists as a knowing and not a telling of a doing of practice, as similarly argued by Polanyi (1966, p.4-6) earlier. Such discoveries draw on Kant's notion of reasoning (in Gutting, 2005, p.36, Kant,

2008) of *a priori* knowledge,<sup>46</sup> and on what is known at the time of knowing. As a knowing knowledge, this practice inquiry evidences a doing of fashion practice that is externalised as a complex existence, the complexities of which consist of 'simultaneous and disparate relativities' of a reasoned knowing to be dynamically expressed in space and time. In a practice context this knowing knowledge is perceived through a reasoned knowing that exists in situational and relational terms, but is not easily expressed because the practitioner knows more than could be said. Moreover, tacit knowledge is challenged by its own adversity when considered beyond *what is* perceived. A moment of discovery is often lost to an instance of complex reasoning that is not easily put into words because more is known of the doing than is ever said.

At this point a general observation is made about the practitioner in relation to a lack of theoretical confidence and an apparent torment of self-belief when speaking about their work. Unlike a scientist, who may have the results of their experiment to discuss and make claim, there appears to be little or no evidence (visual or literary) to back up the practitioner's claim of their knowing knowledge. This research argues that the practitioner is not adequately equipped to make claim of the knowing of their practice? It is also argued that tacit knowledge of the discipline has remained unspoken and elusive over time, in part due to a knowing knowledge that is known but never said.

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46 Kant (2011) In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, first written in 1781 and later translated by Meiklejohn in 1855, argues that all knowledge is gained through knowledge of being and this a priori knowledge, as a reasoned knowledge, can have validity when constructing human knowledge and understanding.

### 3.4. The Dialogic's Neutral Centre and a Knowledge Universe

If we now consider Bakhtin's interconnected thinking as a dialogism that argues a neutral centre exists, and all that is not the centre as both situational and relational representations of what is known at the time of knowing. In this context the voice of the practitioner, the spectator and the practice aesthetic become representations of an interconnected knowing knowledge: a coefficient model of practice inquiry (Figure 31) within a knowledge universe consisting and contextualising the situational and relational existence of *what is ...let's say?*

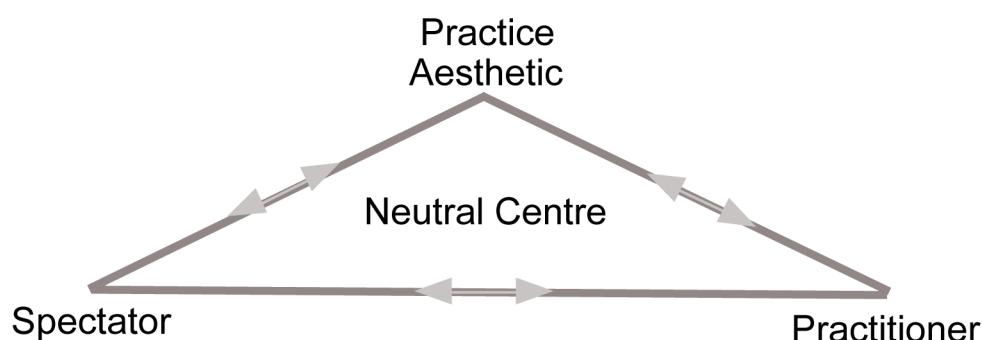


Figure 31. A Coefficient Model of Practice Inquiry.

This doctrine is considered to parallel the work of Foucault (1969) on his writings concerning a 'neutral centre' and his question of 'what is an author' (1969) but a performed function amongst many other performed functions? Drawing on Foucault's lucid panoramic conjectures (1966, p.4-49) this neutrality and interconnectivity of a 'neutral centre' is where a critical gaze of practice is never fixed between the practitioner, the spectator and the practice aesthetic. Norris-Reeves et al (2012, p.4-5) further argues that the practitioner role is 'a performed function amongst many other performed functions' and is not to be considered as a singular protagonist of fashion's narrative. It is then reasonable to locate the practice aesthetic and spectator of practice as performed functions of a knowing knowledge also.

The division of image and word is considered an arbitrary limitation and this separateness, in this research context, is also challenged, much like Gauker's (2011) claim of 'perceptual experience and imagistic thought' (p.1) and how thought (as image or word) could not be independent from concept itself (Gauker, 2007, p.125-142). Further, Searle's (2011, p.126) 'speech act' as a behavioural act resides at a finite point where thought and action collide (or meet) (Figure 32) and where Searle's claim of an 'intentional state' (p.127) is to be realised through such performative utterances (of a doing of practice) with infinite complexity.



Figure 32. *Example of where Thought and Action Collide, Narrative, 1, p.44.*

If we are to assume that a hierarchy of image and word no longer exists, and the construction of a narrative<sup>47</sup> can create passage of 'what is':<sup>48</sup> then Bakhtin's (in Holquist, 1990, p.15) concept of dialogism is worthy of further exploration. Both image and word as a visual and literary language of fashion practice (Figure 33) is argued as an articulate dialogic method of which a knowing knowledge can emerge.

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47 Constructing a narrative of practice draws on the linkages assumed of word and image as a visual and literary language and the intimacies of cognitive reasoning that are associated with creative practice.

48 Nietzsche's (Tanner 1994) observations of the 'infinite' situated a 'seeing' of 'what is' as universal. The engagement of a reasoned knowing in this universal space constructed the infinite possibilities of what is seen, what is known and what is meant to become *what is* of fashion practice.

# A Visual Literacy

## FINISHED TOILE WITH STYLE LINES .

THE PRACTITIONER FORMS A PROFOUND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRACTICE AESTHETIC

### Visual Data



Figure 0. Draft Toile with Style Lines

A truth to 'what is' as a moment of knowing is argued: a moment when the gravity of my reasoning performs what is the answer?

Now that the developing practice aesthetic is concluded I am needing to translate the toile into a working flat pattern. Am I bound by my own limitations when it comes to technical 'know how'? Is it that this duality of a technical skill and a visually aesthetic outcome are at odds with each other?

Perhaps the mastery of one limits the resolve of the other?

### Literary Data

I momentarily consider my practice as a performance; a performance of my trials and tribulations as I move in and out of this metaphorical space. Utterances that are concerned with the evolution of my practice.

At this moment I am the sole protagonist of the piece and I ponder how others might critically gaze upon my work?

This Voice ...

A new confidence is contributing to the evolution of my practice. I am deliberately and consciously being true to the finite and some times infinite moments of discovery. As I begin to understand this narrative space that I work within I am able to position my thinking and doing more freely and at will.

Truth to what is

Final Sketched Toile with Style Lines

The performative role of the practitioner

Figure 33. Example of Visual and Literary Data Collection, Narrative 1, p.59.

Dialogism's infinite ableness to discover the discovered of a knowing knowledge determine the reflective interactions, practice contexts and visual traces of practice exist as an own version of reality. As dynamic moments of discovery, a reasoned knowing, as a narrative of seeing fashion practice, is appropriated to offer knowledge of 'what is' at the time of knowing.



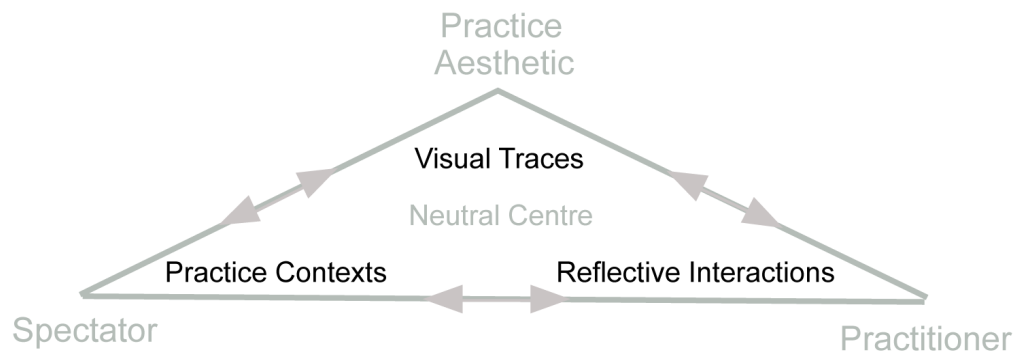


Figure 34. *Multiple Dialogues of Practice.*

The dialogic event, as multiple dialogues of practice (Figure 34), encompassed by the coefficient model of practice, assumes the meaningful attribution of the voice of the practitioner, the practice aesthetic and the spectator of practice. Such a constructed dialogic (Figure 35), as a community of meanings, is to communicate the relativities of a cognitive and behavioural reasoning of the fashion practitioner, as author, that actuate a physicality of a tacit dialogue and a materiality of a visual and literary language of fashion practice.

# Deep Engagement

**THE LIVING SKETCH .** Conscious reasoning and knowing translate the context to continually question the visual ambition of the practice aesthetic.

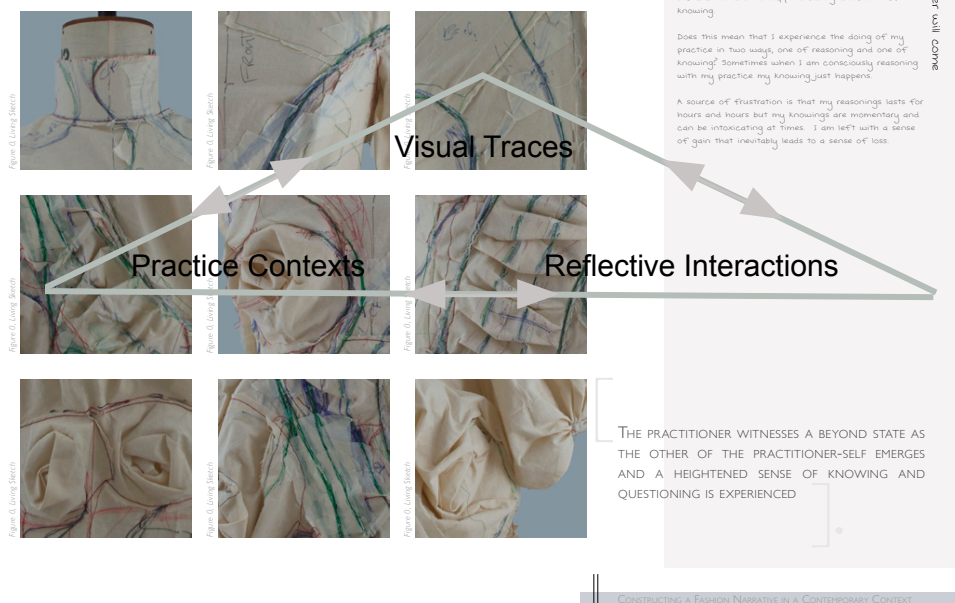


Figure 35. Example of a Constructed Dialogic, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.46.

The adoption of a critical visual method of fashion practice is argued to empower a constructed dialogic to create a record of events as they are lived.

### 3.5. A Position of Relativity and a Conscious Other

This practice inquiry acknowledges a duality existing in the practitioner: a moment of heightened knowing, or creative flow, that is experienced and perceived both simultaneously and separately by the deeply engaged reflective practitioner. In relation to the coefficient model and the dialogic, this research argues that a conscious other exists as a voice of reason (Figure 36) bound only by the knowledge universe, and appears relative to a universal reasoning of *what is*: a conscious other is argued to exist that extends beyond intuition and appears to know more than could be said. For example, in Narrative 1, p.35 through reflective practice

the practitioner claims 'I feel like an accomplice to my own secret world. The world that exists in my head when the other of me engages with the chaos of my practice thinking and doing'.

It is hypothesised in relation to the situational and relational relativities experienced and perceived in both space and time by the practitioner-self and to include a conscious other (as a voice of reason), that an interconnected tacit space of a knowing knowledge exists: a space where thought and action simultaneously and separately can occur (collide) and a knowing knowledge can emerge knowing more than could be said. It is also noted that this heightened awareness of a conscious other that is simultaneously and separately perceived appeared to grant validity or a confidence to the practitioner's claim of their knowing knowledge.

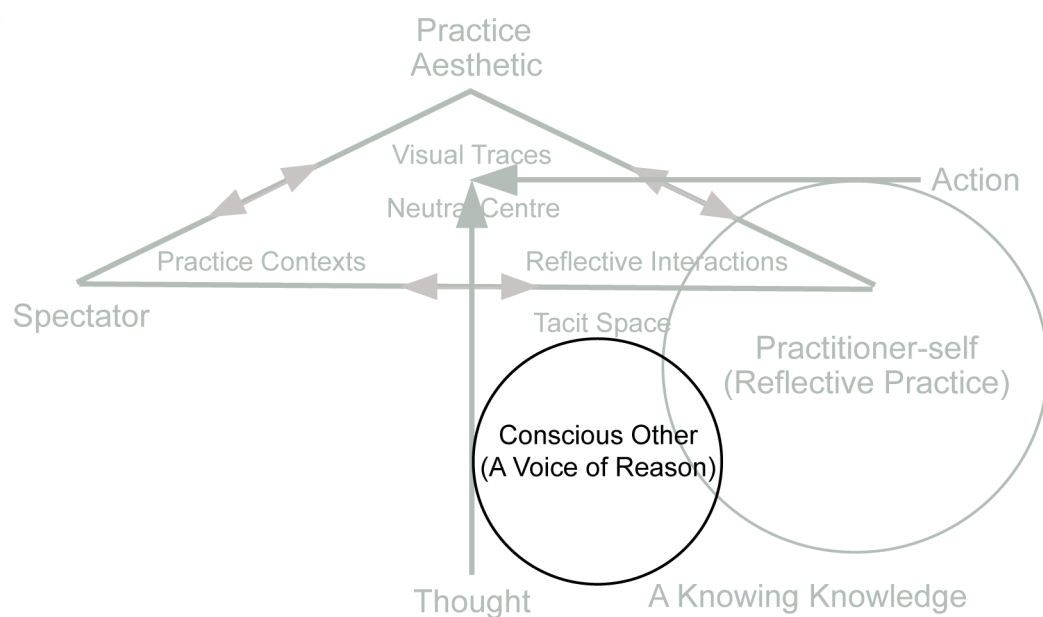


Figure 36. *A Conscious Other (a Voice of Reason).*

In support of this heightened awareness perceived by the practitioner Newton and Bakhtin's views are found to polarise this claim. Newton (in Holquist, 1990, p.19) argues for the 'infinite'

and acknowledges the spatial extent of a universal reasoning, but challenges Bakhtin's belief in a simultaneous separateness and contends sameness to be the absolute oneness of a consciousness. Newton's view might be the absolute oneness of existence ...but, through this experience of practice, assuming the author-function role's relative position in a knowledge universe, this practice inquiry finds affinity with Bakhtin's position of relativity. Through practice, the voice of the deeply engaged reflective practitioner and a conscious other, as a voice of reason, exist as truth to what is perceived. This conscious other could not be called upon on at will, but assumes a position of relativity brought into being through a dialogic of this fashion practice. A voice of reason (Figure 37), that notably heightens the simultaneous and disparate discoveries that are discerned in the practitioner when doing practice is argued.

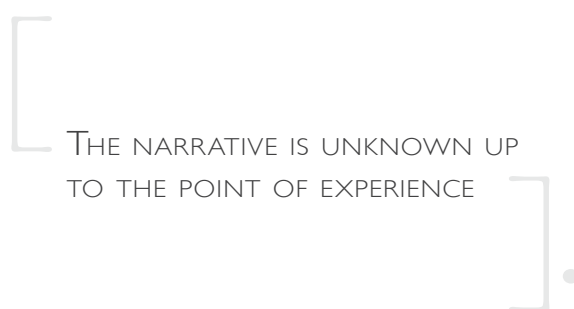


Figure 37. Example of a 'Voice of Reason', Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2. p.8.

In a curated context the dialogic event externalises the existence of a conscious other and a craving in the practitioner, like an addict looking for his next fix, is witnessed. Situated in the here and now of a knowing knowledge, and determined to be relative to a heightened existence of a reasoned knowing, this inquiry of fashion practice argues a position of conscious other as relative to a heightened knowing of *what is*. These subtleties to do with self (practitioner-self), a conscious other and other as spectator are noted and are referred to later, as Newton's view may well find affinity with the spectator role. The reflective interactions of the fashion practitioner and perhaps heightened awareness of a knowing knowledge actualise

such perceived truths as instances or moments when thought and action occur and a visual and literary language can emerge of a reasoned knowing in a tacit space.

Derived from a knowing knowledge, as finite occurrences of *what is*, an interconnected knowledge universe (Figure 38) is to comprise observed truths that are constructed as simultaneous, but disparate relativities of reason. As transcendental representations<sup>49</sup> of *being*, the reflective interactions and practice responses of the practitioner, a conscious other as a voice of reason, the practice contexts, reflective interactions and the visual traces of practice (as active critical engagement) to include the spectator of practice, represent the situational and relational truths to what is known at the time of knowing.

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<sup>49</sup> Transcendent representations are concerned with an intuitive sense of knowing and how these might be represented as a form of knowledge independent of prior experience: an existence of being embodied within the physicality and materiality of a reasoning of practice dynamically expressed in space and time.

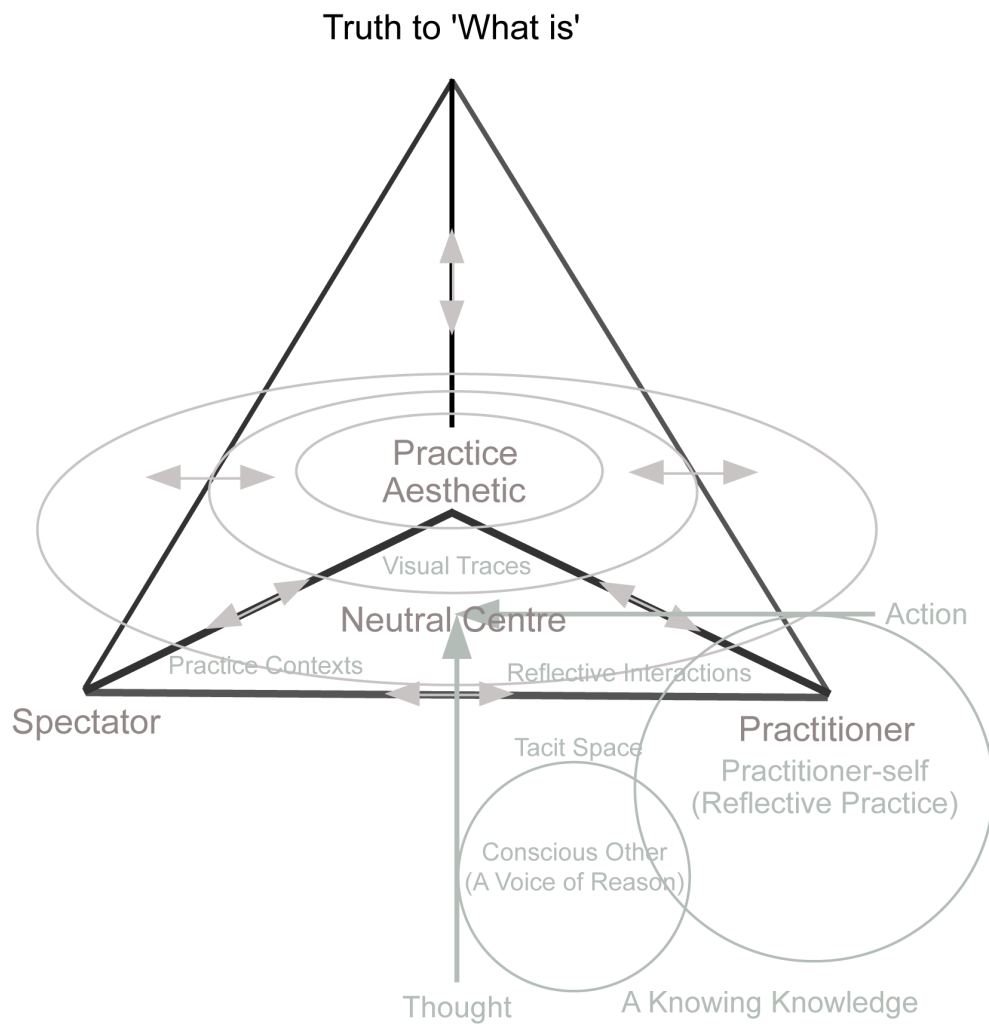


Figure 38. An Interconnected Knowledge Universe.

It is hypothesised that the existence of an interconnected knowledge universe in the here and now of practice exists as truth to what is known at the time of knowing. A *priori* knowledge of practice as a momentary and universal truth to *what is*, is argued. It may only be through reflective intent that an own version of reality manifests as relative and relational, and the as yet un-reasoned language of fashion practice has yet to be reasoned with. In this research context a foundation for conceptualising and actualising practice has granted validity to a consciousness of *what is*. Transcendental representations of a human experience is to be realised and actualised through a dialogic method and argued as knowledge of *what is* at the time of

knowing. The hypothesis of this, in this research context, suggests that an interconnected knowledge universe exists which is capable of constructing a knowing knowledge of the discipline.

### 3.6. Framing the Narrative Inquiry

Clandinin and Huber (2002, p.162) claim that knowledge of practice can be critically observed and reflected upon in a lived reality of a three-dimensional space. This narrative inquiry suggests that action research methods encountered through a lived reality of practitioner reasoning (Figure 39) to be a method of externalising the practitioners knowing of their practice.

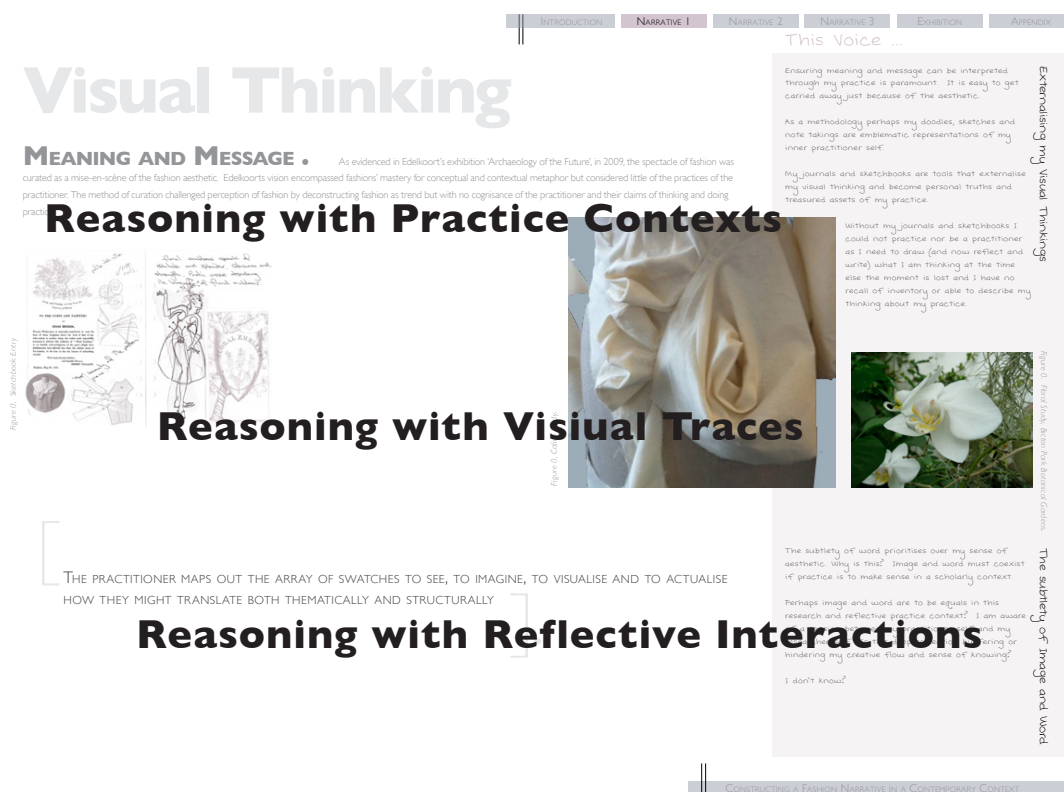


Figure 39. Example of Practitioner Reasoning, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.27.

This seeing of practice, as a triangulated (coefficient) model of equal attribution (practitioner, artefact and spectator), frame the practice development, practice response and practice

conclusion (as a critical visual method) of this fashion practice. This model of a lived reality chooses not to limit itself to the three-dimensionality of the problem-solution space but chooses to posit Newton's (in Holquist, 1990, p.19) earlier claim of the 'infinite' relative to space and time. This research argues that Clandinin and Huber's dimensional space as infinite: a narrative space<sup>50</sup> of practice as inquiry (Figure 40) that both entraps and liberates the abounding seeing as observed truths of a reasoned knowing of practice as it is lived by both practitioner and spectator: a vast and vague narrative space that consumes the physicality and materiality of the spectator, practitioner and artefact and facilitates a critical gaze of practice as a way of seeing the visuality of fashion practice itself.

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<sup>50</sup> A narrative space as a perception of space refers to the sensory reach, spatial perception or 'Volumes Sensation' (James, 2001 [1892] p.202-207) that existed of the coefficient model (Figure 2) for the purposes of knowledge creation and knowledge conversion of practice.



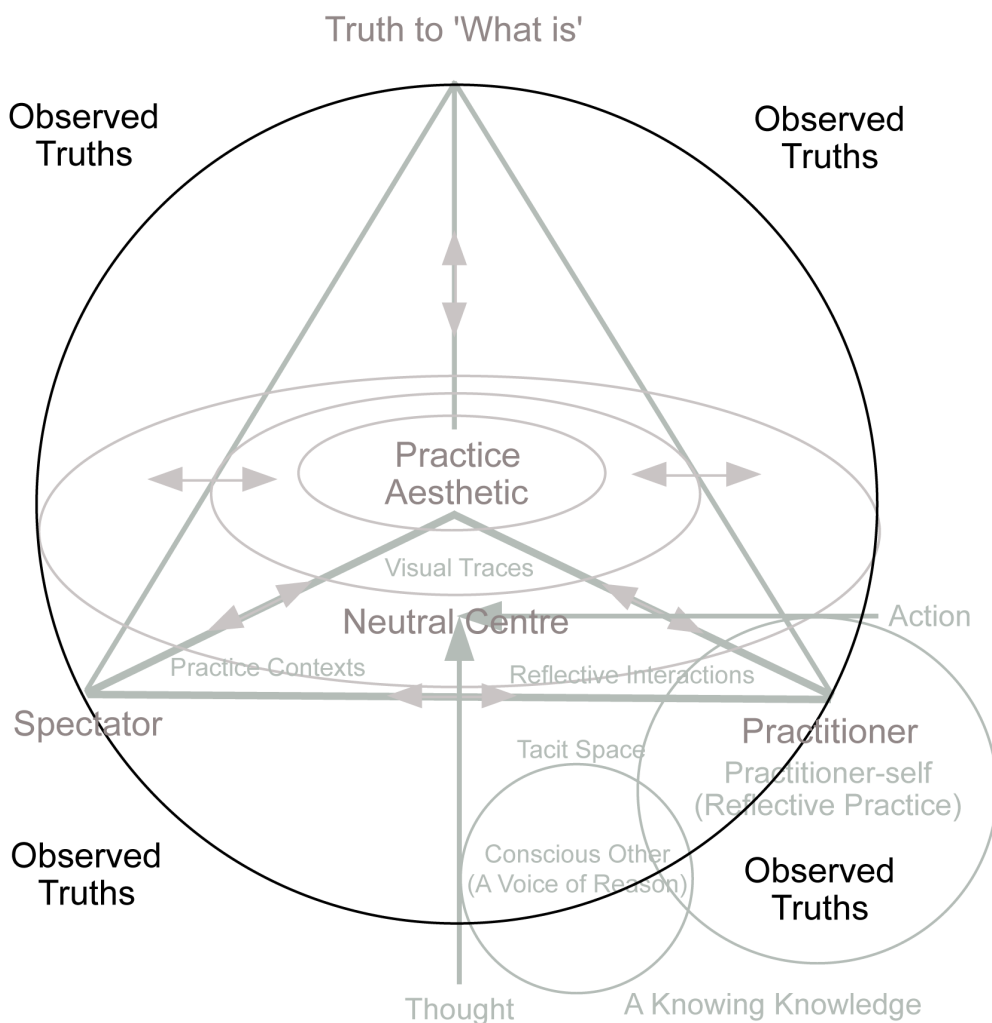


Figure 40. A Narrative Space of Practice Inquiry.

### 3.7. A Double-Loop Seeing

On reading more widely on scholarly research in a practice context there appears to be a dynamic for case study material where the practitioner is being looked at from the outside, and a bringing together of theory and practice that is emerging in the practice disciplines (Lawson and Dorst, 2009; McIntosh 2009; Cross, 2011). This research positions the author, as fashion practitioner, as transcending both theory and practice with the through, in and of practice contexts emerging as performed functions of a narrative inquiry: a moving in and out of practice is argued, that purposefully externalises the reflective-self (Figure 41).

As I begin to experience a moving in and out of my practice I am able to separate my thoughts from my actions. Foucault's theory of 'Author Function' (in Rainbow 1987, p.108) helps me (as a research practitioner) to see what I do and to understand what I think I do (as a fashion practitioner). I have moved outside of myself, or so it feels. A sort of outside looking in, out, behind, forward, upward etc all at the same time.

It is easy to see how practitioners, as researchers, become distracted as what appears to be important is the object of study (the practice aesthetic). Perhaps this is the myth of practice as a research endeavour? Is it that we all do not fully understand because we do not know what we have never said?

I am having to keep reminding my self of the purpose of my practice as research. The construction of practice as process, as development, as knowledge is where the intelligences of the practices of the practitioner resides. I am constructing a narrative of my practice for others, and me, to discern.

Moving In and Out of Practice

Figure 41. Example of Moving in and Out of Practice,  
Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.8.

As a body of work is assembled<sup>51</sup> as a constructed narrative, this seeing as a material existence augments Rose's (2007, p.11) view that discerns of a mediated seeing, signaling the existence of a conscious seeing of practice. These authentic experiences, as observed truths of (fashion) practice, situate both the practitioner and spectator in the here and now of a lived reality. A

<sup>51</sup> A task not to be under estimated in terms of externalizing the cognitive and behavioural engagement of constructing a narrative of practice.

'double-loop seeing'<sup>52</sup> (similar to Argyris and Schön's 'double-loop' learning, 1974, p.19) emerges as a situational and relational transference of a constructed narrative of fashion practice. This double-loop seeing (Figure 42) of situational and relational thought is argued as an assembly of empirical and *a priori* knowledge as truth to *what is*.

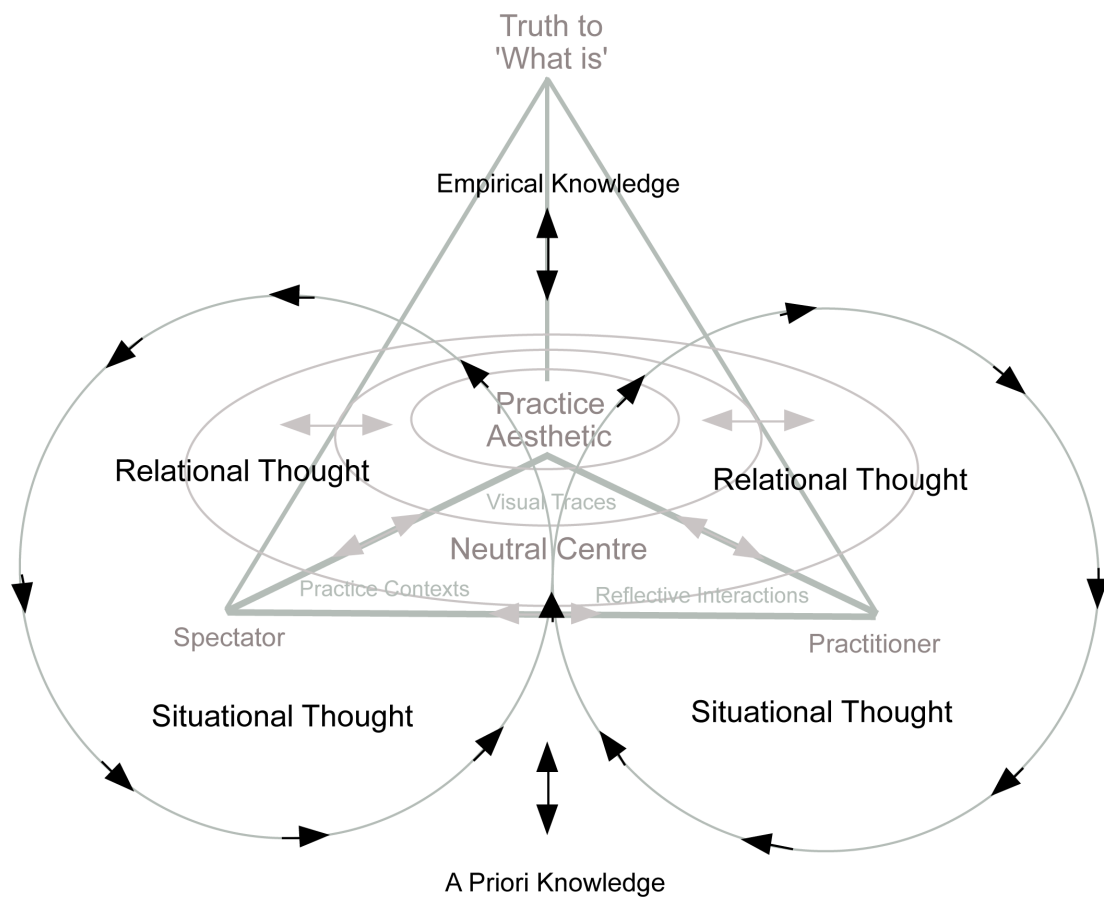


Figure 42. A Double-Loop Seeing.

52 A 'double loop' seeing is argued as a situational and relational transference similar to Argyris and Schön's 'double-loop' learning (1974, p.19) with distinctions drawn between the infinite and finite seeing of practice, resulting in *what is* as a universal knowing knowledge (rather than a new goal or fact).

In the first instance this research affords the practitioner (and not necessarily researcher) a position of authority to engage and reflect upon a narrative of practice (as phenomena) as it is consciously experienced and perceived. The spectator is then invited to observe, engage and respond to the narrative of practice (as phenomena) as the practitioner, as researcher, observes the spectator engaging with and responding to a narrative of practice (as phenomena) as it is also consciously experienced and perceived in a narrative space.

The five practitioner respondents (the spectator-function role) in this ethnographic study were invited to actively engage with, and respond to the portfolio of practice through individual practice response, questionnaires, personal audio recordings and interviews (a conversation about a way of seeing). Through the cognitive and behavioural narratives of fashion practice this double-loop seeing in action (Figure 43) is considered to have authenticated and validated the active critical engagements as reflective interactions and practice responses of both practitioner and spectator. This double-loop seeing in action attributes the author-function and spectator-function roles as equal functions of a seeing of practice in a narrative space.

# Reflection

## THIS VOICE .

### Practitioner observing the Spectator observing the phenomena

Respondents reflected on their engagement with the practice of practice. Some respondents expressed a sense of being 'seen' by the practitioner, and an empathy with the portfolio of practice. Comments such as "your using things that I thought provoked me to think" and "this is where it is still Alive" suggested the dialogic methodology of the practitioner was being recognized and that this 'other' existed more freely in a narrative space.

Respondents alluded to the "next level" and "another dimension" and how the practice was "refined". One respondent suggested that as practitioners a line of thought could be observed and edited but also questioned the honest "could be achieved". It might be that further understanding of the reflective practice process result in existing in a space that is not what it is.

One respondent and another reflected on the dialogic methodology that was used. "I look at the things are written rather than what I am actually reading" and "It inspired me to um change the way I work and develop".

Respondents acknowledged that they had not seen or considered practice in this way and related to the portfolio of practice on a number of levels.



Figure 0. Origande Study

INTRODUCTION | NARRATIVE 1 | NARRATIVE 2 | **NARRATIVE 3** | EXHIBITION | APPENDIX

This Voice ...

Page 6 of 13

...IT'S REALLY DIFFICULT TO SEE ABOUT THE ACT OF PRACTICE

...PRACTICE IS SO MUCH HARD TO SEE DIFFICULT TO TALK

...THINKING THRU DRAWING

...I CAN COMPARE ...

...THINKING ABOUT

...SEEING ME

...MY PERSONA

...PERSONA'S?

...GAZE

...NARRATIVE

...THE PRACTITIONER HAS YET TO DISCOVER WHAT NEEDS TO BE KNOWN

...LIFE

...RAW

...TRUTHFUL

...PRECONCEIVED IDEAS

...THOUGHTS

...WHAT IT'S ABOUT

...INTRIGUING

...NEXT LEVEL

...NEXT DIMENSION

...WRITTEN WORD

...DIMENSION

...ALIVE

...SPENT LOOKING

...ME

...GAVE CONFIDENCE

...WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING

...CONVICTION

...I WOULDN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE

...OBSERVE

...THOUGHT

...EDIT

...THAT LINE OF THOUGHT

Figure 0. The Voice of the Practitioner Respondent

CONSTRUCTING A FASHION NARRATIVE IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Figure 43. A Double-Loop Seeing in Action, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 3, p.73.

It is noted at this point that the spectator and practitioner both somehow appeared to collude in a knowing of the 'never said' (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C & D). Could it be that the very existence of a narrative space (Figure 44) passaged a tacit knowing of the 'never said', and that the 'never said' could now be spoken?

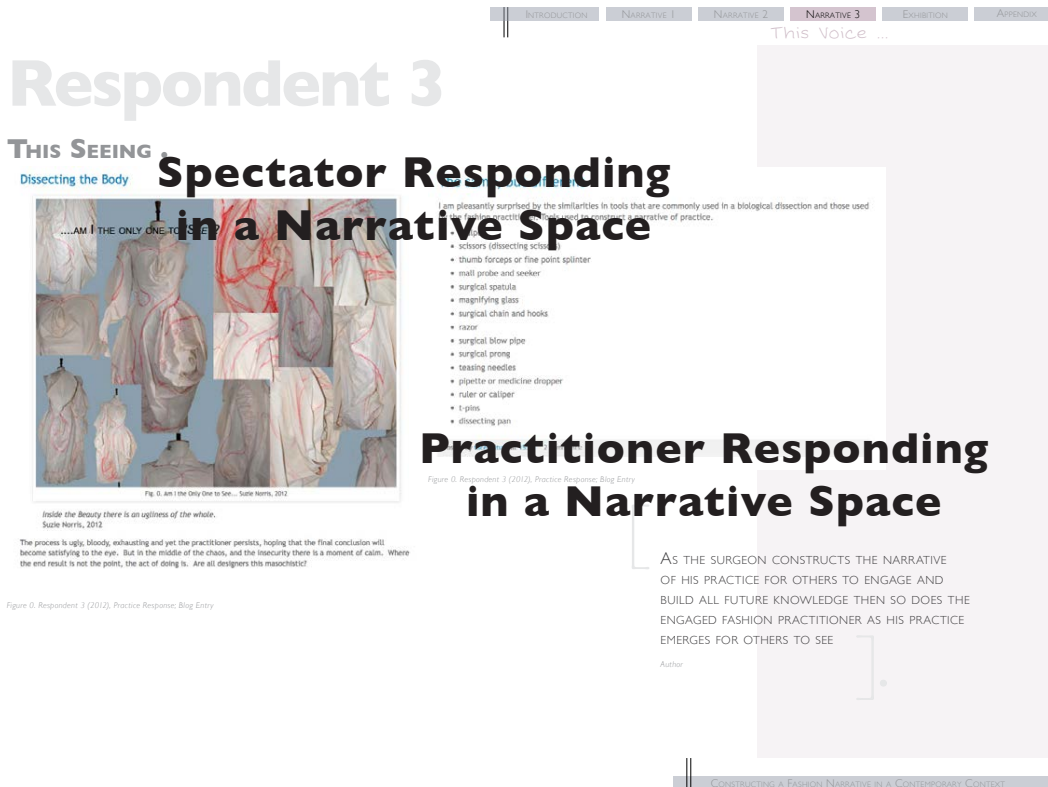


Figure 44. Example of a Narrative Space, Narrative 3, p.61.

**3.8. A Narrative Space**

Clandinin and Huber’s (2002 p.162) ‘Narrative Inquiry: Understanding Life’s Artistry’ proposed that a three-dimensional space existed that situates both the artistic and aesthetic composition of reasoning. Extending this view an augmented narrative space of practice as inquiry (Figure 45) is argued to exist that acknowledges the inward connectivity of the self, the outward connectivity of self and others and the divine connectivity concerning the culture of practice itself: a ‘multi-voicedness’, as McIntosh argues earlier (2010, p.130), as observed truths that construct a narrative of practice as it is lived, if you like?

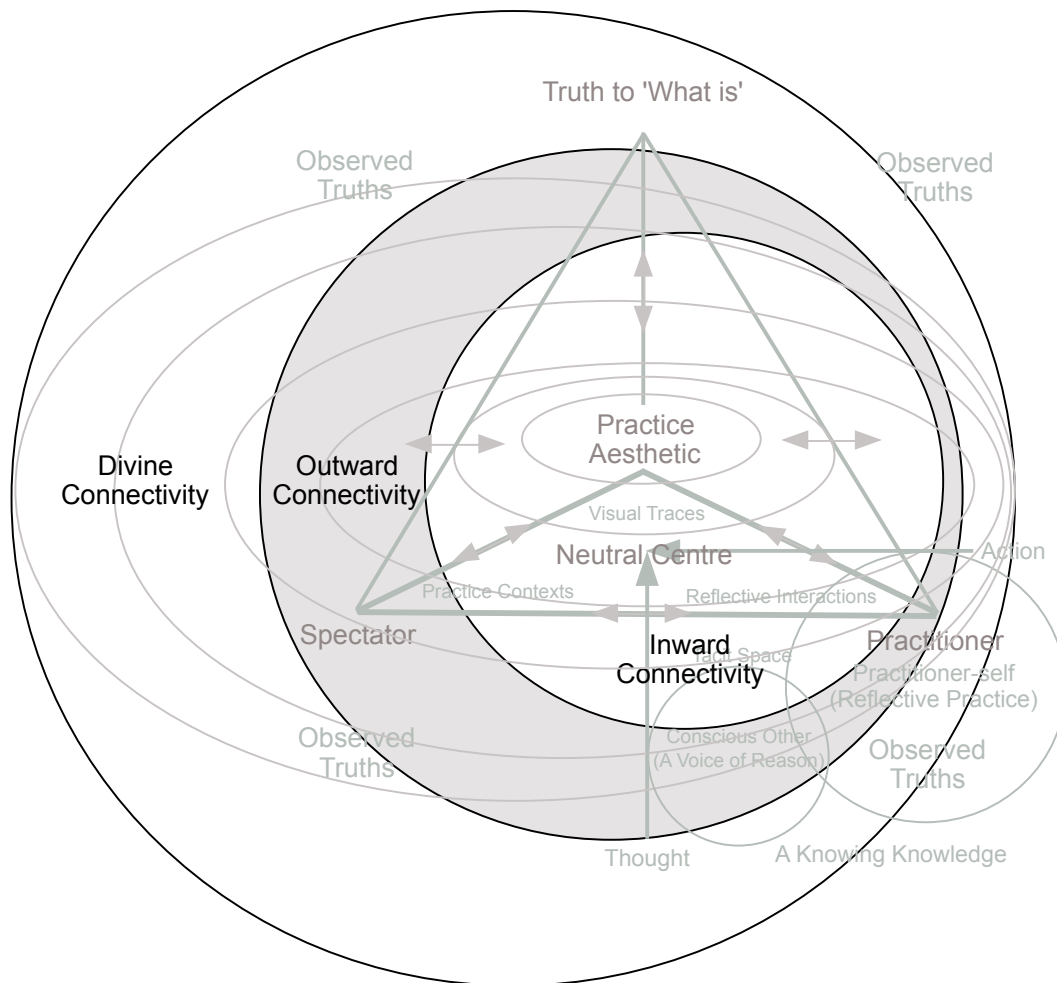


Figure 45. An Augmented Narrative Space of Practice Inquiry.

The in-practice contexts situate the interconnectivities of story and experience (Figure 46) in a narrative space that has no bounds and where the spatial reach is infinite. Importantly, the coefficients of this multi-voicedness, as observed truths, unite the empirical and all the *a priori* knowledge into a narrative space of practice for the purposes of inquiry itself.

I am deeply engaged with my fashion practice as an awareness of both experiment and discovery unfold. This feeds my insatiable drive to be as innovative as I can be through my practice. Not as a researcher but as a practitioner who is driven and hungry for the new, the unconsidered, the untested or even the unthought of?

I need to find order in what appears to be a very chaotic and complex perception of my thinking and doing.

Experiment and Discovery

Figure 46. *Example of Interconnectivities of Story and Experience, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.8.*

### 3.9. The Spectator's Engagement with the Portfolio of Practice

The spectator's engagement with the unabbreviated oeuvre of the practices of the fashion practitioner contained in the portfolio of practice (Narrative 3, p.50-80 & Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C & D) is encountered as a consequence of a dialogic method and engaged with through a curated intervention of practice. The reflective interactions and practice responses in the form of graphic narrative, creative and performative writing, illustration, narrative through styling, responsive drawing, film and photographic narrative, oral and audio narrative, electronic dialogue, such as blogging, etc. privileges a consciousness of seeing practice as it is actively and critically experienced and perceived by the spectator. As observed truths, the reflective interactions and practice responses of the spectator (as active critical responses) also suggests the existence of an own version of reality (Figure 47).



# Respondent 2

## PHOTOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE AND IMAGE PROJECTION .



Figure 3. Respondent 2, Practice Response, Photographic Narrative.

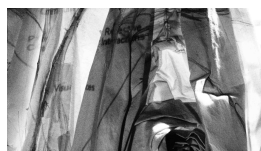


Figure 2. Respondent 2, Practice Response, Photographic Narrative.

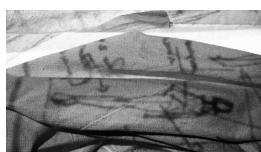


Figure 1. Respondent 2, Practice Response, Photographic Narrative.

...WHEN I DECIDE TO MAKE A PIECE OF WORK ...THE CONCEPT COMES FIRST.  
 THIS HAPPENED THE OTHER WAY AROUND  
 Respondent 2



Figure 4. Practice Response, Photographic Narrative.

Nothing was said but we all knew there was more to say  
 Nothing was Said

Click to View, stop and play  
 Figure 5. Respondent 2, Practice Response, Photographic Narrative.

Figure 47. Example of an Existence of an 'Own' Version of Reality, Narrative 3, p.55.

This version of reality is initially considered to have aligned with Newton's view of 'the infinite' as the absolute oneness of a consciousness. The spectator role is proposed as a singular experience of consciousness (as opposed to a duality of the self and conscious other, or, indeed, of the 'outsideness' that Bakhtin referred to (in Holquist, 1990, p.26-33), but amid a coefficient model and a dialogic method of a narrative of practice the spectator (as respondent) also staked a claim to a knowing knowledge in an 'own context' (Appendix E(ii) p.90).

The respondents were asked about their experience of knowing and whether they experienced such moments, and if so what a sense of knowing felt like when engaging with a narrative space of practice as inquiry. It was found that the spectator-respondent (as practitioner also), made reference to alternative representations or visual metaphor, drew on emotional reasoning, demonstrated an empathic knowing and readily engaged with the dialogic in a narrative space (Appendix C, p.39-42).

Could the spectator's engagement with a narrative space of practice also engage with the self as other? Could it be that the other of the spectator-self was brought into existence through a consciousness of seeing that only came into being through a reasoning of practice in a narrative space of practice as inquiry? Did a reasoning of practice exist as a knowing and not a telling in a shared and intuitive narrative space, and could the spectator of practice now speak freely of what was known at the time of knowing? A knowing knowledge that could be claimed of the 'never said' is also argued to exist by the spectator in a narrative space.

As a community of meanings (Figure 48), the practitioner's '...externalised position of self' (as Norris-Reeves et al argues, 2012, p.11-12), a conscious other, the spectator and the practice aesthetic framed and facilitated a way of seeing a truth to *what is*.

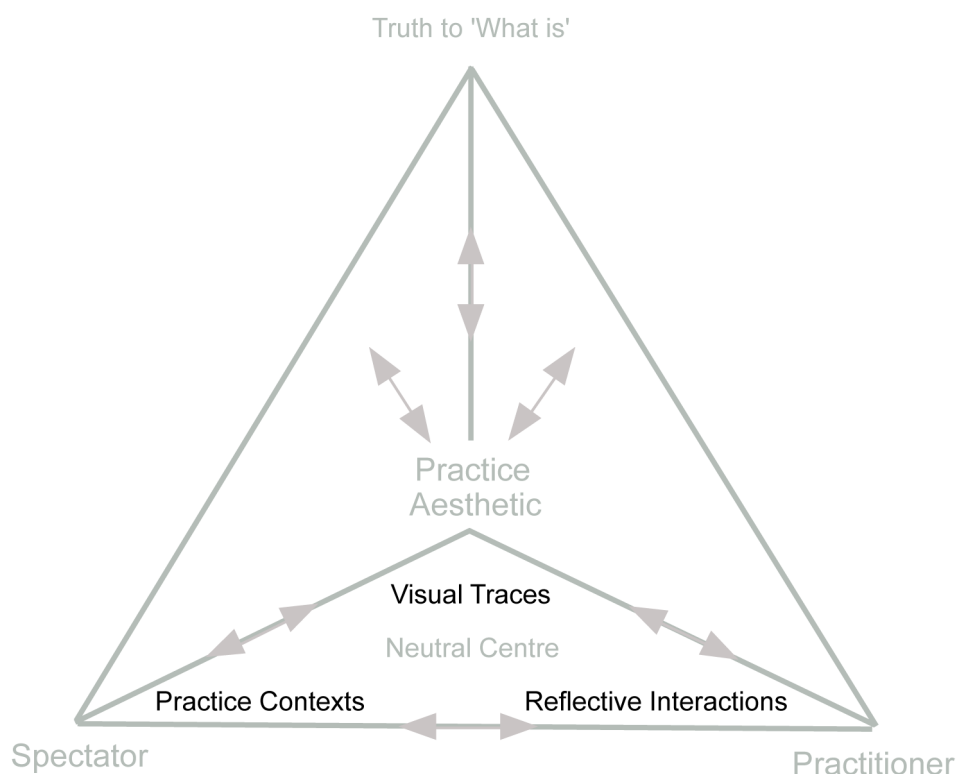


Figure 48. A Community of Meanings.

A consciousness of seeing facilitated an empathic knowing or a conversion of a collective reasoning as a knowing knowledge that exists in space and time. Relative to the conditions of the possible, an expression of what is known at the time of knowing, as a cognitive and behavioural response to the here and now is intuitively reasoned with by the spectator and empathically shared with the practitioner (as both practitioner and researcher). The viewing of, and engaging with, the studied practice, through a curated intervention of practice, prompted a common affinity as the perceived and collective reasoning as knowing enables the spectator to freely ponder instances of practice as discovery through reason in an 'own context'. The spectator, conscious of rational thought, immersed him or herself in a moment of critical engagement, a representation of gaze in its purest form, shared only with those who colluded in the knowing. At this point the practitioner, the practitioner other and the practitioner as author, as distinct and self-interested entities of the practice inquiry, appeared to conceptualise (critical) gaze as a (re) presentation of truth that could contribute to, and construct a future discourse of practice: an archaeology of a critical gaze transcends the embodied physical and material existence of being to be dynamically expressed in space and time: a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice in the here and now is to construct a narrative of fashion practice as it is lived.

### **3.10. Summary**

Advancing Rose's hypothesis of a critical visual method this fashion practice as inquiry argues a transcendental phenomenon for the purposes of constructing and converting a knowledge of the discipline: an own version of reality as a cognitive and behavioural instance of a knowing of a doing of practice, of which a telling can be told (by either the practitioner or spectator). The dialogic method is argued to have mediated a situational and relational telling (of a knowing of a doing of practice), that purposefully unites the empirical nature experienced through a doing of

practice where a reasoned knowing is tacitly engaged with as *a priori* knowledge of *what is*, in and of practice.

The fashion practitioner, as author-function, is concerned with the development of the fashion practice aesthetic (as artefact) and of engaging with fashion practice through reflection. The role of the spectator, as spectator-function is to actively and critically respond to the portfolio of practice and in doing so engages with a double loop seeing of practice. As a critical visual method of practice this archaeology of a critical gaze, as a visual and literary language of fashion practice, situates the tacit moments of discovery in Kant's philosophical domain. As *a priori* knowledge, a reasoned knowing in the here and now of fashion practice is engaged with through a curated intervention and a dialogic method. Both the practitioner and spectator were found to readily engage with a narrative space of practice as inquiry.

Through a curated intervention of practice these (practitioner) truths (such as the film displayed at the RCA exhibition referred earlier) as visual traces, reflective interactions and practice contexts emerge, augmented and are offered as a consequence of the dialogic. This inherent multiplicity, as representations of what is said and understood and what is known and what is meant, assemble, or perhaps unite, an empirical and *a priori* knowledge as a transcendental phenomenon of fashion practice in a narrative space.

#### **4. A Way of Seeing**

This chapter offers an evaluation of the results and conclusions drawn from the work outlined in chapter 4 and considers if the aims have been met (Introduction): a method of constructing a narrative of fashion practice as inquiry that reconciles the tacit dialogues embodied within a knowing knowledge of practice.

Firstly the work of Archer (2003, p.22), Shumack (2010, p.3-6) and Rose (2007, p.10) are discussed relative to the through, in and of practice contexts that this narrative inquiry purports. The dialogic, as a community of meanings, the coefficient model and a consciousness of seeing comprised of observed truths is described and considered in support of the research aim. The construction of an archaeology of a critical gaze is reviewed and a way of seeing is determined. Drawing on Bakhtin's triangulative model (in Holquist, 1990, p.26-33) and Foucault's (1969, p.27-31) belief of the 'said' and 'never-said', a subjective-objective knowing of the tacit dialogues of practice are considered and if such truths, in these terms, could construct a future discourse of practice and how practitioner thought and action can contribute to the constructed contexts of fashion's narrative?

Concurring with Norris-Reeves et al (2012, p.11-12), Collier and Collier (1986, p.5) and Rose (2007, p.238) and in considering a research paradigm concerned with the present, Schön's (1983) reflective practice inquiry, Ylirisku and Buur's (2007, p.19) design ethnography, Pink's (2007, p.119) notion of the visual and the oral (in ethnographic study) and the notion of a (future) design ethnography are discussed as research methods that could cultivate conversations in the here and now. The physicality of tacit knowledge, a conscious other and the 'active dialogues' (James, 2001 [1892] p.186) espoused of the coefficient model are considered as an enabling method for empirical data to be reasoned with. McNiff, (2007, p.308) and Clandinin and Huber's (2010, p.3) 'lived experience' is argued to have been useful

to the research method for the more rational data to be reasoned with. Believed to be one of the significant discoveries in this narrative context is the subjective-rational and objective-empirical foundations of a knowing knowledge whereby the abutment of the empirical and the rational are found to be juxtapositional. The discussion concludes if this is the ultimate reality to be examined?

The spectator's journey is described as a critical encounter that was both material and physical in existence. The data drawn from the research exercise is discussed at length and the (active critical) reflective interactions and practice responses of the spectator are considered. As multiple dialogues, the portfolio of practice is described in detail relevant to the research aim. Each narrative is described as a correlative body of work that considers, reasons and reflects on what has been learnt from the perspective of the author, as fashion practitioner. Finally, the chapter concludes with a theory of engagement: a purposeful excavation of what fashion practice is, as inquiry, or certainly could become.

#### **4.1. An Archaeology of a Critical Gaze of Practice**

In support of Archer's (2003, p.22) 'Inner conversations and self-reflexivity' and Shumack's (2010, p.3-6) 'Conversational-self', this research engages with and constructs a knowing knowledge as externalised constructs of (a doing of) practice. This practice inquiry discerns that, through a moment's knowing, a consciousness of seeing exists that is both infinite yet finite in space and time. An example of this would be the practitioner's statement of practice (Figure 49). Much like an artist's statement, a representation of truth, a representation of a deep and emotional engagement that is externalised by the fashion practitioner and their practice. A telling that would otherwise have not been told perhaps?

My practice is symbolic of a social statement of meaning and cultural etiquette synonymous during the Victorian period. Through my practice I have deconstructed a code of transactional values and emotional sentiment abstracted through the visualisation and translation of the meanings and memoirs assumed of the Language and poetry of Flowers.

My work engages with the fashion aesthetic through a series of closely spaced and uninterrupted assessments of line and form and a seeing of what is. As points of reference the floral anatomies pose as portraits narrated of a story telling experience. Of this floral grammar the visualities of my practice are born out of intuitive and instinctive happenings that describe a cultured and literary landscape that was cognisant of new histories being made.

This voice of the practitioner as provocative visual communicator, as editor of meaning and message, as writer of cultural interpretation and as curator of a lived reality of practice is concerned with interpretation of what is seen, what is known and what is meant of practice.

This voice is Me.

Figure 49. Example of a Practitioner Statement, Portfolio of Practice, e-Exhibition, p.1.

Norris-Reeves et al (2012, p.10) has suggested this 'way of seeing of the practitioner's unabbreviated oeuvre' and Berger's (1972, p.9-10) and Rose's (2007, p.10) claim of a mediated seeing, as having a situational and relational impact on what is seen, what is known and what is meant at the time of knowing. These arguments resemble the dialogisms of Bakhtin's mediated languages as visual and literary truths to *what is* (Figure 50).

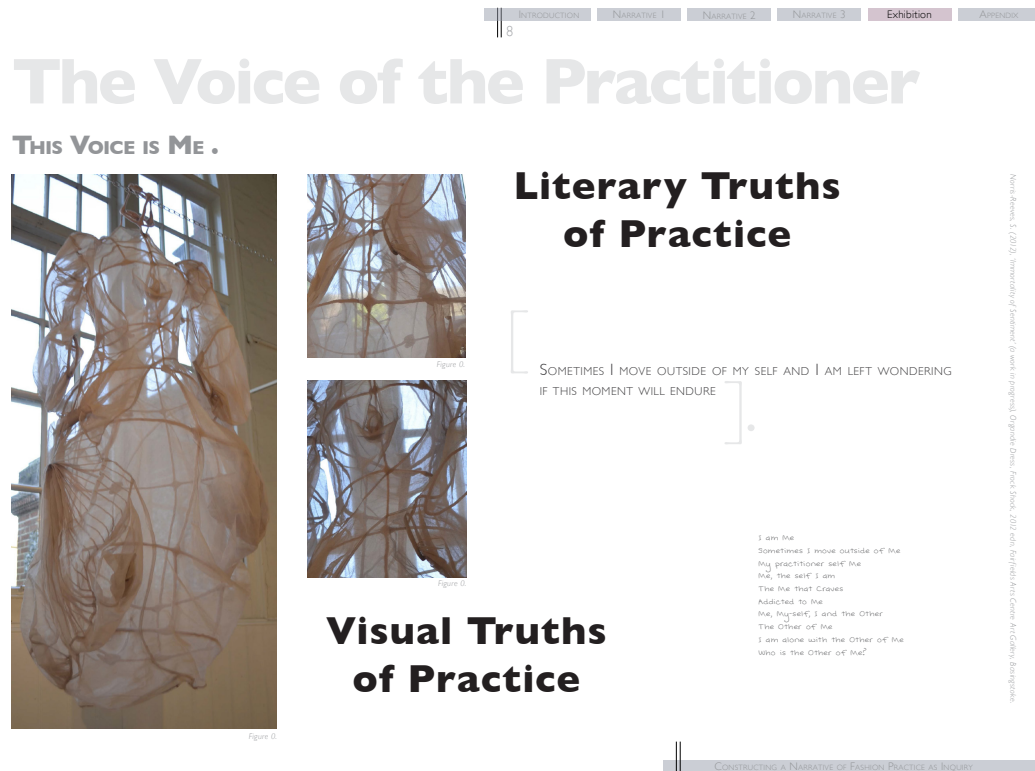


Figure 50. *Truth to what is, e-Exhibition, p.3.*

The practitioner's unabbreviated oeuvre as a unique set of experiences, reasoning and perceptions of practice emerge from the dialogic. As a community of meanings, the oeuvre of the fashion practitioner advances a way that fashion practice, as knowledge, can be recovered, studied and evaluated in the wider context of a modern postmodern visual culture. No matter how immaterial or material the doing appears there is always something that can be said? Could it be that the practitioner's sketchbooks (Figure 51), or indeed the materiality of the artefact itself affirm the layers of reasoning and that the tacit said can now be considered as knowable?





Figure 51. Example of the practitioner's sketchbook, Narrative 2, p.27.

An archaeology of a critical gaze of practice has emerged amid the coefficient model (spectator, practitioner and artefact) and the dialogic event (the practice contexts, visual traces, and reflective interactions) as a discovery of *what is* in a knowledge universe. This critical gaze of practice comprises observed truths facilitated by the universality of an interconnected knowledge universe. As a community of meanings this critical visual method as process, as practice and as knowledge advances a consciousness of seeing as a way of seeing a narrative of fashion practice.

Through the transcendental 'conditions of possibility', Kant (in Gutting, 2005 p.36) argues that the 'moment' experienced in space and time becomes *a priori* knowledge and a mediator of the 'here and now'. As the mind arranges the sensory experiences that Kant describes, this

archaeology of a critical gaze, as practice viewed in the here and now, became the ultimate reality to be examined. This narrative of seeing, of sensory experience and beyond sense perception (Figure 56) of knowledge in space and time, of subjective belief and objective experience as a consciousness through a lived practitioner experience, positions practitioner thought and practitioner action as entities to be gazed upon: the conditions of the possible (as an own version of reality) transcends a narrative space to construct a future ethnography of practice as it happened.

#### **4.2. Tacit Dialogues of Practice**

Bakhtin's triangulative model (in Holquist, 1990, p.26-33) suggests that the author as self is the perceiver and the spectator, as a functional 'other', is as the perceived, and that the self, as author, can somehow be both inside and outside the work, existing as a relational construct ('a telling', p.30) existing in space and time. In this context the experience of moving outside the self, as a conscious other, was evident during moments of a heightened sense of creativity, as a knowing, or a concentrated awareness of practice making. This was particularly found to be the case as the practitioner feverishly adopted digital and social media to record and reflect in and on the moment (as it was lived). This neutrality of seeing by the practitioner-self and conscious other suggests a subjective-objective knowing exists that offers witness to a tacit dialogue or a knowing of practice that was experienced and craved by the practitioner as both self and other.

In Foucauldian terms the intrinsic manifestation of the practitioner mind functions as single elements of thought and action. These thoughts and actions, as cognitive and behavioural truths, are to contribute to the constructed contexts of fashion's narrative as situational and relational peculiarities of a discourse of practice. Practitioner truths (Figure 52), as thought and action are determined by finite moments of a doing and a knowing in this context.

The more I reflect the more truth I have to reason with. Without these truths, as practitioner truths, there would be no reasoning through, in and of my practice. I now understand that the doing of my practice is externalised as truths and it is these truths, as tacit thoughts and actions of my practice, that a knowledge of practice can emerge.

Practitioner Truths

Figure 52. Example of Practitioner Truths, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.7.

The 'said' and 'never-said' (Foucault, 1969, p.27-31) require rules of discourse by which the truths (as totalities) of judgment can be made in order to construct a future discourse of practice. If there were to be rules of discourse then this cognitive and behavioural seeing is considered firstly as a material existence, albeit as writing, speech and or visual response, secondly is a unique event and thirdly exists before and after a situational and relational reasoning: a moving in and out, or a to-ing and fro-ing of sensory experience and beyond sense perception. In a practice context this unity of a subjective-objective discourse is concerned with existence and the existence is transformative and discursive. In anonymising the practitioner (as author-function and a neutral centre), the meditative role of the practitioner becomes less privileged, enabling the spectator both cognitive and behavioural access to a consciousness of seeing in a narrative space (also).

This research considers practitioner thought and action to be grounded empirically in the lived practitioner experience and the truths actualised of *a priori* knowledge and this can be evidenced through the constructed contexts of *what is*, as a reasoning of practice.

### 4.3. A (Future) Design Ethnography

This research argues that the ethnographic conversation cultivated (similar to Fischer-Lichte's claim earlier) a discourse that transcends a lived reality of practice in the here and now. As authentic experiences, similar to an artist placing his brush directly onto his canvas or a visitor consuming a museum or gallery experience, design ethnography observes both the practitioner and spectator in the here and now of experiencing, reasoning or perceiving practice and reflecting upon and responding to the tacit moments of discovery. Design ethnography and the ethnographic conversation, as interpretive research methodologies, afford a discovery of a consciousness of seeing practice that is perceived as 'communicable knowledge' (as Frayling argued, 1993 p.1) and facilitates a way of seeing a future ethnography of the discipline.

In relation to ethnographic knowledge, the visual and oral accuracy of the photograph or film is to extend a narrative of practice (Pink, 2007, p.119). Further, Ylirisku and Buur (2007, p.19) argue that by adopting design ethnography as a research method, the rich and often ambiguous narratives of practice could cultivate conversations through a deeper engagement with the studied practice. Extending this view, the emergent design research methodologies of (future) design ethnography and the ethnographic conversation are to situate the interpretive and aesthetic narratives of practice as communicable knowledge from which others could derive importance. Norris-Reeves et al (2012, p.11-12) concurred with Collier and Collier (1986, p.5) and Rose (2007, p.238):

Such material realities, as visual texts, bear witness to the externalised position of self, noting a homogeneity with Foucault's author-function role, locating the observed whole of the reflective self (Holliday, 2004, p.56-62) as explicit knowledge of practice.

Design ethnography, appropriated through film, sound and photographic narrative as a method of observing a doing of practice, were found to extend the narrative beyond practice itself: a non-verbal dialogue that externalises a knowing knowledge of the 'never said' is argued. Equally, the ethnographic conversation passages the tacit moments of discovery of both the

spectator and practitioner through reflective practice inquiry: a sense-making of a given situation, understanding or experience concerned with the present: a unique event, a situational and relational instance in the here and now of a narrative space, let's say? These instances, or moments of experience and story (as discovery or as liberated theories, Figure 53), might otherwise be lost to a finite knowing or reasoning when deeply engaged with (doing) practice. The adoption of both visual and textual ethnologies are argued as performed functions of a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice that are dynamically expressed in both space and time.

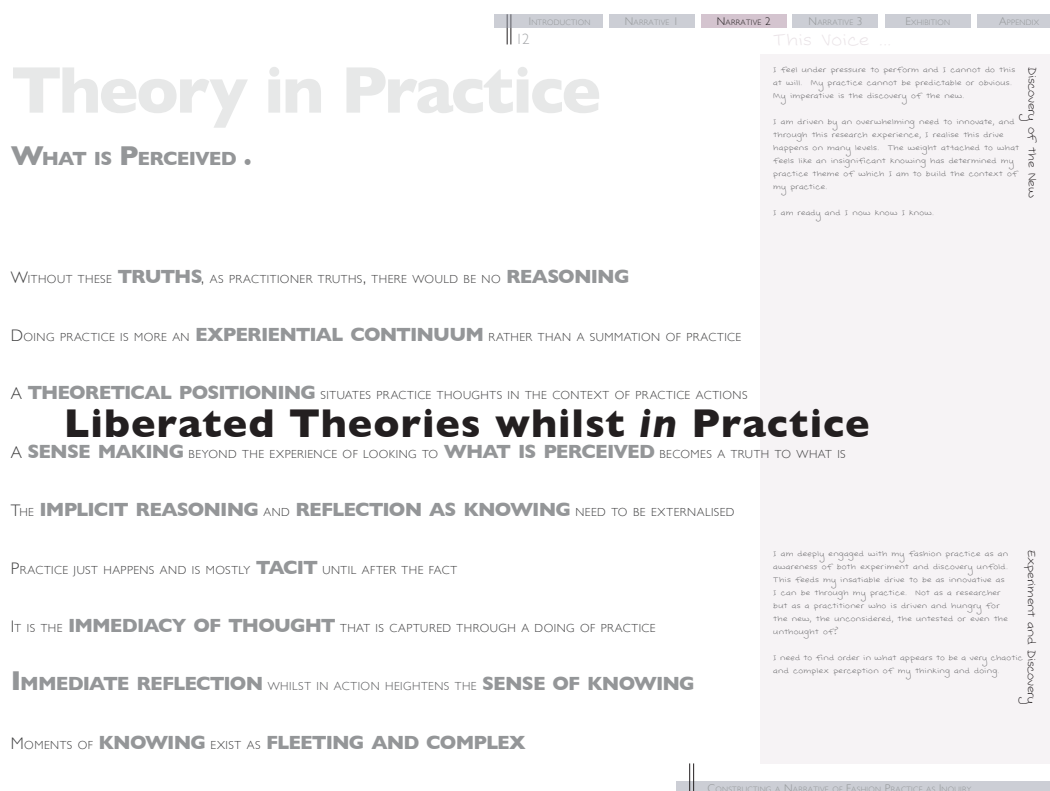


Figure 53. Example of Liberated Theories

#### 4.4. Reflective Practice

Drawing on Schön's (1983) reflective practice inquiry and on the perception of a problem-solution space (as Figure 12) the locating of emotion and intuition as integral to reflective practice provided further insight into the conditions of a heightened sense of reasoning as

knowing. Simply just *knowing* is an isolating experience, as others find difficulty in connecting with the intensity of such an unspoken imperative. Davies (1985, p.129), in his interviews, noted that an important aspect of those interviewed was the need of a personal sense of uniqueness, and surmised (p.138) the practitioner's need to be '*true to self*.' These claims resonated with the practitioner, as author, as the complexity of thought and action appeared to deepen through the act of reflection: a heightened sense of knowing is to be equally burdened with a sense of not knowing (Figure 54). Could this opportunity of truth to *what is* be as a result and recognition of the other of the practitioner-self (as conscious other) and the unique experience of deep reflection? This inquiry identified a willingness of another, (the spectator) as a complicit stakeholder, to acknowledge the moment of affirmation or collude somehow in the knowing: an empathic knowing as a revelation of *what is*, is hypothesised in a narrative context.

A three dimensional living sketch, as a visual proposition of the practice aesthetic, is emerging before me. My practice journey is unknown yet the toile, as my canvas, can now speak. My sense of knowing is articulated through the line and form as a visual conversation of what might be.

Through my practice I am daunted by the provocative and curious moments of not knowing. Is it okay to not know? Is this a valid insecurity of practice and of the fashion practitioner? These moments of not knowing appear as significant as the moments of knowing that I experience; a sort of (pre) state (of mind) in anticipation of what might be? These moments of not knowing daunt my practitioner-self, but if they were not to exist, then perhaps my knowing in practice might not be?

This realisation brings a sense of relief as this (pre) state of not knowing predisposes my state of knowing. I am left wondering if this heightened sense of knowing can only be experienced after a not knowing of my practice?

Not Knowing in Practice

Figure 54. Example of Not Knowing, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.45.

#### 4.5. A Telling of a Knowing of a Doing

This practice as inquiry posits the physicality of a tacit knowledge (Figure 55) as a reasoned knowing, as a knowing knowledge, and the materiality of a visual and literary dialogue as empowering to both the practitioner and spectator of practice; the unity of which appropriated communicable knowledge through a dialogic method. This narrative of fashion practice proffers a collective understanding of what is seen, what is known and what is meant (as *what is*) and of what is experienced and perceived: a research method that purposefully interprets, constructs and communicates a telling of a knowing of a doing of fashion practice as it is lived.

As I reflect on this way of working I ponder the significance of somehow fitting my thinking together. A sort of sense making is needed that provides an evidence base in support of my practice reasoning. Do I need to make sense of what I do, know, mean in order to validate the next stage of my doing of practice?

I wonder if this is really possible?

I am finding challenge with the interrupting of my flow. When I do practice it is immediate and knowing. My thoughts are momentary and fleeting and some how happen simultaneously to the doing of my practice. If I stop and think for too long the moment is lost.

This is a journey of challenge as my thinking and doing of practice exist as implicit; a cognitive and behavioural space known only to me? My implicit reasoning and reflection as knowing need to be externalised if others are to interpret and understand my narrative of practice.

Again, I wonder if this is really possible?

Do others think, do and see as I do?

This Journey of Challenge

Figure 55. Example of Physicality of Tacit Knowledge,  
Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 2, p.5.

Further, the ethnologisation of a lived experience as story (McNiff, 2007, p.308; Clandinin and Huber, 2010, p.3) is synonymous with a qualitative approach that led to the generating of a methodological concept through discovery.

#### 4.6. A Conscious Other

There appears to be a conscious 'other' (Figure 56) to consider and determine as the coefficients of the tacit dialogues are externalised and consciously reasoned with. The experiences of a heightened sense of knowing are bestowed of a conscious other as the



practitioner appeared, infrequently, to move outside of the practitioner-self when doing practice. An unconscious willingness to be consumed by the discovery of a knowing, in fact a craving of the knowing, was evidenced through reflective practice. This simultaneous separateness was considered an affective intelligence and perceived to be integral to an assembly of empirical and *a priori* knowledge. Active dialogues with the practitioner-self, a conscious other and the spectator fostered and strengthened the in-action discovery through reflection (this notion was supported by James' findings (2001 [1892] p.186). Such discoveries through reflection authenticated a confidence in both the practitioner and spectator role when actively and critically responding to a constructed narrative space of practice as inquiry. Through a doing of practice this research purposefully examines a heightened sense of knowing that is affirmed and experienced by reflective practice: a narrative of practice that facilitates a moving in and out of a transcendental (lived) experience (as perceived), enabling empirical data to be collected.

As I move through this practice journey I am situating myself in a state of conscious reasoning. These tacit moments or happenings or reasonings are integral to my practice.

I am no longer singular to the telling of my practice.  
The other of me is emerging amid the telling of a knowing of a doing of my practice.

This voice of my practitioner self moves outside of me.  
I am connected to this voice that is no longer me for it is the other of me.

I am addicted to the other of me.

A State of Conscious Reasoning

Figure 56. A Conscious 'Other', Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.38

A justification of truth is derived from a simultaneous separateness of the practitioner's sensory experience and beyond sense perception (Figure 57). This research is not concerned with a constant comparative method of coding and grouping in determining the how's and why's, and so on, but more an investigation of the (sensory) experiences and (beyond sense) perceptions of the fashion practitioner as self and other.

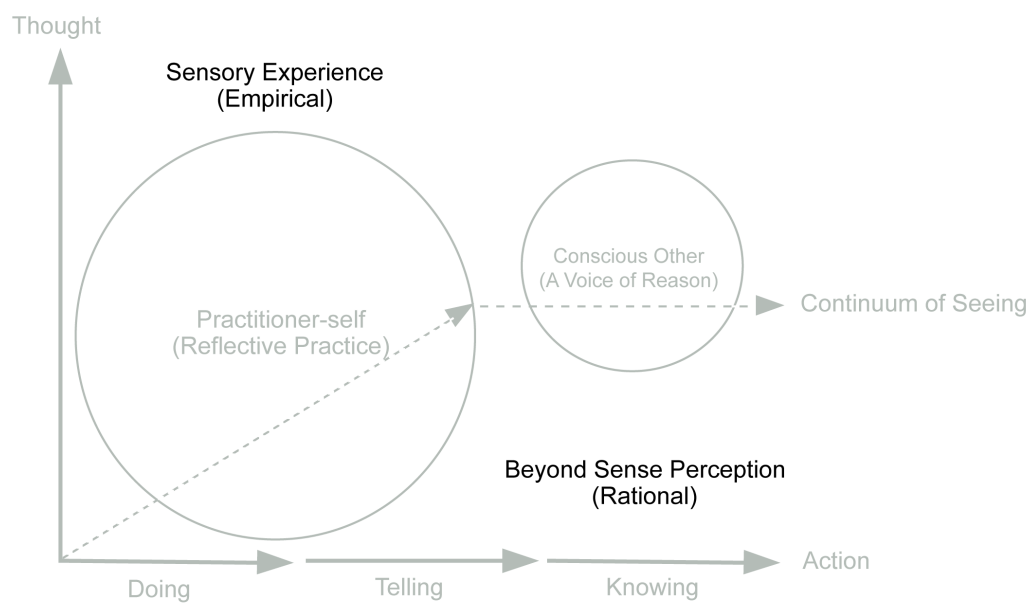


Figure 57. A Simultaneous Separateness

The empiricist versus the rationalist view is widely contended. Through this practice as inquiry, the empirical and rationalist phases were found to be juxtapositional in a narrative context where crucially an abutment of these two opposing research methodologies predicated the conversion and construction of a narrative inquiry of practice. This inquiry posits, in a curated context of a dialogic method, an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice constructed through the empirically-based sensory experience of practice triggered a more rationalist phase of a beyond sense perception as a voice of reason.

Having argued the rationalist view, however, the perceiving of a reasoning of practice was one that the practitioner, as author, struggled with, due to the intensity of the engagement with the reflective-self. This beyond state could not be called on at will, nor was the perception of such reasoning easily understood at the time of knowing. Significantly, the actuality of *this voice* as a voice of reason might not have existed without the deep engagement of the reflective-self emerging out of a conscious other (Figure 58).



Figure 58. Example of Reflective-self emerging of a Conscious Other, Narrative 2, p.49.

If this was the case, then through action research and reflective practice the *a posteriori* and *a priori* knowledge<sup>53</sup> transcended a doing of practice through the more affective dialogues of a telling of a knowing. Polanyi's (1966, p.6) mooting of a tacit knowing and the juncture at which thought and action collide or meet (as referred earlier) this research ponders the abutment of these two opposing forces. This voice of reason appears as independent of the sense

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<sup>53</sup> Much contention exists about the epistemology of *a priori* knowledge and *a posteriori* knowledge. This research considers knowledge gained by reason (as perceived), as truth to *what is* independent or before experience as *a priori* knowledge and knowledge gained by fact or account dependent or after experience as truth to *what is* as *a posteriori* knowledge.

perception experience, yet could only come into being through a consciousness of 'what is' through a reasoning of practice. Is it that the empirical and the rational collide (or meet) as the practitioner *does practice*?

The empirical phase surmises that knowledge of practice can be gained through the experience of a doing of practice, and that this *a posteriori* knowledge is the epistemology, or the extent of what was known at the time of knowing. Further, the rationalist phase contends that a 'beyond state' of reasoning constitutes *a priori* knowledge, perceived through a conscious other, whereby an innate and heightened sense of knowing is intuitively deducible. Can we assume that a cognitive and behavioural positioning of any, or all, *a priori* (prior) thought was perceived as intuitive or momentary, as subjective-rational, and any, or all, *a posteriori* (after) action was experienced as objective-empirical, and that the existence and foundations of a knowing knowledge happened, and therefore existed, at the abutment of the empirical and the rational (Figure 59)?

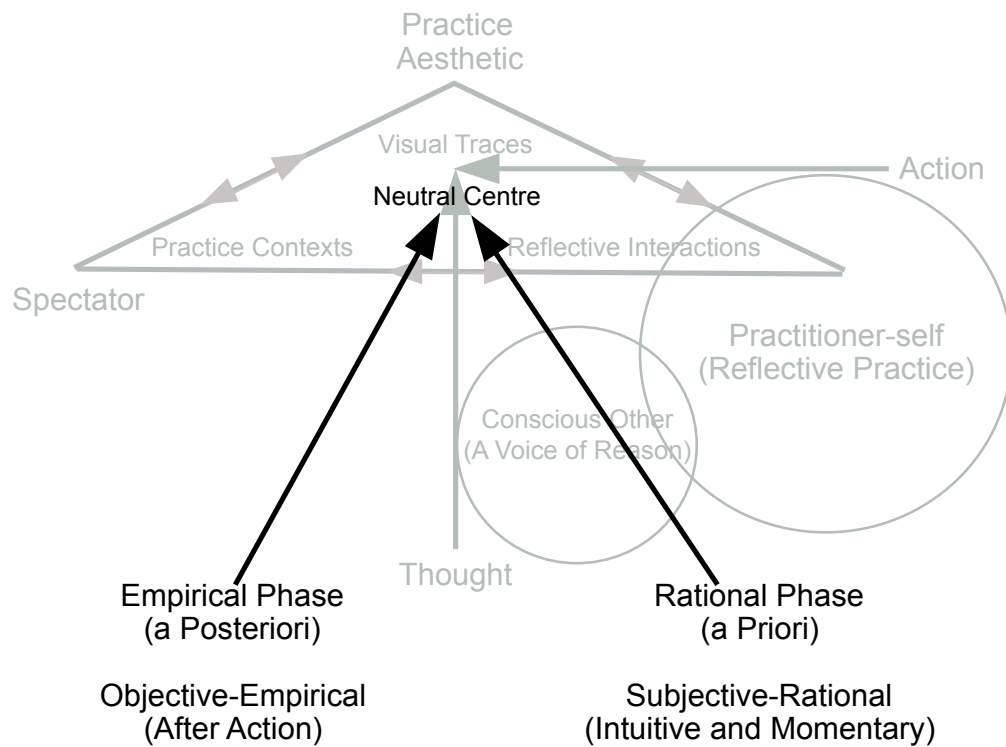


Figure 59. Abutment of the Empirical and Rational Phases.

The complexity of *what is perceived* and *what is experienced* make the very reasoning of practice unfathomable, and is perhaps why the practitioner is challenged by the relationship of theory and practice, and is likely to know more than is ever said of their doing (as the abutment of the rational and empirical are not easily put into words). These perceptions and experiences, as everyday truths of a doing of practice, were the ultimate reality to be examined. As practice happened, independent and or dependent of experience, the practitioner reasoned with *what is perceived* and *what is experienced* as truth to a telling of a knowing of their practice.

#### 4.7. Spectator-Function Role (Respondent)

There is a compelling argument for a new type of viewing experience that encompasses a range of new media experiences for the net-savvy generation (McNeil, 2008, p.65). In a

curated context, the spectator was invited to engage with and respond to a portfolio of practice of which an own version of reality might exist in a knowledge universe. The spectator was no longer a casual spectator, but an active, reflective and critically engaged spectator-respondent who was invited to select a medium of their choice and respond, through practice, to a constructed dialogic of a narrative space of fashion practice as inquiry. Increasingly, as the spectator reflected more critically, deeply and in an own context, it was noted that an insatiable craving was presumed of the spectator's rationality as technology intrinsically shaped a lived reality of a consciousness of their seeing of practice.

This net-savvy generation responded to and readily engaged with an immersive, participatory and experiential viewing experience, with respondents adopting film narrative and social media tools (Respondent 1, Narrative 3, p.51-53) (Figure 60), photographic narrative and image projection (Respondent 2, Narrative 3, p.54-57), digital and social dialogue (blogging), (Respondent 3, Narrative 3, p.58-61), Graphic Narrative (Respondent 4, Narrative 3, p.62-63) and Writing Narrative (Respondent 5, Narrative 3, p.64-65). Characteristic of this experience-centric modern postmodern phenomenon, an immersive and participatory seeing of the fashion practitioner's unabbreviated oeuvre was anticipated, if not expected, in the spectator when engaging with and responding to a portfolio of practice in a narrative space.

# Respondent I

## FILM NARRATIVE AND SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS .

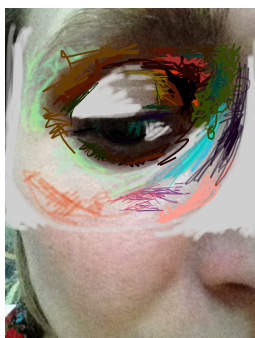


Figure 6. Respondent I (2012), Practice Response: Film/Make Up Design



Figure 6. Respondent I (2012), Practice Response: Film/Make Up Design



Figure 6. Respondent I (2012), Practice Response: Film/Make Up Design

**Tablet is used to enable use of Social Media Tools**

**Laptop is used to enable the Recording of a Film Narrative**

THE IMPULSIVE QUALITY OF THE LINE ...THEY STILL HAVE A SADNESS TO THEM?  
Respondent I

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INTRODUCTION | NARRATIVE 1 | NARRATIVE 2 | **NARRATIVE 3** | EXHIBITION | APPENDIX

This Voice ...

As I begin to capture my practitioner responses I have found myself unprepared for how I would feel. As I approached each of the practitioner respondents I could sense their passion and seizing of an opportunity to practice. I no longer feel exposed but feel a sense of sharing or knowing. Is this a sharing of their knowing too? I wonder why this is?

It is like we are about to share or empathise with an experiential happening that is unspoken yet known. Our dialogue is silent yet we both know that we are sharing in a common understanding.

...as intriguing as the commentary we are to become stakeholders of a common visual understanding. Do these silences symbolise a universal knowing or understanding? The respondent makes references to a landscape exclaiming the images now speak for themselves. It is as if I am meant to know.

I am intrigued as all the respondents acknowledge a change to their original or planned response as engaging with the portfolio of practice appears to have afforded or introduced a new understanding of what might be.

Unspoken Language of Practice

The Silences of Seeing

Figure 60. Example of a Digital Response, Narrative 3, p.52.

This inquiry considers the spectator-function role as a situational and relational model of sensory perception and beyond sense experience as experienced and perceived in relation to a narrative space in an own context (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C-F). English (2009) draws on some useful analogies and argues for a human predisposition to perceive that situates both 'particular and universal' experiences as direct sensory experiences, suggesting that the perception of the experience is equal. Respondent data (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E & F) is elicited from the active critical reflection and practice responses gained of individual practice responses, questionnaires, personal audio recordings and interviews (a conversation about a way of seeing) drawn from the spectator-function role.

Concurring with Davies' findings (2008, p.73), it was found the spectator displayed a need to be true to the task and to the creative-self, and it was surmised that a chain reaction took place

when the spectator was invited to reflectively interact and respond to a constructed dialogic. The spectator appeared to experience a transference at this point, and engagement was more an immersive, participatory and experiential viewing experience that extends a consciousness of seeing as a way of seeing in the here and now of a lived reality. The now active spectator, as respondent, demonstrates a willingness, in fact an eagerness, to construct an 'own' version of a lived reality. The spectator, now fully engaged, readily assumed an active stakeholder position and actively responds in and on an extension of practice-making (Figure 61): an opening out of an own version of reality that is empathic and knowing is evident.



Figure 61. Example of an Extension of Practice Making, Narrative 3, p.51.

Could it be that an opening out or identifying with a narrative space has facilitated a telling of a knowing of a doing that could now be collectively understood? A reflective momentum is noted of the spectator the deeper he or she related to and rationalised with the task set.



Equally, the respondent appeared more empathic or open to reflection as a method to discuss or describe their moments of knowing as the conversation purposefully discerned their own experiences and perceptions of a doing of practice.

If we are to consider the anonymity of the practitioner as having authority to curate the work from a subjective-objective position (the author-function role), then, as Rugoff<sup>54</sup> (1999) argues, a curated intervention of practice is to be considered as a practice in itself, and that this could invite scrutiny. This was certainly found to be the case in this research context. The practitioner, although an active stakeholder to a constructed narrative of practice, naturally and integrally assumed anonymity,<sup>55</sup> and the practice as a body of work is viewed as an object of study that is to be consumed in a narrative space. The spectator's journey of seeing became more a physical and material space for active critical encounter (Figure 62) relative to his or her own rationality. As active and critical engagements, a consciousness of seeing, as a way of seeing practice in a curated context is to be collectively reasoned with and proposed as a future ethnography that would emerge as worthy of critical and cultural debate.

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54 Rugoff discussed the need to engage with the spectator on both an emotional and experiential level and cites *The Anonymous Museum*, Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, founded by Rowley Kennerk, 1991, as having a 'profound impact on individual discovery' as the works exhibited were without the authority of curatorial enlightenment or naming of the artists themselves.


55 Anonymising the practitioner in this research practice context was to assume the practitioner as an anonymous function of practice: a function amongst many other functions of equal attribution.

INTRODUCTION NARRATIVE NARRATIVE 2 NARRATIVE 3 EXHIBITION APPENDIX

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# Respondent 3

## THE TEXTILE ARTIST AND BLOGGER .



### Momentary and Illusionary

POSSESSING THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Respondent 3

I ARGUE THERE ARE DISTINCTIONS THAT CAN BE MADE BETWEEN THE FASHION DESIGNER AND THE FASHION PRACTITIONER. THE FASHION DESIGNER IS LED BY COMMERCIAL REASON WHILST THE PRACTITIONER IS THE AUTHOR OF HIS CREATIVE PRACTICE


Author

WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY 2012

I changed my mind.

There is something mystical about observing flowers closely. The raw, scientific nature of the sinuous postulations of the petals as they emerge from bud creates a tension that places emphasis on its momentary state. You need to visually drink it in. There will never be another quite like it. Likewise observing the fashioned body, where the figure is contorted through the cut of a sleeve, the lowering of a collar, the nip and tuck at a waistline, the subtle drape of fabric representing the weight, strength and yet delicate nature of a petal. The creative process reveals ribbons of fabric that somehow come together to represent the designers intent, a reworking of the body that aligns more to that of a cosmetic surgeon. Cutting, slashing pulling and shaping in this way seems to be allow the inner strength of the body emanate from the female. Possessing the creative process seen here is far more interesting than attempting to be stylish. It is easily seductive, yet in a different manner from the traditional perception of the creative design process. It is much more aligned with art.

Strange, I used to to think of fashion designers as architects.



There are several similarities between 'Transformation and Deconstruction' and that of dissecting flora. By conceptualizing the process of creating, observations of the structures that make it possible can be made. Likewise, by dissecting a variety of flowers and identifying their parts, a better understanding of the mechanics of flowers is also possible.

As I begin to interview the spectators as respondents of my practice I am emerging as an estranged entity to the practice that they view. I have some how become another self. One that is distinct from the practice and that the practice has become an object of study of which I am observing also.

I am no longer, the practitioner, author, curator but a second generation spectator or so it feels?

My confidence builds as I acknowledge a sharing of what to know, what is needed, what to understand?

These tacit moments of understanding revealed and informed a bond between us, at least as if a shared knowing of what is has happened?

I feel richer for such a shared experience.

The responses made of the portfolio of practice were open and revealing and I was touched by their honesty.

These were practitioner truths experienced in the here and now and confirmed only with what is.

A future truth to what is known at the time of knowing is emerging as a perception of what is.

From to what is

## The Observed being Observed (being observed)

CONSTRUCTING A NARRATIVE OF FASHION PRACTICE AS INQUIRY

Figure 62. Example of a (Active) Critical Encounter, Narrative 3, p.58.

#### 4.8. Spectator Response to Practice (as Data)

This study is developed to investigate the (active critical) reflective interactions and practice responses of the spectator when gazing at fashion practice in a curated context. The spectator-respondents were invited to view the portfolio of practice as a constructed narrative: a collection of dialogic events that aimed to extend a (active) critical gaze in a narrative space. The rationale for constructing a portfolio of practice is to evaluate the effectiveness of the data collected through, in and of fashion practice (reflective engagement facilitated through action research methodologies, for example) as the practitioner and spectator were each to assume a performative and functional role of equal attribution. Further, the data collected is concerned with the (active critical) reflective interactions and a practice response discerned when engaging with fashion practice and how the spectator responds to and reflects upon fashion practice in a narrative context. A consciousness of seeing as a way of seeing was found through individual

practice response and the tacit knowledge of those responses when in practice, for example 'I started to see these kind of scars' or 'almost bone structures and a sort of a breast' (Appendix, D(ii), p.54) for example. Should the wider academic and fashion (design) practice communities adopt the methodologies described then might we begin to construct future knowledge of the discipline?

The key themes that emerge from the active critical reflective interactions and practice responses of the spectator (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C) were those that made sense to the author and aligned with his or her own understanding of creative thinking or practice doing. Such a causation effect could perhaps be aligned with the instances of a doing of practice from a more generalist point of view. Each thought, action, practice response and reflective interaction was unique, but nevertheless did form a recognised path of a doing of practice. Emergent and interpretive utterances of practice were constructed in new ways to elicit data for the purposes of this practice inquiry: a truth to *what is*, is argued, drawn from the spectator's own version of reality as a telling. The spectator willingly engaged in a seeing of practice and is invited to discuss an own version of reality as it is experienced and perceived (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix D). These ethnographic conversations provide insight into a consciousness of seeing, as a way of seeing, fashion practice as inquiry in an 'own' context.

The meaning and understanding of the (active critical) reflective interactions and practice responses using interviews and questionnaires extend a consciousness of seeing that contribute to an archaeology of a critical gaze that emerges from a narrative space. Through conversation

analysis (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix D) and when engaging with the portfolio of practice this inquiry records that the spectators made reference to six key themes (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C and as referred in research exercise 1-5, Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E) and provided opportunity for data<sup>56</sup> (Figure 63) to be collected and analysed (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix F).

# Data Analysis

Page 1 of 7

## KEY THEMES USAGE

The data charts (Figure 0 to 0) record usage of the emergent key themes used by each of the respondents. Although no usage pattern can be identified individually the data determined the use of seeing was most used by respondent 1 (50%) and analogy most used by respondent 2 (49%) and with respondent 3 and 5 spreading theme usage across the range of identified themes and with respondent 4 appearing to adopt less usage across all of the key theme usage range.

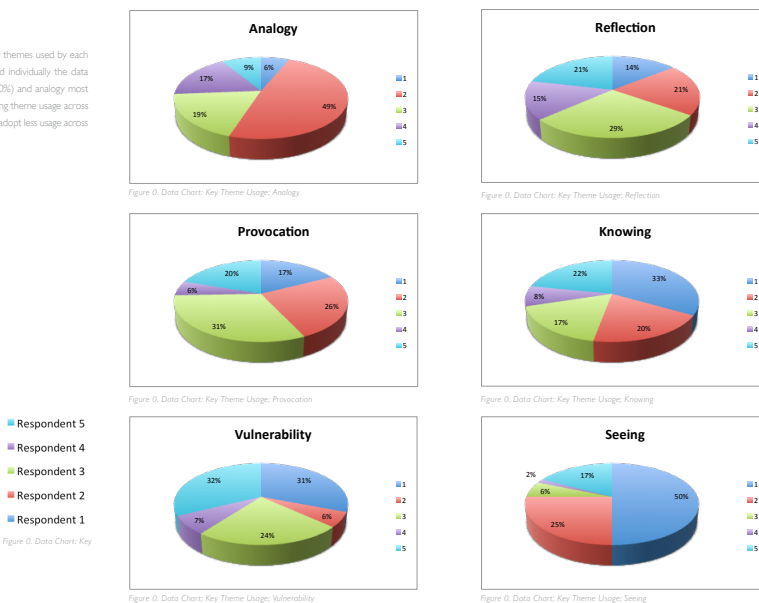


Figure 63. Example of Data Analysis, Key Theme Usage, Portfolio of Practice, Appendix F(iv).

<sup>56</sup> Drawn from the data (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix F) this research reviewed the response pattern, key theme averages, key theme usage, response rates, response pattern, response range and response mean.

As a research endeavour, the spectator appears to discuss more freely their empathic moments of knowing and to readily adopt the spectator-function role. A consciousness of seeing is evident as transference of the spectator's reasoning of the studied practice appears more open to discovery when situated in an intimate video diary setting.<sup>57</sup> The spectator deeply immerses and readily engages with the constructed contexts of a curated intervention of practice and found affinity with *this voice*<sup>58</sup> of the deeply engaged reflective fashion practitioner, 'I found this voice to be the most interesting ...it's really raw and truthful' (Appendix D(ii), p.51) for example. These authentic experiences (similar to a visitor consuming a museum or gallery experience) observe the spectator in the here and now of the studied practice reflecting and experiencing what is known at the time of knowing (Figure 64).

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<sup>57</sup> The spectator was asked to 'think aloud' when engaging with the portfolio of practice. Bite size narratives of video/audio collage using a smartphone in an intimate diary setting documented the private thoughts and conscious seeing of the spectator.

<sup>58</sup> As a human endeavour the voice ('this voice') of the author, as fashion practitioner, assumed a philosophical disposition in that the visualities of fashion practice were assembled as a critical mass of reflective possibilities as a knowing of their practice.

## I changed my mind.

There is something mystical about observing flowers closely. The raw, scientific nature of the sinuous postulations of the petals as they emerge from bud creates a tension that places emphasis on its momentary state. You need to visually drink it in. There will never be another quite like it. Likewise observing the fashioned body, where the figure is contorted through the cut of a sleeve, the lowering of a collar, the nip and tuck at a waistline, the subtle drape of fabric representing the weight, strength and yet delicate nature of a petal. The creative process reveals ribbons of fabric that somehow come together to represent the designers intent, a reworking of the body that aligns more to that of a cosmetic surgeon. Cutting, slashing pulling and shaping in this way seems to be allow the inner strength of the body emanate from the female. Possessing the creative process seen here is far more interesting than attempting to be stylish. It is easily seductive, yet in a different manner from the traditional perception of the creative design process. It is much more aligned with art.

Strange, I used to to think of fashion designers as architects.

*Respondent 3 (2012), Practice Response; Blog Entry.*

Figure 64. Example of Spectator Reflection, Narrative 3, p. 58.

### 4.9. Multiple Dialogues (Portfolio of Practice)

As research, this practice as inquiry contends that a visual and literary language, as a reasoned knowing of fashion practice, is as yet not recognised or noticed for the purposes of knowledge construction and knowledge creation of the discipline. As intuition renders towards a reasoning of practice, tacit or otherwise, the practitioner's dual role as researcher and practitioner, and subsequent framing by the spectator, was found to be capable of mediating a narrative of practice appropriated as a dialogic representation of *what is*. The portfolio of practice as multiple dialogues through, in and of a constructed narrative of fashion practice considers and found:

#### 4.9.1. Introduction : A Future Now (Introductions)

A Narrative Inquiry (Practice as Knowledge):

As a preamble to a constructed narrative of practice the voice of the deeply engaged fashion practitioner, as author, is intended to mediate a journey of discovery as it is lived. Conveyed

through a curated intervention of practice, the practitioner ponders fashion's relationship with the arts and questions the interpretive nature of the practices of the practitioner as knowledge. The practitioner considers discovery in a narrative context and how fashion exhibition (ism) could claim a cultural notoriety of the discipline in a cultural context.

- Practice contexts anchored the reflective engagements of the practitioner whilst purposefully reckoning with the multiple concepts and contexts of what practice as research is, or might become: a sense-making as a momentary and universal truth is argued.

#### **4.9.2. Narrative I: Living Portfolio (Process)**

Engagement *through* Practice (Practice Development):

The voice of the engaged fashion practitioner is to interpret a journey of visual and literary note-taking *through* a doing of practice. Sketchbook work and journal entries, 3D drawing using pin and pen, contextual referencing and anchoring, visual inventories, personal anthologies and journaled moments of reasoning (as knowing) expose the complex and intuitive intelligences made of practice. The author, as fashion practitioner, reflects upon a doing of fashion practice through the development of a body of creative work perceived as a constructed narrative of the 'never said'. A process of practice is engaged with as the practice aesthetic, in the form of a collection of womenswear and range of fashion artefacts, emerge from the here and now of a living portfolio.

- Whilst denying hierarchy of image or word, this research argues that a tacit knowledge of practice (development) emerges *through* a doing of practice appropriated from a dialogic method: a reasoned knowing of what is known at the time of knowing to become *what is*, is the principal finding.

### 4.9.3. Narrative 2 : Thought Structure (Knowledge)

Archaeology *in Practice* (Practice Response):

The *in practice* contexts aim to contextualise a theory and method of a telling of a knowing of a doing of fashion practice, as it is experienced and perceived. As a journey of discovery the practitioner, through reflective inquiry, purposefully maps a methodological approach that situates Foucault's (1969, p.27) archaeologies of thought as knowledge that frames the practitioner's cognitive and behavioural intelligences of practice (as perceived and experienced through, in and of a doing of practice by the practitioner).

- The ultimate reality for the practitioner and their practice is argued as *a priori* knowledge. In response to the practices of the fashion practitioner, this practice inquiry concludes that a discourse of practice exists whilst *in practice* and is hypothesised as a knowing knowledge; a transference of reasoning with no preconceived hypothesis from inception.

### 4.9.4. Narrative 3: Gaze of Practice (Practice)

Consciousness *of Seeing* (Practice Conclusion):

As a commodity of practice, conversations with the practitioner, the spectator and the artefact extend a consciousness *of seeing* practice that recognises there is no end to a seeing of practice, only a consciousness of beginnings. This narrative inquiry considers an interconnected knowledge universe where the reflective interactions and practice responses (as active critical engagements) of both the practitioner and spectator observe a truth to *what is* in a narrative space. In a contemporary context this narrative, as invention, teased with the notion of drift as a seeing of practice is dynamically experienced and perceived in the here and now of a



narrative space. This drift is significant, and suggests that a continuum of seeing rather than a summation of practice took place.

- It is hypothesised that equal attribution be granted to the role (function) of the practitioner, the spectator and the practice aesthetic in constructing a narrative of seeing as knowledge of fashion practice in a modern postmodern context: a subjective-objective assembly that acknowledges the experiential, the reasoned and the perceived as an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice.

#### **4.9.5. e-Exhibition : Spectacle of Fashion Practice (This Voice)**

Practices of Looking (A Way of Seeing):

This e-Exhibition engages with the practitioner as *other* and acknowledges that seeing is an act of choice and often comes before words. The voice of the practitioner as provocative visual communicator, as editor of meaning and message, as writer of cultural interpretation and as curator of a lived reality of practice is concerned with interpretation of *what is seen*, *what is known* and *what is meant* of practice. The voice of the engaged fashion practitioner (as other) acknowledges the spectacle of fashion practice as a misconception of glory and engages with a 'beyond sense' perception when pursuing the 'afterimage'<sup>59</sup> (Goethe, in Crary, 1992, p. 69) as a way of seeing the spectacle of their practice.

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<sup>59</sup> Crary (1992 p.98) supported Goethe's (in Crary, 1992 p.69) view that in the absence of the image a sensory perception of the 'afterimage' extended the narrative to exist beyond the moment or memory and the optical transmissions.

- This research found that the practitioner (and not necessarily researcher) exhibits an obsessive and naked ambition to extend a narrative of their fashion practice (through, in and of a portfolio of practice) and in doing so constructs a monument that could contribute to the evolving landscape of fashion's practice in a high-culture context.

#### 4.10. Concluding with A Theory of Engagement

This practice inquiry argues that through the unique and empirical experience of a doing of practice a 'beyond state' exists, with a more rationalist view concerned with a reasoned knowing as a knowing knowledge and the notion of authorship as other. The epistemology of this excavates the through, in and of practice contexts to consider a theory of engagement (Figure 65), that purposefully investigates what fashion practice as inquiry is, or might become. A voice of reason emerges out of the cognitive and behavioural truths as a knowing knowledge that is (simultaneously and separately) experienced and perceived by the practitioner as self and other.

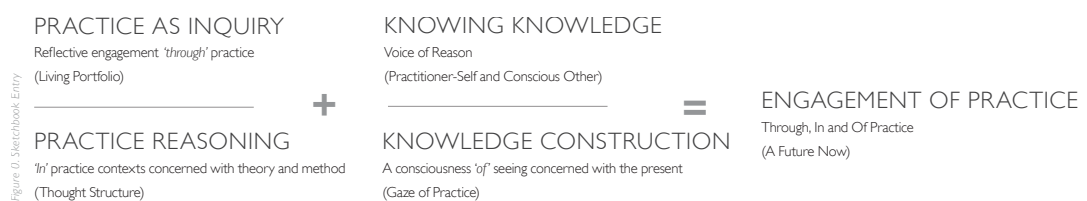


Figure 65. Theory of Engagement, Narrative 2, p. 49.

This narrative of practice transcends a sense perception experience in pursuance of a beyond sense perception, whereby a reasoned knowing mediated of a conscious other, as a voice of reason, is reconciled with a knowing knowledge of the never said. Through a doing of a telling

of a knowing of practice a simultaneous separateness empowers the practitioner-self and conscious other in a narrative space to engage with practice *as* inquiry for the purposes of converting and constructing knowledge of the discipline. A theory of engagement is argued as interdependent constructs of practice *as* inquiry from which scholarly practice can emerge.

#### **4.11. Summary**

In constructing a narrative of practice, as a portfolio of practice, the practitioner (as author) is aware of the limitations of the data as representations of the fleeting. The infinite and finite moments of the cognitive and behavioral instances of practice, although limited to this case study, found the possibility of constructing a narrative space of practice *as* inquiry a compelling one. In this respect, a reflective momentum is harnessed in support of the conversations that are yet to be had of a doing of practice.

It has not been possible to synthesise fully all the interpretations that the data excerpts: therefore the findings are not presented as conclusive or exhaustive: in addition, a certain amount of data collected often goes beyond the bounds of this inquiry. However, this method of inquiry is considered to construct, through multiple conceptualisations, communicable results that can invite scrutiny of a telling of a knowing of a doing of (fashion) practice towards knowledge creation. For this narrative inquiry, a phased and methodological assembly is located to construct a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice, and in doing so assumes authorship of the data and argues for a (future) design ethnography concerned with the present.

The thesis aims to formally and rigorously investigate the cognitive and behavioural dialogues through, in and of a construction of a narrative of fashion practice as it happens in the here and now. In support of Goddard's (2007, p.119) view of exposing the 'process and practice of the research' the practice inquiry is not necessarily deemed to critically evaluate or analyse the

findings<sup>60</sup> but does make claim to a research paradigm, an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice, in support of a theory and method of the work.

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<sup>60</sup> Although data collection and data analysis can be found in the Portfolio of Practice, Appendix C-F.

## **Future Narratives of Practice as Inquiry**

This conclusion reflects on the findings of the research and considers its usefulness in furthering knowledge of the discipline. The research ambition, the scholarly context and the pursuit of a theory and method of the work and how this might contribute to the 'superstructure' (O'Neill in Rugg and Sedgwick, 2007, p. 21) of knowledge creation is considered in the wider context of a fashion (design) practice and the academic design research community (although other practice disciplines might certainly draw from the findings).

The discussion considers why fashion practice as inquiry is a relatively new and untested research discipline and argues the adoption of action research methodologies and reflective practice inquiry. A basis for criterion is discussed to provide a foundation for critical and cultural debate and concludes Frayling's (1993, p.5) definition of what design research 'through' practice is, as foundational to the research aim with further work needed of the definitions (drawn from Candy, 2006) that make up the recognised research categories.

Tacit knowledge, the construction of a narrative, new future discourses and an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice are brought to the fore in a belief that a methodological approach, as opposed to a systematic approach, appears to be fundamental to inquiry of the discipline.

Foucault's characteristics of the 'author function' role (Narrative 2, p.34) (in Rainbow 1984, p.111; Foucault, 1969, p. 111) is discussed relative to a wider construction of knowledge and consideration is given to the unabbreviated oeuvre of (doing) practice (Figure 66) and how this can support the constructed contexts of all future narratives of practice is discussed. The abutment of theory and practice as both object and subject (O'Reilly, 2005, p.164) is considered as misguided and how the very doing of practice might be considered as theory and that this just might lead to a better understanding of the never said? A continuum of seeing is

surmised rather than a summation of practice and how this might emerge as interdisciplinary and aid in the cultural ambitions that this inquiry has for the discipline. A work of practice is discussed in relation to a 'body of work' where theories can be drawn and advanced upon and how drawing on Foucault's (1963) 'medical gaze', a critical gaze of practice is to be seen as foundational in the construction of a future discourse.

### **1.1. Fashion Practice as Inquiry**

This practice as inquiry proposes that the archaeologies of a future history of fashion design as practice, are being made in the here and now yet sit dormant without reason, question or understanding. Beyond social and cultural adoption what do we now know of the cognitive and behavioural reasoning of the fashion (design) practitioner when engaged with the design and development of a fashion collection aside from the histories being made of the spectacle, or theatre of the fashion design aesthetic? The twenty-first century appears more curious of the tacit and of tacit knowledge and in finding ways in which such knowledge can be explicated. If we are to acknowledge a physicality of tacit knowledge and a materiality of a visual and literary language of fashion (design) as practice, then a methodological approach that explicates the *tacit said* appears to be fundamental to inquiry of the discipline. Norris-Reeves et al (2012 p.14-22) identifies the fashion community who question the compatibility of academic research in a commercial context, but surmised that more could be achieved to further what is meant or understood by scholarly research in a (fashion) practice context.

The challenge of this fashion practice inquiry, as research, was how to explicate data as a factual account relative to any relevant existing theories and found the medical, philosophy and the design research disciplines to be useful. From a practitioner's viewpoint, this inquiry argues a research method for and in support of fashion practice as inquiry, and examines how the adoption of action research methods and reflective practice inquiry could be transformative for the discipline. The research approach of this fashion practice challenges Friedman's (2009,

p.154) earlier view and further makes explicit Frayling's (1993, p.5) definition of what design research 'through' practice is, or could be. A research method rather than a research category for determining an appropriate question, answer or method for practice as inquiry to be relevant and to be consumed by both a 'general and specialist academic audience' (Biggs and Bulcher, 2008, p.11-12) is argued.

A view could be formed of the practice community being awash with theoretical reasoning of what (design) practice as research is? It might be considered that the responsibility to preserve and contribute to the 'superstructure' of knowledge creation, in the context of a curated intervention of practice, as argued by O'Neill (in Rugg and Sedgwick, 2007, p. 21), lies with the (fashion) design practice and design research communities to enable a constructed narrative of fashion practice to be considered as worthy of critical and cultural debate. The research journey (as an outcome in itself) considers more clarity and definition is needed if we are to consider (doing) practice as inquiry, as what appears a hybrid or combined practice-led through practice-based approach needs further definition<sup>61</sup>.

The research reach is aimed at early career and (future) research (practice) practitioners with the ultimate ambition of preserving and furthering a collective understanding of the discipline. The research ambition is to offer a methodological framework that could be confident in its pursuit of a theory and method that will enable the fashion practice (research) community to construct knowledge discerned from a doing of fashion practice and to consider ways in which

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<sup>61</sup> Definitions drawn from Candy (2006)

a curated intervention of practice might influence future work and research practice relative to the work of others. The principal outcome is offered as a research paradigm that aims to advance fashion practice, as inquiry, as research, in a scholarly context. Fundamentally, the research aim of this inquiry is to advance fashion practice in scholarly terms, and argue a foundation to construct a (future) ethnography of the discipline. Without this, it is suggested that there will be a limited foundation for constructing such data as comparable.

Assuming the 'death of the author', the practitioner, the spectator and the practice aesthetic from here on in are to be considered as equal and distinct functions of practice. That is to say, the coefficients of the practitioner, spectator and practice aesthetic, as equal and commensurate functions of practice, are no longer to be considered as distinct but privileged with equal merit and attribution for the purposes of theory construction in a wider field of knowledge. The practices of the (fashion) practitioner are to become constructed narratives augmented as new histories or new future discourses of practice: an archaeology of a critical gaze of practice in support of a scholarly approach to the discipline.

## **1.2. Characteristics of Fashion Practice**

This practice inquiry is concerned with a critical gaze of practice and proposes that fashion practice requires a unity and recognised style or handwriting that is to be evidenced by experiment, theory or concept. This research argues, for the purposes of fashion practice as inquiry, that a record of events should be declared of a lived reality of a doing of practice. Aligned to Foucault's characteristics of the 'author function' role (Narrative 2, p.34) (in Rainbow 1984, p.111; Foucault, 1969, p. 111) the adoption of a principal criterion that determines a set of key characteristics of fashion practice is argued for. These characteristics are to provide a measure of what fashion practice is, or should become, for the purposes of furthering inquiry into the discipline. Firstly, implied of the fashion practitioner is that the fashion practice should not contradict or conflict with prior authored works, but should exhibit



a conceptual and theoretical expertise of consistent measure and truth. Secondly, an assembly of practitioner truths should be validated by others and not solely by the practitioner as the author of the works. Thirdly, fashion practice, as concept, should clearly be equal and consistent and not notably inferior or superior to prior authored works, to ensure that the meaningful status of the practice is maintained and belongs by association throughout.

The practitioner's portfolio of fashion practice makes claim to this criterion through the constructed contexts of practitioner thought and action: a cognitive and behavioural seeing, as a conscious seeing, of the unabbreviated oeuvre (Figure 66) of a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice. The visualities of fashion practice as image, artefact or text, to include sketches, drafted works, crossings out, reflective thoughts, visual concept mapping, contextual reference, discarded actions, note-taking etc. support the constructed contexts of the practice development (process), practice response (knowledge) and practice conclusion (practice). In providing measure, the dialogic event as a community of meanings, mediates these visual and literary intelligences in support of these principal criteria and a critical visual method of practice as inquiry.

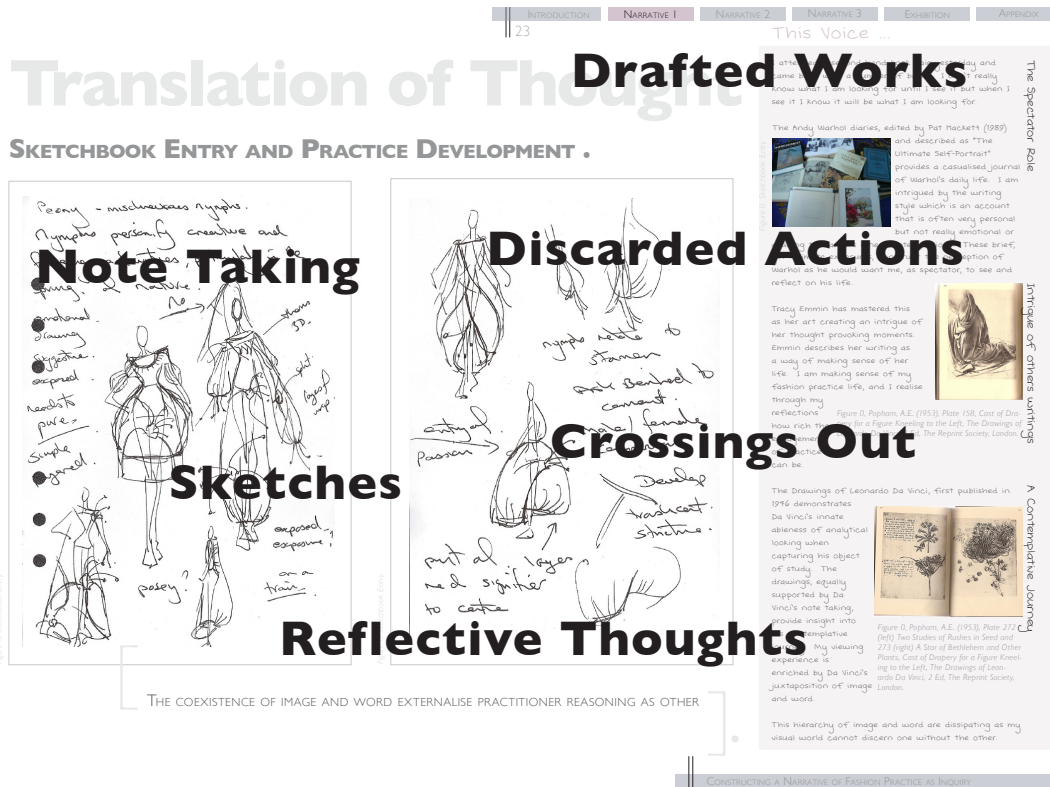


Figure 66. Example of the Unabbreviated Oeuvre, Portfolio of Practice, Narrative 1, p.21.

### 1.3. The Abutment of Theory and Practice

Considered as archaeological data and by deconstructing the visualities of fashion practice 'several structures of inquiry' (Hardesty, 2002-2012, p.1) have contributed to the key concepts being considered. Such rich accounts of a human experience characterised by the author-function role and constructed as both object and subject (O'Reilly, 2005, p.164) suggest that a narrative space happened and therefore came into existence, no matter how briefly, where more could be told of a knowing knowledge of the 'never said', and where critical and cultural debate could take place.

Perhaps the abutment of theory and practice could be considered as misguided and may be the reason why practitioners find difficulty in linking theory with their practice? This research considers a doing of fashion practice as theory that led to a telling of a knowing that would

otherwise have not been known: a way of seeing practice as a *work* to be consumed in a narrative space as discovered and evolutionary: a narrative as invention (Figure 67) for others to situate their telling of a knowing of a doing of practice as similar or otherwise.

## As Silent Preachers



Figure 67

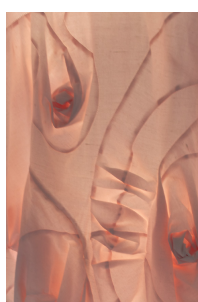


Figure 68



Figure 69. There Look I

THE ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES ARE PROVOCATIVE AND COMPELLING

### **Fashion Practice as Discovered and Evolutionary**

Figure 67. *Narrative as Invention, e-Exhibition, p.29*

#### **1.4. A Future Narrative of Practice**

Foucault (1963, p.7), in discussing the organisation of knowledge, suggests that 'if one poses no retrospective question, there can be no priority only the spoken structure of the perceived'. If fashion practice as inquiry is to become observed, analysed and re-organised, then much depends on the records of (evolving) contemporary practices. If fashion practice were to be discussed as a *work* contained within a body of knowledge, and were theories to be drawn and advanced upon as new thinking emerged, this could begin to create order out of (a doing of) practice and contribute to the theoretical maturity of the discipline. In support of a juxtapositional view, like 'medical gaze' (Foucault, 1963) a critical gaze of practice is to describe

a doing of practice that constructs the coefficients, and grants equal attribution, to the author-function, spectator function and practice aesthetic-function roles to facilitate a way of seeing fashion practice as inquiry in a field of knowledge that has been found to be lacking in maturity. The result of this archaeology or thought structure has enabled theoretical integrity for the purposes of a future discourse and it is this notion of structuring practitioner thought and action that positions this fashion practice inquiry as research, as a visual culture, in which a future knowledge of the here and now can be discerned.

As key protagonists of fashion's future narrative of practice the spectator respondents demonstrated a thematic use of reflection, knowing, provocation, analogy, vulnerability and seeing as a way of seeing and responding to a narrative space of practice as inquiry. It would be wrong to claim a totally unequivocal view, and the method did have its weaknesses, ambiguities, cultural variations and interpretations that might have impaired the ethnographic data. Nonetheless, this should not inhibit the usefulness of the research method/s chosen. As a future narrative of practice the 6 key themes (Appendix C, p.40-42) now exist for others to argue, to find and to ponder.

### **1.5. Conversations Yet to be Had**

It might be considered that creative practice in fashion design is particular to each and every designer and that nothing can be usefully extrapolated from any one practitioner that would offer a method to another practitioner. If this is the case (and how would we know unless others embark on such a journey as I have), then my journey of discovery may have been futile? It is my hope that the project will be either of direct use to other design practitioners, or even those who wish to study the invisible or tacit process of a designers thinking and doing journey, or at the very least will inspire others to make their own, equivalent study, to provide simply, evidence of one person's journey as a narrative method. Perhaps the

bibliography and the Portfolio of Practice will offer others some clues to ways of developing a new methodology and theory of fashion practice for research.

However, to further the conversations yet to be had of a doing of fashion practice a number of outstanding questions are considered as worthy of further debate.

I. Review and further testing

Due to variations in approach a comprehensive review and further testing of the *through, in and of* practice contexts would purposefully invite scrutiny and build on the theoretical maturity that the discipline so needs. This might also lead to a greater understanding of the practice-led through practice-based approach that this research considered as 'Practice as Inquiry'.

II. Reflective practice inquiry

From the data drawn from both the author-function and spectator-function roles it is evident that reflection as a method to engage with a narrative space of practice as inquiry is readily engaged with. The data (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix F) suggests that from all the practitioners surveyed, reflection was a key theme used to critically respond to the practice portfolio, and the theme of seeing was the least frequently mentioned. Might the wider (fashion) practice research communities readily adopt reflective practice inquiry as a research method to confidently contribute to a collective understanding of the discipline?

III. A curated intervention of practice

The practices of the practitioner were appraised in the mind's eye of the spectator beyond the *mis-en-scène* of the practice aesthetic itself. A curated intervention of practice transcended the spectacle of fashion practice toward a more discerning

narrative and cultural context, to be critically gazed upon. Could such an intervention of a doing of fashion practice begin to construct knowledge of practice as inquiry?

IV. A reasoned knowing

The spectator respondents made claim to a knowing, but did not appear to know how to put their claims into words adequately, as a knowing existed as a doing and not a telling? This reasoned knowing is described in differing ways, but was principally described as a sensory experience, or beyond sense perception, through the use of reflection, emotion or analogy (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E(ii)). It could be surmised that the respondents lacked any or very few key terms of reference to make claim to his or her knowing, and therefore resorted to other, more tangible, means of communication. Is it that more needs to be known of a knowing knowledge of the 'never said'?

V. The abutment of theory and practice

As a theory of engagement (Chapter 8.2), the abutment of theory and practice is considered as a cognitive and behavioural positioning of any or all *a priori* (prior) thought and is perceived as intuitive or momentary, as subjective-rational. Further, any or all *a posteriori* (after) action was experienced as objective-empirical, and the existence and foundations of a knowing knowledge happened, and therefore existed, at the abutment of the empirical and the rational. Is it that the empirical and the rational collide (or meet) as the practitioner *does* practice? Could the complexity of *what is* perceived and *what is* experienced make the very reasoning of practice unfathomable, and is this perhaps why the practitioner finds difficulty in linking theory with their practice and most likely knows more than is ever said of their doing (as the abutment of the rational and empirical are not easily put into words)? What more can we learn from the subjective-rational and objective-empirical, and could these two

opposing forces be the reason why practitioners struggle when speaking in theoretical terms concerned with their practice?

VI. Effectiveness of a critical gaze of practice

Although respondents confirmed the effectiveness of a critical gaze of practice as a responsive and experiential viewing experience (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E (iii).), there appeared to be more work to be done in terms of its effectiveness.

VII. Critical and cultural exchange

The potential for critical and cultural exchange resides with the practitioner's intrinsic ability to reflect. It might be that the reflective practitioner appeared to be hindered by emotional restraint, though appearing to utilise analogy as a visual comfort blanket or way of seeing (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E (vi).). Is it in this narrative space of practice as inquiry that a construction of a future narrative exists of a telling of a knowing of a doing of practice?

VIII. A future ethnography

The author-function and spectator-function roles engaged with a consciousness of seeing in the here and now that led to an engagement with the studied practice. In this respect, a future ethnography of a doing of practice exists in a narrative space in support of a conversation that is yet to be had about a doing of practice, perhaps?

IX. A *work* of practice

As a body of (creative) work, as a *work* of practice, a discourse of practice emerged in relation to fashion practice that could be critically observed, reflected upon and be collectively reasoned with in a high-culture context. Could a cultural confidence now

be assumed in a modern postmodern context of the practices of the fashion practitioner?

X. A measure of Expert

There appeared to be a lack of theoretical confidence and an apparent torment of self-belief by both the author-function and spectator-function roles. The practitioner respondents, although they all confirmed their distinctive and primary practice specialisms, also made reference to a secondary practice role and claimed a crossing of multiple mediums when describing their engagement with the studied practice (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E (i)). The data highlighted an ambiguity that could be a result of practitioner insecurity or the fact that a measure of *expertise* needed further definition in a scholarly context? Cross's (2011, p.6) belief that an '*expert*' (fashion) practitioner displays a visible determination in achieving a desired aesthetic, based on extensive knowledge of the practice discipline, may well need further definition.

XI. A continuum of seeing

Spectator respondents elucidated a reasoned response that was contemplated through reflective intent. A continued sense of (un)finish and that another day might bring further response, whether the same or different, suggested that a continuum of seeing took place (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E (ii)). Why is it that the practitioner was not able to stop looking and seeing (and therefore doing) when engaging with a doing of practice?

XII. A reflective momentum

Respondents drew on emotional reasoning when engaging with a narrative of practice, and made reference to alternative representations or visual metaphor when engaging with the narrative of practice. A reflective momentum was evident (Portfolio of



Practice, Appendix E (vi).) as the respondents appeared more empathic or open to reflection as a method to discuss or describe their moments of knowing. Could this reflective momentum be harnessed to further our understanding of practice?

#### XIII. Key themes usage

Although no pattern could be identified from the emerging key themes (Portfolio of Practice, Appendix E (iv).) it was surmised each of the respondents drew on a range of key terms that comprised reflection, seeing, analogy, provocation, knowing and vulnerability when engaging with a narrative space of practice inquiry. Could it be the abutment of the rational and empirical are not easily put into words, and such perceptions and experiences, as everyday truths of a doing of practice, are the ultimate reality to be examined?

#### **1.6. Just Maybe ...?**

Through the relativities of reason this inquiry surprisingly found cognitive simulation with Darwin's theories of evolution (Introduction, p.12). Is it possible that a narrative of practice bears some resemblance to Darwin's theories of evolution? Did the author of this practice inquiry ponder (Figure 68) such rationality during a moment of a reasoned knowing? Could natural selection versus genetic drift be considered analogous to the evolution and discovery of a knowing knowledge of practice?

Could natural selection versus genetic drift be interpreted to rationalise what practitioners do in thought and action to become the archaeology of fashion practice itself? Can Darwinian theories be applied to the fashion (practice) narrative and the evolution of practice as physical and material knowledge?

Curating Meaning

If evolution results in diversification then the uniqueness of my thinking and doing continually evolve also. If I am to be governed by shape and form, theme and fabric etc as commodities of practice, then is it that my thinking and doing simultaneously diversify as my practice evolves?

Fluid lines lead my pencil whilst on the page. I have no idea what I am about to draw until it is committed to canvas...this 'drift' is significant and perhaps provides some clues as to why the practitioner finds difficulty in linking theory with practice, as practice is just what is done and is mostly tacit until after the fact.

Drift

Figure 68. *Pondering Darwin's Theories, Introduction, p.12.*

The textual and visual dialogues contained in the narratives of practice evidence a process by which natural selection versus the genetic drift of a lived reality of fashion practice was experienced and perceived. If this was the case it is then reasonable to assume that the evolution of these two, no doubt, reasoned forces of practitioner thought and practitioner action constantly introduce variation in the reflective possibilities. In evolutionary terms, it might be argued that fashion practice is the coexistence of humanistic and philosophical endeavor, and that both may be considered as inherent entities of a doing of practice ...just maybe?

## Glossary of Key Terms

### Anonymising the Practitioner

Through the adoption of Foucault's (1969, p. 111) 'author as function' theory, the practitioner, spectator and artefact are considered as distinct functions of practice. In the twenty-first century, might the notion of celebrity challenge the adoption of Foucault's (1969) and for that matter Barthes' (1967) beliefs about the 'death of the author'? However, decentralising and deconstructing the author's position and place to become contributory to the subjective-objective nature of a doing of practice, such an anonymous, yet valued, position, may challenge the assumed status and role that the fashion (design) practitioner, as celebrity, has achieved in recent times, and could this enable a more scholarly record of fact to take place in relation to practice as inquiry? Should the 'death' of the fashion practitioner, as anonymous author, be assumed, then a consciousness of seeing, as a way of seeing, the practices of the practitioner could emerge as 'communicable knowledge' (Frayling, 1993, p.1) in the here and now of a doing of fashion practice.

### Conditions of the Possible

The constructed contexts, as conditions of the possible (as Kant's 'conditions of possibility', 1969 in Gutting, 2005, p.36), supposed that a finite knowing of the moment existed, and that these moments or instances could vary over time. Narratives of absolute engagement as truth, no matter how abstract or mundane, for others to engage with is argued as conditions of the possible.

### Contemporary Context

Bugg (2009, p.42) noted the evolving landscape of fashion practice and the fact that many designers now seek innovative ways, such as performance, film, photography and curatorial contexts, to communicate their practice. Taylor (2005, p.445) also acknowledges the interdisciplinary and contextual arena that has emerged in recent times as the practitioner openly exploits a broad range of communicative strategies when promoting their conceptual innovations. In a contemporary context the interdisciplinary use of social, digital and interactive media and so on shapes the way that the narrative contexts are constructed and consumed.

### Curated Intervention of Practice

In the twenty-first century, museums, galleries and exhibition spaces all place fashion in a position of scrutiny. Loscialpo (2010, p.9, Clarke, 2004, p.7-12) observed a recent trend for the exhibition of fashion practice where the norms of chronology or taxonomic organisation are no longer recognised. The curation 'listens to the traces' (Loscialpo, 2010, p.9) that the garments portray as practice contexts.

### Practice as Knowledge

To defend a regulating of knowledge, Foucault (Rainbow, 1984 p.15-17) quotes Guillaume de la Perrière, in *Le Miroir de la politique*, 1567, 'Government is the right disposition of things arranged so as to lead to a convenient end.' Foucault's cultural commentary bought the knowledge-power relationship to the fore and was to become a recognised agent in transforming a subjective-objective system of thought that was to lead to the organisation of a constructed discourse as knowledge (as practice in the context of this inquiry).

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