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Investigations into the impact  
of tactile perception on the artist's creative process  
expressed on a 3D Poetic Canvas  
using the methodology of a '*Forest Flaneur*'

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doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the University of Sunderland  
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## Abstract

This practice-led study explores the experiences of four poets in relation to specific landscapes and its inspiration on the creative practitioner. The research study focuses on tactile perception and its influence on the artistic process as both experiential and interpretative tool. It utilizes the idea of the 'haptic intuitive' (Di Giovine, 2015), specifically the finger pads, for a qualitative phenomenological study framed by fieldwork in nature and expressed in a 3D poetic canvas. The Flaneur methodology was applied to the approach made in the field and developed. This poetic style of walking which is historically associated with Baudelaire is chiefly applied to research in urban settings (Frisby, 1998) However, in this research study, the concept of a "Forest Flaneur" was developed as the scope of the fieldwork involved rural settings and encouraged movement (walking) in random directions primarily linked to tactile attraction in natural landscapes. The methodology developed focused on case studies of four walking poets' inspirational landscapes (Wordsworth, Whitman, Machado and Snyder). The notion of the "*Forest Flaneur*" which has been developed in this study is a poetic walking style in nature, highlighting tactile memories, in rural settings. The contribution to knowledge focuses on a method of revisiting the experiences of poets in relation to their specific inspirational landscape and refining that method through exploring the tactile dimension of experience. This method of separating the tactile from the non-tactile has relevance for the creative practitioner, Furthermore, when undertaking this research I allowed a period of 15+ day's gestation period between the haptic work in the field and the creative response to that experience on the poetic canvas in the studio. This relationship to time and what I have called 'the looping of experience' became a second key part of the research methodology. This methodology uses the memory of a visceral emotive 'in situ moment' as a stimulus - a memory formed in the somosensory cortex as a response to the 15+day gestation period. The cognitive process that is a consequence of the time lapse, or 'time looping' between the two events, synthesizes in the brain with the recall activity undertaken in the studio during the creative process. The research suggests that haptic experience (tactile perception) tends to enrich the creative process in both visual art and poetry.

## Chapter 1 **Aims and Objectives**

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This qualitative study was primarily designed to apply the Flaneur method to rural settings in order to evaluate the tactile impact on the creative process for an artist expressed in a 3D artwork.

- 1) Tactile Perception impact on the creative process and the Flaneur
  - **Collect notes through fieldwork** by using the artist's own haptic (finger pads) contact in a random walk focused on the tactile attraction.
  - **Explore the relationship between colour (visual perception) and colour palettes and tactile experiences**
  - **Fuse all data** inputs into a 3D hand-built artwork (poetic canvas).
  - **Compare and contrast** the full creative process of tactile and non-tactile based on fieldwork.
  - **Consider** tactile perception impact on the creative process.
- 2) Re-engagement with the environment through tactile experience
  - **Collect** information using sketchbooks and creative writing techniques.
  - **Compare and contrast** experience of tactile and non-tactile experiences.
  - **Evaluate** experience of tactile perception

However, as the thesis and research developed, it became clear that the contribution to knowledge focused on two approaches to methodology – firstly the use of the “Forest Flaneur” and secondly the implementation of a 15+ day gestation period between the haptic work in the field and the creative response to that experience on the poetic canvas in the studio. I therefore decided to use the exhibitions and public outdoor walks a way of finding out more about the haptic responses people had to both the natural environment and the gallery environment, but to include this information in an appendix as a source of reflective information (see Appendix 1) rather than the main body of the text since for the purposes of this thesis, the key contributions to knowledge developed around creative methodological processes explored.

## Methodology

This thesis was a qualitative study designed to isolate the tactile perception in order to explore its impact as an agent of change to the creative process. The phenomenological study involved four case studies in four distinct ecosystems linked to the cultural heritage of each poet's inspiration. These case studies were planned with first a non-tactile walk and a second tactile walk, which were carried out on separate days with brief notes and sketches. Subsequently, poetry and a colour palette were created in a studio for each walk after the fact and off site. The poetry derived from the walks was a re-play on the original poets and expressed in lyrical style poems. The colour palette was created by mixing primary colours to access the sensory memories post walking in a studio setting with natural light in daytime sessions. The objective was to compare and contrast the value of the tactile data collection on the second walk. The follow up tactile walk was specifically focused on tactile perception to pay attention to elements of touch after the non-tactile walk had been accomplished in the same vicinity.

This study explores the tactile walk that focuses on tactile attraction motivated by touch, encouraging the “haptic intuitive” (Di Giovine, 2015). It expands the training ground of the tactile memory sphere for artists to be able to create in the studio post walking without depleting the ecosystem of its natural resources or objects that seem innocuous and yet belong to a larger more than human ecological interdependent arrangement. It meant the creative process was based on recall (tactile memories) with a low impact on the actual environment without *in situ* landscape painting or removal of objects that modify the living world. This recall element arose after a time lapse from field work in New York with the Whitman non-tactile walk to the studio that followed up in Spain. During a 15-day lag in the creative process it was observed that this time-loop formed an intermediate-term memory (ITM) for recall over time. This experimental result was transferred to the methodology, and formulized into a 15+day window as a gestation period post walking for both non-tactile and tactile walks. This was the base for refining the

tactile memory methodology as a tool for the creative practitioner to recall throughout the project over the 3-year span for long term memory of the landscape. Memory stages, recall training, and value of spacing are current discussions in neuroscience (Sutton and Carew, 2002), (Pyc, 2010), (Sleister, 2014) and (Fiebig and Lansner, 2017).

Tactile perception is different due to stimuli passing from the finger pads to both the heart (pulse) and the brain (nerve), unlike the other senses that are located in the head with a direct signal to the brain. Touch sensations are produced through the skin and then transferred to the brain by the central nervous system as indicated in Gray's Anatomy (Standring, 2015, pp. 60–66). Sight, for example, is located in the head with the eye and has a direct link to the brain (optic nerve). Since the 1920's, touch has been identified as a sense that needs to have more integration (Melzack and Wall, 1962, p. 337). On the other hand, the finger pads are also areas where the pulse of the heart is registered at the same time, differentiating them from the other senses. The accuracy in studying the pulse rates are measured with oximetry studies and the index finger has been determined to be highly efficient (Bowes, Corke and Hulka, 1989), (Jubran, 2015). The fusion of this heart/brain interaction is revealed in the cognitive process (Field, 2014), (Cerritelli *et al.*, 2017), (Johansson and Flanagan, 2009) and this study suggest a certain amount of time is needed to allow for this incubation period in order to form a lasting tactile memory in the creative process. This memory left dormant could be lost if not acted upon (Thomas and Johnson, 2008), (Peters and Goldreich, 2013). Therefore, a physical transfer was essential to complete the cycle and in this study, it took the form of written poetry and a colour palette for a 3D poetic canvas. The 3D poetic canvas was based on a hands-on experience beyond an illustrated poem to extend the tactile perception into the artwork.

This practice-led research was able to reach its results with a combination of methodologies as discussed in Chapter 1, to set up the basic premise of research good practices for sound results. The research scope involved two continents (USA & Europe) with four poets (W. Wordsworth, W. Whitman, A. Machado and G. Snyder) in two mountainous terrains (Helvellyn, Mt. Tamalpais) and two flat terrains (Hempstead Plains, Valsain Valley). Literature in Spanish and English were analysed for historical background of the poets, while most of my creative writing in this study was English based. All of this research and analysis are discussed in Chapters 4 (Case Studies).

In this practice-led research, I partly utilized Allison (1992) and extended by Gray and Malins (2004) as a base to build an outline of steps for the methodology applied in this project. However, during the Experimental stages (1) and (2), I allowed for on-going adaptations combined with fieldwork. Memos and poetic notes were supportive. Coding the notes and analysing them post walking added to the process of modification, which was then applied on future walks. In part, this research is positivist in its use of fieldwork and yet is highly interpretive based on my creative process in producing art; hence utilizing the Grounded Method was helpful (Charmaz, 2006).

1. Historical
2. Philosophical (theoretical)
3. Experimental 1 walking (pre, post-testing, control)
4. Experimental 2 studio (pre, post-testing, control)
5. Comparative (cross-cultural, cross-seasonal, cross-landscape)
6. Descriptive (notes and sketches from walks)
7. Naturalistic (interpretative, phenomenological, qualitative enquiry)
8. Practical (expressive-creative/productive poetry, colour palette, sculpture)
9. Note-taking (journals writing; feelings, ideas)

The planning schedule was set up to allow for the Comparison Stage (5) by recording changes in the creative process due to non-tactile and tactile walks. Two walks were planned to examine the same author and cross analysis post-production provided data for differences, if any. Originally, two seasons had been planned for each author, but limitations on time and finances modified the study. This decision was made only after the Machado and Snyder case studies rendered no real differences in seasonal changes. However, the Wordsworth landscape was accessed in three seasons and field notes made over a two-year period. The Whitman case was accessed in the same season for the non-tactile and tactile walks in two different years. Machado and Snyder non-tactile and tactile walks were completed within the same season, no later than 30 days apart to maintain the control group, as a reference point. The four landscapes are located on two continents in three countries. There was considerable distance between all of them. This factor slightly complicated the cross-seasonal comparison studies to arrange accommodation, transportation and studio space.

Assessment of tactile and non-tactile feelings was carried out by recording in a notebook to draw upon for comparisons. These reflections were noted in separate timeframes to highlight the feelings associated with each type of walk and each type of studio work. The tactile notes provided the main data to compare to the non-tactile to test the impact of tactile perception on the creative process. The assessment of the tactile and non-tactile feelings was qualitative in the form of a written format post walking and recorded in a separate larger notebook. The emphasis was on the tactile walks as a comparison to the non-tactile to document and highlight the differences. In addition, notes included the feelings of studio work and the creative process post walking, especially signalling the tactile inputs that contributed to the process of recall. Language in the post tactile poetry was analysed as well for comparison to the non-tactile poetry. The interplay between the materials that involve tactile inputs, mainly brush strokes, was noted for changes in post tactile and non-tactile studio work. However, the actual production process entailed in the entire journey from outdoor to indoor (landscape to studio) gave rise to new knowledge (Elkins, 2009).

The interdisciplinary aspect of this thesis has a wide variety of outcomes that are divided between the artistic and literary fields. Therefore, Chapter 5, Conclusions, not only addresses poets and artists, but also extends the research to new areas in tactile perception. Contributions to knowledge in Chapter 5 are largely focused on the development of a method of revisiting the experiences of poets in relation to specific landscape and in terms of refining that method through exploring the tactile dimension. The method of separating the tactile from the non-tactile has clear relevance for the creative practitioner.

In addition, I formulated the definition of the *Forest Flaneur* so as to stand out as a random poetic walking style in rural settings with a focus on tactile perception emphasising a haptic reflective approach to interacting with Nature.

Finally in this section, I will introduce some brief definitions of key words used throughout this thesis:

The use of the term **haptic** in this thesis refers to any form of interaction involving touch. It can refer to:

- Haptic Communication: the means by which people and other living organisms communicate via touching
- Haptic Perception: the process of recognizing objects through touch.
- Haptic Poetry: a liminal art form combining characteristics of text and sculpture.
- Haptic Technology: technology that interfaces with the user through the sense of touch.

The use of the term **tactile** in this thesis relates to haptic perception... things perceptible through touch; things designed to be perceived through touch and, sometimes, the way in which we experience ourselves and other living organisms through the sense of touch. **Tactile cutaneous** specifically focuses on the finger pads.

The use of the term **somatic** and/or **somatosensory** in this thesis refers to experiential movement disciplines, with an emphasis on touch relating to perception of sensory stimuli received from the skin and interpreted in the somatosensory cortex of the brain.

The term **visual** is used at times specifically relating to sight or seeing – seeing in the visual *sense* as opposed to, say, touch. On occasion, the term **visual** is also used pejoratively to refer to the primacy of vision within western culture from the Enlightenment onwards – a Cartesian view of the world.

Finally the term **empathy** in this thesis draws from the social psychology definition, more specifically referred as the “third emotional component, feeling compassion for another person...most frequently associated with the study of empathy in psychology” (Hodges and Myers, 2018, pp. 296–297).

The term “**roof tile**” is used in this thesis to indicate the four types of building materials for the roof motif linked to the four poets. The tin roof tile for Snyder is actually a roof ridge cover or side joint cover. However, I refer to it as a “tile” for consistency along with the slate (Wordsworth), ceramic (Machado), and cedar (Whitman) materials.

## Chapter 2 **Background**

### Introduction

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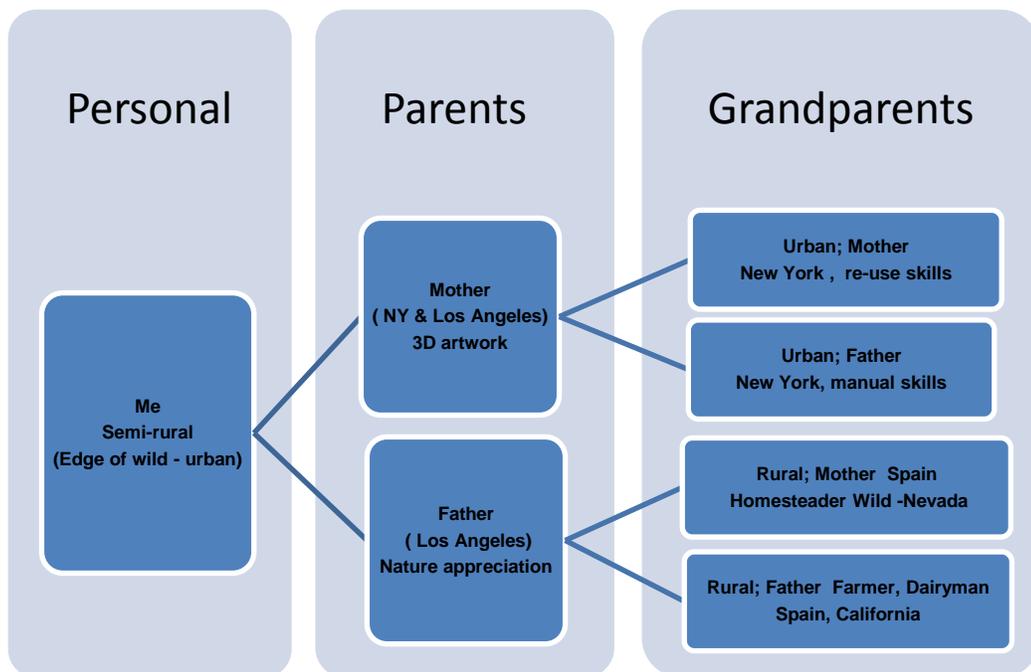
This research project was undertaken by me in order to grow as an artist, poet and human being with exploration into the understudied tactile perception impact on the creative process.

As I am now an urban-dweller artist today, I was motivated to study the re-engagement with Nature by returning to the “road not taken,” (Frost, 1915) considering I was a child of a semi-rural upbringing with ample fields to play in, trees to nap on, coping with tarantulas and the dangers of rattlesnakes.

This study permitted me to re-experience the rural environment (re-engagement) as an artist through a specific methodology, tactile perception as a “Forest Flaneur”. A practice-led research project based on re-engagement with Nature from childhood to adulthood needs to include those elements of dormant memories from the past. Therefore, I would like to outline my personal background that adds value to the project.

### My personal background

My background lends itself to a rural-urban mix due to both the generational influences from my parents and my own experiences from childhood growing up on the edge of the wild desert. Tangentially my sister’s applied linguistics career spurred my interest into how language is acquired through tactile perception. Furthermore, my father’s heart monitor research to create a finger pulse device was also a childhood influence. My skills and appreciation prior to this project acquired from these influences are outlined in the following chart.



*Tactile sensitivity acquired in play with random exploration*

The tactile memories as a child were the base of my prior knowledge with Nature. My father's homesteader, rural background inspired his disdain for fences, consequently, our garden opened, further than the boundary of the neighbours' fence, to fruit orchards and the desert beyond. This provided me with free run to gather flowers, grass stalk and to feel and taste the ripeness of fruit right there from the tree. At school recess, we would reach across the fence to the mustard grass, plucking off some stems, often tasting the wildness, getting a feel for the texture and character of the yellow petals. Also from nine to eighteen, I learned music, practicing forty-five minutes daily on our great grandparents' vintage piano. The aged key board was stiff and difficult and it required dexterity and strength for playing to make each key respond properly. In the torrential desert rains we would play in the mud, and at the beach we made sand castles; these hands on, tactile, memories are embedded in my mind. Then, while my father ocean fished from shore, I would explore the tide pools with a slow meander. While I wandered randomly from pool to pool, I would explore with my finger pads, becoming enchanted with the touch, the feel and texture of the variant sea growths. On the way home from school, I rambled through the fields experiencing the changes of the seasons in my hands as I touched the wild clover. In spring, it was wet and damp while in summer it was dry and prickly. By autumn, the winds were uprooting sage bushes from the desert and blowing tumbleweeds across my path. The thorns tore up my fingers, never to be forgotten. The loss of close contact with Nature on a daily basis was one driver for this line of research to explore re-engagement as an artist. I explored the orchards with enthusiasm and found a friendly avocado tree, which became my nap tree. Hugging and climbing to the first arm gave me empathy for this tree. I felt as though in love with this snugly tree; the strength of the texture of its trunk lingers in my mind to this day, as a long lost protector. Then later it was heartbreak to hear the roar of chainsaws killing my *play land*, my refuge. I could not protect it back then as a child. Missing the sound of the owl at sunset that howled from those trees, I fell asleep slightly empty after that event wondering about the new neighbours to be.

### *Hand-built and re-use of material transfer*

I chose to mainly hand-build the artwork to present to the public based on my childhood experiences. A family culture is a generational heritage as passed down from elder to younger through story, comment, direction and practice. Thus, the use of heritage elements in the work will establish a respect for social history. Handicraft, re-building and manual skills were carried down from my mother's generational influences. She grew up during the US Great Depression, which required re-use and re-making skills as handed down to her from her parents. For example, my mother would re-upholster old chairs, and took pride in demonstrating that skill to me, even though by then she could buy new ones. Her father continually used his hands to repair all the household items and later in life created lamps from vintage bits and pieces, which to me became art. I observed and participated in his projects at his fascinating garage workbench. In fact, I inherited his tools. Arts and crafts classes with the parks and recreation department in the summer (with cornhusk dolls, macramé and crochet at home between the ages of 8-15) contributed to my skills in handicraft, too. In high school, I joined the ceramic classes and was attracted to the new techniques used with lace or crushed glass in hand building which I observed while visiting the college art shows with my teacher on excursions.

All of these personal experiences drove me to explore tactile perception impact on the creative process expressed in a 3D artwork derived from a Flaneur walk. The contributions to knowledge that ensued from this practice-led research are discussed briefly after I sketch out the aims and objectives of the project.

I will next discuss my Literature Review in order to frame the research. Although this research is an arts based project, the first discussion relates to neuroscience and psychology. The focus in these fields in relation to this study deals with tactile perception and lack of bonding to other living organisms, humans included, and this latter issue affects us all.

## Chapter 3 Literature Review

### Literature Review

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#### **Introduction**

The definitions of tactile perception and visual perception, considering their interplay in the creative process, are helpful to define for this study. Occupational therapy deals with learning outcomes and states; “Visual perception is the way we know and understand the world around us through what we see” (NH Trust, 2011). The definition of tactile perception is the “process by which the nature and meaning of tactile stimuli are recognized and interpreted by the brain, such as realizing the characteristics or name of an object being touched,” whereas “Touch” is defined as sensation of making physical contact with objects, animate or inanimate. Tactile stimuli are detected by mechanoreceptors in the skin and mucous membranes” (Reference MD, 2017). However, the impact of tactile perception on the artistic creative process that may stimulate engagement with the surrounding natural environment has rarely been the focus of research in these fields. Some studies point to how language arises as a cultural evolution of the human species with “words” as its base to control emotions. These studies are linked primarily to psychology, with a focus on depression, pain and psychosis. Such studies are tangentially linked to well-being; however, this new research will explore the relationship between the creative process, and the natural environment – and specifically, an emotional attachment to place via tactile perception.

I will identify how this project contributes to new areas of knowledge, exploring ideas around the Flaneur, art and poetics. The British Ethos network was consulted for UK dissertations, while other international dissertations appear as academic research published in full or part in articles or book chapters.

## **Psychology, Neuroscience, Haptics**

Tactile perception studies have been limited to mainly four areas 1) IT; Technological hand devices, touch screens or robotics, 2) Linguistics; acquisition of language, 3) Humanities; Advancing visually impaired cues, 4) Psychology; emotional healing (Horton *et al.*, 1995; Hayward *et al.*, 2004; Bufalari *et al.*, 2007; Johansson and Flanagan, 2009; Wong, Peters and Goldreich, 2013). Interdisciplinary research is usually complicated by having to explore subject territories sometimes outside of one's specialism or expertise – in this case in the area of neuroscience and psychology. The cognitive and emotional gap suggested by a Cartesian Dualism between the emotional and cognitive has been eroding with recent neurological studies demonstrating a merging of the two paths in a “holistic” brain model (Pessoa, 2018).

Touch is the only sense that stimulates a dual mode of communication in the human body with signals moving through the blood stream to the heart and nerve endings reaching the brain. The research is divided between the emotional psychological aspects related to the variation in pulse and the cognitive neurological motor effects linked to electrical currents. Tactile perception in this study corresponds to the finger pads skin sensors (tactile cutaneous). The accuracy in studying the pulse rates are measured in oximetry studies and the index finger has been determined to be highly efficient (Bowes, Corke and Hulka, 1989), (Jubran, 2015). The motor skills in connection with tactile perception are mostly studied for robotics and gaming (Johansson and Flanagan, 2009), while psychological studies in tactile perception are explored for empathy (Bufalari *et al.*, 2007) and language acquisition (Wong, Peters and Goldreich, 2013).

Although tactile discrimination may decline with age, there are positive results for research in tactile co-activation. Research shows that “tactile performance is not irreversible” and is “subject to considerable restoration by specific stimulation protocols” (Dinse *et al.*, 2006). Microgeometry properties have been the focus of a study related to how we gather information for natural textures with the fingertips that tangentially is related to this research project.

It has been shown that this information is “driven by high-frequency skin vibrations” with a “combination of spatial and temporal mechanisms,” and accounts for perceptual judgments of texture” (Weber *et al.*, 2013). In terms of this study on the creative process, it is refreshing to understand how the tactile perception is trained and retrained. Consequently, according to neuroscience, artists would be able to increase their tactile perception discrimination with stimulation for a benefit to their creative process.

Affective studies in neuroscience have focused on behaviour, language and empathy (Panksepp, 2010), (Baron-Cohen *et al.*, 2014), (Jablonka, Ginsburg and Dor, 2012) and, indeed, neuroscientists are now exploring the concept of networking within the brain (Pessoa, 2018). In terms of “affective body language and the associated neural correlates,” the handshake has been the focus of evaluation for social interactive responses. This centre of attention on the nonverbal and tactile perception mode of behaviour showed a positive impact of inter-subjectivity at close range involving haptic communication (Dolcos *et al.*, 2012). This research into the haptic social behaviours relates to this study in parallel to the human interactions with the living organisms in the environment and its connection to brain activity.

Neuroscience studies with tactile perception through somatosensory testing are relevant, considering that research on the right index finger (d2), “improved discrimination performance” with intermittent theta burst stimulation (iTBS) and showed “excitability” that was “accompanied by changes in tactile discrimination behaviour.” However, the left index finger (2d) “remained unaffected in all cases.” The research in the technological field with tactile perception in 2017 is linked to a paradigm shift in the internet communications moving towards the haptic sphere. It is understood that haptic design and communication “are in its infancy,” and we are on the threshold of a “Tactile Internet revolution” (Pereira *et al.*, 2017).

## **The Flaneur and the idea of the forest Flaneur**

The variance of the perspectives on the Flaneur, a poetic style of walking, lends itself to an enriching complexity of refined definitions with a touch of poetic license. The Flaneur methodology in this project was derived from Baudelaire's act of strolling unburdened by time or route as a poetic observer. However, the anonymous randomness of disassociation of the Flaneur in the city to relieve stress is not my intention with this concept. The Paris Review describes the Flaneur; "The idea here—of dissociating from one's surroundings, of taking a step back—is important... these little things do seem to matter, not least as an effective antidote to artificial busyness and its accompanying stress" (Bijan, 2013). Although a type of Flaneur (gawking observer) has been associated with crowds and protest giving rise to violence, it seems extremely removed from the original artist-poet observer of Paris during the 1800's (Shaya, 2004). Primarily, Baudelaire was a poet distinct from the idle 'Dandy' whose fashion was the limit of his mind. In contrast, through the act of strolling (Flaneur) the poet was freed up from constraints on time and goal oriented planning from point A to point B. For Baudelaire the emphasis was on observation like a painter waiting for materials and yet painting in the mind a picture, later to be filled in by brush strokes (Baudelaire, 1883). Baudelaire formed a poetic style by gathering snippets from a visceral experience to be fanned out in prose poetry with impeccable meter. In this collage of poetic prose, he created sketches of the modern society with an intention to share them with a wider audience hoping, to awaken them from their sleepy hollow. Werner, in his essay "'Ground-Moles" and Cosmic Flaneurs: Poe, Humboldt, and Nineteenth-Century Science" argues that Humboldt was *ambling* the streets of Paris and utilized the Flaneur methodology in both urban and rural settings which contributed to his intuitive cosmography in *Cosmos*, noting Humboldt was a keen observer in the natural world (Werner, 2002). Even though Nature is the central axis of this project, the Flaneur methodology for this project is unlike Troy Innocent's "Augmented Bushwalk" that attempts to adapt with "cross media ecologies" as it is wrought with artificial video games (Innocent and Riley, 2014).

Baudelaire's Flaneur can be transposed to the rural environs by crossing the limits of the urban dweller to reach the fields and forest without a marked path; one that would frame the experience before it began. This is a new Flaneur in open spaces who strolls along without any goals similar to Julia Daniel's "Walk in the Park" (Daniel, 2011) and yet beyond the city boundaries and further than Walter Benjamin's Parisian connotation. The social theory proposed by Frisby and Tester (Frisby, 1998) displays the Flaneur caught in a cross fire of competing ethics and loses the essence of the inner chambers of the heart of the poet. I contend that Baudelaire must write as a catharsis for his generation to remain consciously aware of his juxtaposed surroundings in the midst of social order. With the elegance of prose poetry Baudelaire exposes the underside of the metropolitan life. I too touch the underside of Nature like the skin of a slug tucked away in the leaves of the forest, which was not as vulnerable as preconceived. It was rather tough with a finer palette of yellow hues once I had examined it close up. Baudelaire's Flaneur is not afraid and dives into the environment with all senses. There is a commitment to awaken the reader not as a removed observer with a theoretical path destined to find the path-o-logy but rather a weaver of absurdity spun from the "modern" life. Leaping forward with "Beautiful Transgressions: Thinking the Flaneur in Late-modern Societies," Martinez describes Flaneurs as "capable to test borders and establish new connections...with an opportunity for empathy" (Martínez, 2015).

I agree that the Flaneurs as poets have the chance to stand apart from the crowd juxtaposed to Edgar Allen Poe's "Man of the Crowd," who blends into the sea of humans to escape a social role (Poe and Poe, 1840). We, as poet Flaneurs, could seek beyond the dotted lines of concrete poetry and the asphalt jungle with the earth beneath our feet not merely transferring the image of the Flaneur to a roadway as a "wanderer" (the Flaneur). Armstrong purports the Flaneur into the context of a 1000 kilometre-driving trip through Saskatchewan, in her travelling tale of research (Armstrong, 2011). Baudelaire constructed his own city escapes from different angles much like the cubists and was not afraid to knock inside a world so different from his own.

I propose the 3D poetic canvas as my craft made with my hands specifically to access the tactile memories echoing Esther Leslie's "Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft" in which she reminds us of changes in production from artisan to industrial and "impacts on modes of memory and experience" (Leslie, 1998).

### **Poetics**

I find Linehard's analysis of Indian classical lyrical poetry to be somewhat true for even Western lyrical poets. Lyrical poets set out to evoke emotions with a refined technique noted in the short length of the stanzas and choice of words (Lienhard, 1984). Oliver reviews the role of poetic language in ethics with Julia Kristeva's writing and notes that "meaningful and non-signifying aspects of language---rhythm, tone, music---are just as important in poetry as the signifying elements of language," and I agree that is especially true in lyrical poetry. Further, along these lines, Oliver reminds us that "in poetry it is obvious that words are both meaningful for what they signify and meaningful how they sound and how they affect the listener" and the "ethics of a social discourse may be gauged by how much poetry it allows (Oliver, 2010). This project employs the *replay* method as a retrograde step back in order to thrust ahead, while still processing the past to gain wisdom on the ethics of the present. Kristeva coined this as how the "subject is put in-process/on-trial" and "the ethical cannot be stated, instead it is practiced to the point of loss, and the text is one of the most accomplished examples of such a practice" (Kristeva, Waller and Roudiez, 1984). Ethics plays a key role in our new geological age, namely the Anthropocene period as denoted in terms of a change due to human activity (Oxford Dictionary, 2017). Considering the *replay* on historical lyrical poetics in this research project, I contend a long-standing tradition of nature poets to turn inward while engaging with the "more than human" outward world citing their sources of inspiration as poetic empathy.

I fully embrace the geological scope noting these four poets of this research study to “depict life that slips outside of an autobiographical frame, but that frame resonates in the poetry’s bodily action connecting with an affective and electric charge to place” as purported in *Anthropocene Lyric: An Affective Geography of Poetry, Person, Place* (Bristow, 2015). Further to my own motivation for this research project, I resonate with Bristow’s focus that reaches beyond a fall backward to the *romantics*. He comments: “The Anthropocene Lyric responds to these literary qualities as a priority while aiming to take its place within a project that articulates a fresh turn in cultural studies, germane to the politics and discourses that orbit the escapable reality of our shared destiny on a destitute planet.” Place is ever so important in a project that analyzes the poetic expression in a specific location in order to understand tone and textures. The poet William Blake wrote about the industrial age, (British Library and Freedman, 2014), and its impact on human behaviour with a warning to the child labourers, inspiring Coleridge to move to the countryside to raise and protect his children.

Keats’ pilgrimage to Rome upon facing his immortality, found the ancient sculptures a solace to his dilemma as a metaphor to dedicate his writings with a serious tone to endure the ages. Poets Shelley and Lord Byron escaped together to Italy for freedom of poetics and lifestyle, and yet were on the opposite sides of the Italian countryside exploring a new inspiration, while Keats was seeking inner revelation.

However, the historical event of the dramatic explosion of an Indonesian volcano sent a wave of climatic changes in Europe, and consequently affected the Byron group. The natural crisis, a dark foreboding summer without light except the lightning strikes of thunderstorms in Europe, transformed Byron and his contemporaries, both their inner and outer reflections (BBC, 2014). It set the scene for Lord Byron’s *Odette* gathering in the summer of 1818. Shelley’s companion and the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft had an intuitive dream and woke up to write a story called “*Frankenstein*” that later would be referred to as “post-human” (Goss and Riquelme, 2007).

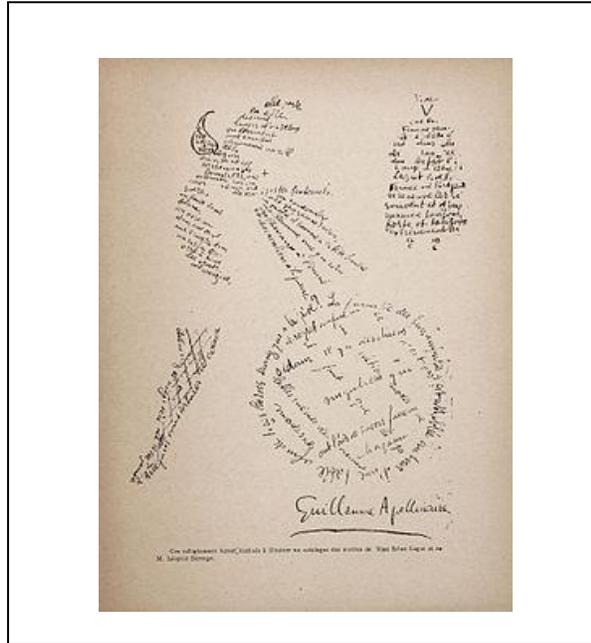
We can no longer say we are in the “age of innocence” nor ignorance especially when T. S. Eliot first published *The Waste land* (Eliot, Pound and Eliot, 1971) as a 434-line poem in 1922 and later in a book form published by Virginia Woolf at Hogarth Press. My inner reflections expressed in the lyrical poetic style dating back to 600 B. C. (Nims, 1990) hopefully can have a response before the “beauty” of the lyrical is absorbed in the vacuum of chaos in silence, void of poet and listener simultaneously: as Eliot mysteriously ended his poem, “Om Shantih...” and I do, too (Chandran, 1989).

### **Poetic Canvas:**

The poetic canvas can be seen in various formats and dimensions throughout the ages. Ancient rock painting that spans the continents contributed highly to human development in the artistic historical sense and developed into language through the (weaving) transfer of motif onto cloth and baskets, which eventually became symbols for texts (Van Tilburg, Hull and Bretney, 2012). In addition, shards of ancient urns with inscriptions scattered across the globe could be considered a base for the poetic canvas based on cultural heritage and ceramics. However, I would like to focus on the individual artist contributions to the poetic canvas (Rodriguez Adrados, 2006).

The 2D poetic canvas in the East, “Three Perfections,” arose with Zheng Qian for his calligraphy, poetry, and painting. In the Tang Dynasty, this art form was highly acclaimed and continued with “tishihua,” where paintings incorporated poetics directly on the canvas in the Song period (Pan, 2011). However, most of this genre was mainly painted in shades of black (Nanjing University, 2017) with Tao motifs and did not delve into abstract art.

In contemporary Western art culture, “Concrete poetry” including Ezra Pound with his Chinese ideograms and Apollinaire with his “Calligrammes” (Apollinaire, 1920), were noted because they “carry the eye to the corners of the page and whimsical structures were a breakthrough in poetics” (Solt, 1968).

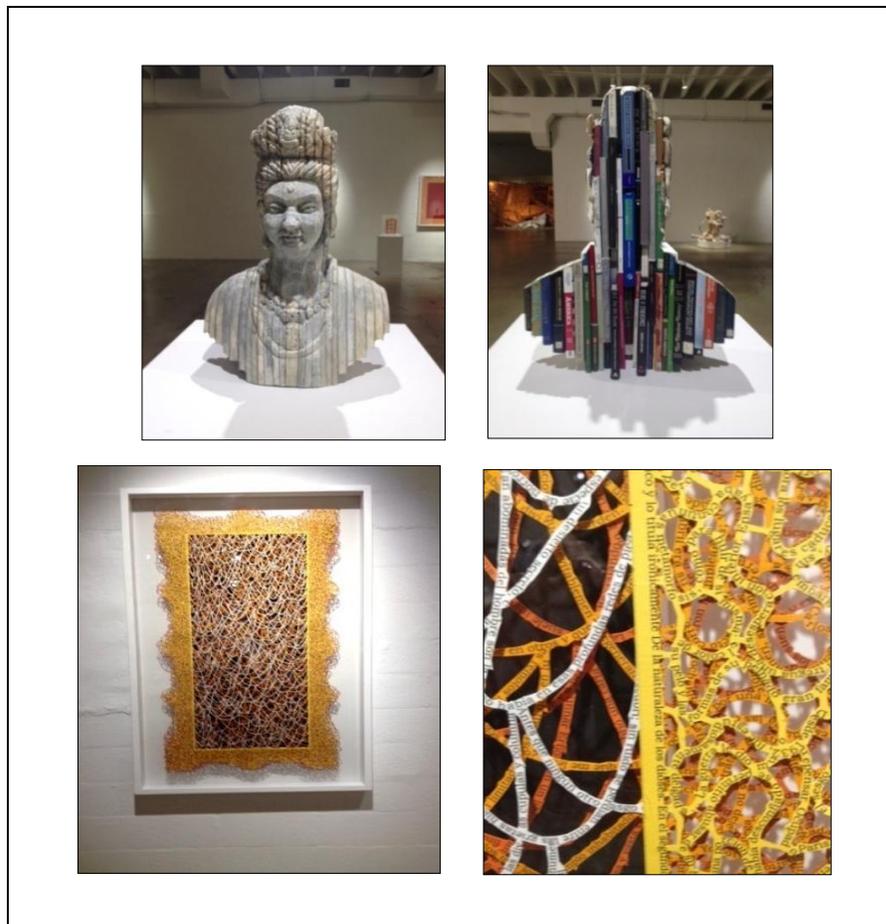


**Figure 2 Apollinaire 1920 « Cahiers Individualistes De Philosophie... »**

In the USA Basquiat (1983) and Kruger (2008) loosely formed poetic canvases in mixed media with texts that stood out utilizing collage or large print expressing common cultural ideas (feminism or racism) forging their own genre.

The 3D poetic canvas as sculpture highlights Roni Horn’s (Horn, 2014) series of long white beams engraved with Emily Dickinson’s poetry. Ryan Johnson with graffiti style markings in his series “Sentinel (Orange)” in 2008 (Johnson, 2008) features texts which although not essential to the sculpture, add texture. The Dada movement in Paris opened up the “art book” and subsequently book sculptures have become a genre worldwide such as Long-Bin Chen (Chen, 2017) and Pablo Lehmann (Lehman, 2013).

The 3D poetic canvas as installation can be seen in Ryo Shimizu's work, —'Altering Letters' - transforming Chinese brush strokes into Roman letters that literally fall off the wall creating an illusion for the viewer (Shimizu, 2011). Tran Trong Vu (2014) from Vietnam in, '*I will come to see you with a visual story*' presented his floating texts of a 21-day creative process as a long walk along the synapses of his brain. Nowadays, the 3D aspect of interactive art has been developed from holograms to mid-air haptics (Chang and Richardson, 2015). However, in this research project, the 3D poetic canvas is not a technologically derived sculpture. It is worth noting the 3D dimension attracts spectators to move around it as an object and interact with it beyond the visual element.



**Figure 1 Chen (top) Lehmann (bottom)**

## **Dissertations:**

The research database Ethos was consulted for dissertations with tactile as a part of their research theme. Three hundred (300) results were retrieved from this data consultation over the span of this study (2014-2017). The haptic response stimulation in robotics showed the most significant numbers for research followed by medical biology and psychology. One of the most relevant dissertations entitled, "Beyond the Looking Glass: object handling and access to museum collections," (Walker 2013; University of Southampton) that proposes a new way of accessing the museum collections through a tactile mode with practical research related to building tool kits for such purposes. Rodent whisker tactile discrimination research (Evans2012; University of Sheffield) was the most extensive subject matter on the biological workings of the tactile "sensing for gathering of information." In the area of creative writing a significant research subject on "tactile poetics" (Jackson 2009; Sussex) addresses the play of skin in writing, but does not extend to the environment. Psychological research on the "contribution of body part terms in children's native language to tactile spatial perception" (Knight 2014; University of London) is linked to the linguistic correlation, adding value to the research into tools for learning, but was not applied to bonding in nature. The visual-tactile related studies included about how people "anticipate the tactile outcomes of other people's actions with their own sensory tactile system." However, they did not isolate the tactile perception element, and related to human-human interactions (Nicholson 2015; University of Plymouth). Tactile perception in the food industry was related to predict customer behaviour and preferences by exploring "whether there is any correlation between texture sensation and tactile sensation systems, which was claimed to be responsible for texture sensation... sensory tests on the fingertip and tongue" (Aktar 2015; University of Leeds). In terms of external stimuli and its effects on human skin, a highly relevant study considered the tactile inputs with living organisms in nature with thermal outputs. Part of the design of this study was the "integration of thermal and tactile sensory cues" and results yielded "...appear to be remarkably consistent regardless of the modality for which skin wetness is experienced," (Filingeri 2014; Loughborough University).

A pertinent study (Petreca 2016; Royal College of Art) linking tactile memories with aesthetic choices notes: “to understand what sensorial information underpins the textile selection processes,” and found, “significant through the tactile experience.” The memories associated with this process by “communicating such experiences in the design process” with a first person approach, is parallel to this study but does not account for a transfer of empathy. Closer to empathy research is outlined in somatosensory activations with “experiences of touch” in child development studies examining autism disorders related to speech (Galilee 2015; Birmingham). Although, not necessarily directly related to the research on tactile perception, the study of visceral impact on audiences is relevant. Sandys’ innovative title, “‘I thought I grew an ear in my stomach’: the phenomenological experience of the art event as sublime encounter” (Sandys 2012; University of London), focuses on the challenges associated an encounter with site-specific locations for land art installations. It attempts to measure the “visceral charge in the phenomenological experience of the encounter” and is significantly pertinent.

### **Philosophy, Poetic Reason: Zambrano**

Ortega y Gasset, a Spanish philosopher who studied in Germany, introduced Husserl’s phenomenology to Spain. Ortega y Gasset mentored one of his youngest disciples, Maria Zambrano, during her university studies in Madrid. Prior to Ortega y Gasset, Zambrano while living in Segovia had considerable contact with the poet Antonio Machado (her father’s friend and colleague). Hence, Zambrano would come to merge these influences later in her own philosophy. She inherited Ortega y Gasset’s new philosophy coined “Razón Vital” (Vital Reason) that was based on a continuum of consciousness that builds over time as the exterior circumstances are transformed. Therefore, “Yo soy yo y mis circunstancias” (I am I, and my circumstances) was her mentor’s most famous line, emphasising the outer world as a function of Self. On the other hand, for Zambrano poetry was the key to exploring the meaning of life, and with Machado’s influence on her, she integrated his perspective in her adult rationale.

Balancing between reason and sentiments, Zambrano developed her own philosophy called “Razón poética” (Poetic Reason). Whereas the exterior was the emphasis of her mentor, the interior became her ultimate focus (Zambrano, 2007) concentrating on the “corazon” (heart) and its chambers that resonated with a harmonic rhythm of the universe (Pythagoras).

Zambrano’s method of “Poetic Reason” expounded that poetry was felt through the body (heart), and then expressed in words (brain). Zambrano’s metaphor of the heart as the chamber of poetics opened the boundaries of an individual’s reason beyond grammar structures (Nietzsche, Ansell-Pearson and Diethel, 2017) such as with Machado. She developed this philosophical method to balance the metaphor with the mind. Zambrano argued that poetry was the link to humanity’s loss of the cosmic truth (innocence), and the ultimate goal of life was to peel away the mask of adolescence, a mask created to confront the world (personality). Zambrano believed that lyrical poetry as opposed to epic poetry was the “path” for the individual to find the deeper truth, being open to the embodiment of cosmic expression, (muse). The lyrical poet-philosopher was reborn as a transcendent being beyond social acculturation and could possibly advance humanity’s consciousness (Zambrano, 1978).

Zambrano notes that the landscape of Castile produced a special light in the arid openness. She believed solitude created a unique inner reflective poetry. Reaching back to the mystics, she also drew on San Juan de la Cruz. He was the disciple of St. Teresa of Avila, from the heart of Castile known as St. John of the Cross. Salamanca University, located in northern Castile (beyond Segovia), had taught this long line of poetic verse to Spaniards over time including monk/professor Góngora (poet). During Zambrano’s university days, the prestigious Salamanca University President was a philosopher named Unamuno, and he influenced Spanish society as well: albeit, he stood for divergent arguments and distanced himself from philosopher Ortega y Gasset at the University of Madrid. The two philosophies emphasised either the mystic line and /or the political line. Góngora, the poet, was part of the Salamanca academic long tradition of poetry and philosophy based on the mystic metaphor.

In 1927 Zambrano's contemporaries such as Garcia Lorca and Salvador Dali, belonged to a student group from Madrid that participated in an event to pay homage to Góngora (300-year anniversary), which led to a new school of poets and thereafter referred to as "Generacion '27". This group followed their predecessors Generacion '98 from Castile.

### **Philosophy Summary**

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological framework was used as a base in this study and stems from the groundwork set by Husserl's tactile perception. The relationship of the individual in the world defined as "I" and the "Other" put forth the importance of tactile perception for Husserl. However, the "Other" was predominately meant for human relationships. Merleau-Ponty extended Husserl's definition of phenomenology.

Husserl (1930's) focuses on the senses and becomes the grandfather of modern phenomenology. Determined to convince his audience (French, pro-Descartes) he utilized a scientific method to isolate or "bracket" the cultural bias in visual perception. The tactile perception was part of Husserl's body of work, but his successor, Merleau-Ponty, did not fully explore this aspect. The lack of evidence from neurological science stumped Merleau-Ponty with the phantom limb syndrome (amputee false tactile sense cues). Instead, he described this situation as "Intention" as the reason for this phenomenon according to Merleau-Ponty, with the visual cue of the floor as the base for the tactile sensation. However, Merleau-Ponty's "intentional arc" does fit this research project as the possible "attractor" for the artist in the environment in order to move towards objects to touch. Finally, Zambrano's phenomenological philosophy (1940-1950) pushes the boundaries of "Reason" via "Poetics" to form a fusion between the senses and the cognitive. According to Zambrano, the poet has access to an open space (silence between beats) in the heart to explore a creative element, suspending the brain's known cognitive action, and better known as "reflection."

Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is based on historical shifts in Western Philosophy, and is best suited as a framework for this research project by extending tactile perception inquiries on the impact of the creative process. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological perception also focused on the "first person point of view," and the strength for this study relies on an individual artist: sculptor and poet.

### **Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology, Husserl and tactile perception.**

Tactile perception in this project looks at Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that perception uses all the senses. Bringing tactile perception to the forefront of our sense of perception, can act as a balance to the other sensory perceptions as we process information with our finger pads in the environment helping to negate the priority ranking of visual perception within Enlightenment cultural approaches (Collier, 2011). Irigaray's analysis of Merleau-Ponty (Irigaray, 1993), and later revealed by Murphy, (2014) regarded the visual perception priority ranking as a feminist flaw arguing that the tactile (feminine) was relegated to second player behind the masculine (visual). Although, I tend to agree this visual bias ranking was present in Merleau-Ponty's original *Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty, 1945), this was later addressed as his own studies developed through to his final book *The Visible and Invisible* (Merleau-Ponty, Lefort and Lingis, 1968). The example of the lips in Irigaray's argument rallies my curiosity about the tactile priority in humans or mammals, due to how the lips, (upper and lower), are a reciprocal primal reflex (first tactile) and put into play for survival with the mother's breast without the need of a visual cue. It comes before "hand to mouth" even then this act is tactile before the spoon or utensils are applied for coordination. Simply, the lips touch each other and grasp the mother, and later interact with others through speech extension and the "kiss."

In this research project, the tactile perception focus is on the forefinger with an aim to collect field notes for tactile memories derived from touch during inter-subjective experiences as an adult amongst living bodies, myself included. Trigg's (2013) treatment of the phenomenological relationship of humans to monuments, non-living objects of historical reference, outlines the cognitive process. It is pertinent in terms of individual memory and public collective memories, whereby "Individual memory is irreducible to experience, yet fundamentally rooted in lived experience...History, on the other hand, appears to objectify and render the individual aspect of memory external... by articulating the past into an ordered unit... as a phenomenon among many" (Trigg, 2013). The power of touch is transformative and I contend that Maclaren's intimacy concepts for human interaction could be extended to the natural world: "This intertwining and transformative power is what makes touch an intercorporeal form of intimacy and accounts for its ability to inaugurate and enliven, at the affective level..." (Maclaren, 2014). Following up with Toadvine's central argument that Merleau-Ponty offers a unique approach to environmental dilemmas from philosophy rather than natural sciences (Toadvine, 2009). Toadvine's leap into the "expressive role of reflection" in *Phenomenology of Perception*, as it negotiates the area between nature's own "self-unfolding" and "human subjectivity" evokes Merleau-Ponty's conception of 'intertwining' and "his account of space" that allow for a shift in consciousness.

Tactile perception *a priori* is found in the relationship with the "flesh" in Merleau-Ponty as expounded by Alphonso Lingis (English translator) in his preface to the final unfinished manuscript, *The Visible and the Invisible*. Lingis insightfully comments to the reader; "but one extraordinary constructive chapter---that entitled 'The Intertwining---the Chiasm'---introduces the new concepts with which to explore the production of visibility and 'the metaphysical structure of our flesh'" (Merleau-Ponty, Lefort and Lingis, 1968). James Hatley in "Recursive Incarnation as Goodness" backs up Lingis delving into how Merleau-Ponty treats the "skin" and the touch of "others" as embodiment (Hatley, Lawlor and Evans, 2000, pp. 241–242).

A refreshing and vital parallel to this research project in recalling Merleau-Ponty's inter-subjectivity (intertwining) can be observed in part of Westling's ecophenomenological approach in *The Logos of the Living World: Merleau-Ponty, Animals and Language*. Westling's awareness that "subjected evolutionary biology" was to fit into "the story of humankind's development" noting that "Human language, literature, and the other arts are for him the continuing efforts of our species to sing the world in call and response, carrying with them the past and anticipating the future..." (Westling, 2014).

This study moves the narrative forward to an individual artist choosing a style to interpret the poetry on a 3D poetic canvas as a "readymade" (Nesbit, 1986) infused with cultural heritage and environmental empathy. Walking behind the poets is an important component of the study and the style was chosen carefully, the Flaneur. The next section looks at four case studies, focusing on the lyrical poet (first person expression) as opposed to the epic poet (collective historical expression).

## Chapter 4 **Case Studies**

### Case Studies

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The four poets in the research project fall within the Western canon of poetry with their roots in the Greek poetry and cover a full range of meter including free verse. Wordsworth was confined to a meter by stylistics of his time-period reaching up to 16 syllables per line, while Snyder broke all convention of meter side by side with the "Beats" in uneven syllabic lines. Nonetheless, Whitman had already broken the traditional meter mould of Europe with his uneven lines long before Snyder in 1850, emphasizing his pioneer spirit of America. Machado remains like Wordsworth, conforming to a European metered line closer to the Sappho tradition of eight syllables.

Wordsworth (1779) is the most silent poet of the group, having lived in a remote part of England, seeking to be a “recluse.” His predecessors Dante and Virgil wrote for a public audience to teach a generation. Wordsworth wrote for a public audience, but he was removed from his peers. His poetic inspiration was primarily through walking in the Lake District, a rural setting, and preferred his urban friends come to experience Nature first hand. As a *Romantic*, he strove to find peace within himself through his poetry and walking. The publication of his works was his public response to troubled times. Chaucer, his predecessor, (1340) lived in times of change also and his “beat” was along the lines of a gallop, as he was a court page by profession and travelled great distances in short periods. The introduction by Glaser in *Chaucer’s Verse* (Chaucer and Glaser, 2005) provides us with a canvas to draw upon for this racing rhyme of metric genius.

*Libro de Buen Amor* (Ruiz (Arcipreste de Hita) 1283-1350 and Cejador y Frauca, 1963) parallels Chaucer’s style with its ironic verse expressed in perfect metrical rhymes that a young reader would enjoy, while a mature adult would appreciate the depth of knowledge that abounds his witty verse. In the introduction, the author is described as a mysterious genius walking around the Guadarrama Mountains. This long poem by Arcipreste de Hita (Juan Ruiz), first published in 1330, has lasted through the ages and is a pillar of Spanish literary heritage. In honour of its 600-year anniversary publication in 1960, the highest point in the Guadarrama Range was designated as a Natural Monument due to its connection to the text. The beat is easy to follow and generations of writers have been inspired by the text, as well as the place of his long walk around the Guadarrama Mountains. Cervantes, Quevedo, Machado, among other writers, have literary works inspired by this range of mountains, although they follow a meter but not necessarily a rhyme.

The American poet genius Walt Whitman broke the code of European metre and created “free verse” and yet he repeats his first lines like a chorus response, a personal meter. He is remembered for “Captain O’ Captain...” dedicated to Abraham Lincoln after the assassination of the President, amongst other poems. As a Quaker pacifist, Whitman was a nurse on the battleground of the American civil war and never took sides (Murray, 1997). He instead wrote letters for wounded young soldiers in need of “hope” in the front line hospitals. Snyder is the last poet of the series in this project and his poetic verse is a “beat” version without any prescribed meter or chorus.

However, beat poetry has a special inner clock ticking away to help the poet compose. It is akin to a jazz riff that plays off a scale that everyone recognizes. The beat poets knew how to attract the crowd with their own rhythm inherited from poet Langston Hughes, who sat outside a jazz club in Paris absorbing the rhythm. This syncopation was then incorporated into the beat poetry. Nonetheless, the beat poet reading aloud with syncopation (pauses) infuses the meter of the poem in performance and enlivens the essence more than a silent reader from a book. All four poets’ works vary in meter taking into account their culture and freedom to improvise.

These four modern age poets from the 18<sup>th</sup> (Wordsworth), 19<sup>th</sup> (Whitman) (Machado) and 20<sup>th</sup> (Snyder) centuries express their love for walking and created poetry from their own beat of walking. There is a profound difference in the “beat” of a walking poem compared to a sitting poem (active and passive). The latter carries the weight of a room from a sitting position. In contrast, a walking poem expresses its beat with the wide, open space that captures nature with the heartbeat. This walking poetry summons us to reflect on the landscape and humanity at the same time with the stride as the meter. Their poems capture the morning light, babbling brooks, a lost feather and driftwood found upon a shore. Machado’s “No hay camino” (there are no roads) propelled him to attempt the walk over the Pyrenees with a light suitcase as a refugee of the Spanish Civil War. He died walking over the mountains in this process (Gibson, 2006).

Whitman spent a lifetime walking to perfect his “song” with the stride of a bard (Perlman, Folsom and Campion, 1998). Snyder walks circling Mt. Tam in an attempt to “open” the mountain (Snyder, 1965). These poets walked around lakes, strolled in grasslands, hiked up the side of a mountain, or stumbled in a bloody battleground and expressed all these footsteps in their poetry.

### **Following Footsteps: Re-play Poetics**

For me “re-play” poetics is an inspirational creative writing method, which extends the tradition of ritual by following in the footsteps of other poets (writers) and creating a poem based on that experience, interlaced with the ideas of the original. This type of lyrical poem is based on walking behind a poet, which in turn is transformed into a precise account of places, names or even lines interwoven into a new poem. *Re-play* is not new, but merely a poetic term I use for this project’s research methodology to emphasize the poetic process of transforming past influences into a new poem. It is well known that Homer’s poetics (Homer and Shewring, 1980) was to remind listeners of the wisdom of Greece (pre-Socrates) . Virgil remembered Homer and Dante remembered Virgil, and so on until the four poets in this research project were able to draw on the European and Greek ancient wisdom.

### **Flaneur: Random or Slow**

The Flaneur poetic style of walking originated in France, but curiously enough has a hint of Nordic background derived from the Norwegian “flana,” “flanta” meaning to “gad about” according to the Harper in the Etymology Dictionary (Harper, 2010). It should be noted that it refers to a style of observation and walking, collecting mental notes for later infusion into poetry. The incognito aspect of the Flaneur is distinct from the gawker (Tester, 2014). The depth of empathy resulting in the meditative stroll is intrinsically slow enough to mentally engage the poet yet remain apart from the surroundings. This enables the poet to capture the inspiration for a poem that is “lived” out in a wonder world. Flaneur in its barest form arose to collect images and sensations for writing based on experiences in a random walk beyond the boundaries of a home environment.

Flaneur has no political agenda; however, it is an artistic form of walking with a highly acute sense of observation. It is decidedly individual and moves from one environment (home) to another (urban crowds) with ease. It is on the edge of a nomadic wanderer but the Flaneur returns to a home base.

The term *Slow Movement* is to be understood as a response to “fast food” and entails in its origin a shift to preserve traditional foods from a small town in Italy, bearing the motto of three main ingredients: good, clean, and fair. *Slow tourism* is based on the *Slow Food* global movement capitalizing on the tastes of trendy new travellers in the market. The philosophy of “slow” has begun to seep into the academic circles manifesting itself in such ideas as “Consuming space slowly” or “Out of time: Fast subjects and Slow Living.” The concept of “Slow Art in the Creative City” is taken up by academics analyzing how the movement of an image in street art in Amsterdam is slow, not fast.

The aspect of the *Slow Movement* differs greatly with Flaneur mainly because of the overall emphasis on speed and politics. The local focus of the “*slow*” concept bridges large groups of people together to adhere to manifestos and take on a lifestyle. Flaneur, on the other hand, is based on random walking and poetry. It is slow in its nature, but it does not manifest this quality as its foundation. Flaneur is an artistic choice to move randomly in a surrounding without a destination per se. The *Slow Movement* has deliberately rooted itself in a branding to connect various people across borders. The Flaneur in contrast has no interest in a network of people, but rather it is rooted in self-reflection in relation to a new environment or experience for poetic inspiration. Additionally the Flaneur method is intuitively interfacing with surroundings and pausing. It has been a style of poetic walking mainly in urban settings.

This research project transferred this walking style to a rural setting. It was introduced during the Experimental Stage 1 in the project in order to induce the reflective mode necessary to expand the thinking process (Siegel, 2009) add to the creative process. The Flaneur in rural settings has the versatility to move freely and interact with the living organisms through tactile perception or deeply observe with non-tactile perception.

The poetry derived from this random method of movement in a Natural environment expands the scope to abandon the “path.” Consequently, this freedom from the urban concept of boundaries (roads/paths) is the method of poetic walking applied in this research project to engage the artist fully.

The four case studies were designed to explore a new area of the creative process forming, both literally and metaphorically, a ‘pathway’ between the artist and the environment by linking the act of random/reflective walking in the footsteps of four poets in heritage landscapes as the primary focus of this research project. As an urban- dweller artist, although familiar with rural settings, I was re-immersed into rural environments by researching these poetic landscapes *in situ*.

I immersed myself in each specific poet’s culture and heritage by following, literally, in their footsteps, but at a slow, random pace. This method was very different to hiking, running, riding on horseback, biking, climbing or trail blazing for pleasure or athletic pursuit through such landscapes as I had done in the past. I used the “Flaneur” poetic style of walking inspired by Baudelaire associated with Paris. However, I moved the project from the urban setting to a rural environment. The slowness and randomness associated with attraction and observation was made possible by moving slowly through an environment without a planned route. This method opened up my sensory and emotional responses. A reflective mode in the field for notes and sketches was followed up by a 15+-day delay in the studio as part of the testing of the tactile perception on my creative process. In the studio, I developed a colour palette and created poetry inspired by the poetic landscapes. The outcome was a 3D poetic canvas combining all the elements from the studio.

Four landscapes were chosen to coincide with four poets and some aspect of their inspiration for a specific poem, namely 1) Lake District, UK; 2) Hempstead Plains, New York; 3) Guadarrama Mountains, Spain; 4) Mt. Tamalpais, California. In order to isolate the tactile perception, non-tactile walks were performed without tactile inputs. First, a non-tactile walk was undertaken in the specific landscape of a poet. Then the tactile walk on a separate day in the same area was performed to gather inputs using primarily the forefinger and hands.

Given the financial limited resources, only two poets per continent were chosen in Europe and USA, where I was able to investigate areas with inter-connectivity amongst the poets. Machado admired Whitman and Whitman was an extension of the English poet Wordsworth. Snyder was an extension of Whitman and understood the walking tradition of Wordsworth. I began with Machado in preliminary tactile research and continued with Wordsworth, Whitman and Snyder. This chapter describes each case study in detail, one by one. Each case study was developed in the field, then the studio, and eventually incorporated in exhibitions. The stages of exhibitions gave sufficient feedback from the public to modify the subsequent case studies for a richer research process. The four case studies were carried out over the entire thesis process with preliminary data collection starting in 2013 and finishing in 2016. There was a general timeline, but in some circumstances, the notes collected adhered to travel plans and thus the experimental stages were staggered across case studies taking advantage of learned outcomes to apply to other cases studies. The Whitman case provided a unique opportunity to utilize a time lapse gestation period to my advantage due to the distance between the fieldwork (New York) and the studio (Spain). This discovery of 'time looping' between the *in situ* exploration of the environment and the studio creative process had peaked my interest. I began to apply this 15+day incubation period both in non-tactile and tactile walks for studio work. The first case study is Machado, and is described in the following section. It was carried out in a landscape near Madrid.

## Machado

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### **Machado & Valsain**

#### *Introduction*

Madrid and Segovia are urban areas that flank both sides of the Guadarrama Range. I visited several trails on the Madrid access side before finding the Valsain access from the Segovia side of the range. This part of the mountain range was quieter than the Madrid side. The Madrid side was easily accessible with a variety of public transport systems and served as a recreational playground to urban dwellers. On the Segovia side, I could take my time and admire the *Silvestre Valsain* pine tree that is a unique species to this location with fewer hikers. This particular pine forest is a jewel in the Guadarrama Range shining with its stunning copper colour trunks.

The Guadarrama Mountain Range, also known as the Central Range, divides the Castile plains into two areas north and south: namely Castile-Leon and Castile de la Mancha respectively. Historically, travellers from Northern Europe entered through the Northern Sea ports of Spain. They crossed the Guadarrama Mountains to reach Madrid from the north and continued south to Granada or Cadiz, which accounted for several literary figures (A. Dumas, V. Woolf, E. Hemingway, Hans C. Andersen, Richard Wright), to mention Guadarrama in their diaries. Their travels were in part based on visiting the legendary writer Miguel Cervantes and the land of Don Quixote land, (*La Mancha*). Other Spanish destinations included Granada (Alhambra) or Cadiz (door to Africa). These routes over Guadarrama have remained as foot and horse carriage paths over centuries, including stone remains of the ancient Roman Road.

The poem selected to represent Machado in this research project was "*Eres Tu, mi Viejo Amigo Guadarrama?*" This was mainly due to its direct reference in the signature registered at the end of the poem, "*Camino de Valsain, 1911.*" I utilized the area of Valsain at the foot of the Guadarrama Mountains to collect notes from the visual and tactile walks for my 3D poetic canvas by following Machado's perspective. Machado had grown up hiking around the Guadarrama Range from boyhood on excursions with his mentor Giner de los Ríos and with his brother from Madrid. As an older man at the age of 36, he returned to the vicinity of the Guadarrama Range on the Segovia side (North) to take a position as teacher after his wife's death. This poem is a remembrance of his younger days hiking in the Guadarrama Range as seen from Valsain, at the foot of the mountains accessed from Segovia. While residing there in Segovia, Machado's impact on philosopher Maria Zambrano was life changing since he was part of a project to institute a new education system in Segovia with her father. Young artists from Madrid sought him out during their adult formative years via the Residence of Institute of Free Education (Lorca, Dali, Buñel). Other young poets, such as Rafael Alberti (National Literary Prize) or Vicente Alexandre, admired his poetic style and even took up his mountain walking lifestyle based in the Guadarrama Range (Machado and Yndurain, 1972).

#### *Literary Context (Walking Poet)*

A few days before his death, Antonio Machado was internationally recognized by the Hispanist John Brande Trend who appointed Machado for a Reader post at the University of Cambridge (Gibson, 2006). Unfortunately, Machado was never able to fulfil his post and died walking over the Pyrenees Mountains to France during the Spanish Civil War. Today the poems of Antonio Machado form a part of the curriculum in Spanish departments in both Europe and the Americas (North, Central and South). Machado admired and studied international writers, such as William Shakespeare, Fernando Pessoa, Walt Whitman or Rubén Darío. Machado had an impact other poets, such as Octavia Paz, Pablo Neruda or Mario Benedetti (Machado and Yndurain, 1972).

Antonio Machado published a collection of his poetry in a book called *Campos de Castilla* in 1912, and after five years republished the same book but with several additions in 1917 (Machado, 2012). One of the most famous additions to this second version was a stanza that begins, “Caminante no hay camino...” (Walker, there is no road...). This has become the signature piece of Machado, where we can observe his passion for walking. In a novel, Machado spells out his habits of walking to stay healthy in *Juan de Mairena* juxtaposed to the position of organized sports or Greek exercises (Machado, 1989, p. 2116). He emphasized the integration of nature in such walking activities noting the Guadarrama Mountains as an example. The walking tradition of poets in Spain has a long history, and in Guadarrama dates back 600 years (predating Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*) with Arcipreste de Hita in 1330’s.

*“Caminante, son tus huellas  
(Walker, these are your  
footprints)  
el camino y nada más;  
(the road and nothing more)  
Caminante, no hay camino,  
(Walker there is no road)  
se hace camino al andar.  
(You make the road by  
walking)  
Al andar se hace el camino”*

**Figure 2 Fragment of Caminante. A. Machado 1917.**

“If we succeed in awakening in the child the love of nature, which delights in contemplating it, or the curiosity for it, which endeavours to observe and know it, we would later have mature men and venerable old men, capable of crossing the mountains of Guadarrama in the crudest days of winter, and for the sake of recreation in the spectacle of the pines and the mountains, already moved by the scientific desire to study the structure and composition of the stones or to find a new species of lizards.” (translation; mine)

**Figure 3 Antonio Machado, Juan de Mairena, 1936.**

*Creative Process:*

**1. Non-tactile**

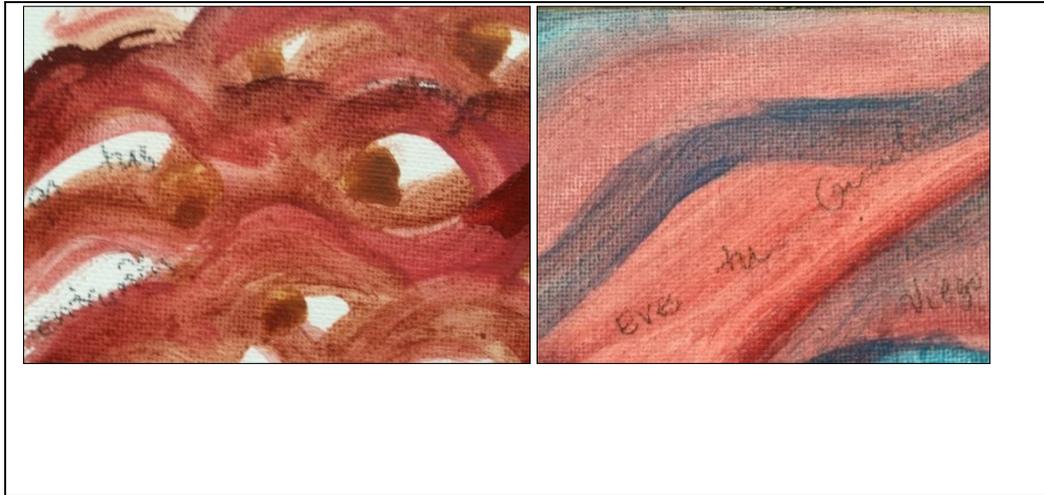
The first attempt to separate out the tactile perception inputs was to start with a non-tactile walk of the landscape starting from Valsain, the inspiration point of the Machado poem “*Eres Tu, mi Viejo Amigo Guadarrama?*” The walk took place on a winter day arriving by bus from Madrid to Segovia, and then a smaller route to Valsain. I was able to observe the overall impression of the Guadarrama Range during the bus ride. The visual perspective of the forest greens against the blue sky was highlighted by the snow-capped peaks. The Valsain village is the last village before entering the Guadarrama Range. Once I was off the bus and began walking near Valsain, the landscape details became clearer with a river running down from the mountains in a pine forest opening up into a green pasture valley.

I began my walk with open eyes and a sketchpad. The colours were recorded in the sketchpad along with notes for poetry. However, I was moved by the light that bounced off the snow-capped mountains and the crisp green tips of pine juxtaposed to the blue sky.

## 2. *Studio Non-Tactile Colours*

The studio work that culminated in the non-tactile landscape palette was mixed with literary texts from Machado's poem. It was an experiment in combining forms, colours and language. I tended to use the poem as a literal expression with the non-tactile palette. The non-tactile tended to grasp an overall palette of the horizon, especially between the sky, snow and trees. Another aspect that was noted was the attempt to connect the poetic lines with the visual encounter from Valsain. Furthermore, the non-tactile had cowbells in the background but did not disturb the sketching exercises or the overall experience.





**Figure 4 Non-tactile walk landscape palette (Studio) 2015 spring.**

### **3. *Studio Non-Tactile Poems***

Notes Streaming: Antonio Machado

February 22, Valsain

Non-Tactile

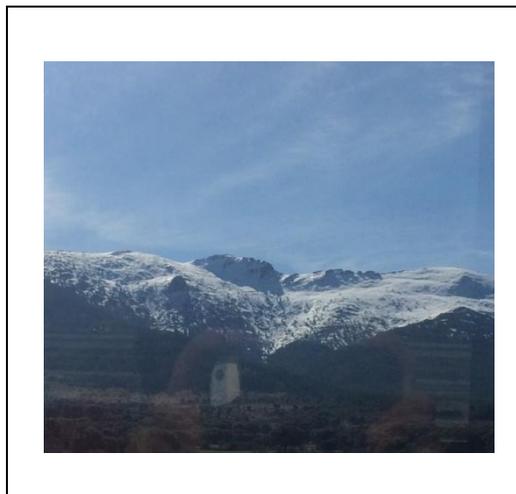
Winter

Snow,  
Foggy,  
Fallen on the path.  
Dry dead leaves left behind  
On the way to Guadarrama  
Valsain, (North Face)  
Old friend of Don Antonio  
The ringing of cows bells  
Constant in the distance  
In my ear  
In my pace  
Mountain mysterious  
No one could see her  
“the dead woman”

(Post walking)

River gulping  
Cow bells swinging  
Lapping river stones  
Absent bird songs  
Chunky awkward stones  
pillars for new construction  
(aqueduct)  
Reflections of trees in a  
puddle  
Old, New  
Among dead leaves

**Figure 5 Notes from Non-Tactile walk**



**Figure 6 Outline on the ridge “Dead Woman.”**

Siempre quería  
encontrar tu huella,  
Abajo Tu amigo viejo Guadarrama.  
Tonight they sing your poem,  
“No hay caminos...”  
with tears  
“Caminante no hay camino”  
under the “laurel” tree,  
As they say. Under your balcony,  
For these few who recognize you  
and carry on your legacy  
Reciting as if you would come out to greet us  
In the cold dark foggy night  
Tu poesía llevamos todos dentro y fuera,  
y en el bolsillo  
Especialmente hoy, para recordar  
Tu vida  
Tu senda  
Tu amigo  
La mujer muerte  
Por pena  
Se murió  
Como tu  
Por pena.  
Que Tu España  
No tenía libertad  
Y Tu fuiste a las montañas  
Como siempre  
Para sentir aliviado.

**Figure 7 Poem for non-tactile walk**

Rest in peace Don Antonio  
For now España tiene  
Un luz pequeña para ir adelante  
Con tus huellas se puede  
Gracias a Don Antonio  
El Gran maestro  
De la vida  
Más allá de la poesía  
Sobre el mar  
Se queda tus palabras  
Para siempre no vamos olvidar  
Tus ritmos  
De andar  
Porque estoy viva aquí  
¡Gracias a ti!  
Mis palabras tienen sentido  
Como tuyas tenían  
Perdón es una palabra  
Fácil escribir pero vivirlo  
Es más de los muertos, y solo quería  
Decir que tu vida dura más en la historia  
Que en tu propia vida han dado  
Y el testigo  
Es tu gran amigo  
“Guadarrama.”

**Figure 8 Poem non-tactile walk. (Valsain Feb 22, 2015)**

Translation: Parts

My Old Friend-Don Antonio-in my heart,

I took you

In my backpack

I have got you, close by.

Today February 22

It can be always done

Your old friend wanted --- Guadarrama.

Tonight They sing your poem, "There are no roads ..." with  
tears

"Walker there is no road" under the "laurel" tree, as They  
Say...

Under your balcony,

For the few who recognized you, carry on your legacy

Reciting as if you would come out to greet us

In the cold dark foggy night

Your poetry we carry inside and outside of us

And even in our pockets

Especially today, to remember

Your life

Your path

Your friend

The woman died of heartbreak

You died

Of heartbreak

For Spain was not free

You retreated to the mountains

As usual

To feel relieved.

Rest in peace Don Antonio

For now Spain has

A small light to go forward

In your footsteps, we can

Thanks to Don Antonio

The great teacher of Life

Beyond poetry

Upon the sea

We will not forget

Your rhythms

Walking

I am living here

Thanks to you!

My words have meaning

As yours did  
Forgiveness is a word easy to write,  
But to live it,  
That's beyond the dead,  
I just wanted to tell you  
Your life lasts longer in history  
Than your own real life given to You  
And the witness  
It is your grand friend

**Figure 9 Translation of parts of poems from non-tactile walk**

The writing process was inspired by the historical background I had gathered about Antonio Machado. In addition, the anniversary event of his death at his former residence in Segovia on the same day of my non-tactile walk (February 22<sup>nd</sup>) was present in this group of poems. The larger visual effect of the landscape stimulated my references to the mountain legend, “La Mujer Muerta” (Dead Woman) mainly because it stood out as I arrived on the approach from Madrid to Segovia on the mountain ridge. My poetry has a storytelling aspect of Machado on the path, connecting my own life by following his footsteps in Valsain. I had known this poem existed but the place was unknown to me, even after living in Madrid almost 15 years. I was excited to visit the small village and witness the landscape *in situ* after studying this poem in its book form. The dramatic colour contrasts in the sky, snow and green pines became a backdrop of this poetry. However, my emotional connection to the poet was more expressive than the colours.

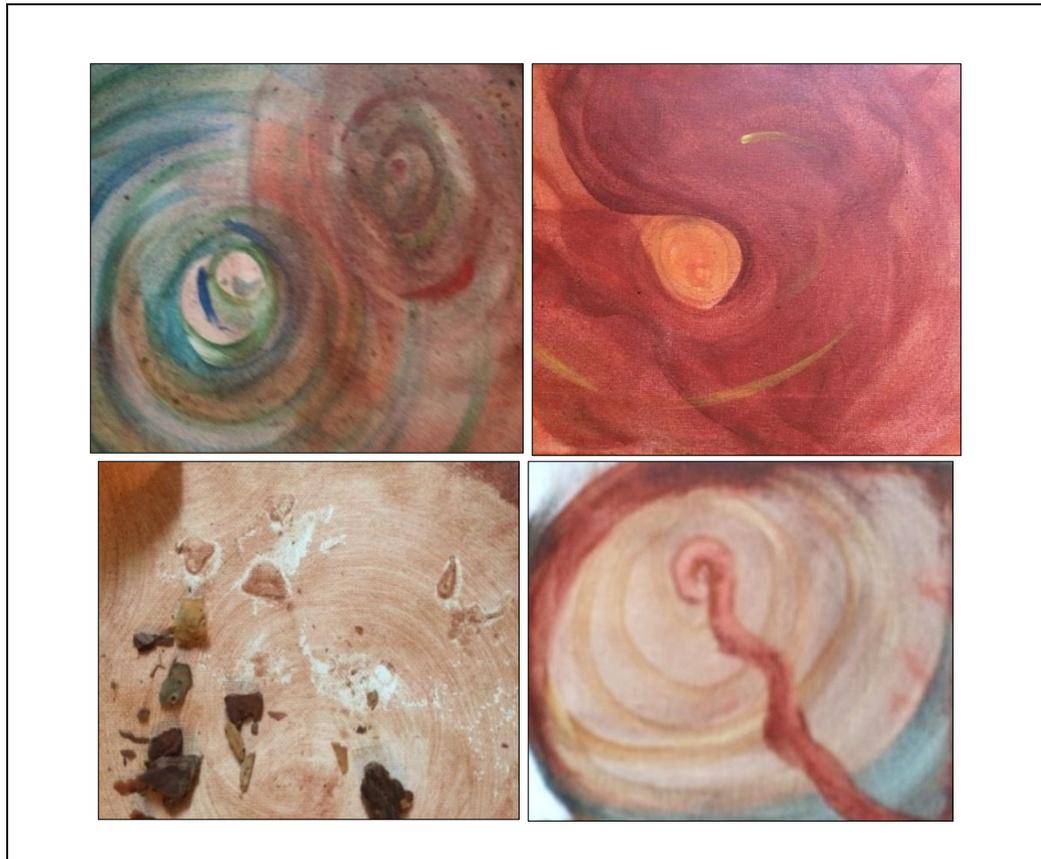
#### *4. Tactile walk*

The tactile perception was based on the intuitive attraction to objects that drew my attention to the base of the surface layer of the environment. The landscape presented itself with new attractions in my quest for tactile inputs. The non-tactile walk was a sensory survey that became visually dominant because I was seeking out the colour palette of the landscape. However, the tactile walk was centred on objects within reach and the visual perception was secondary. The role of the eye (organ) was to capture a colour classification. The textures and sensations of touch were attached to the tactile memory and stored as a tactile impression of for the landscape from the exchange of contact with the living organisms directly. I waited 15 days to incubate these tactile impressions (after the discovery with the Whitman case) and then I began in the studio to write poetry and build the colour palette. The following passage is from the tactile walk.

'The walk was slow along the river and I ventured into the higher forest, attracted to a spot that I will never forget. It was there I encountered a decomposing Valsain pine. The fallen tree invited me to touch its inner heart that inspired two unique poems. The river was cold as ice in the thawing north side of the mountains, still covered by snow. Everything was inviting me to touch it! I even found river stones that asked for my tongue to savour them. It was an astounding walk with the pace similar to a frozen lizard gazing from all directions with caution. An unfortunate chain saw noise interrupted a lovely afternoon and the stumps of freshly cut trunks ripped through my heartbeat, startling me. Even so, the walk became imbedded in my finger pads'.

## 5. *Studio Tactile Colours*

The tactile walk was taken during the same season yet the Flaneur method was more intuitive due to my attraction of objects to touch. The non-tactile walk tended to stick to path in the unknown territory and take in the mid to long distance markers with the visual and other sense perceptions actively taking in the overall general landscape as a survey of the area, while the tactile walk delved into a rich interaction with the environment through touch and focused on details up close at short distance perception on many occasions. The colours of the river in contrast to my thumb created the palette of the water encircling each other. The cut stump of the pine tree provided a light brown hue to the palette. The roots by the riverbank drew my attention as the channel for the life source of the trees leading to the heart (associated with oxygen and iron rich blood). The decomposing Valsain Pine tree was rich in orange tones from a golden centre to a robust copper outer layer.



**Figure 10 Tactile walk landscape palette (Studio) 2015 spring**

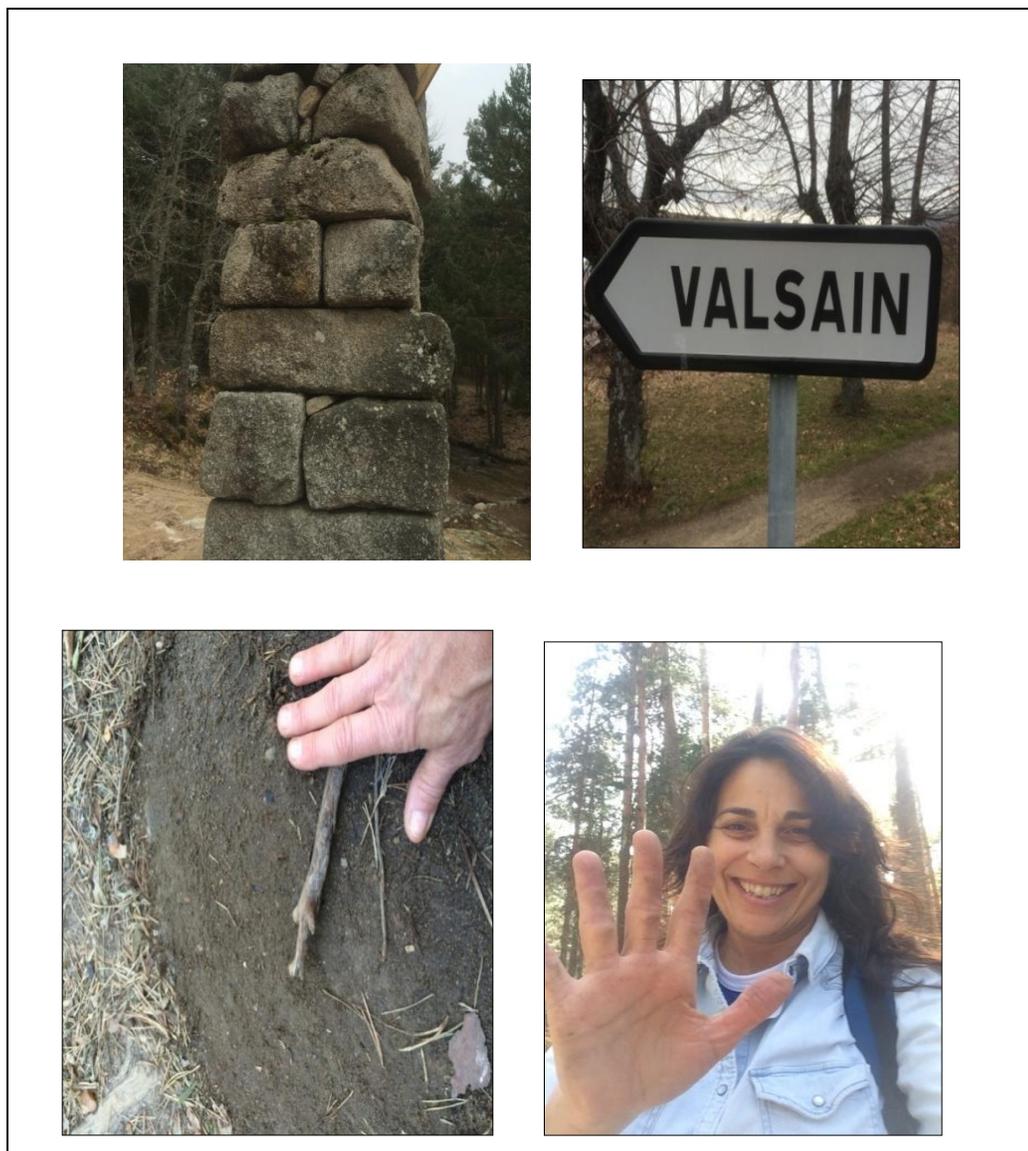
## 6. *Studio Tactile Poems*

Notes Streaming : Antonio Machado
March 8, 2015 Valsain
Tactile
Winter
Snow, Clear

Excitement, Playful, Discovery

At the turn of the road through the tunnel of Guadarrama from Madrid to Segovia, the amazingly beautiful (dormant) “La Mujer Muerta” made an impact on me within the bright sunshine and crystallized azure sky. The white snow-flaked profile of “La Mujer” awakened me to Maria Zambrano’s (philosopher) land of childhood just over the hill in Segovia. Her days filled with this immense legendary woman, guarding Guadarrama, seen from her youth in Segovia. Machado, one of Blas Zambrano’s friends (Maria’s father), also would naturally have a glimpse of this legendary mythical outline of a woman’s face up on the ridge known as “La Mujer Muerta” from the Segovia vantage point. Today is March 8<sup>th</sup>, and everywhere the struggle of women from Japan to Spain was being celebrated - to claim her equality that once was the place of justice and harmony. However, today I was called to “La Mujer Muerta” and Guadarrama to feel the unique textures of the Valsain pines trees—no other mountain knows. She stands guard over the “Silvestre Valsain”--- for it is the minerals of the soil, the mountain peaks dribble year by year into the rivers that feed the raw, orange, golden Valsain Pine.

The legends of this unique figure on the ridge are as long as humans have inhabited this mountain range from a Hercules legend of bravery to a sad lover's disappointment in war; the "La Mujer Muerta" legend. The stark sky, clear, clean, that outline her large body and fine facial features set the stage. For it is here I begin my journey, under her watchful eyes---apparently closed, yet open to the sky---only the Gods and goddesses are privy to her legendary eyelids full of stories of these parts. I slowly descend from the empty bus at the end of the bus line where few travellers go. It was beyond the royal summer palace of San Idelfonso--"La Granja" to the "falda" (skirt) of Guadarrama---Valsain.



**Figure 11 Photos of tactile walk, Valsain to Guadarrama Range**

Valsain:

This village is surrounded by the peaks of Guadarrama and no wonder Antonio Machado sat here remembering his “*Viejo Amigo*” (old friend).

Grass:

My first encounter with this apparent silky, long, green, shrub grass fools me---it is coarse, rough and prickly on my fingers with its nodules at several points of its lengthy stock.

Rocks (Supports for the canal):

The blocks of granite built to last millenniums stand by---greeting the traveller who dares to enter under her watch---most people just pass under her watchtower and run to the river. I pause to touch the bold rocky surfaces that are stacked in such a way to support the channel of water above our heads. As I approach the square form (as seen from afar) ---I discover the roundness of the corners worn down over the ages by rain and ice. They massage my dry hands from Madrid---its pores rub out my flaky skin cells and refresh my palms---like an initiation to the path. Intuitively I follow my finger down as I trace the contours of the husky granite. There in the hidden crevice of this block, a lizard [just as Antonio had said to his students] appears. It freezes in its movement, sensing my heat---I freeze too sensing its fixed eyelid alert and unwavering. We both breathe the lovely air of Valsain---no one moves---until the sun counts three---3 seconds, 3 minutes or 33 hours. It has blurred the time---the lizard time is no time---they make us freeze with them in sync until we tire or they retreat---a game of fencing Spanish style in Nature. I proceed to the river as travellers are drawn by her lullaby.

**Lizard Rocks**

Porous pumice

Lizard rocks

Soften my palms

Close, eye

Rubbing

Lizard looking back

Still

Wondering

Why I am

Pausing here

In its territory

Crevices of the block

We exchange

Breath

You lizard

Me poet

Eye to Eye

**Figure 12 Poem Lizard Machado Tactile Walk**

### Branches:

Along the path, a branch has fallen---fresh from the top of a pine---its needles are like a feather fan, soft as fresh woven cotton. I pick up the branch and run it across my face. I am enamoured with the pine needles that are like tickling strokes across my forehead. It is rare to feel pine tops (*Silvestre Valsain*) here on the forest floor, for these copper trunks are untouchable and reach to greet the sky, no pine needle is at hand level within reach of the human fingertips. How did this fresh branch get here?

### Roots:

Large, wild roots full of blood, quenching their thirst to relieve their dry dusty limbs like the muscles that pump iron into the body builder. I pause and feel the coolness running through their veins. It is pulsing with life! It is clenched to a river boulder to stay steady while drinking its fill from the snowdrift waters it needs to grow strong and shine like no other tree in this forest, a golden fleece!

### The River:

It looks inviting with its serenity. I walk down to the shore. The snow-capped mountains alert me to its coldness, so I avoid putting my feet into its depth. The river is actually shallow at this point in the bend but has a lovely transparent glowing sheen. Water is attractive in the Madrid area, a high plateau of little rainfall and dry landscapes. I lightly dip my finger in the water. I am astounded at the numbness that engulfs my hand. I feel trapped by its frozen temperature. There is a strange merging of our blood vessels. I can no longer distinguish the river from my hand.

***Trans-parent River Echo***

I dip in  
to  
your heart  
my trans-parent  
ancestor  
We are One River  
Bed frozen  
Resistant  
Icy---cobalt blue  
Washed alone the shore  
Just Beneath  
Algae silk threads  
Dance to  
Silt brown hues  
  
In the bubble  
Of light  
An echo  
reverbs  
unspoken  
you sense  
I am here  
  
My river thumb  
Numb  
  
I sense  
You,  
Too

**Figure 13 Poem River Machado Tactile**

### River rocks:

Picking up rocks for my companion along the way, I notice their texture. One is soft, worn down by the river another sharp, both descendants from the mountain---hardy and jagged edges in one and smooth rounded edges on the other. They are good companions, as I do not know the country I am in and they anchor me on the walk. I think “Surely, you river rock have been rolling around all these parts for some time and your Great Grandfather Guadarrama has told you stories of the mountain to find your way back.” There in the distance Peñalara stands proud---untouched by no other peak. Opposite on the far side was the “La Mujer Muerta.” Together these peaks watch over the poets who dare to compose.

### Boca de Asno: Visitor Centre

Children playing on plastic playgrounds, families asking for activities at the visitor centre. The whole forest is here to play with. Fewer families go beyond the boundaries of the parking lot or picnic ground into the forest to enjoy the wonderful pines and riverbed. There were many cars, cans and trash, yet few visitors explore the forest in detail.

### Decomposing Valsain Pine:

I find myself attracted to something up the hill from the river path. I deviate a bit and find a decomposing Valsain pine---the golden heart exposes its essence to me! I sit down on the forest floor, sun shining through the lichen covered branches. I begin to explore its body with my fingers and all its textures at various stages of decomposition. The tactile sensations are amazing from splinters to soft powder.

**Brave heart of Valsain**

Hidden

Protected

by

Sharpened splinters

Exposed to Light

Sunset chunks

Velvet charcoal

Saffron powder

On my fingertips

Dawdling

Heart beats

Moist inner thoughts

Leavesdrop

**Figure 14 Poem Tactile Walk Machado "Brave Heart"**

## Composition of the Forest

Compose

Or

Decompose?

Valsain Silvestre

At will

You lay down

Your arms

Rest in pieces

Silent not

Like a poet

Once alive

Composing

Then a legend

Decomposed

Only then shall we

Know thy heart

Soft, golden, rule

Dust to dust

We all

Con-form to

compose

and De-Compose.

**Figure 15 Poem Tactile Walk Machado "Composition"**

### Chainsaw Stumps:

There is nothing more annoying in a forest than a chainsaw within earshot. However, I found the remains of a tree that had been harvested drawing my attention to touch it in some manner. At first, the fresh cut tree stump was attractive with its historical rings and sawdust smell. The tactile sensation was smooth but artificial after the decomposing Valsain pine experience. I suddenly felt sad that this tree had been prematurely sentenced to death. I knew that forest management currently is based on planting and cutting, hence this process is part of today's Valsain forest in Guadarrama, which dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when commercialization of the wood was authorized by the King. I had understood this aspect of the Valsain pines due to a manuscript written by the Royal Forest Manager at that time. He had fallen love with these trees and refused to cut them. He resigned and self published the manuscript to their defence (Ortega Cantero, 2001, p. 282). In fact, he cited several reasons to preserve the forest as natural as possible foregoing the commercial aspect in order to provide traditional shade for pastures in summer for sheep. I was overtaken by grief with this stump. I had never felt that kind of connection with a freshly cut tree. I believe my prior tactile contact with the old decomposing tree was part of this sensation.



I now see what Antonio must have seen, the perfect view of Guadarrama. An old man shares the bench with me and tells me “Antonio Machado was in Soria, but Sofia Loren was here in Valsain.” The Spanish Civil War takes its toll on historical data and forgetfulness is easy, once rewritten. Soria did adopt Antonio as their poet, while Guadarrama villages left him behind. I know better and quietly ascend to the plaza of the Valsain village. It was abandoned at this dusty hour—no one in sight. Sheep were drinking to quench their evening thirst in a trough while city folks were lazily finishing their country meals.

**Valsain---Estabas Tu Antonio!**

No one whispers

Even your name

“Machado?”

Pero yo sé---estabas tu aquí.

Mirando tu viejo amigo

Guadarrama

Se ve perfectamente

Siete picos

“Sofía Loren” si estaba dicen

En Valsain

El viejo sentada

Del pueblo

Pero Machado  
Ni hablar.  
Mi viejo  
Antonio  
El Gran Poeta  
Of Spain  
Sí estabas aquí mismo  
Como yo  
Mirando el paisaje  
Pensando  
En ella  
Recuerdos  
Unforgettable  
Like YOU  
Amigo

**Figure 17 Poem Tactile Walk Machado “Estabas Tu”**

**Valsain---You were here Antonio! (English)**

No one whispers  
Even your name  
“Machado?”  
But I know---you were here.  
Looking at your old friend  
Guadarrama  
You can see it perfectly  
Seven Peaks  
“Sofia Loren” they say she was here  
In Valsain  
The seated old man  
of the village  
But Machado  
not even a word  
My old friend  
Antonio  
the Great Poet  
of Spain  
Yes you were right here  
Like me  
looking at the landscape  
contemplating  
on her  
Memories  
Unforgettable  
Like You

**Figure 18 Translation poem Valsain: Estabas Tu Antonio!**

## **7. *Writing Process:***

The tactile walk poetry seemed to culminate in focal points that were attractive to touch linked to each tactile input, such as the rock pillar, river dipping, fallen tree or freshly cut stump. I applied the 15+day gestation period before starting the poetry work in the studio. I seemed to be able to be more integrated into the landscape with this type of walking that required me to touch it. It opened up avenues of poetic lines that flowed easily ranging from on site notes to full composition in the studio. In addition, there was less editing or rewriting on these poems compared to the non-tactile walk. I found the quill drifting directly from the heart to the paper without missing a beat, or an awkward pause. This was the ease of flow that I experienced with the benefit of the tactile perception. It seems that I was immersed in the environment with the tactile walk, whereas the non-tactile walk focused on the experience of the poet. In this tactile walk, I was able to weave a poem with the impressions of the poet together with the finer details of the landscape in a fluid poem.

## **8. *Art process and materials***

The process of the 3D poetic canvas was complicated with Machado because it was the first case study and several choices made in this process carried over to the other cases saving time thereafter. The cultural heritage of the Spanish ceramic roof tile dates back to the Greeks and Romans. Red terracotta clay is used to make these roof tiles as the original. However, the original tiles were made by hand with a technique that utilized the human thigh as a supportive moulding structure.

This custom began in the Mediterranean and then it was transferred to the Americas. In California, the mission churches continued this heritage as the primary buildings of establishment there. The life span of a terracotta roof tile can be up to four centuries but is usually replaced within a century. They remain unchanged except for green mould or grass growth due to rain and do not crack in extreme heat. The clay expands and contracts with humidity. It must be fired twice in a high heat kiln (oven) to be solidified and durable.

As I had been accustomed to the ceramic process, I opted to try two styles. First in Spain, I experimented with a small studio with a local community kiln managed by an artists' collective to make and fire my hand-built ceramic tiles. Then, I explored the ceramic hand building in the University of Sunderland (UOS) art department studio run by a highly qualified technician. Each process brought up a series of choices that led me down various paths to explore.

**a) Hand building tiles vs. real market tiles**

In Spain, I experimented with hand building my own roof tiles from red terracotta clay. I made these tiles after both tactile and non-tactile walks had been accomplished. The tactile walk stimulated me to use hand building rather than a mould. Thus, I opted to create the tiles without a mould with my own hands. I explored the underside of the tiles and even added a lizard to one, remembering the gazing lizard on my walk. I was pleased with the outcome of the main shape of the tiles and the process turned out to be very tactile. However, the writing text on the tiles was not pleasing and seemed very rudimentary as compared to the elegance of the poet, Machado.

In England, I attempted to match the palette that I had created from the tactile walk by experimenting with glazes in the ceramic studio. This process was an intense week guided by the head technician in the University of Sunderland (UOS) ceramic studio. Several tile fragments were prepared before my arrival to assist with an extensive colour blending process to try to find the best match to the palette of the Machado landscape. These tiles were replicas of the roof tile in a smaller version.

**Final Choice:** The final choice was to use ready-made market roof tiles available for purchase locally in Spain, mainly due to the enormous amount of energy spent on kiln firings that did not justify my art project for a few tiles in a 3D poetic canvas. I bought them and used them for the rest of the project. Heritage tiles from old roofs were obtained for the final art installations and combined with the commercial tiles for energy efficiency.

This choice seemed logical for two reasons 1) sustainability, 2) authenticity, 3) ecological harmony (beauty). I was able to be part of a larger firing on a commercial level eliminating a personal kiln firing that reaches up to over 1,000° C (2,800° F) for a prolonged period of time solely for my project. The shape was utilitarian to match the cultural heritage element of this project. Therefore, I could mix the vintage heritage roof tiles with the newer ones in a congruent manner.

#### **b) Ceramic colours to match palette colours**

I selected glazes to work with in the UOS ceramic studio. These were supplied by an outside source and my exploration was directed at finding a repetitive method to match the palette of my landscape poet with my final 3D poetic canvas. I combined the glazes for application. Careful weighing of each glaze powder component was made to assure uniform formulation of colours could be duplicated for the process in consequent trials. Colour number applications were labelled on each tile to be able to track colour combinations.

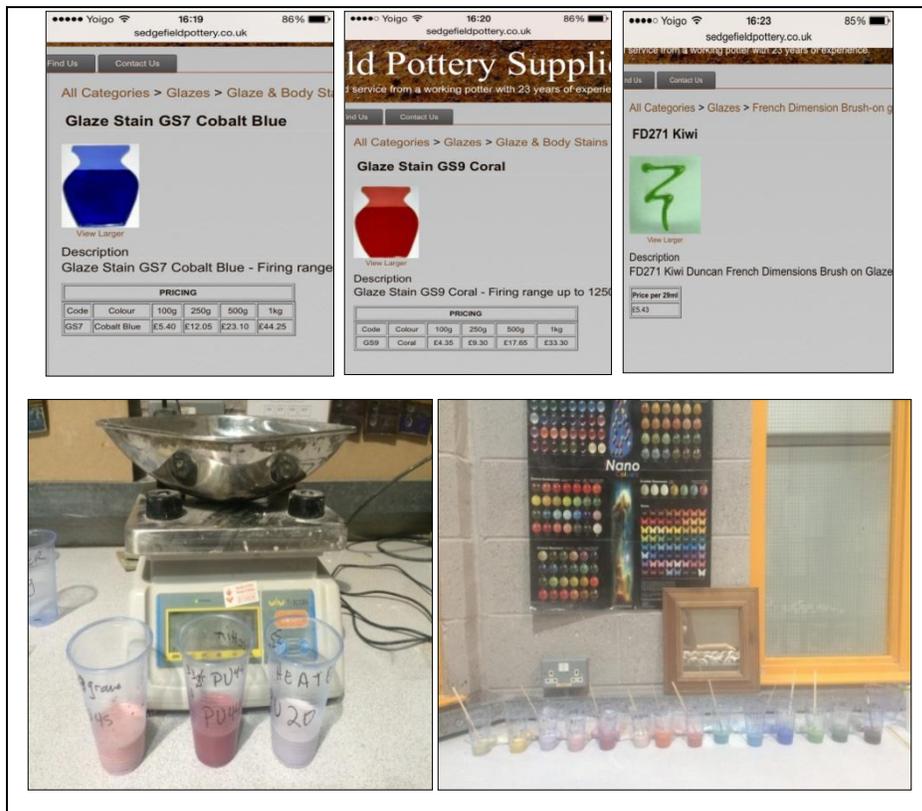


Figure 19 Glaze selections and formulations for Machado palette

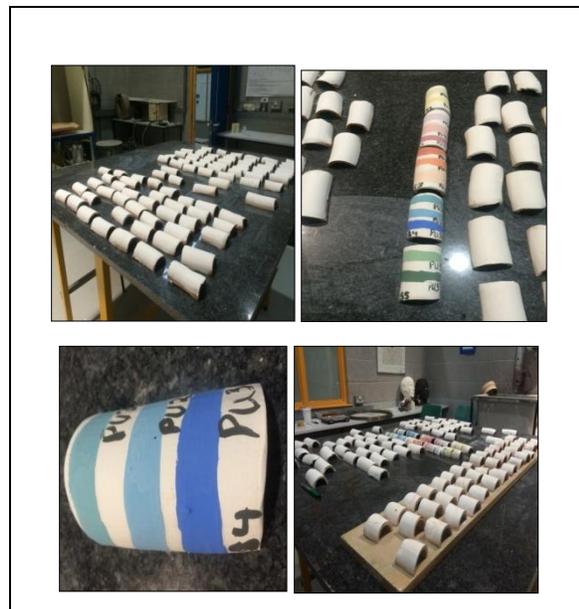
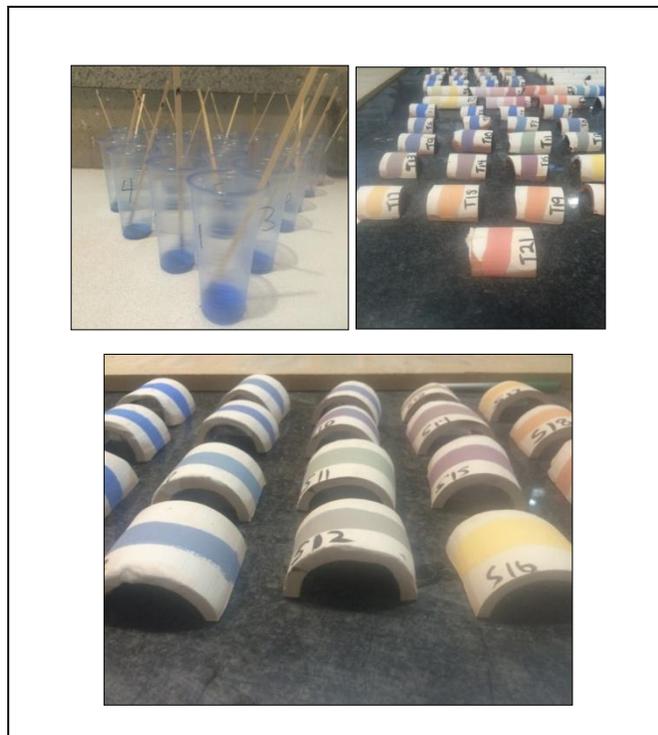


Figure 20 Application of glaze colours on UOS tiles.

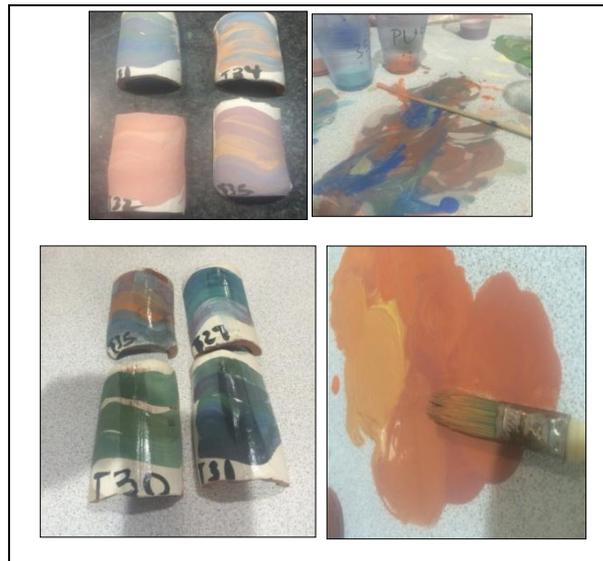
Next, a triaxial test method was introduced as a suggestion from the UOS technician. This was the first time I had used this method to combine glazes for tracking with precision according to a three-colour combination. It was a tedious procedure to be sure all the combinations were correctly measured out and weighed properly creating 21 gradation (sloped) saturation in the process.

'A triaxial blend is a method of testing three ingredients on a three-axis system similar to a two-ingredient line blend. Often triaxial blends are used to test the primary ingredients in a glaze base...A 21-point triaxial is a systematic blending of three variables with 100% of each variable at the three corners' (Nuekamm, 2015).



**Figure 21 Triaxial combination trial**

At the end of the complete cycle of all the triaxial combinations, I decided to apply my method of painting on canvas to ceramics. I mixed several hues of blues, greens, yellows, reds and oranges to match the Machado landscape. It was a very freeing experience. I had not known this method of mixing glazes from my prior ceramic experience in the studio. I had been accustomed to prefabricated glazes or simple combinations of iron oxide or mineral glaze powders. It was the last applications I made with the glazes.



**Figure 22 Mixed palette glaze combinations, freestyle.**

**c) Text writing method & tools**

The application of texts (fragments of Machado poetry) on the ceramic roof tile was an interesting process. I worked in Spain with hand building techniques and scratched in the text at the end of the process while the clay was still soft. My director and I were not pleased and I understood that this would take several steps to find the right combination.

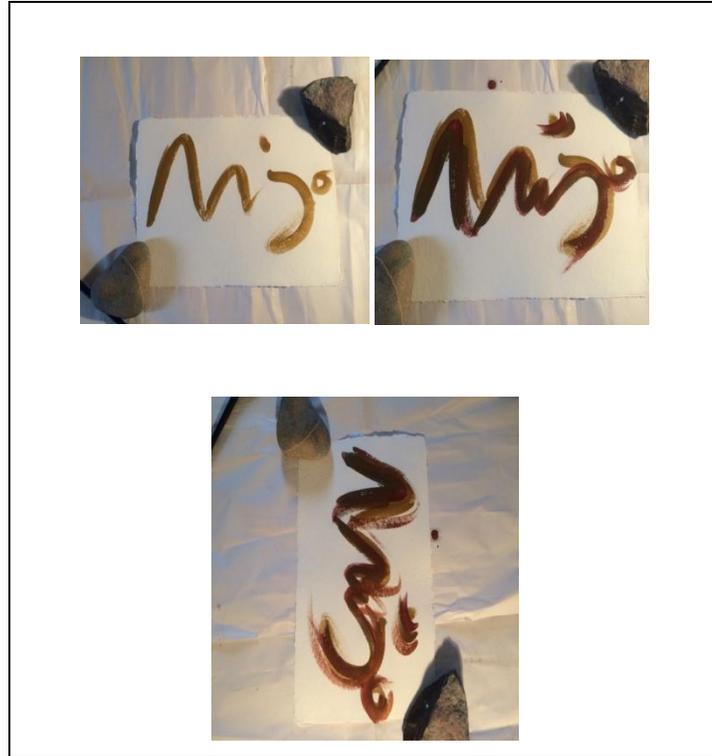


**Figure 23 Handwritten text with ceramic tool in Spain studio.**

The last step in the studio in this cycle was to find a handwritten font experimenting on handmade paper. I used my knowledge from Japanese calligraphy by using a one-stroke method. I enjoyed this method due to my affinity with Japanese arts. I arranged these works in several configurations playing around with the Roman letters turned vertical like Chinese characters. I used the palette to paint these words. I repeated the action three times with different colours. Then, I placed these works together in vertical and horizontal patterns to see if I could use this method for the poetry book.



**Figure 24 Calligraphy "Sierra" with colour palette for Machado.**



**Figure 25 Calligraphy “Amigo” with colour palette for Machado.**

In the UOS studio, I was able to put together different methods for written text on the ceramic tiles. I tried some thin wood block letters pressed into a hand built roof tile. Next, I tried wood block letters with rubber stamps on a flat rolled out soft clay slab. The feel of the rubber stamps that resembled the printing press letters was a joy since I knew Walt Whitman was a printer. Although it was an easy way to utilize the soft clay to make the imprints, I was not convinced with the outcome. After the first firing, it seemed like a cheap souvenir style and I wanted something more elegant.



**Figure 26 Wood stamps: 1) Top; thin wood, 2) bottom; wood with rubber.**

Next, I followed the suggestion of the technician in the UOS ceramic studio with a painted method utilizing decals that could be printed or scanned and then transferred to decals. These decals could be placed on the ceramic tile and then fired. I tried a complete poem with a computer-based font and some hand written fonts derived from experimenting in Spain. This meant a decal was created from a computer program and then applied before firing. We used pre-made porcelain tiles to test this method.



**Figure 27 Decal application with computer & hand written texts UOS studio**

I liked the state-of-the-art technology used to produce this effect on ceramic tiles and left these ideas to incubate. There was another concern about the overall use of high energy resources used to fire up kilns that occurred to me during the testing of the colour palette in UOS. This became one of my main reasons to abandon the handmade ceramic tiles. The glazes were toxic with the use of lead mixed in for bright overlay to help the colours stand out. It is common use for non-food ceramic items to use lead as part of the overlay glaze (Hamer and Hamer, 2004). See recipe below:

<b>Majolica Matt 1100 ° C Recipe</b>	
<b><i>Lead bisilicate</i></b>	<b>60%</b>
Feldspar	20%
China clay	5%
Flint	5%
Tin oxide	4%
Zirconium oxide	3%
Titanium oxide	<u>3%</u>
	100%

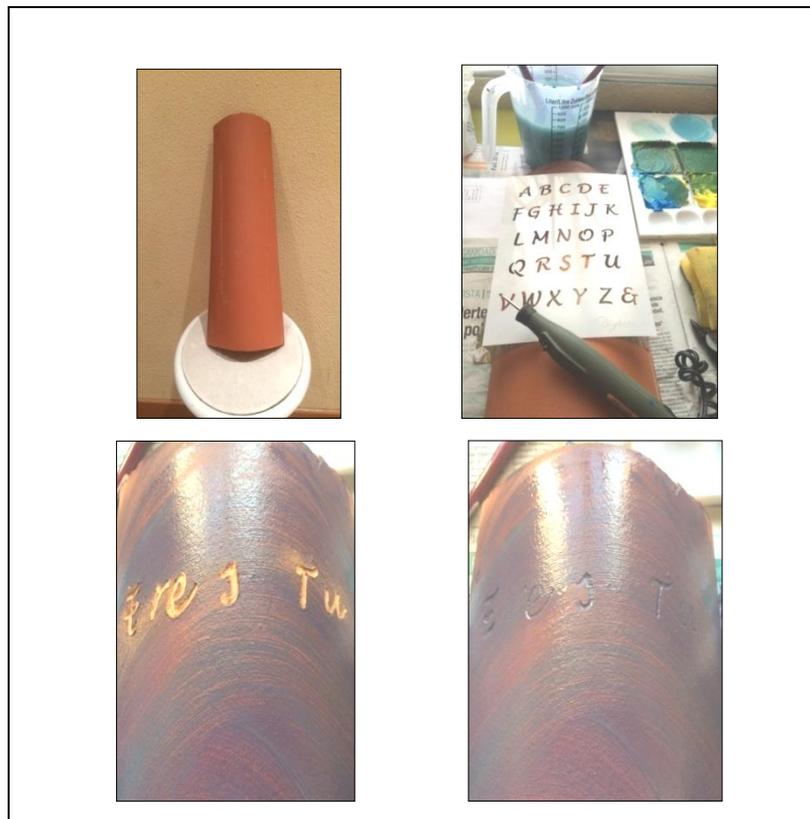
The high temperatures that are common in kiln firing were an added concern for an art project that required extensive testing for matching a palette or would define my final method. The sustainability of this thesis came to bear weight on my decisions to question the high technology used for art. I did recognize that the commercial roof tile companies used a kiln but the efficiency was greater with a larger batch. It is commonplace in university art departments to use these high-energy consumption kilns for student projects with temperatures bearing 1000° C (2,800°F) and greater with two firings. I wanted to try another channel to resolve this challenge. Upon returning to Spain, I began to search for commercially made roof tiles in building material warehouses. There were varying quality standards. I found two or three easily accessible warehouses nearby my studio in Madrid. I set out to purchase a pack of six to start my project to use “already-made” to fit roof tiles.



**Figure 28 UOS Kiln firing with test samples for Machado palette.**

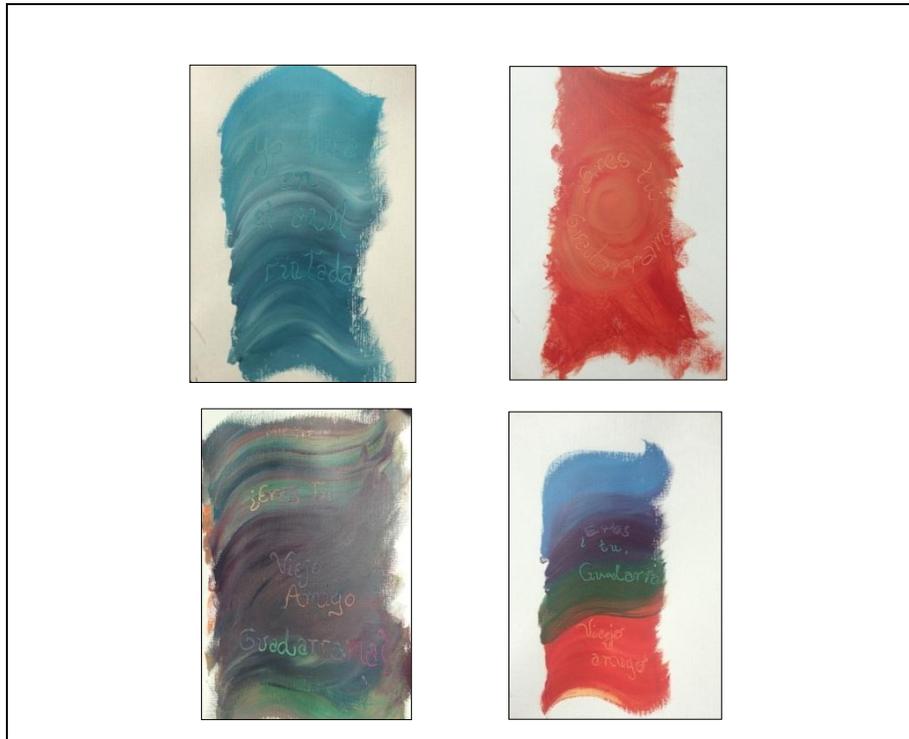
**d) Ready-Made Roof Tiles and Text**

Back in Spain in the studio, I began to search for an engraving tool for the metal and slate roof tiles for Wordsworth and Snyder. In the process, I found a small low voltage (12v) hand held engraver with a diamond cutter ballpoint. It was a wonderful way to engrave the texts on metal, slate and ceramic. It was the solution for the text. I used stencils to outline the words first and then experimented with acrylic colours to save energy as opposed to glazes.



**Figure 29 Spain Machado palette acrylic paints, stencils hand engraver.**

I worked up a series of ideas for engraving with painted ceramic commercial tiles using the Machado palette. I knew I had to become more knowledgeable in typography, and searched for course of study. I found a course from Cal Arts San Francisco in graphic arts. It was an introduction to typography. The on-line course changed my whole perspective on the composition of the texts on the tiles. I had tested several ideas before finding the natural and plain engraving technique, which to me seemed to fit Machado: Elegant and earthy.



**Figure 30 Series of ideas for Machado palette texts Spain studio.**



**Figure 31 Final engraving on Machado commercial tile Spain.**

The colour landscape palette was another challenge having given up applying it directly onto the tile. I opted for fabric to complete the 3D poetic canvas. Fabric could be used in a variety of ways and remained inside the sculpture idea rather than a 2D paper option.

I began to think about the textures of fabrics that would match the poet and the landscape. I chose burlap for Machado it was part of the cultural heritage of Spanish bags for legumes, which are an integral part of the Castile gastronomy. In addition, the texture of burlap was dry and rough like the land of Machado's poetry. I had to find a brush stroke that would be satisfactory on fabric. I began to do swatches of colour with the landscape palette.



**Figure 32 Brush strokes for Machado palette on fabric in Spain studio.**

The fabric was difficult to paint. The brush would stick and I had to find a way to make quick strokes without lingering on the material. I tested several brushes to find the best option for a rapid stroke that moved along the fabric length with ease. I painted one colour at a time in each swatch area. I could mix the colours from memory for the Machado palette and finally found the right rhythm.



**Figure 33 Machado palette applied to burlap with acrylic paints Spain studio.**

### e) Outcome

I was lucky enough to be accepted in an exhibition that coincided with Art Basel 2016 in Switzerland. This opportunity with GZBasel (GaleriaZero, 2016) spurred me along to figure out how to complete the 3D poetic canvas as an installation work for an interactive audience. I combined the fabric as a backdrop for the tiles.



**Figure 34 Machado 3D poetic canvas with landscape palette & engraved tiles**

### Synopsis of Case

The Machado case study provided me with a better understanding of the landscape and studio materials. The environmental aspect in the ceramic studio at UOS made a dramatic change in my hand-made ideas transforming into an “already-made” choice. The method of adding the tactile inputs on a separate walk created a freshness given the absence of touch on the first non-tactile walk. This first sensory survey was dominated by the visual perception given the focus on over viewing the landscape to create a palette. Consequently, I was able to compare this non-tactile palette with the tactile palette. In the second walk, I could focus on objects that were attractive within reach of my finger pads (haptic) in the environment.

This part of the process invoked my tactile perception by drawing my hand towards objects to touch. The visual classification of colours in the tactile walk should not be considered a visual perception, as the tactile memory was induced by interaction of texture with finger pads and the objects were chosen for touch attraction not visual. The colour recognition is part of our cognitive ordering and the tactile memory can access this information for later use. Understanding the power of the tactile input from a known landscape like Guadarrama was exciting both in the colour palette and in the poetic verse. Further observations and cross analysis is expanded in the summary of case studies.

Summary: Machado's Guadarrama case study was carried out with a preliminary test of tactile inputs *in situ* in the summer prior to the winter walks. In this season, pinesap was abundant on the Madrid side of the mountain range in Pedriza, a known walking path of the poets from Machado's generation. It appeared like golden honey but upon touch, it entangled my fingers and transformed from a visually appealing touchable element to a sticky glue-like substance covering my palm with every finger movement. Removal of the sap was even more entangling as water or a cloth was not an option. I used the organic dusty path to free me from its imprisonment as Machado had felt walking over the mountains to France for his freedom. Nothing could change the pine's sap grip on my fingers and its original sweet honey poetic adjective visually suddenly turned sticky in a poetic sense tactilely. I realized in this exercise how powerful the tactile inputs would be in my poetic creative process.

The Valsain tactile walk offered various tactile inputs and stimulated a new vocabulary bank that differed from the non-tactile inputs. For example, "rough" looking rocks turned out to be "smooth" by weathering rain or appealing "tranquil" rivers shocked my fingertips with the frozen temperatures blending them into "one" by sheer numbness. Splinters of a decaying *Silvestre Valsain* transformed into a pine tree's gentle heart like "sandalwood powder" or golden charcoal. My re-play poems bonded me more deeply to the living organisms and enriched my access to a wider vocabulary bank with the isolation of tactile inputs, overlaid with other sensory perceptions.

## Wordsworth

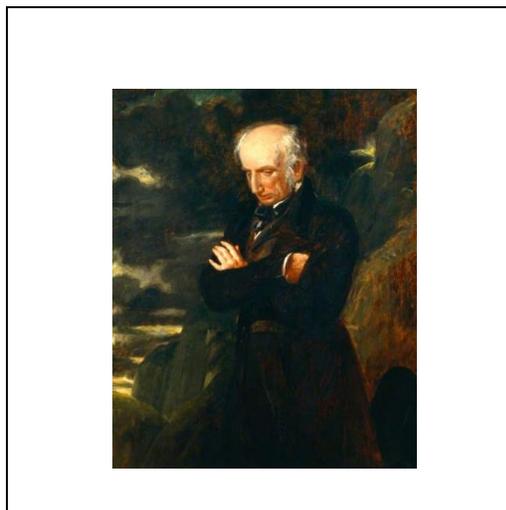
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### Wordsworth & Mt. Helvellyn

#### *Introduction*

The poem “*To---- On Her First Ascent To The Summit Of Helvellyn*” (Wordsworth and Owen, 1974) was chosen mainly due to its direct reference to a Wordsworth landscape accessible by walking. Although, some of Wordsworth’s walks are noted in his sister’s diary near Dove cottage in Grasmere, I was attracted to the high summit and rugged terrain. The National Portrait Gallery features artist Benjamin Robert Haydon’s portrait of Wordsworth (Haydon, 1842) with Helvellyn as the backdrop in the Lake District.

This portrait depicts Wordsworth aged seventy-two. It was painted to commemorate a sonnet that he had composed on climbing the peak of Helvellyn, after seeing Haydon's picture of Wellington musing on the Battlefield of Waterloo. Wordsworth was pleased with Haydon's heroic image, describing it as 'a likeness of me, not a mere matter-of-fact portrait but one of a poetical character' (Art Council UK, 2016).



**Figure 35 Wordsworth by Benjamin Robert Haydon, 1842**

I wanted to walk in the footsteps of Wordsworth beyond his *Daffodils* poem that seem to be a stroll along the river valley rather than one of his hardy walks that had transformed his consciousness. His long poem *Prelude* (Wordsworth and Wu, 1997) is a culmination of his life work, and I was inspired by the Helvellyn summit that situated me right in the middle of the rocky edges of the Lake District, where I could experience his grasp of the land first-hand. *Prelude* begins with his boyhood wonders in natural crags and hanging on to the rocky ledges bearing the wind's blow in his ear. Only after I had walked up Helvellyn, did I understand these precious lines from a visceral point of view. I felt as if I had broken through the Wordsworth wall and into his recluse. The tactile research in this area with Wordsworth in the Lake District was the best way to delve into the making of a Wordsworth poem. The contrasts of soft moss and rocky slopes, accompanied by tufts of wool from highland sheep culminated in my own re-play poetry and palette work. The colour hues that seeped into my fingertips on the slopes of Mt. Helvellyn remained imbedded in my memory from the tactile walk and combined well the overall visual layer of perception of the Lake District on my first non-tactile walk.

I first encountered the Lake District in spring 2015, which caught me off guard as the beauty wrapped around me, as soon as we crossed some unknown mysterious geological boundary. The hills were astoundingly bright with hues radiantly sparking off the silvery clouds as we descended from a ridge into Grasmere. My second trip was in the autumn of 2016, taking a slower route by train from Sunderland to Penrith and then a bus to Glenridding. Two Chinese women accompanied me on the last leg of the bus ride. They were also there in the Lake District to experience the Wordsworth landscape. They were romanticizing about it from their literary studies back in China. As they went off to the hotel, I wandered up the valley to the climbers' hostel and a group of sheep on the path welcomed me. Ullswater was in the background - so serene.

### *Literary Context (Walking Poet)*

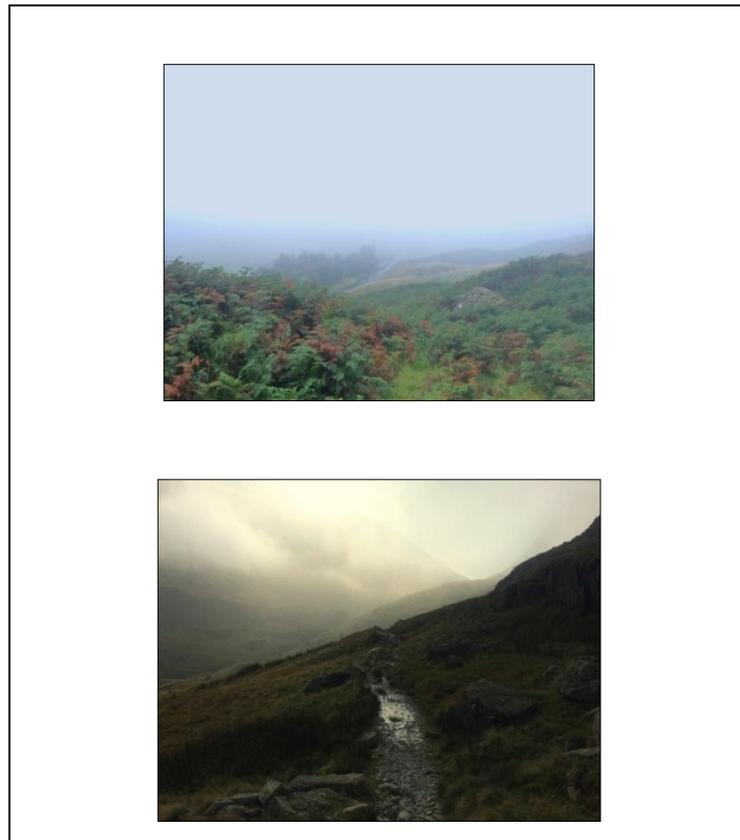
Wordsworth tells us from *Prelude*, that his hiking days were a culmination of his youth. This habit overflowed into adulthood and retreating to the countryside after living in London and touring Europe was easily regained. His travels in Europe were walking tours indeed. One epiphany was in the Swiss Alps, where he spent a night lost and it reinforced his poetic drive combined with Nature's grandeur. This experience rekindled his love of mountains as an inspiration, and upon his return, he began to appreciate the English countryside immensely vowing to become a recluse. He believed that the dramatic landscape of the Lake District was enough to raise his consciousness and at the same time develop his poetry for the benefit of humanity.

Wordsworth settled in Grasmere at Dove cottage with his sister, Dorothy, for part of his residence in the Lake District with the impressive backdrop of the peaks nearby (within walking distance) like Helvellyn. Wordsworth's fellow poet, Samuel Coleridge, had decided to retreat from urban industrial life to raise his child in a rural area and joined Wordsworth walking along the lakes conversing about poetry. Coleridge recognizes Wordsworth in a letter (1815) as deeply rooted in his senses with the area (Coleridge, 1957, p. 130). Dorothy joined them and wrote diaries that are a lasting impression of Wordsworth's life beyond his poetic legacy. In a tourist guide that Wordsworth contributed to as an adjunct to illustrations (Wordsworth and De Selincourt, 1977), Wordsworth explained several walking paths with details of specific access routes to the mountains. It demonstrates his familiarity with the area as a walker. His entries for Helvellyn are numerous with approaches to ascend the summit as well as its "watch tower" effect from the valley below along Grisedale Beck. I walked this area both above to Helvellyn's summit and below along the slope of Helvellyn, parallel to the stream to fully understand his fascination with the mountain.

*Calne, May 30, 1815*

“I suppose you first have meditated the faculties of man in the abstract in their correspondence with his sphere of action, and first in the feeling, touch, and taste, then in the eye, and last in the ear---to have laid a solid and immovable foundation for the edifice by removing the sandy sophism of Locke, and the mechanic dogmatists and demonstrating that the senses were living growths and developments of the mind and spirit, in a much juster as well as higher sense, than the mind be said to be formed by the senses.”

**Figure 36** Fragment from a letter to Wordsworth from Coleridge.



**Figure 37** Grisedale (Beck) Valley below Helvellyn

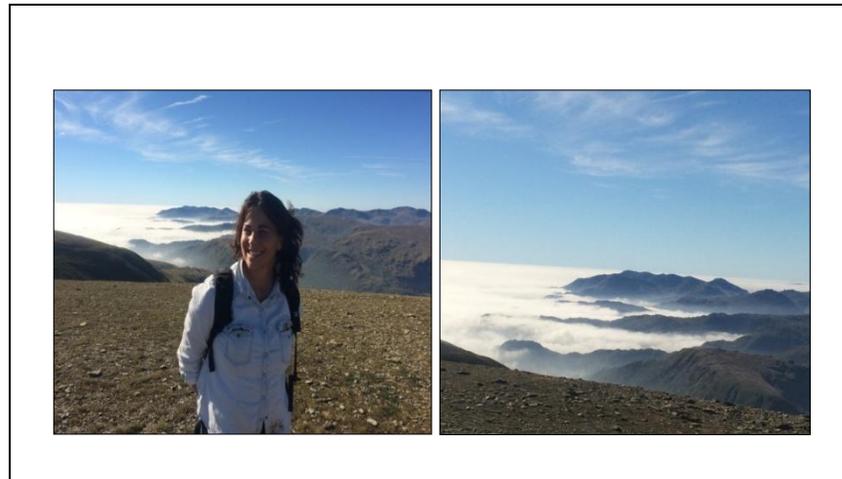
Wordsworth published his poem about Helvellyn in the *Guides to the Lakes* in 1835 although he worked on it from 1816-1820. Its essence is captured in each line that followed Wordsworth throughout his walks in the Lake District referring to the “watch towers” in the second line. There is no doubt about his fascination to ascend this mountain and yet the dedication of the poem to a woman has not been fully understood. The dreamy sense of the ocean mentioned in the poem was an illusion of cloud formations. However, before ascending the mountain, I could not understand this line. There was a sublime effect when I was standing on the summit (called a cloud inversion), which gives you the sense of looking out at an ocean, when in fact it is a group of clouds hanging over the valley below the summit. I was lucky enough to experience that effect in parallel to Wordsworth’s poem.

Guide to the Lakes (Wordsworth)

1. “I know not any where a more sublime combination of mountain forms than those which appear in front, as we ascend along the bed of this Valley; and the impression increases with every step till the path grows steep; and as we climb almost immediately under the projecting masses of **Helvellyn**, the mind is overcome with a sensation, which in some would amount to personal fear, and cannot but be awful even to those who are most familiar with the images of duration, and power, and other kindred influences, by which mountainous countries controul or exalt the imaginations of men.
2. “Among the interior vallies, the proportion of beeches and pines is so great that other trees are scarcely noticeable; and surely such woods are at all seasons much less agreeable than that rich and harmonious distribution of oak, ash, elm, birch, and alder, that formerly clothed the sides of Snowdon and **Helvellyn**; and of which no mean remains still survive at the head of Ullswater.”

3. "Scawfell and **Helvellyn** being the two Mountains of this region which will best repay the fatigue of ascending them, the following Verses may be here introduced with propriety. They are from the Author's Miscellaneous Poems.
4. "At the end of Gowbarrow Park a large herd of deer were either moving slowly or standing still among the fern. I was sorry when a chance companion, who had joined us by the way, startled them with a whistle, disturbing an image of grave simplicity and thoughtful enjoyment; for I could have fancied that those natives of this wild and beautiful region were partaking with us a sensation of the solemnity of the closing day. The sun had been set some time; and we could perceive that the light was fading away from the coves of **Helvellyn**, but the lake, under a luminous sky, was more brilliant than before."
5. "You cross, at Glenridding-Bridge, a fourth Stream, which, if followed up, would lead to Red Tarn and the recesses of **Helvellyn**. The opening on the side of Ullswater Vale, down which the Stream flows, is adorned with fertile fields, cottages, and natural groves, which agreeably coalesce with the transverse views of the Lake;"
6. "From this, hitherto our central point, take a flight of not more than three or four miles eastward to the ridge of **Helvellyn** and you will look down upon Wytheburn and St. John's Vale, which are a branch of the Vale of Keswick, upon Ullswater stretching due east;"
7. "A sublime combination of mountain forms appears in front while ascending the bed of this valley, and the impression increases till the path leads almost immediately under the projecting masses of **Helvellyn**."
8. "**Helvellyn** may be ascended from Dunmail-raise by a foot Traveller, or from the Inn at Wythburn."

**Figure 38 Fragments from *Guide to the Lakes*, Wordsworth 1810-1835**



**Figure 39 Summit at Mt. Helvellyn October 2015 R. Ruiz©**

**To---- On Her First Ascent To The  
Summit Of Helvellyn**

Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed  
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;  
Awed, delighted and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee  
Not unwilling to obey;  
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,  
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows;  
What a vast abyss is there!  
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,

And the glistenings--heavenly fair!  
And a record of commotion  
Which a thousand ridges yield;  
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean  
Gleaming like a silver shield!  
Maiden! now take flight;--inherit  
Alps or Andes--they are thine!  
With the morning's roseate Spirit,  
Sweep their length of snowy line;  
  
Or survey their bright dominions  
In the gorgeous colours drest  
Flung from off the purple pinions,  
Evening spreads throughout the west!  
  
Thine are all the coral fountains  
Warbling in each sparry vault  
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;  
Listen to their songs!--or halt,

**To Niphates' top invited,**

Whither spiteful Satan steered;

Or descend where the ark alighted,

When the green earth re-appeared;

For the power of hills is on thee,

As was witnessed through thine eye

Then, when old Helvellyn won thee

To confess their majesty!

**William Wordsworth 1816-1820**

**Figure 40 To---On Her First Accent to the Summit of Helvellyn**

One curious reference is “To Niphates” known as Mt. Niphates, the place where Satan lands on Earth in Milton’s poem, *Paradise Lost* to carry out his plans to destroy Adam and Eve (Milton and Pullman, 2005). Helvellyn is referred to this mountain with the “power of hills” within its realm thus the line “To Niphates’ top invited,” Wordsworth was known to respect Milton and this reference is a direct connection. Milton’s Satan was part of the sublime as noted in Kelley’s analysis of Wordsworth aesthetics in the chapter “The Sublime and the Beautiful” (Kelley, 1988, p. 37). Wordsworth tells us to “Listen” to the “untrodden” lunar mountains and “Halt” as songs to be heard are like warnings.

Lost Paradise (Book III) 737-42

As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,  
Where honour due and reverence none  
neglects,

Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth  
beneath,

Down from th’ Ecliptic, sped with hop’d  
success,

Throws his steep flight with many an Aerie  
wheele,

Nor staid, till on NIPHATES top he lights.

Figure 41 Book III, Lines 737-42, Milton’s poem, *Paradise Lost*

## *Creative Process*

### *1. Non-Tactile*

The visual perspective of the Lake District came upon me as a startling wonder. The hills were impressive with the delicate changes in hues and the dramatic sky with bellowing silvery clouds hanging over the lakes. It was on and off rainy weather and my experience, walking in this condition, was limited. I was able to climb up above Dove Cottage through the wet grass and stumble upon the lichen stuck to the slate wall before ascending the hillside. There was an unusual visual sense of a landscape that had been conjured up in my mind and yet in reality I was taken aback by the unexpected immense craggy mountains that surrounded me. I had once thought that the area was a recluse of quiet lakes and walking paths around them. I found myself immersed in a grand awakening of the hardy walker William and Dorothy Wordsworth must have been in this wet weather on raging hills.

### *2. Studio Non-Tactile Colours*

The visual colours were explored through colour pencil sketches with texts written out on top of them. I found my pencil roaming the page with the outline of the mountains, and streams of consciousness following its line. This format seemed like the only way to capture the historical background of Wordsworth and its impact on American literature, and my feelings. It struck me so emotionally to have been present in the Wordsworth landscape. I had to write it down interspersed with the colour palette. I was subdued by the sound of the ducks on the water below and the piles of neatly left sheep droppings.

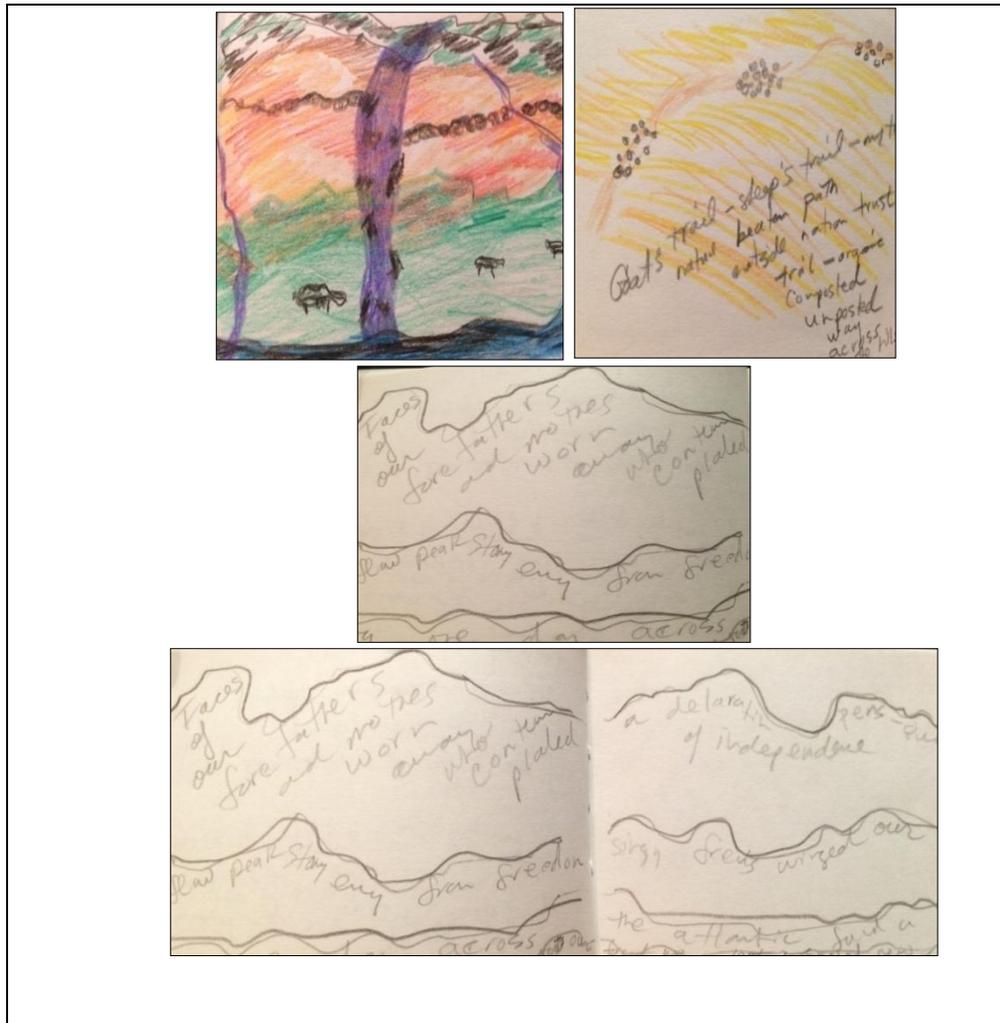


Figure 42 Non-tactile Wordsworth landscape palette (sketchpad) spring 2015

### 3. Studio Non-tactile Poems

Notes Streaming: William Wordsworth, April 25, 2015

Non-Tactile: Spring

Cooing ducks  
Voices glide-filmy  
Transcendence  
Waters wake  
Hidden on the lake

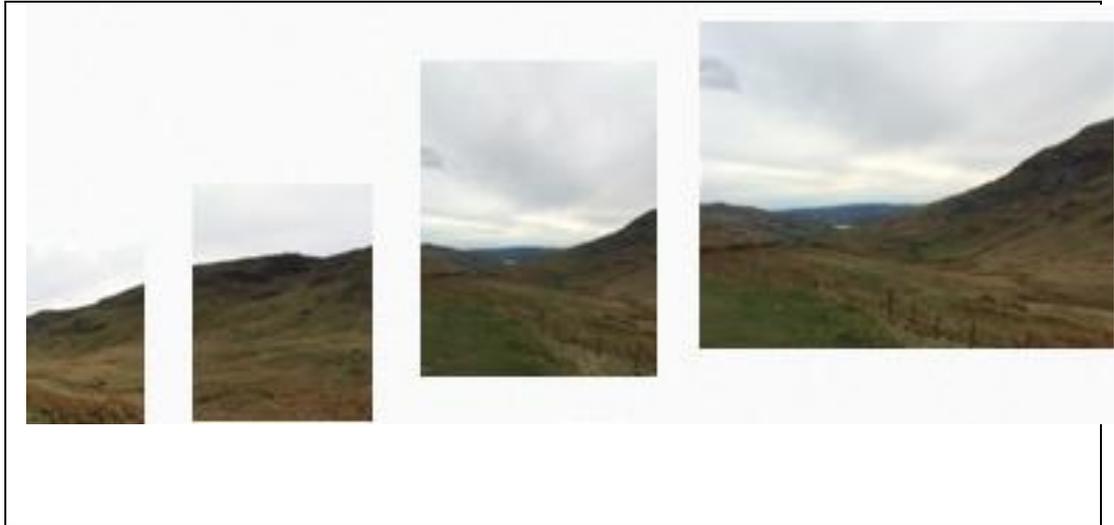
Singing the song of oneself  
On the backs  
Of native spirited  
Winged prophets  
Whining—echo—tweet  
Endless bird songs  
Dotted the path  
Chirped, chirped  
Slate cracked  
Split arrow heads

Craggy stone hath  
Fallen asleep  
Above the bogs  
Drunken with Wren's flute  
Woken up  
Turned old of sudden with  
With copper brush  
Some call lichen

I prefer my mossy green  
Plush and easy  
Gather rain droplets  
How else will I  
quench my  
thirst  
to grow  
into a mountain

holding up the wall  
our ancestors under foot  
bear the weight  
of our young restlessness  
still together, side by side  
we run the length  
of countryside  
hill to sea

**Figure 43 Notes from Wordsworth Non-Tactile walk**



**Figure 44 Scene from Lake District April 25, 2015 Ruiz ©**

### **Ode to Wordsworth**

May you rest among  
The mossy blanket  
In repose, I suppose  
You have doneth thy job

A road determined  
Break-broke  
Broken away  
From city life  
We do apprec-iate  
The bridge that many  
Crossed behind your  
footsteps

A pre-lude  
To our very core that  
Glistens from  
A cityscape  
And yet gets dulled  
By Nature's wonder  
Full of words  
Worthy of Repose.

**Figure 45 Ode to Wordsworth (Non-tactile) walk, 2015**

The writing process for Wordsworth began with a historical background from the American writer R. W. Emerson who had admired Coleridge and visited England with great admiration stimulating his work *Nature*. The Berkshires in Massachusetts was regarded as the Lake District of the American North East. My visit to the dramatic landscape fulfilled a dream stepping back in time to discover the seeds that grew into poetry and consequently inspired Wordsworth and others. I had conjured up an idea of the Lake District with only serene flat strolling paths. However, the immense hills surrounding the tranquil waters, stirred my imagination with the contours of the rugged hills as a backdrop against the dramatic sky. My first non-tactile walk inspired me to write about the connection to the American writers that crossed the Atlantic Ocean returning with a new path to writing via Emerson. My emotional link the Lake District was bound by American historical figures and their footprints carried over from England. I felt a need to create an “Ode to Wordsworth” in the midst of my own poetic verse with a grateful note to the recluse.

#### 4. *Tactile walk*

The tactile walk in the Lake District up Helvellyn proved to deepen my poetic verse as well as added texture to my palette. The following note is from the tactile walk up to the summit.

“Tufts of wool ran between my fingers like a butterfly wing smooth and hiding from the wild wind on the slopes of Helvellyn where crystal lace lies frozen in the crevices where Red Tarn escapes down the rocky hill. Blue, ochre, saffron grasses shift under the moon’s gaze at mid-morning. Duck landing skirts the windowpane surface of the tarn below the watchful eye of Helvellyn tower. Twas the warmest, stillest, blue sky on the summit unlike her slope, remarkable says my fellow walkers (locals). I found the same ocean mist Wordsworth had seen there like a magical flute playing in the distant. The soft mossy blanket dispersed amongst the coarse edges of the rocks was a relief in the midst of Striding Edge’s shadow.”

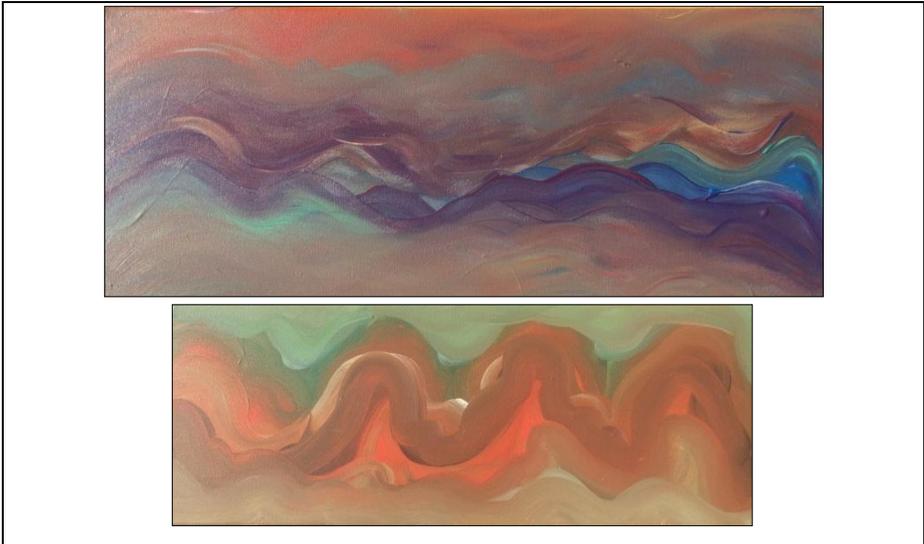
I had ventured out after the first group of walkers, mid morning to have solitude on the way to Mt. Helvellyn. I headed straight to Red Tarn (little mountain lake) under the summit. The quietness of Helvellyn in the mid-morning left me plenty of silence to wander from place to place as a Flaneur in the bogs fleeting from rock to rock, moss to moss, lichen to lichen and grass to grass. The grazing style of the sheep on the slopes encouraged me to touch Wordsworth's Nature without much disturbance and yet my fellow sheep companions nibbled down to the roots. I found the rusty colours of fall fascinating as the bogs leached out this exquisite colour running over grey rocks profoundly marking their path. Hikers passed me by as I mingled more with the sheep on my slow ascent to the summit.

The path was well trodden, but the crevices of brooks rambling down from the tarn were only surveyed by the wild sheep. We shared the landscape, as they grazed for physical nutrition; I grazed for tactile inputs and poetic nutrition. In this walk, I was enamoured with the delicate flora and brave fauna hanging on the edges of the craggy paths, only goats and sheep can manage. A tree clung to the bedrock in the middle of the river; it was a beautiful Japanese Zen painting or Chinese Tao ink sketch painted by nature. The landscape drew me into its roots and ground layer with rusty mud and chalky gravel on the path. Slightly off path, I was attracted to the morning dew on a plant that crystallized into frozen lace. I touched all of these objects except the sheep. I could gather tufts of wool left behind on the branches of shrubs. The softness astounded me as my visual contact fooled me. I had conjured up rough wild wool scratching my skin from these wise creatures. Instead, these puffs of wool that scattered the land were like milk thistles blowing in the wind as soft as baby lamb's fleece.

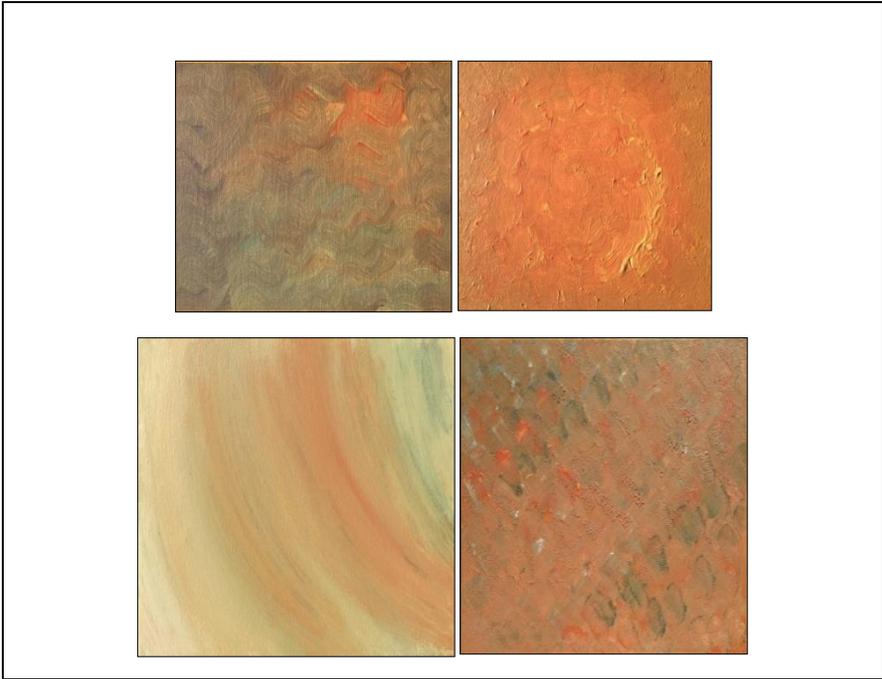
The grasses were blowing in the breeze on the slope just under a moon that shined in the mid-morning sky over Mt. Helvellyn. I ventured into the mountain's womb to touch its array of colours that varied from blue grass to honeycomb grass. The autumn changes were apparent in the texture of these grasses from the dry stalks of yellow to the moist stems that blended like an impressionist painting. Above the tree line, these grasses were solemn and yet were the last flora before the rocky edges that covered the summit. A few butterflies danced along the bog like Dorothy and William out for a stroll.

### *5. Studio Tactile Colours*

In the studio, the colours and textures in the tactile palette were begun after 15 days and were most notably layered. In addition, I had done an intensive colour course back in California in the summer, which significantly influenced the Wordsworth palette in the fall. I applied the 15+day gestation period between walking and studio work. What I had not expected was the enjoyment of achieving texture with varying brush strokes as well as amount of paint to apply to convey the landscape. The tactile memory was very much embedded in my fingertips to obtain the rough textures and depth of foreground illusions. The idea of the outline of hill contours from the non-tactile was incorporated into the tactile studio palette, but it was merged on my pounding heartbeat to reach the summit.



**Figure 46 Tactile palette Helvellyn summit (Studio) autumn 2015**



**Figure 47 Tactile Palette Helvellyn (Studio) autumn 2015**

## 6. *Studio Tactile Poems*

Notes Streaming: Wordsworth
October 2015, Helvellyn, Lake District UK
Tactile
Fall
Clear, sunny, windless on summit

Notes: Adventurous, Risky, On the edge, Profound

Scanty notes were taken in the sketchpad on site and later expanded in the studio. The poems were created after the 15+day gestation period except “Afterlude.” The exhilaration of the path from Helvellyn to Grasmere excited me to write this unique long poem as Wordsworth once did (1799) just upon return from a walk. In this case I had woken up the very next day and sat down to breakfast tea to write in a quiet room overlooking a garden. The poem spilled out like a cloud burst.

The Glenridding access point to the ascent of Helvellyn is a quiet stroll up a valley to the climber’s hostel. At the end of the road behind the hostel, the trail begins leaving behind civilization and opens up into the narrow trail to Red Tarn with hues of oranges and yellow ferns covering the hillsides.

The moon hangs over the summit in the mid-morning inviting us to follow her path. A fusion of coloured grasses sway as I am awakened to the Zen landscape, where a meditating tree perches alone on the bedrock as the stream rushes down over its roots. The last butterfly fluttered on the bogs. The silhouette of trail runners on Striding Edge gives me the impression it is an easy trail. I push up Swirl edge to the summit.

The sun is deliciously basking our faces, and fellow hikers on the summit linger on the plateau enjoying a rare day on Helvellyn. I have considerable hesitation to continue down Striding Edge. I absorb the sea of clouds just over the edge, which covers the valley below.

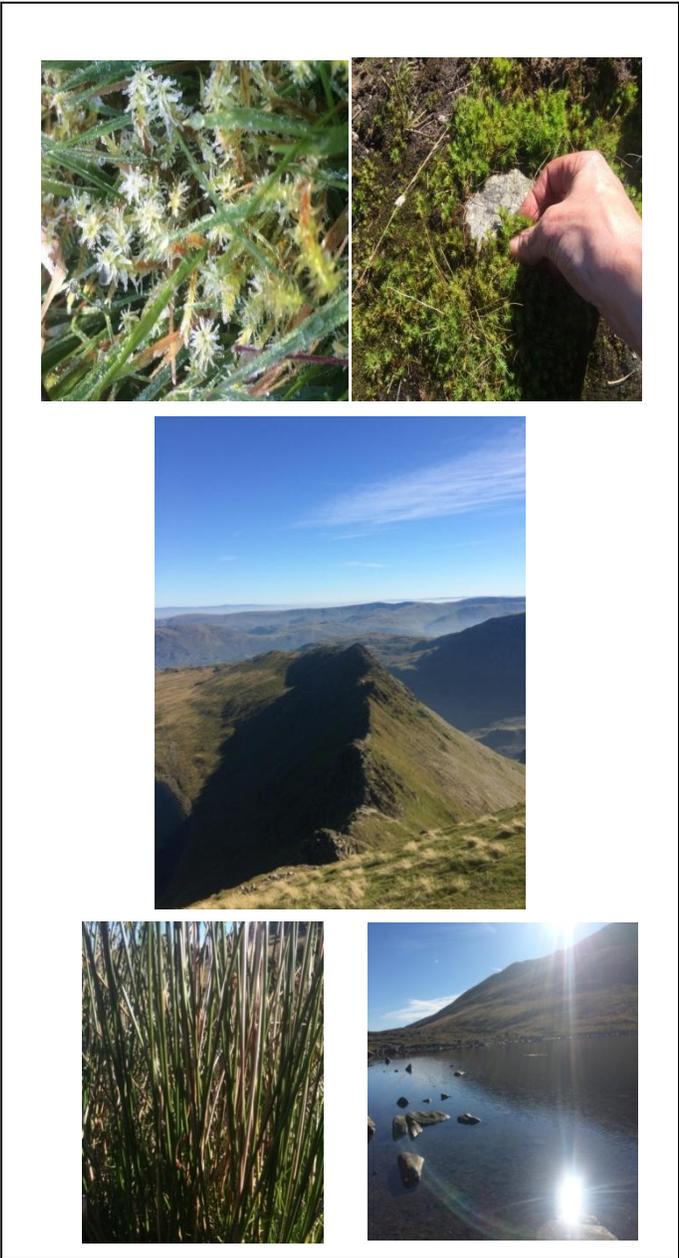


Figure 48 Helvellyn Tactile walk fall 2015 R. Ruiz ©

**Behind Wordsworth's Stride on Helvellyn**

High above sea level

Touched the Poet

Following an imaginary stride

My ripping heartbeat imprinted

On jagged edges of Helvellyn summit

Crumbling above Red Tarn

I scramble, seeking, Wordsworth's  
distant ocean

Here where inland mountains  
abound

Barely holding on to a poetic verse

Not brave enough to bear

A sight below, out of reach

Ghastly rocky waves striding under  
foot

Heaven's gateway to the Poet

We knew him and his hymns

Yet nothing was clear, Until I had  
grappled on one side

Of Helvellyn's abyss

    Stroked by her glacier slices

Into my palm, fingertips

Contemplating a move, any direction  
was treacherous

It was the essence of the Poet

Here under Helvellyn skies

Towers watch over the valley

Just beneath Ether

**Figure 49 *Behind Wordsworth Stride on Helvellyn* 2015 R. Ruiz©**

### On the Edge:

Once on the trail grabbing the rocky edges to hoist myself up and creating the impromptu trail as I go, there is no turning back. Strangely enough, the wind breezes past my ear on the way up. Curious, once I reached the summit, it was windless. A Zen moment captured us all and cast a shadow of silence over the summit that day. I was told by a local that in 40 years she had never experienced such a day with the absence of wind and fog. I tossed a stone on the cairn at the summit feeling the adrenalin rush of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, immediately comprehending his description of the wind's bellow in his ear hanging on near a Raven's nest.

### The Moss:

In barren terrain that covers Helvellyn's glacier sheer cliffs, the moss is a welcome soft carpet to rest my head. It had the same effect on Wordsworth as he noted in his writings. The spongy moist vegetation contrasts with the barren dry rock and draws me in; comforts me.

### Dew:

The Flaneur method allowed me to move in all directions on the slopes of Helvellyn and across to the streams that rush from Red Tarn (mountain lake) just below the summit. Here in the midst of the rocks and bogs, I found the glistening dew that shone like glass. Upon touching it, I was excited to find out its frozen content. From a far, it was shining, but up close, it was as stiff as glass left over from the freeze the night before. Hikers passed by anxious to reach Helvellyn, I was on a random path as integrated as the sheep that shared my curiosity.

**Brash winds awaken the Muse**

Harsh billowing winds  
Rippled in the poet's ear  
Hanging on to a rocky ledge  
I, too  
Grapple on death's door  
Slipping into a daze  
A maze of poetic justice  
Only known to those who  
Dare to climb, feel the rock  
Naked and valiant  
Willing to stand alone  
Against the wind  
Wordsworth hung on  
I, too  
Nature and the Muse  
Fused into ONE  
No one would know  
If only read a few lines  
From the Prelude  
For walking the rocky edge  
Wind hollering though  
Beating one's own ear drum  
Until it ached, To tell the story  
Of Nature  
Awakened by a gripping tale  
Beat from within

**Figure 50 *Brash Winds awaken the Muse* fall 2015 R. Ruiz©**

**Comfort of Moss**

No doubt  
God put moss On Helvellyn,  
To soften the pain, Of the rocky path  
Apparently juxtaposed  
To all the roughness  
Life is a rock  
With a little moss, To bear the weight  
We celebrated its comfort  
In the midst of a sharp terrain  
Even Wordsworth acknowledged  
It's worth, a soft bed  
To rest while on a path  
Laden with stones, Like the poetic verse  
In the midst of a revolution

Figure 51 *Comfort of Moss* fall 2015 R. Ruiz Full Moon on the Grass:

**Glass dew**

Frozen moss  
Morning  
Crystals laced  
In patchwork  
By the stream  
Down from Helvellyn  
Crackling upon touch  
Icicles in crevices  
Dew drop in

Figure 52 *Glass Dew* 2015 R. Ruiz ©

**Full Moon Cadenza on Helvellyn**  
Bursting Ochre  
Iron tips  
Slate blue wisps  
Moss green shoots  
Full moon breeze  
Autumn's gift  
Improvised and wild  
Yet a seasonal Cadenza  
Setting over Helvellyn's ridge  
Meadows planted for the Poet  
Paradise lost & found  
Niphates' hiding ground  
For William words hath  
Known from the girth  
Of his heart  
Swept aloft  
In the Roseate spirit cast  
Upon me  
An imprinted glimpse  
Inside the Poet's  
Path that which followed  
Moons and lunar lands

**Figure 53 Full Moon Cadenza on Helvellyn 2015 R. Ruiz©**

### Grisedale Beck & Valley:

I left the slopes of Helvellyn the next day, walking down in the morning mist, to capture the “watch towers” from below along the Grisedale beck (stream). A fellow walker caught me by surprise and he remarked that Wordsworth was not taught much in school. He explained that he thought Wordsworth was too old to make sense for children and was a bit taken aback that I was interested in his poetry, and the conversation had peeked his interest again in Wordsworth acknowledging that I had alerted him to revisit the poet. As I moved along in dialogue with my temporary companion for about an hour, I was moved to contemplate this issue later on my own. We split up at the Glenridding junction and I began following Helvellyn from a lower perspective. I followed the Grisedale Beck in the valley below Helvellyn and finally understood the meaning of the “watch tower” Wordsworth had alluded to in his poem. Suddenly, the fog lifted and the tower appeared looking down on me. As soon as I arrived in Grasmere, the one-day journey, I wrote this poem, *Afterlude*.

**Afterlude for William & Her**

Poor William  
Worth of words  
May powers by  
Shakespeare forever  
Standing, not one, Could ever come  
Thereafter---  
Too old---they say, I say neigh/nay  
Recluse thy be, For tis a matter  
Of time-the recluse  
Walked here and  
There across these Mountain-Fells  
Made his life a way  
From the city—wanton  
Of those to follow  
Find in their deepest  
Ravines---the Soul's pure essence  
Merged with Nature  
We study the French Revolution  
As an evolutionary step to  
Freedom-though Wordsworth beckons us  
All to come within---seek Thyself  
As Delphi proclaimed on the gate "Know  
thy Self."  
For this became nothing  
But an inscription  
Lessened by Time, Burdened with haste,

Wasted for a youth to study again, again—  
and gain—gain not  
Only a self revealed  
But a Nature's way  
Of the planetary vow  
To love our Mother, Father and others---  
Lest be our own Earth that feeds  
Us well—on well, of water  
Clean and fresh—  
Not just an ink well  
Words splattered on a page  
For this Soul, Sat only after a walk  
Through the mist,  
The Sheppard his guide  
The Sheep mine  
Brooding in clouds  
Brooding in mind  
Burst forth to find  
A solution to the folly  
The once social being,  
Recluse to the Mountain Lakes  
Deceiving illusions  
Of castles on the hills  
Wordsworth dis-covered  
His own and owned it---  
Failures and victories made not this  
human---  
Quiet serenity clothed in a harsh life of the  
lakes

Sounds placid on the tongue  
For those who have not come  
A walk along these parts is nothing  
Of sort descending from the clouds  
Ascending to the heavens  
Neither could be compared as easily  
achieved  
The slow downward steps  
Concentrated gait  
And there walked Wordsworth  
Never waiting for a better day  
Strong legs to carry on  
With "sisterly love"  
We most certainly scarcely hear  
Between equals of man and woman  
Their words, walks, pens blotted in ink  
Smeared in their hearts  
Rendered in a poem  
A diary forgotten  
Why the English have kept Shakespeare  
Thrown out Wordsworth I cry,  
For the plot is lost in the Soul  
Searching Wordsworth  
A modern one haste no time to reflect  
Shakespeare serves a puzzle of powers  
Powers of the human psyche  
Wordsworth serves none other than Soul  
The struggle between the mind & soul

Most prefer an intellectual battle  
Than an inner revelation  
Sought after the hard walk  
Step by step  
Gripping a stone to hold on  
Before striding over the rock  
The rock of the mind  
Dense and thick  
Full of routine  
Com=fort  
Only after a long day  
Scrambling the English heights  
Like Helvellyn edge of Earth  
May you find the soft beds of moss  
And appreciate their lustre  
Gleaming in sunlight  
Set free for you  
Offered upon her hearth  
Hard and slated  
It is that comfort after the struggle  
That has a great meaning  
To touch it, or let it touch you  
Your back is soothed  
No one could deny its wonders  
Not even Wordsworth  
Moss, he recognized  
Her beauty  
In the midst of these glaciers

Stripped, razor, sharp edges  
Sharpened by Nature  
And yet the green lofty moss  
Showed us our time  
It had grown out of the hardness  
Watered by dew  
Reared by Nature herself  
For it was the moss  
That knew how to survive  
Strive and blossom  
In the cracks  
It is the cracks in the mind  
That bears witness to the Soul  
It is the expansion of the Earth that makes  
Those rocks split  
Make room for the moss  
Turning slowly into soil  
From Lichen to moss to grass  
Soon a meadow appears  
Then the butterfly dances  
Here and there  
Flitting along  
Pollinating the last drops for honey  
Oh, the soft vision of a meadows  
Blowing gently on my eyelids  
I am eyeing the moon  
Just over the ridge  
Guiding me

Pulling me  
Home to the Heavens  
Swirling along the edge  
I gasp  
I step  
I land  
On top  
I toss a stone  
On the pile to be absorbed  
With other climbers  
Gear, and their ascent  
Is the aim  
For mine was just  
A beginning to feel  
What Wordsworth felt  
Walking in his footsteps  
Wondering how he had chosen this life  
A great vow for an Englishman  
Who had travelled abroad  
Conversed in the city  
And wrote in the depths of his lake  
A well of knowledge  
Gained upon the ledge  
Led to the edge  
Driven down within the crags  
And found Him Self  
A PRELUDE  
Witness for us all

To begin a Prelude to what?  
To your own poem  
Written from your Soul  
By experience  
Step –by-Step  
For if every English  
Could be looking  
To the Lakes and Fells  
And uncover their  
Own illusions, immerse in the Ether  
Create form in that way  
Nature had intended  
To reveal a magical painting---optics  
overcome  
By mindful walks  
For this would mean  
William’s Prelude was not written in waste  
Movements of a Soul  
Moving across the land  
No:214  
A fad  
All of us just skirting  
On the edge of Truth  
Look inside  
Walk with a purpose  
Beyond Time, beyond Space  
The timepiece of a dooming clock  
Set up in the town

For an industrial revolution  
Another time keeper is Nature  
Truly you know our human made time  
keeper  
Crumbles in less than a second  
As the Earth quakes  
7.5 on its scale  
You set the time by the Moon  
Or the setting Sun  
For a Sun Day is the most logical one in  
England  
For a Holy Day (Holiday)  
I admire these people of the Fells  
Who can read more than poetics  
They read the Sky  
Know it well,  
Wish they knew themselves  
As well as the weather  
Within is harder to predict  
Clouds are many,  
storms less likely  
To subside, Without a psyche cleanse  
A walk with Nature  
Then the Soul takes over  
Challenging the mind  
To a duel  
Body follows shortly after ward  
If we change it  
And turn our weathervane

Towards the inward direction  
Worry not of outcomes  
And the let the body begin  
The mind has to follow and  
Soul is the driver of a walk in the Fells  
Intuition makes you pause  
On the way if you let Her  
Allow Her to touch you, drawn you in  
Lace of the morning dew  
Feel the hour glass, frozen in time  
Overnight she teaches you  
The road has fewer miles gained in an  
hour  
Yet you have been there longer  
In the cracks and crevices of Nature,  
herself  
And there in the her arms of Ether  
You will find the open gateway  
To your Soul  
You may miss it  
If you just walk across the land  
From East to West, why?  
To say I did that...what?  
Done that  
Did you really do anything?  
Accomplished a goal  
Like any other one in the office  
It actually was attainable many had done it  
Made you a map, even

What did you dis-cover  
Had you noticed the liquorice slug?  
If you try to walk like a Wordsworth  
Make the map of your Self  
What would that look like?  
Like No Other  
No One could use it, but You  
Rich in the Oneness of Nature  
For She was not meant to be trampled  
Nor made into milestones  
For She is here to support  
Your journey—within  
Our human Waywardness  
With a steady cadence  
Oh I too have hung from a Raven's nest  
By knots of grass, shouldering the naked  
crag  
Of half/inch fissures of slippery rock  
Dipping into Grisedale Tarn  
Passing John's last farewell  
On my way to Grasmere  
Home to William and Dorothy  
Making my vow deeper to this land  
That anchors my Soul  
And I must confess  
My gratitude to both  
Poet and Her  
Streams of consciousness, Streams of joy!

**Figure 54 Afterlude for William & Her 2015 R. Ruiz©**

## 7. *Writing Process:*

The Wordsworth tactile walk poetry was a combination of direct touch and reflective writing accumulated from the walk itself. The two-day walking trip began first to Helvellyn summit, and then down to Grasmere via Grisedale Valley, following the stream and over the pass arriving at Wordsworth's Dove Cottage.

Fragments of ideas cropped up in my sketchpad alongside the collection of tactile inputs, that I call part of the "grazing" like the sheep. I decided on this walk to use the colours from nature pressed and smudged into my sketchpad for later use. The rusty brown was so tempting that I even smeared it on my cotton work shirt. Using the Flaneur method to reach the summit enhanced my poetry and palette tremendously as compared with the non-tactile walk. However, having made that visual recording of the area, I was then able to focus on specific flora and fauna through touch on the second walk. Once I had come back from the walk and re-read *Prelude*, I had an enhanced comprehension of the poem and its intention. My own experience of hanging on to the rocks to climb up Swirl Edge and resting on the moss with the sound of the wind in my ear were directly part of the original Wordsworth *Prelude* poem. My poem, *Afterlude*, unravelled from pen to paper as a stream with little revision. It was like a kite string catching the wind and flying high in the Lake District. I felt a release from the exhilaration of that two-day hike especially given the threat of rain on the second day. I am positive that I would never had had understood *Prelude* from a distant point of view without walking the landscape of Helvellyn. Furthermore, the Zen landscape elements created a peaceful transcendent effect on my writing rather than a lonely poet walking along a 'un-trodden' trail.

During the Wordsworth research, I was prompted with the suggestion by my Director of Studies to analyze the "touch" words in the poetry of the four poets. I began with Wordsworth. I was surprised to understand the *Prelude* from my own touch experience.

Wordsworth	Poem
1. on cool green ground	Prelude; Book Second
2. infant softness	Prelude; Book Second
3. naked	Prelude; Book Second
4. baked	Prelude; Book Second
5. plunge	Prelude; Book Second
6. sandy fields	Prelude; Book Second
7. bronzed	Prelude; Book Second
8. in the thunder shower	Prelude; Book Second
9. of frosty wind	Prelude; Book Second
10. smooth hollows	Prelude; Book Second
11. along the moonlight turf	Prelude; Book Second
12. my shoulder all with springs hung	Prelude; Book Second
13. gentle powers	Prelude; Book Second
14. scudding on from snare to snare	Prelude; Book Second
15. when I hung above the raven's nest	Prelude; Book Second
16. by knots of grass	Prelude; Book Second
17. or half inch fissures	Prelude; Book Second
18. slippery rock	Prelude; Book Second
19. shouldering the naked crag	Prelude; Book Second
20. hung alone with what strange...loud wind	Prelude; Book Second
21. blow through my ears,	Prelude; Book Second
22. as at the touch of lightning seeking him...	Prelude; Book Second
23. gentle visitation	Prelude; Book Second

The senses were awakened in these Wordsworth poems with the choice of words to describe the act of touching and its resulting sensation such as “smooth, softness, slippery or cool.” The feeling associated with being “touched” implicit in such adjectives describe his experience as “bronzed, baked, frosty or loud.” Furthermore, there were word choices that implied touching such as “scudding, shouldering, by knots, or hung.” To be touched and touch were integrated in *Prelude* almost equally.

### *1. Art process and materials*

The process involved with Wordsworth was completely new to me as an artist. Slate roof tiles were actually a scary material from the outset, but my DoS and sculptor Brian Thompson, encouraged me to explore new materials. At first slate seems like a fragile material, when in fact it is a heritage roof tile due to its durability. I soon learned that slate would chip on the surface layer, but would not break so easily if dropped. There are slate mines near Grasmere that still provide the green slate of the Wordsworth era. I was in my studio in Spain, and I acquired one of the best slates for construction from Segovia, nearby Madrid. Artistic choices during this process were the following.

#### **a) Slate from Spain vs. England**

Interestingly the facts around the slate roof tiles during Wordsworth’s time in England came from a great fire in London that stirred production from the Lake District mines and became by law one of the two materials of choice (ceramic and slate) during the Regent era. Slate is sustainable and lasts up to 400 hundred years with no fire danger unlike thatched or wooden roof materials, which spread fire quickly and result in destruction of large areas.

Slate from the Lake District is still available from the Honister Mine. Shipping and handling slate for me was cumbersome from England and the cost was unaffordable for this project. However, upon my July 2016 trip to the Lake District I

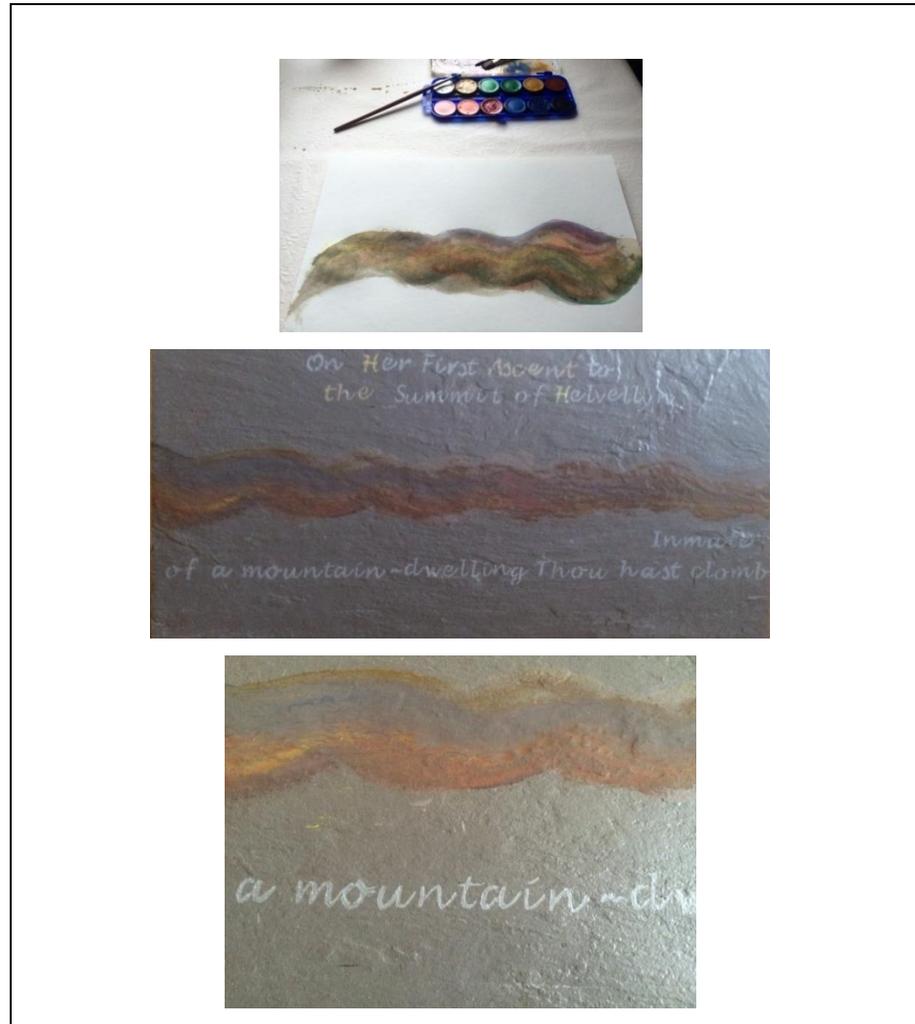
was able to find a heritage green slate from a local person in the area through walking around the villages, although, these slates were from the Edwardian era. I used these pieces for the interactive art installation to provide a sample of old slate from the area.

**Final Choice:** Slate from Spain was the final choice for engraving Wordsworth fragments of poetry. I was able to find slate from Segovia, near Madrid. It is a world-renowned slate used for roof tiles. It gave me the immediate access to work with this new material in my studio in Spain. These slate tiles were a bit thinner than UK heritage roof tiles but the material was the same with the same properties.

This choice was cost effective and gave me the opportunity to experiment with ideas for engraving and applying the palette. This choice seemed logical for three reasons 1) cost, 2) authenticity, 3) availability in the current building material scope. I saved on shipping costs and still could produce my art with this unique material. If the project worked out, I could attain Lake District slate and incorporate it on site in the UK for an exhibit.

#### **b) Colour palette application**

I began to apply the palette with watercolour that could be easily removed and modified. I wanted to see how the palette looked and at the same time amortize the limited slate tiles from Segovia. This material was unlike the ceramic tiles from the Machado case that were easily and cheaply available everywhere. I had to adapt my strategy.



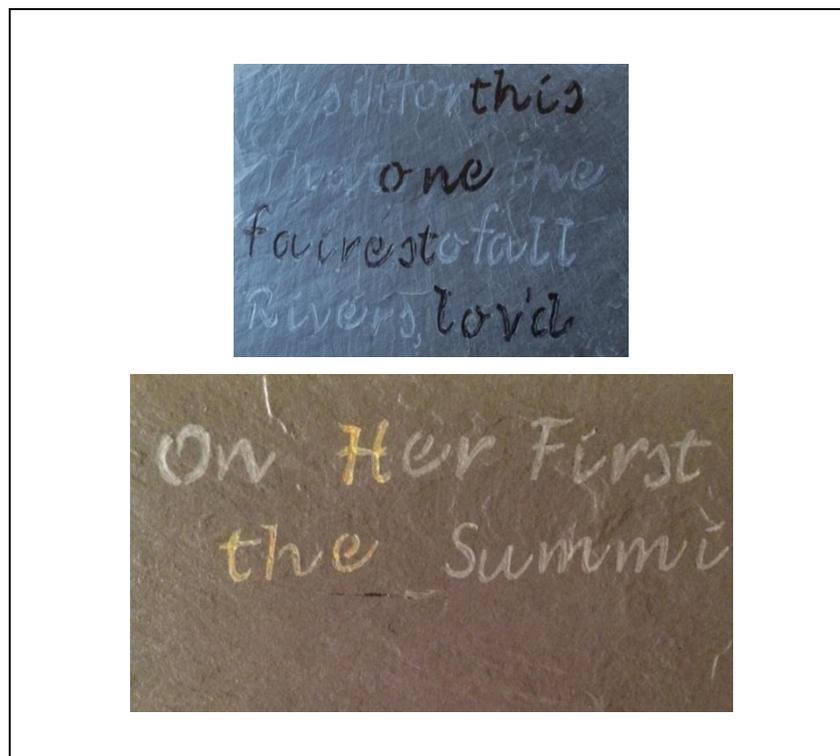
**Figure 55 Colour Palette application on slate with watercolours Wordsworth**

I began to experiment with colour patterns and text with colour pencils to guide me on the slate. It was a playful act of minimalism to highlight the text more than the palette. The palette began to be a background to the text. In addition, I began to alternate colours with the palette merging colours on letters.



**Figure 56 Colour and text experiments in colour pencil for slate.**

The colour application began to focus on the letters and I alternated colours and no colours for the letters and the background. I began to like the elegance of the bare letters engraved on the slate with a dab of colour. I used colour chalk for this experiment because it was a choice that put me closer to the writing on slate like a child in school with tablets.



**Figure 57 Felt pen colouring (top). Colour chalk (bottom).**

**c) Text writing method & tools**

Slate was a new material to me and I was more aware of its tactile effect on my finger pads since my experience from the Flaneur tactile walks. Stroking the length of the slate was suddenly a new sensation. I had used two types of slate sizes. One was small chips of slate and the other was a long slab. The chips of slate were fragments and rustic but smaller in comparison to the uniform slab cut tiles. I began to imagine the text from a long perspective after moving my hand across the longer slab. This interaction changed my viewpoint and I began to see it like a Japanese scroll with writing engraved vertically rather than horizontally. This tactile moment prompted me to change the angle of writing.



**Figure 58 Chip fragment (top). Uniform slabs (bottom).**

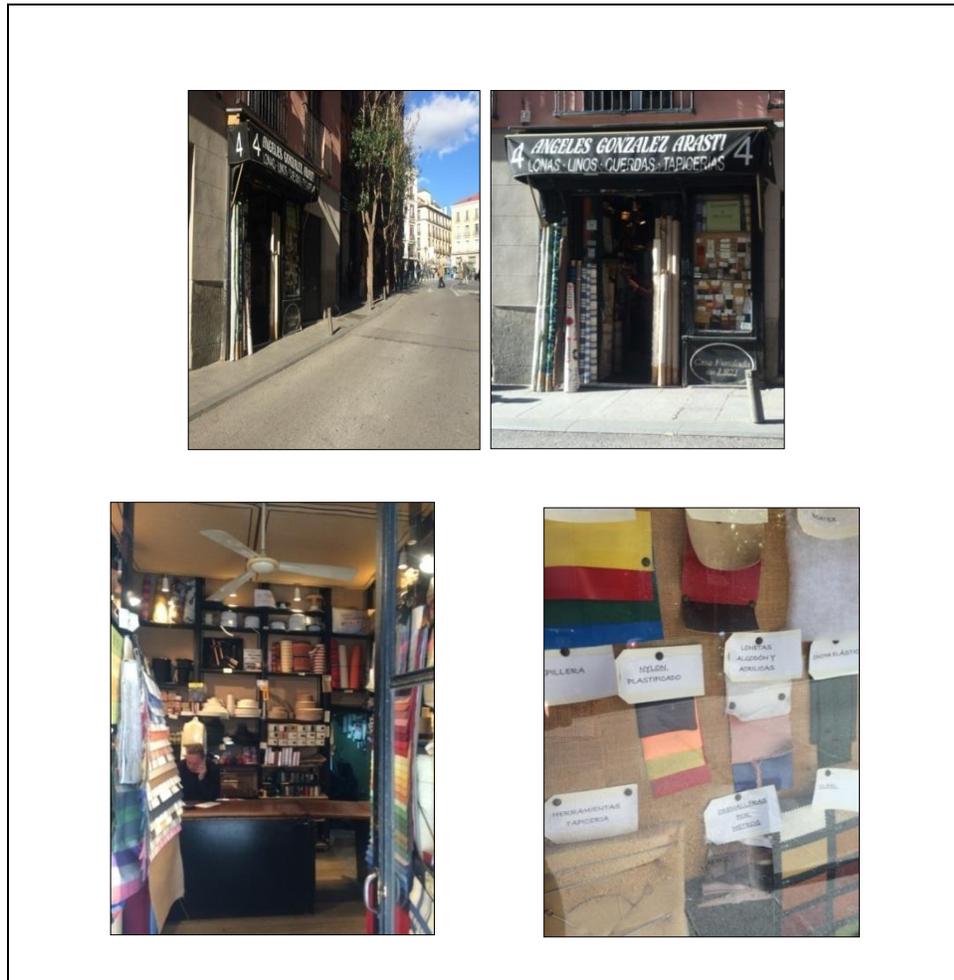
The change in direction of the writing was initiated by modifying the graphic design of the composition. I liked this sense of the project moving away from pure tablet engraving such as signs or gravestones. I began to experiment with spacing and placement of the poetic lines. My typography course was instrumental in this modification. In addition, the tactile aspect of the slate compounded with this new design element to treat the tile as a poster rather than an ordinary tablet. It opened up my creative process completely and I began to see the 3D poetic canvas emerge.



**Figure 59 Wordsworth fragments with new spacing & composition.**

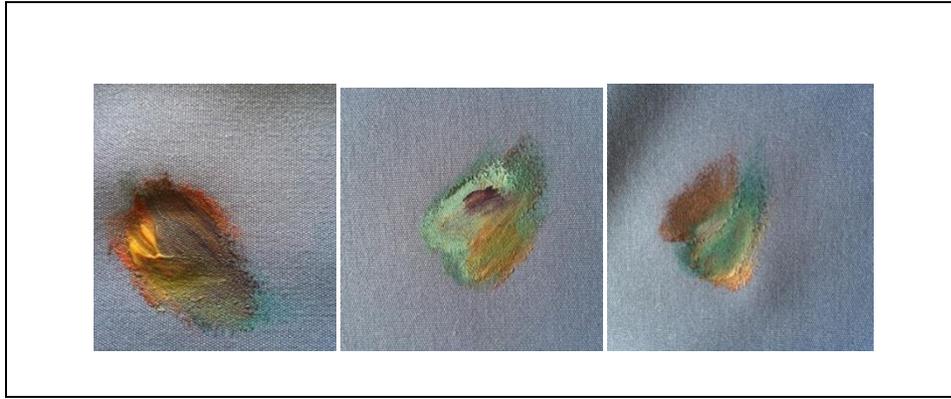
**d) Fabric Material**

The fabric for Wordsworth was sailcloth and blue. I searched around Madrid to find the authentic cloth used for sails. The texture of the cloth was stiff and yet flexible like the stalks of grass I had encountered on the tactile walk up Helvellyn. My adventure to find the fabric was a Flaneur walk around the centre of Madrid where the fabric stores are located. I went in and out of the small traditional stores specializing in canvas fabric and asked questions. I was learning a lot about sailcloth for boats and canvas for awnings. Canvas was stiff and sailcloth was flexible for the wind. I avoided nylon.



**Figure 60 Fabric store in Madrid for Wordsworth sail cloth**

The application of the palette on the sailcloth was easier than the burlap of Machado. The acrylic paint went on smoothly and I was able to use various amounts of paint to obtain more texture to the canvas cloth. It felt cool and fresh. The colours of the Wordsworth landscape came back easily even after travelling back to Spain and waiting the 15-day incubation period.



**Figure 61 Wordsworth palette applied to sailcloth acrylic paints**

**e) Outcome**

I was able to incorporate the Wordsworth 3D poetic canvas in the Basel Switzerland exhibit in 2016 (see appendix) as part of my interactive installation. I added a black border. I also decided to make some hanging fabric scrolls with the sailcloth and burlap to give my installation some depth and levels. I used fishing line and fishing weights to hang them. I was very pleased with the contrast of blue and tan for the exhibit.



**Figure 62 Basel 2016 installation Switzerland: (Top) Wordsworth**

### **Synopsis of Case**

The Wordsworth case has transformed my vision and understanding of his poetry due to the direct tactile contact with the landscape in the Lake District and mode of climbing Helvellyn often on my hands and knees (scrambling). The rocky crags and crevices taken from a tactile perception provided me with a visceral comprehension of Wordsworth's masterpiece *Prelude* in conjunction with a book reading. The weather in the case study was a draw of luck that answered my poetic question about the "ocean" of mist in the poem about Helvellyn. From the lower level of the towering mountain, I could fully appreciate Wordsworth's mention of Milton's poem (*Paradise Lost*).

The typography course and touching of the long slate slab adjusted my composition of the 3D canvas to take advantage of the vertical length of the roof tile. A new presentation of the texts (on ceramic and slate) staggered the lines. This change in presentation by combining the colour palette with hand engraving moved the texts away from a gravestone effect. This choice created the elegance I had been seeking for both Machado and Wordsworth's poetry.

Summary: Wordsworth's Helvellyn tactile walk started with a slow traverse to Red Tarn (lake) in the late morning hours. The sunshine highlighted the frozen dew on the flora. The impression on my fingertips of the crystals frozen on the plants from the night before stimulated my poetry. In addition, the full moon was orbiting across the peak leaving its mark in the sky. The iron brown mud was attractive to my fingertips like a child after a rainy day seeking a puddle. My fingers delved into the roots of the grass, where this colour oozed into a tiny stream on the rocky path. Although the mountain landscape is dotted with sheep, the tufts of wool from the sheep drift down the mountain similar to the open pods of a grass that mimic its sensation, pure and soft blowing in the wind. The craggy path tears the fingers and yet the moss comforts the body. I was startled at the lack of a path on Swirl Edge and every grip was a long lasting tactile memory during the ascent. The absence of insects on these high mountains astonished me. Given this rarity, I was attracted to touch a black slug crossing my path describing it like candy, "liquorice."

Whitman

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## **Whitman & Hempstead Plains**

### *Introduction*

Walt Whitman has been associated with Brooklyn, New York as a printer rather than his rural teaching days in Hempstead Plains. Although his birthplace was in the country, his positive nuances of the country had been erased with his family's move to Brooklyn, closer to the metropolis.

Long Island was predominately rural except the Southern tip near Manhattan, where Brooklyn was located. As noted in Burr's 1829 historical map of Long Island, I noted the urban colour coding in purple for Brooklyn versus the overall rural brown of the island (Smith, 1844). After a fire in Manhattan, Whitman moved back to the countryside on the Hempstead Plains to take teaching jobs. His life in Brooklyn was linked to the metropolis and as a printer was in contact with the urban current events. Rural Long Island was not part of his personality during those times as he aspired to join the urban writers in the nearby cityscape; the attractive feature of Brooklyn.



**Figure 63 Hempstead vs. Brooklyn 1800's**

The turn of events that pushed Whitman to move to rural Long Island to make a living would change his life forever. He reluctantly leaves Brooklyn due to the overall economic crisis in New York. However, Prof. Emeritus N. Naylor explains Whitman's appreciation of the country life and walking amongst the common folks as where he formulated "Leaves of Grass" (Naylor, 2005). In fact, Whitman states in his autobiographical notes that his teaching career in many parts of Long Island, including Hempstead, were instrumental in his writing. Complaints about his teaching style focused on his writing at the teacher's desk encouraging students to do the same rather than lecturing (Naylor, 2005). "*Leaves of Grass*" was a lifelong collection of poems that he revised over 30 years of his life.

Whitman in Hempstead (N. Naylor)

1836-38 Joins family living in **Hempstead and in June 1836** begins teaching at East Norwich; by winter 1837-38 has taught at Babylon, Long Swamp [Huntington Station], and Smithtown on Long Island.

1838-39 Begins weekly newspaper in Huntington, the *Long Islander*, with the assistance of his 10-year-old brother, George. Editor, writer and compositor, he also delivers the papers on horseback. No copies survive from this first year of the newspaper.

1855 Publishes *Leaves of Grass* at the age of thirty-six (twelve poems and ninety-five pages). Sends a copy to Ralph Waldo Emerson and his literary career is launched. Emerson writes him from Concord: "I greet you at the beginning of a great career which yet must have a long foreground somewhere for such a start."

\* [Joann P. Krieg. *A Whitman Chronology* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1998), pp. 2-17, 29; see also "Chronology" in *Whitman Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*, ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1982), pp. 1347-48.]

**Figure 64 Whitman in Hempstead 1836**

Whitman & Teaching in Hempstead (Bio Notes)

"I went up to **Hempstead from New York** 1st of May 1836—went to [East] Norwich to teach school in June the same year."

"I kept the school west of Babylon the winter of 36-7"

"At Long Swamp [Huntington Station] the spring of '37"

"At Smithtown the fall and winter of 37" [-38; edited *Long Islander*, 1838-39] . . .

"In the winter succeeding [1839-40], I taught school between Jamaica and Flushing [Bay-side]—also in February and spring of '40 at Triming Square" [West Hempstead/Franklin Square]

"In summer of 40 I taught at Woodbury . . ."

"Winter of 1840, went to Whitestone and was there till next spring—"

\*[*The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, 1921, ed. Emory Holloway, 2 vols. (Reprint; Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972), 2:86-88.]

**Figure 65 Whitman Teaching Career in Countryside**

His birthplace in Huntington, Long Island, New York today has little resemblance of his childhood in terms of natural flora and fauna with the exception of the ecological preserve of Hempstead Plains nearby. "For over 350 years the Hempstead Plains has played a key role in the history of Long Island as the only true prairie east of the Allegheny Mountains" (Friends of Hempstead Plains, 2013). I chose this location to do my research.

In September of 2013, I had my first encounter with the visual element of the grasses on Hempstead Plains. It surprised me how beautiful the wild flower blooms were amongst the grasses. The array of bright colours on that first non-tactile walk was astounding. The emotional element was rushing through me as I walked amongst the grasses in Whitman's landscape.

September is the season when the wild flowers bloom and it was a perfect time to enjoy a walk accompanied by Director Prof. Betsy Gulotta (biologist) and Maxwell Wheat (first poet laureate of Nassau County). Furthermore, I was lucky enough to join Wheat's poetry workshop that day. This slow meandering with natural science and literary guides was the optimum way to experience Whitman amongst the grasses of his homeland.

I eventually incorporated those names into my re-play poetry. There was a light breeze brushing against our faces. A silver cloud lining above offered a special light and ambience for the poetic encounter with the prairie heirloom grasses. Delicate hues of yellow buttercups, rosy pink petals and ivory white blossoms poked their heads out from the ochre, saffron and copper long stems that whispered along the trail as they danced in the gentle wind. It was a beautiful way to ignite our quills.



**Figure 66 Prof. Betsy Gulotta & Poet Laureate Max Wheat**



**Figure 67 Poetry Workshop Hempstead Plains**

I imagined Walt Whitman breathing deep among these grasses, and taking a rest from time to time to contemplate his lifelong poem. He had written it repeatedly and dedicated it to all grasses. I had asked the pertinent question to Max: “Did Whitman have a specific grass in mind for his poem?” Max, in his nineties, indicated to me that it was homage to grasses in general. I walked side by side with him at a slow pace. Max and I, with notepads in hand, were jotting down notes from Betsy’s recitation of the grasslands in biological and cultural terms as she ignited our imagination. She explained how long ago people had ridden through the tall grass and woven baskets from the sturdy stalks. We laughed at the “hot pink” Sandplain Gerardia (*Agalinis acuta*) that jumped out to catch us by surprise in the special section reserved for this endangered species (New York Natural History Program, 2017).

The group dispersed on our return and each of us took special notice of our favourite blooms. I hung back to soak up this rare moment when the grasses reach for the sky and the wild flowers show their colours in bloom. I wondered if I might find Walt’s hat somewhere in the grass. I sat down and peered up at the sky with the stalks of grass in my peripheral vision. The names were another dimension to my encounter with Whitman’s land. There native grasses reminded me of his love for Native Americans.

I stretched out, looked up at the metallic clouds and let the grasses paint my face with their brush strokes. They were fine and delicate wisps. Long Island never felt so fine from the ground up after a lovely walk between the poet and biologist who came to love the grasses; I was beginning to understand Whitman's love of the grass.

*Literary Context (Walking Poet)*

Whitman refers to Long Island as Paumanok, its original name from the American natives, and writes an article to be used as a walking guide to the area as well as a poem (Naylor, 2002). In this text, we can deduct that he knew the island by walking and observing the living organisms as well as the people. His collection of poems compiled into a book first published in 1855 called *Leaves of Grass* (Whitman, 2012) signals the flora and fauna of the grasslands and I wanted to return to the essence of the masterpiece: the grasses. The grasses of the plains of Long Island once covered the entire island as the first vegetation sprouting out of the sand dunes, which still can be observed on the Eastern coast. Whitman was aware of the role of grass in the ecological scheme. He notes in his texts that grass is the starting point of soil for bushes and trees to thrive thereafter. He treats this basic plant as the foundation of his poem and calls us to return to smallest visible part, "the leaf." The usage of this term rather than "blade" came from his Quaker pacifist background. He extracted this double meaning in reference to such an everyday word for grass "blade or leaf." It was his poetic legacy to remind us of alternatives for the same object. The "cutting" edge of some grasses instilled this concept of slicing like a blade, but the native grasses on Long Island were of a broader range of shapes and textures.

**Leaves of Grass (Song of Myself)**

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to  
you.

I loafe and invite my soul,

I lean and loafe at my ease observing **a spear of  
summer grass.**

My tongue, every atom of my blood, **form'd from  
this soil,**  
this air,

**Figure 68 Fragments of Leaves of Grass (Song of Myself)**

It should be noted that Whitman self published *Leaves of Grass* with a portrait of himself to accompany the opening page. Upon researching portraits of his time, we notice that his stance and dress differs considerably from the time of his contemporaries such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Whitman posed several times for photographs as shown in a gallery of images from archives (Whitman Archives, Folsom and Price, 2017). The change from a formal dress to a “walking” Whitman is significant as his choice for the first publication of *Leaves of Grass* (Genoways, 2017). This image remained part of his legacy with the long hair and long beard that was not fashionable amongst contemporary intellectuals. The hat is another point of departure of a man who needed practical protection to walk in the sun. It is R.W. Emerson’s recommendation (printed on the binding of 1856 edition) of *Leaves of Grass* that would launch this project into public acceptance and Whitman polished and revised it to the end of his life (1892) leaving behind his literary legacy.

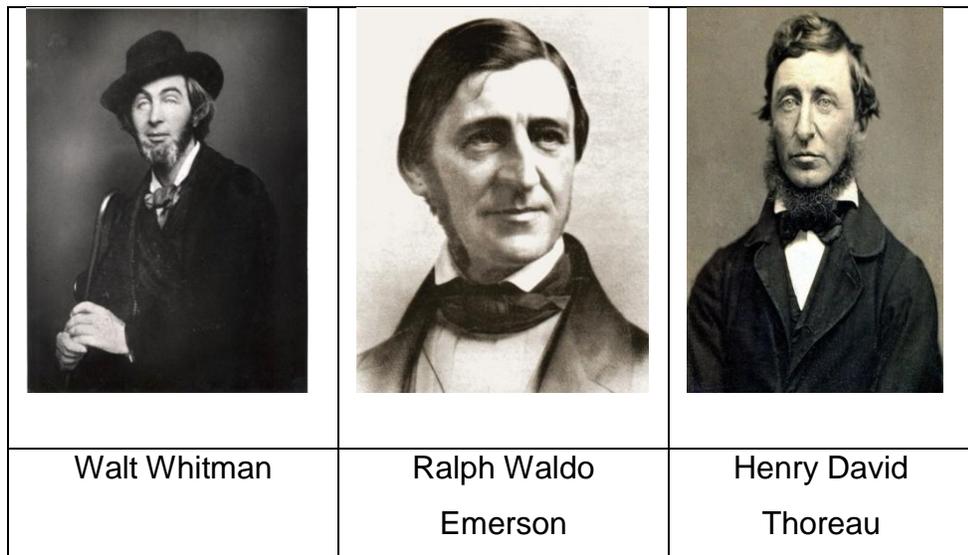


Figure 69 Portraits of Whitman (1848) & Contemporaries mid-1800



Figure 70 Leaves of Grass Editions & Inside Cover Portrait

Walt Whitman stood lonely on his patch of grass proclaiming to the world his unique style. He typeset the book to fit into a pocket. The style comes out of a freshly born native son on American soil. It was in the middle of the nation's greatest toil, the eve of the American Civil War. Democracy is declared in 1776, but by 1865, the question of slavery invokes its citizens to a call to arms and Whitman's poetry stands up in the wake of this turbulent time. Walt Whitman is a product of the first generations to believe they are a "new voice" upon a new nation separating them from Europe as R.W. Emerson had proclaimed in his speech 'Nature' (Emerson, 2003). It is in this literary change of the Americans that Whitman self proclaims in his "Song of Myself" as a rhythm clocked by his heart in a free verse that parallels the "free world." In his opening marketing scheme, he puts forth an anonymous letter to hail cheer for the chains to be broken of literary styles as noted by Price in *The Contemporary Reviews magazine in September 1855 entitled "Walt Whitman and His Poems"* (Whitman and Price, 1855).

The reference to "real things" vs. "unbearably artificial" underlines Whitman's proclamation of a new style highlighting straightforwardness. He wants to be the voice of the United States, original yet a starting point of a movement of a "great succession of poets" to come after his footsteps. The outdoor air and subjects to discuss in his poetic lines are to him "freshness of expression" where not even Emerson had been inclined to touch. The evidence of the self-made man of the new nation drew on the concept of "self-reliance" as the form of fitness that one could aspire to attain mentally and physically (Whitman Archives, 2016).

Whitman's writes his own introduction for the new poet (himself):

1. Must not the true American poet indeed absorb all others, and present a new and far more ample and vigorous type?
2. Has not the time arrived for a **school of live writing** and tuition consistent with the principles of these poems? consistent with the **free spirit of this age**, and with the American truths of politics? consistent with geology, and astronomy, and all science and human physiology? consistent with the sublimity of immortality and the **directness of common sense**?
3. If in this poem the **United States have found their poetic voice**, and taken measure and form, is it any more than a beginning? Walt Whitman himself disclaims singularity in his work, and announces the coming after him of **great successions of poets**, and that he but lifts his finger to give the signal.
4. Was he not needed? Has not literature been bred in and in long enough? Has it not become **unbearably artificial**?
5. Shall a man of faith and practice in the **simplicity of real things** be called eccentric, while the disciple of the fictitious school writes without question?
6. Shall it still be the amazement of the light and dark that **freshness of expression** is the rarest quality of all?
7. You have come in good time, Walt Whitman! In opinions, in manners, in costumes, in books, in the aims and occupancy of life, in associates, in poems, conformity to all unnatural and tainted customs passes without remark, while **perfect naturalness**, health, faith, **self-reliance**....

**Figure 71 Fragments from *The Contemporary Reviews 1855***

The break from form in his free verse is remarked upon at the time of publication and until today is a symbolic parting of ways from European poetic influence. In Whitman, the American poet is born. Longfellow was prior to Whitman having been born in 1807 and settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts within walking distance of Harvard and relatively close to Emerson. The style of Longfellow remains European with its meter and narrative distancing himself from the subject as poet (Longfellow, 1855). David Frost was born after Whitman in 1873 (Frost, 1915). Yet he continues the European meter and even rhyme style in his quaint observations of nature, albeit eloquent and profound. However, these poets did not distinguish themselves as American poets from the United States. On the other hand, Emily Dickerson was born in 1830 holds a rare place in poetics on par with Whitman for that era and can be found in the international as well as the domestic sphere (Dickinson, 1862). Unlike Whitman, the aforementioned poets were all included in the canon of American poetry as part of the United States primary school curriculum.

**“Song of Hiawatha”**

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1855)

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,  
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,  
At the doorway of his wigwam,  
In the pleasant Summer morning,  
Hiawatha stood and waited.  
All the air was full of freshness,  
All the earth was bright and joyous,  
And before him, through the sunshine,  
Westward toward the neighboring forest  
Passed in golden swarms the Ahmo,  
Passed the bees, the honey-makers,  
Burning, singing in the sunshine...

**Figure 72 Fragments of “Song of Hiawatha”**

**The Road not Taken**

By Robert Frost (1915)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could...

**Figure 73 Fragment of D. Frost's "The Road Not Taken"**

**668**

By Emily Dickinson (1862)

"Nature" is what we see—  
The Hill—the Afternoon—  
Squirrel—Eclipse— the Bumble bee—  
Nay—Nature is Heaven—  
Nature is what we hear—  
The Bobolink—the Sea—  
Thunder—the Cricket—  
Nay—Nature is Harmony—  
Nature is what we know—  
Yet have no art to say—  
So impotent Our Wisdom is  
To her Simplicity.

**Figure 74 Emily Dickerson's "668" Poem**

On the contrary, Whitman has been reserved for high school or university students to appreciate and was the forerunner of the “Beat” poets with his free verse. Whereas Dickenson was a recluse, Whitman was amongst the people, and thus he proclaimed himself the poet of the United States. A voice from within that spoke of the people’s dialect and yet called us back upon the ages past with references to Greek and Latin poetry. Whitman was the bridge for American young poets who could read Dante (thanks to Longfellow translations) and Virgil to extract the wisdom in a new voice of their own. Whitman’s repetition of a word at the beginning of a line replaces the formal meter and he offers a refreshing poetic devise of emphasis as a rhythm of his own. It is the beat of the repetition. Whitman becomes the voice of an American who lived, walked and worked side by side with others to understand their joy, agony and dilemmas.

**Leaves of Grass (33)**

Over the western persimmon—over the long-leav’d corn—over the  
delicate blue-flower flax;  
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer there  
with the rest;  
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the breeze;  
  
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low  
scragged limb  
Walking the path worn in the grass, and beat through the leaves of the  
brush;

**Figure 75 Fragments from Leaves of Grass Stanza 33**

Another important mechanism of Whitman is his treatment of men and women as equals throughout *Leaves of Grass*.

**Leaves of Grass (21)**

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,  
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,  
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of  
men.

**Figure 76 Fragments of Leaves of Grass Stanza 21**

Whitman's dedications to small details of his walks are found throughout his poems and he moves us to bend down to his level of observation including names of flowers, grass and trees. The word "earth" appears more than "nature" as if to bring us down on the ground and away from the philosophical debates plagued by Emerson. In fact, in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, "nature" appeared slightly over 60 times. However, "earth" emerged over 150 times. The emphasis on the planet "Earth" as well as "earth" as soil is distinct from nature for Whitman. He captured the essence of life at morning sun-break and he was conscious of his Self in the world as well as others crossing his path.

**Leaves of Grass (21)**

Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!  
Earth of departed sunset! Earth of the mountains misty-topt!  
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!  
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!  
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my  
sake!  
Far-swooping elbowed earth! Rich apple-blossomed earth!  
Smile, for your lover comes!

**Figure 77 Fragments of Leaves of Grass (Earth) 21**

**Leaves of Grass (24)**

That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it  
really be,  
A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more  
than the  
metaphysics of books.

**Leaves of Grass (31)**

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-  
work of  
the stars,  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of  
sand, and  
the egg of the wren,  
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest,  
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors  
of heaven,  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn  
all machinery,

**Figure 78 Fragments of Leaves of Grass (24) Men and Women**

**a) *Non-Tactile Walk***

The Hempstead Plains is a prairie of grasslands that has been designated as an ecological preservation and is around three miles from Whitman's birthplace in Huntington, Long Island. The visual perspective of the grasslands is open and free like Whitman's verse. The tall grasses were more colourful than I expected. Considering the biological dimension of the grasses as recounted by my guide at Hempstead Plains, I felt a strong pull to visit the sand dunes on the East Coast of Long Island in order to experience the grasses original state. It was there that I had a first-hand look at how the grasses take a hold on the sandy slope. This was how the prairie, Hempstead Plains, came to exist just a few miles inland after the grasses transformed the sandy dunes into soil and eventually a prairie.

The grasses on the Hempstead plains can be linked to the mid-west and their long stalks were useful for basket making in all parts of the territory. The September season was spring for the grasses and wild flower blooms of various colours attracted my eye. My walk with a biologist and a poet helped me pay attention to the names of the grasses. Later those names became imbedded in my poetry to distinguish the form and texture of the grasses.

At one moment, I stayed behind in the grass imagining Whitman. My emotions were overwhelming with the breeze, the sky and the sense of arriving in the heartland of Whitman's leaves of grass. The visual perspective amongst the grasses was like an insect that crouches low in a jungle while the world spins around. The others had already chatted their way back to the visitor centre. As I walked back in solitude with the colourful blooms of yellow, ivory, pink, purple, and copper laden stalks, I paused to pencil sketch in my notepad briefly.

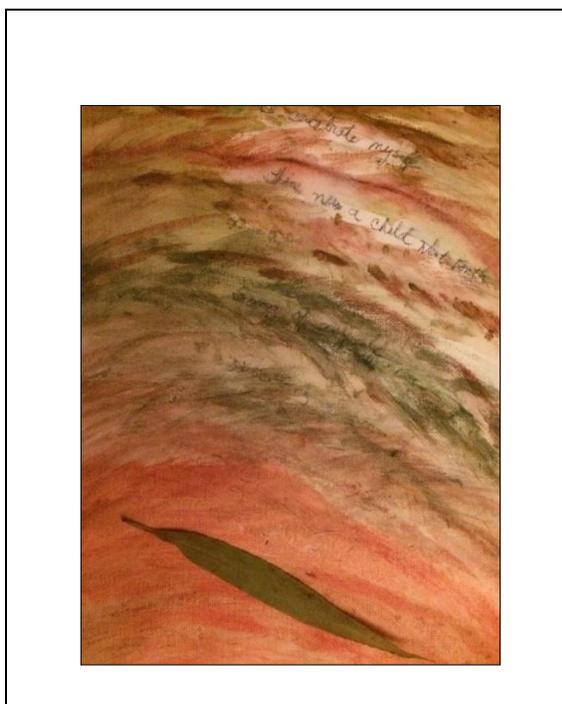


**Figure 79 Whitman Walk Sketchpad**

### *9. Studio Non-Tactile Colours*

The Whitman non-tactile walks took place in New York and I travelled over the Atlantic Ocean back to my studio in Spain. This meant colours and ideas had time to incubate. This had been the first phase for studio work and it took 15 days before I would start. Given that time lapse between walking and studio work, I noticed how the perception memory worked into my sessions. The sketches in my pad were sparse and accompanied by scanty notes. Nevertheless, my enthusiasm with the colours had not dimmed. I repeated this time lapse of 15 days (minimum) for the tactile walk and in the remaining three cases. It modified my experimental stage (1) to enhance the experimental stage (2) with a time control mechanism to test the sensory memories over time. I experimented with words in pencil and then acrylics overlaid in strokes that reminded me of the grass, long and thin. These first sessions served to explore text and colour with Whitman's words from "Leaves of Grass."

I had researched the poem to find his definition of 'grass' and found him telling the story of a child that "came forth" and asked, "what is grass?" The words seem to disappear into the palette. I also liked this first artwork rotated on a 90-degree angle for aesthetics. It had been originally painted horizontally with the grass shooting upwards on the page. The real leaf was added to emphasize the term "leaf."



**Figure 80 A-Musing Grass 1 Whitman Non-tactile**

### *10. Studio Non-Tactile Poems*

The poetry was expressed in lines that were the colours of the grass and wild flower blooms. The entire table could be turned sideways and resembled grass stalks. I began to see how versatile the word could be on the page. My visual perception was quite strong in relation to the text and I drew on the early concrete poets from France and Brazil arranging texts to match the concept of the poem. This happen naturally in the case of my Whitman notes.

**Location: New York, Hempstead Plains.**

Significance: First time encounter with  
Whitman grasslands

Season: Blooming time, September late

Friends o Hempstead Plains, conservation  
NGO

Guided walk: Accompanied by Biologist Betsy  
Gulotta,

Process>Pre:

Read Leaves of Grass

Studied Whitman's walks

Researched Whitman's birthplace

Analyzed "beat" of poem

Investigated other grasslands on the island

Journeyed to other places of Whitman  
significance

During:

heard the names of the grass

jotted down a few

Poetry workshop

Walk, Stop, Smell

Wonder, Note-taking

Wandering, Contemplating

Sitting in the grass

Laying down in the grass

Alone feeling the grass on my back

Post: Writing

Mixing colours

Brushing strokes

Vibrant copper

Fuzzy dark green

**Figure 81 Visual Poetry Whitman**

### *11. Tactile walk*

My second walk was a tactile one, where I understood how Whitman felt the leaves of grass. The tactile walk in Hempstead Plains was initiated by my introduction on how to touch the grasses from Prof. Gulotta without damaging them. She enjoyed touching them as she talked to me on these visits. I had a surprise: some were smooth and some were rough. The visual effect deceived me at times. There had been an autistic group of children just prior to my tactile walk earlier in the week. Interestingly it was noted from a guide at the visitor centre that their communication was somewhat opened up by touching the grasses. This seems to follow my own lines of research in tactile perception within natural settings and language. Further research in this area would be an extension of this project.

The visit was late summer in August 2014. Some wild flowers amongst the grasses were blooming and some were not. In this walk, I was left alone to explore using my Flaneur method. The long, sleek, green stems in one variety felt like a perfect basket weaving material, while another was dry and bristly. One particular stalk stood out tall and was wildly bushy at the tip. Its form and texture reminded me of Whitman's beard and his uniqueness. Later I found the name of this grass: Native Bush Clover.

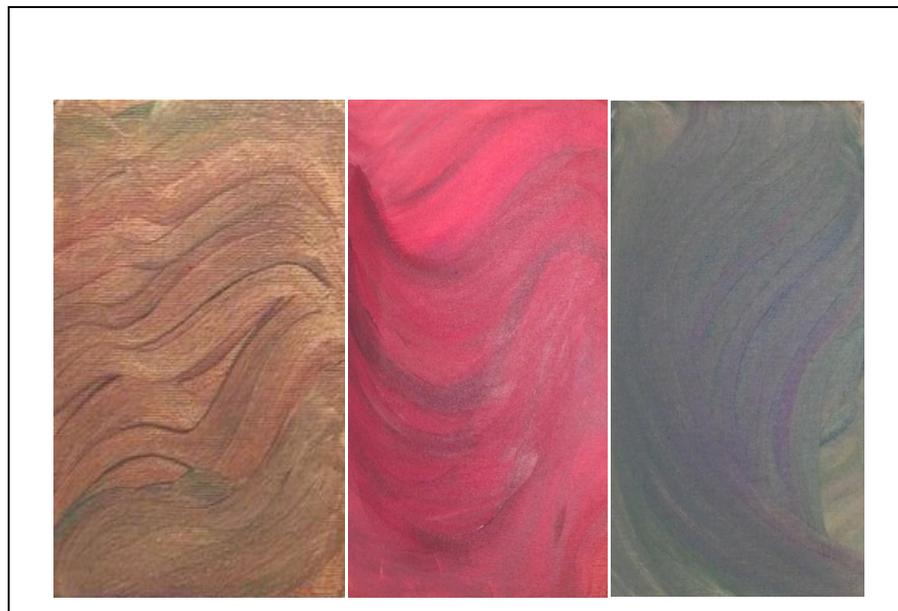


**Figure 82 Native Bush Clover Whitman's Beard Image**

The paths in the grass in winter are erased with the snow only with spring and summer activities are they made anew. Consequently, I was welcomed to stray off the beaten path and randomly walk in any direction for my research. Stepping lightly over the plains, I knelt down to peer into the stalks and get a perspective from the insect level, while at the same time stroking the length of the grass. I was careful not to disturb the seeds. The breeze that day added a dimension of freedom on the prairie. I have always loved prairies and meadows from my childhood, so I felt at home. However, I was drawn to the underside of the grasses and the deep tangles that abound at the ground level with the tiny creatures that walked alongside my fingers. In younger days, we ran through the wild clover in spring celebrating its tall growth. We hid in its labyrinth before summer when it all died back. In my tactile walk, this element of running was opposite; I was compelled to slow down my traverse for periods of tactile enchantment.

## 12. Studio Tactile Colours

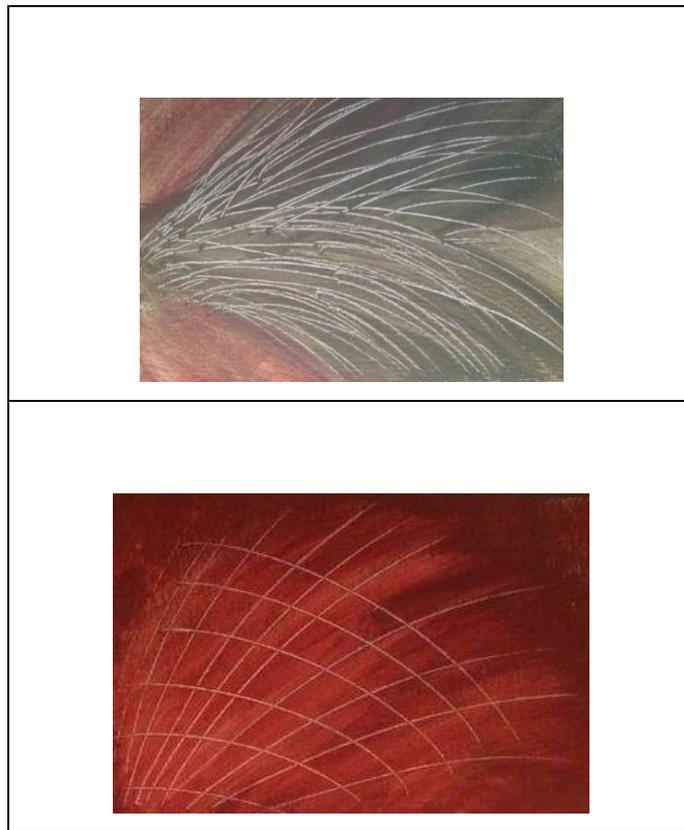
I waited 15 days before exploring the tactile walk in the studio. I found this incubation period essential to allow my tactile memories to mature before transforming the blank canvas. Even though I was excited to explore the next step of the added component of the tactile, I held back. I explored brushes of varied character: round, square, soft, hard, long and short. This part of the studio work was rewarding as it included a discovery of which brush would best express my tactile perception. I utilized the three primary colours to create my palette. I found this elemental method allowed me to access the colours that represented my sensory perception experiences more fully. Texture seemed to follow this process with brush strokes and choice of brush. I also used a scratch off method for the basket effect.



**Figure 83 Tactile Palette Grass Hempstead Plains (Studio)**



**Figure 84 Tactile palette blossoms Hempstead Plains (Studio)**



**Figure 85 Tactile Palette Scratch-Off Hempstead Plains (Studio)**

### 13. *Studio Tactile Poems*

The study of Whitman as a poet and his biography led me to approach this set of poems with references to the “Bard” as he called himself---a lover of poetry. His lifelong project “Leaves of Grass” had been a long reading in my lifetime. Furthermore, the origin of Whitman’s vision of grass finally became evident to me during this tactile walk. To me Whitman was the essence of the native bush clover as plain and common to the prairie combined with the endangered species called the Sandplain Gerardia with its hot pink petals. I saw him wild as the Indigo and classic as Queen Anne’s lace. He was the rhythm of the Big Blue Stem (Bluegrass). I heard his Song, and heard “Myself,” as I touched.



**Figure 86 Hempstead Plains' Grasses**

### **Lonely Bearded Bard of the Plains**

Native Bush clover  
Your silvery beard  
Solemn in the field  
Endures beyond  
Other brightly fragrant youth  
Sand Plain Gerardia  
Indian Hemp  
Wild Indigo  
Even Queen Anne's Lace  
Older than them all  
You sing your song  
O' Bard of the Grasses  
I saw you standing  
Still to the wind  
Remains of wisdom  
Mellow hues of the plains  
Reddish silver tones  
Elegantly larger  
Than slim Big Blue Stem  
No one dared  
To touch your beard  
I did, I felt a tinge  
Of nostalgia  
The poet in the grass  
Never too high  
Never too low  
Mis-under-stood  
Mis-taken  
For a weed  
Shall we forget not  
"blades of grass"  
For plains men and women  
"leaves of grass" for all  
Who came forth  
And tugged on your beard  
Asking "What is the grass?"  
You pondered the answer  
None at hand  
I find you here wandering about,  
"How could I answer the child?"  
Your beard growing fuller by the age  
Like the Native Bush Clover  
Still holding out

**Grass /Roots/Hues**

Blue/grass/green/grass  
Sandy/grass/misty/grass  
Ochre grass/copper grass  
Sea grass/beach grass  
Plains grass/prairie grass  
Always/making/roots

**Walk on the Tame Side**

Whitman under your arm  
Stop and breathe  
Exclaim, "Oh"  
Feel the grasses  
Wild, untamed  
Touch her blooms  
White lace,  
Bird Foot Violets  
Wild Indigo  
Black Eye Susans  
Know how Whitman  
Tamed our native tongues  
Replacing blades *with* leaves

**Our Elders: Stalks of Grass**

Down by the shore  
I touched Sea grass  
On the dunes  
Trans-versed my poem  
Into Sandy Loam  
Turquoise Lichen side by side  
Riding on the wind  
Stained glass mosaic  
Pierced by the Sun  
Reflected our origins  
No one knew their names  
So we called them  
As we pleased  
Even though we mustn't  
The Elders were once young  
A tiny single strand  
Metamorphous over time  
Stalks standing firm  
On Earth, they have tilled  
For once their hues  
Gathered salt from ocean breeze  
They have transgressed  
Giving their lives  
For basket weavers

To store precious grain  
To nourish us, their offspring  
From cradle to foot path  
A child walks beside the Elders  
Stumbling, "fetching it to me with full  
hands"  
Switchback Grass  
Indian Hemp  
Blue Toad Flax  
"I do not know what it is any more than he  
(sic)"  
How easily we forget our Elders?

**Walt Whitman's Sleepers: All for One**

Where hath you've been?  
Sleeping again?  
Like a judge  
Resting from the court  
Like a juror  
Relieved from civic duty  
A working man  
Retired from a pounding hammer  
A working woman  
Resting from a pounding hoe  
The student over books  
Collapsing in the twilight  
The professor sifting through notes  
(sleep) walks in lonely nights  
All for One  
One for All  
Sleep=ers  
You all have been  
You all are  
You all will Be  
From deep inside the womb  
To down inside the tomb  
You, I, they  
We all are Sleepers  
For only Mother's milk  
Like a silk worm  
Working all day  
Working all night  
Never sleeps  
Hence our Mother, our Earth  
She hath been  
Calling you  
To wake up!

**Walking under One cloud**

Open-air grasses  
Where no trees tread  
Nor bushes hinder  
My walk  
Serene  
Clean in wide space  
Sky above to navigate  
No land-marks  
I linger  
Roaming  
Neither here nor there  
Grassy field  
Fresh, lets the wind  
Pass through  
My heart  
Need not wind around  
Branches, trunks  
Free to celebrate  
Myself,  
Sky opens  
To the Grass and I  
Under one cloud

**Grasslands Know no Path**

Insects on the grasslands  
Leave no path for you  
You walk or ride  
Making your own path  
Winter snow comes  
Your footprints disappear  
Springtime renews  
You walk  
A fresh path  
Summertime remains  
You are sure on the path  
Clear by habit  
Autumn breaks your path  
Rain and mud confuse  
Winter overcomes  
You succumb  
Your path erased  
Wild Re-turns  
Springtime Again  
You find a new path?  
Or do you re-member  
Walk gently  
For the Mantis are praying

**Figure 87 Whitman tactile poems**

#### *14. Writing Process*

The Whitman tactile walk poetry was laden with references to *Leaves of Grass* as I felt I was creating my own song and at the same time giving homage to the poet; adding to the long list of international poets who wrote an ode to Whitman (Perlman, Folsom and Campion, 1998). The native and non-native flora was a joy to research for names and pick out from my sketches for the poems. The knowledge of how grass contributes to the ecological stratum of vegetation parallels how poetry is the foundation upon which literature is rooted (Homer). This element of twin action stimulated my writing process. Having grown up in the aftermath of the beat era and as a poet, the free verse was natural. I was sprung back to my origins in poetic style. Backslashes intruded on punctuation in “Grass/Roots/Hues” and the place of the “elder” as a lyrical forbearer was solidified in “Our Elders Stalks of Grass.” These poems came out quite quickly as a wind whispering through the grass signalling my forefinger to listen to the voice echoing on the plains; Whitman? The Flaneur method gave me the poem “Grasslands Know No Path” as I literally was meandering from patch to patch as free as a child. I truly appreciated that freedom to “touch and be touched” out on the plains in solitary and yet surrounded by the world. I had space to reflect and walk on the stems with my fingertips, and flutter through the breeze as gentle as a ladybird.

The touch words analysis of Whitman's poetry is outlined in the following table.

Whitman	Poem
1. go to the bank by the wood...I am mad for it to be in contact with me.	Leaves of Grass
2. My respiration and inspiration....the beating of my heart....the passing of blood and air through my lungs	Leaves of Grass
3. The feeling of health....the full-noon trill....the song of me rising from bed and meeting the sun	Leaves of Grass
4. And mossy scabs of the wormfence, and heaped stones, and elder and mullen and pokeweed	Leaves of Grass
5. I resist anything better than my own diversity, And breathe the air and leave plenty after me,	Leaves of Grass
6. This is the touch of my lips to yours	Leaves of Grass
7. My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite	Leaves of Grass
8. I am the poet of the body, And I am the poet of the soul	Leaves of Grass
9. Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake! Far-swooping elbowed earth!	Leaves of Grass
10. With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green, A sprig with its flower I break.	When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed

11. As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,	When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed
12. And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.	When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed
13. My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still, My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will	O Captain! My Captain!
14. Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.	O Captain! My Captain!
15. In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time, Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.	When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer
16. Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages, with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind;	Come up from the Fields, Father
17. Open the envelope quickly; O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd; O a strange hand writes for our dear son--O stricken mother's soul!	Come up from the Fields, Father
18. By day her meals untouch'd--then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,	Come up from the Fields, Father
19. Darest thou now, O Soul, Walk out with me toward the Unknown Region, Where neither ground is for the feet, nor any path to follow?	Darest Thou Now, O Soul
20. Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,	Darest Thou Now, O Soul
21. Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds, bound us.	Darest Thou Now, O

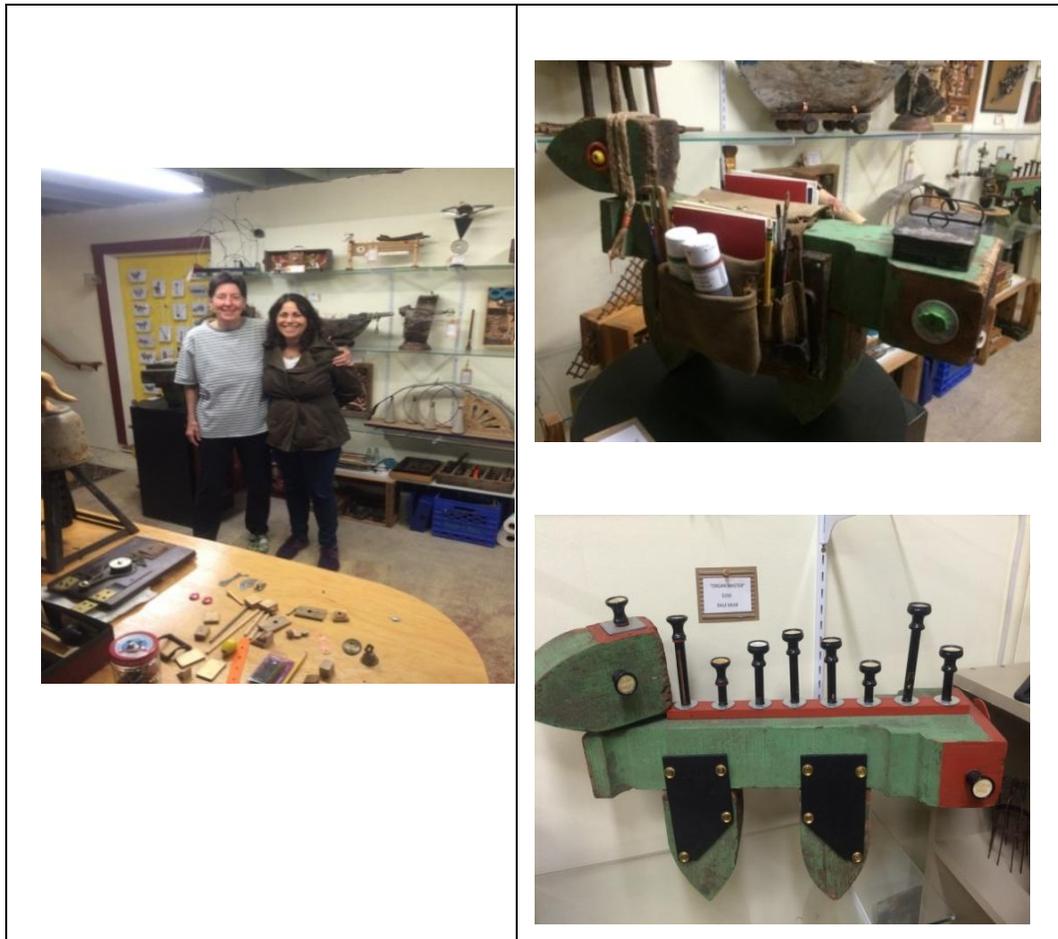
### *15. Art process and materials*

The process to find the materials for Whitman began with my intention to find cedar wood heritage shingles. It is well-known that Whitman's birthplace was built by his father in Huntington, Long Island, and the cedar shingle was the material of the roof. However, the origin of the cedar was more elusive for the state of New York. One day during one of my Flaneur strolls in Ashland, Oregon on research for Snyder, I did find a lead. I came across an artist workshop that was not apparent from the shop window. Out of curiosity, I wandered into the art supply shop for supplies and found a cellar full of artist spaces. Here is where I was introduced to sculptures made out of old building materials in the same line as my desired 3D poetic canvas. I followed the path to a second-hand dealer of vintage materials and was able to extract circa 1940 Snyder tin and 1800 Whitman cedar shingles in one stop.

#### **a) Cedar shingles from New York vs. Oregon**

I was thrilled to find the roof tile (ridge cover) for Snyder in Oregon, near his birthplace. The extra surprise was the cedar shingles from a roof were sold separately rather than sold in a bundle of 300 shingles as had been my dilemma in New York. Ascertaining a few vintage heritage cedar shingles was more difficult and yet I was suddenly presented with the single shingles in Oregon. The owner clarified my doubts and showed me a photo of men in front of the large cedar tree hanging over his desk. He indicated that it was possible that New York imported the cedar shingles from the West Coast during Whitman's time, as cedar was scarce to find there on the northern East coast.

**Final Choice:** The cedar shingles from the Oregon vintage shop could be used for my project without an integrity flaw given the possibility of importation by New Yorkers at the time of Whitman's birth. I fell in love with the ruggedness of the worn out shingles and the smooth backside that had been protected from the weather. This seemed to fit my poet, Whitman. He was rough in appearances but sensitive as he expressed in his poetry.



**Figure 88 Dale Muir, Sculptor, Ashland, Oregon**



**Figure 89 Orion's Building Materials, Medford Oregon**

**b) Wood Burning vs. Engraving**

Although I was accustomed to using carving tools for Japanese wood block printing, I thought it would destroy the vintage cedar shingle. Hence I wanted to try another method. I began by burning the wood with a small soldering iron using points. I thought it would be closer to the rugged look I was trying to achieve with Whitman. I tested two ways of burning. Both styles were messy to me. Then, I used the hand held engraver with the diamond head to test it out on wood.



Figure 90 Whitman wood burning test with soldering iron



Figure 91 Whitman wood engraving test

**Final Choice:** The hand held engraver was my final choice as it let the letters stand out but it was not too overpowering to take away from the actual material. The result was also more elegant in my opinion. This natural elegance seemed to capture Whitman's long lyrical poem as a song.

**c) Engraving test on heritage shingle; front vs. back**

The final stage of the Whitman study coincided with my solo show in the Design Centre in the University of Sunderland in March 2017 (see appendix). I had already shipped the shingles to England to the University and the final engraving would take place in the campus. I had a limited time span of ten days to prepare the exhibit before opening.

The challenge with the cedar heritage shingles was their variation in weathering and it was necessary to consider the distressed surfaces. At first I thought I would engrave the front side of the shingle, where it had been exposed to the weather elements. However it became "literally" impossible to "go against the grain." On the weather-distressed side, the shingle was fragile and working against the grain tore up the heritage piece. After three letters, I abandoned this idea. I turned the shingle over and began again on the back side. It was still cutting through against the grain, but tolerable and the text seem to integrate sufficiently with the heritage shingle.

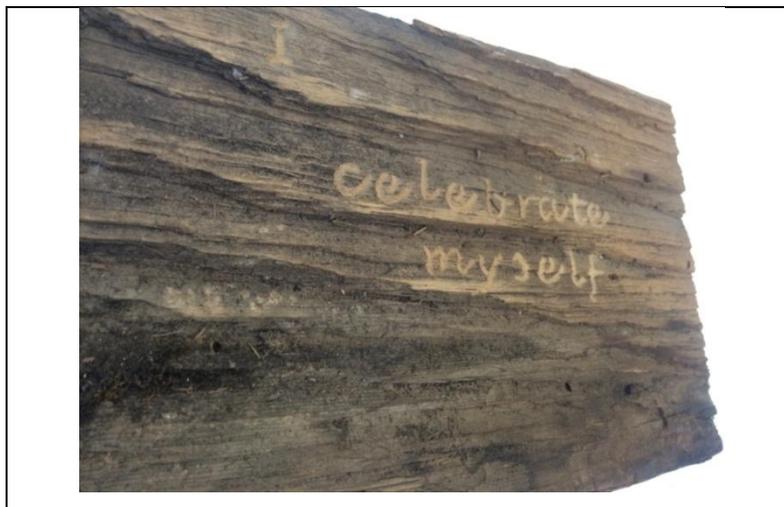
**Final choice:** The back side would be where the text was engraved. Each letter posed its own resistance due to curves. For example, the letter "h" was harder to engrave than the letter "n." As I engraved each letter, I was deeply engaged in that particular letter. I enjoyed this intense concentration on each letter to form a word. Letters began to have a different meaning to me during this process with the cedar shingle. What is it about a "t" that goes against the grain or not? Why did the "n" seem to have smoother interaction in its curves in comparisons to the "h"?

The process was slower and more tedious than burning, but these reflections during the engraving inspired a new consciousness of the letter and the material. The close contact with the fragility of the material in its distressed state was additionally revealing for comprehending the character of cedar.

I did decide to engrave one shingle on the front distressed side. I chose a less distressed shingle that was fragile but its softness had aged the hard wood to meet with less resistance. It was like working with a seasoned poet, calm and secure in its place allowing me to enter into its heart.



**Figure 92 Whitman's front distressed (top) Back engraving (bottom)**



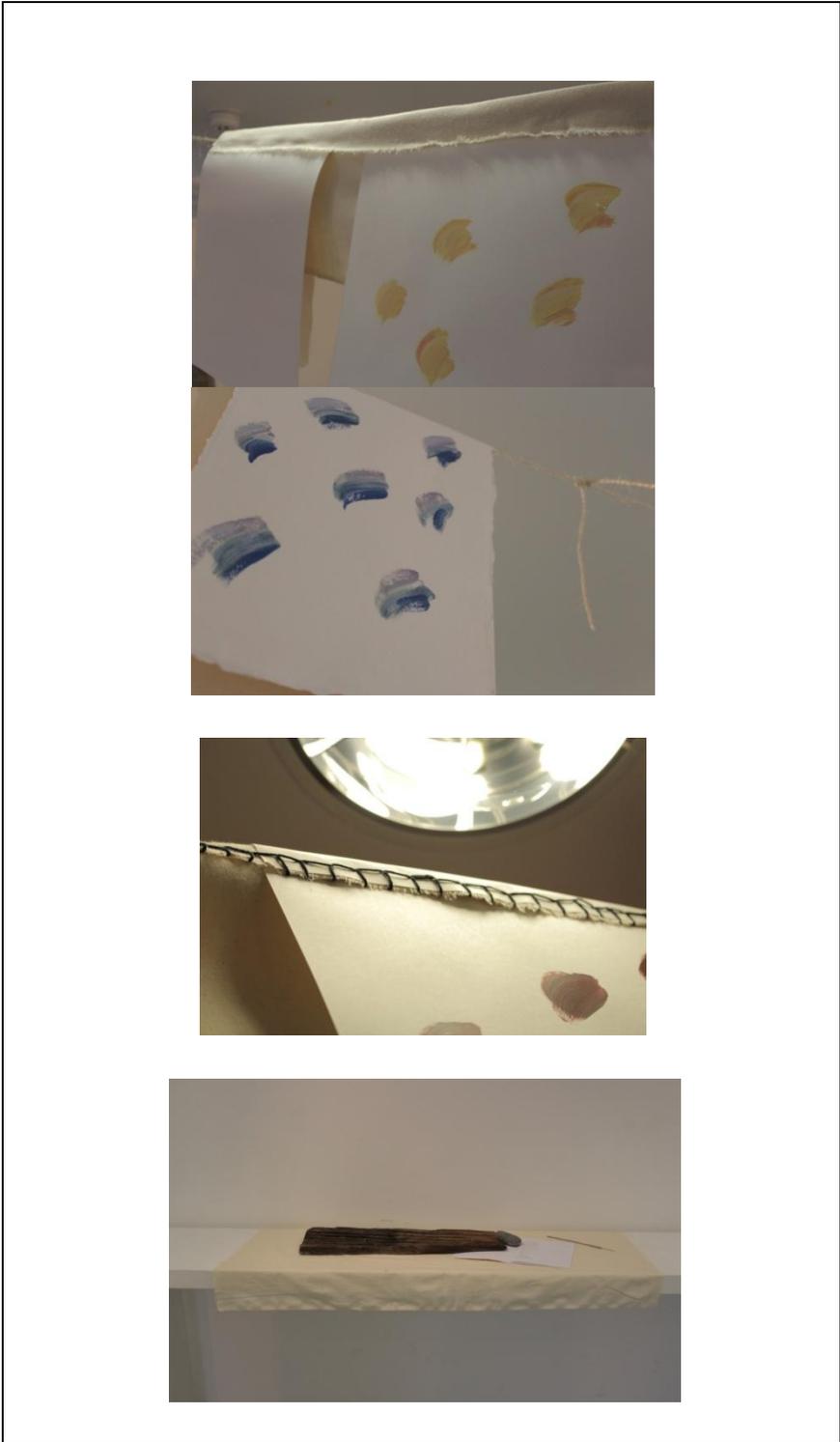
**Figure 93 Whitman final front distressed engraving "Celebrate Myself"**

**d) Fabric choice & Colour palette**

The fabric for Whitman was cotton linen. I chose a light beige natural colour that had some cotton fibre strands visible throughout the weave, which reminded me of the grasslands. Whitman was notorious for sitting for photos in a nightshirt and this material resembled that outfit in his photos.

**e) Outcome**

I presented the fabric on a long white table up against a blank white wall with the heritage cedar shingle placed on top. As soon as I laid it out, I felt peace. It set the tone for the whole show. The colour palette for Whitman was reproduced on paper and made into a banner to hang among the other four poets. These banners were hand stitched like the binding of a book and then glued. Both processes fit into the theme of poetry and books. I had had experience with sewing from an early age and this was reasserted with the bookbinding idea, albeit masters are far more skilled. The sawdust, cedar and glue were reminiscent of my grandfather's workbench. It was interesting to be in one moment working with wood and then with thread. I felt I was activating my full gender identity that expressed my sense of being a gender-neutral poet.





**Figure 94 Final Outcome Whitman Presentation Design Centre 2017**

The colour palette banners were hung with jute that blended in with my grassland theme of Whitman. Jute is rough and burns the fingers, while the cotton thread that I hand-stitched the palette banners was fine and smooth. This contrast was noticeable and interesting from a tactile perspective. It had been a long time since I had used these two materials for binding or hanging. I had tested out fishing line, but it slipped through my hands and could not hold the banners. The jute was sturdy and reminded me of my travels to Bangladesh, where jute rope was used to pull boats into port. This experience with the jute brought me back in time not only to a port in a foreign country but my own childhood (tactile) when rope was made from vegetation and not from polyester. It felt like coming home to the backyard where we used to make kites with glue and string (tactile). This solo show at the Design Centre was part of the presentation for interactive public art. It is discussed in detail in the appendix.

## **Synopsis of Case**

The Whitman case was a deep ecological experience that taught me about grasses and the beginning of vegetation. A knowledge of the Native American names of the grasses and the guided tour with a local poet and biologist culminated in a richer experience than on my own. This was the first encounter with the community for my research project and it was well received. One of my Whitman drawings was donated (framed and printed) in honour of Whitman and the Friends of Hempstead Plains as a gift. I learned a lot about the caretakers of this ecological reserve and the case study was stimulating as well as emotionally satisfying due to the role of Whitman in the cannon of literature in the USA. Brush strokes began to appear as an extension of my fingertips in the tactile studio sessions. This aspect of the creation process was an interesting aspect that I had not taken into consideration before the Whitman case.

Summary: Whitman's grasslands slipped through my fingertips and ranged from a long smooth rounded tactile experience to a dry flat chapped sensation. It fooled the fingers visually. Furthermore, the native grasses were attractive for their names "Switchback" and "Long Blue" grass from a cultural point of view. Weaving baskets seemed like the next step to this tactile walk in the grasslands. Feeling my back brushed by the stalks of older grass contributed to a deeper understanding of Whitman hidden meaning in the "leaves of grass." The touch of the native clover stretched my imagination to the beard of Whitman, a native son on the sandy loam of America. The egg yolk yellow, robust magenta, hot pink were apparent in the palette during the post studio work. The abstract images of the tactile walk captured the sensation of the grasslands and contrasted with the visual studio work that was more literal with grass images painted over written words of Whitman's poem. The tactile re-play poetry delved into the historical memoirs of Whitman and pulled out the native plant names as homage to their indigenous ancestors.

## Gary Snyder

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### **Snyder & Mt. Tamalpais**

#### *Introduction*

The youngest of the four poets and still living at the time of this research project is Gary Snyder. I went to Northern California to study his biography and interviews from libraries along with his poetry focusing on tactile inputs. Previous research on-line gave me insights into his works. Snyder's poem "Rip Rap" had been partly inspired by his burden lifting and placing rocks as he participated in building a trail in Yosemite Park. Snyder's tactile perception was deepened during that time of his life according to an interview published in the Paris Review (Weinberger, 1996).

Furthermore, Snyder believed in the act of walking as a meditation. His broadened awareness of nature and its role in poetry were due to his experiences in Japan, where he studied 12 years in a Zen monastery. His poems and letters of correspondence with fellow poets gave me insight into his philosophy as a Buddhist poet. He was raised in Oregon. He attended UC Berkeley. Briefly, he lived on the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais (Mt. Tam) while in the San Francisco Bay area. However, he eventually settled in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range (White Mountains in the North) in eastern California, for the latter part of his life. The Sierra Nevada Mountain Range runs along the Eastern border of California from North to South along Nevada. It is the same name as the original Sierra Nevada in Granada, Spain meaning "snowy mountains." The search for Snyder's poem for this project encompassed a set of poems from the Sierra Nevada Mountains. I found a reference to rock paintings from a tribe mentioned in Snyder's poetry. It was located near Little Lake in Southern California on the lower side of the Sierras Nevada Mountains (Van Tilburg, Hull and Bretney, 2012). I had already identified the tactile connection to rock art. Fascinated with this historical thread as it played out in Snyder's work, I continued on my quest for the poem that could be linked around a path in the Sierra White Mountains. Nonetheless, not one poem could satisfy my vision of walking in his footsteps in that location.

Finally, a poem appeared in his collection about mountains that was directly related to one of his walks. The poem is called "*The Circumambulation of Mt. Tamalpais.*" It was a poem dedicated to concept of "opening the mountain." Snyder along with other poets from the San Francisco area participated in giving homage to Mt. Tamalpais. They chanted while walking around the mountain in order to clear the mind. Mt. Tam served as part of the watershed for San Francisco and Snyder knew its significance for the whole area. Jack Kerouac wrote a fictional novel as a loose account of the experience, *Dharma Bums* (Kerouac, 1959), which expressed his time with Snyder's at the cabin on Mt. Tam. I decided to utilize Mt. Tam and began to determine how to approach walks on Mt. Tam. Snyder had marked the path by dividing his poem in ten sections linked to landmarks around the mountain.

In addition, there has been a continuum of walks every year after Snyder's original homage for 50 years. Documentation of the event was published later in the form of a photo journal and the path to follow (Davis and Scott, 2006). Snyder's poem of this walk on Mt. Tam had been transferred to woodcuts and published (Killion and Snyder, 2013). However, to my knowledge, no 3D sculpture had been made in his honour. In the back of my mind, I wanted to meet Snyder and have an interview. I attempted to contact him about his tactile perception in the creative process of writing poetry and of walking as his inspiration. Nevertheless, he was reclusive and my emails to University of California, Davis had no response. I continued my project to walk in his footsteps in Mt. Tam relocating myself to the San Francisco vicinity for the summer. One fine day waiting at a bus stop in Northern California 50 miles north of Mt. Tam, by chance I met Snyder's biographer (McNeil, 1983) from Berkeley in a friendly chat about my thesis project. She was also waiting for the bus. It was surreal that in this unrelated minor act of hanging out (Flaneur), I was inspired with this conversation about Gary Snyder. We were both headed to Santa Rosa, and she wanted to put me into contact with his publisher. However, she couldn't remember the address, so she suggested we stop off at the main library. I found myself in a circle right back at the very same bookshelves where I had researched his letters and poems (Snyder, Ginsberg and Morgan, 2009). She opened a book and pointed to the publisher.

I wrote to the publisher and introduced my project. The publisher passed on my emails to Mr. Snyder and he had wished me luck on my quest. I began my walks on Mt. Tam with approval. Later I shared the image of my first Snyder 3D poetic canvas (Study I). The publisher relayed the image to Snyder and commented that it was a beautiful homage. The biographer stopped by the gallery to view it and noted that it was similar to a translation of Snyder. I continued my project for the next show. The Snyder tin roof tiles engraved with fragments of his poetry were transformed into a new 3D poetic canvas highlighting the words, “clarity of mind” as an integral part of my interactive installation in the UK with six pieces dedicated to Snyder (see appendix).

### 1. *Literary Context*

Gary Snyder was born in Oregon. He was impressed with Chinese painting during a visit to a museum and began to orient himself to the East. Even though he was emerging as a poet during the Beat era, he was fascinated with the Chinese poets. He eventually translated some of this poetry into English after his long stay in Japan and studying Buddhism. This culmination of Chinese mountain poems was published under his name along with his own poetry in one book (Snyder, 2010). Gary Snyder was aware that his work could affect his generation and benefit to the new verse of “beat” poetry. Mountains and rivers were key elements in his work on par with the Chinese poets that combined ying and yang for harmony to respect Nature. Snyder added the Zen aspect to the beat poetry group and introduced them to meditation.

Although, Chinese poetic style seeped into Snyder’s work, he also inherited Whitman’s free verse. Walking in rainy weather on Mt. Tam was influenced by Wordsworth’s stamina to walk under less than favourable circumstances in the Lake District (Heilig, 2009). Chanting from his former Buddhist monastic life left an impression on him. He incorporated this element into the poem about Mt. Tam. Furthermore, his travels to India exposed him to the deeper roots of Buddhism and Hindu nuances as presented in his poem, “Om Nama Shivaya.”

*The Circumambulation of Mt. Tamalpais*

By Gary Snyder

Walking up and around the long ridge of Tamalpais, "Bay Mountain," circling and climbing - chanting - to show respect and to clarify the mind. Philip Whalen, Allen Ginsburg, and I learned this practice in Asia. so we opened a route around Tam. It takes a day.

STAGE ONE

Muir Woods: The bed of Redwood Creek just where the Dipsea Trail crosses it. Even in the driest season of this year some running water. Mountains make springs.

Prajñāparamitā-hridaya-sūtra  
Dhāranī for Removing Disasters  
Four Vows

Splash across the creek and head up the Dipsea Trail, the steep wooded slope and into four meadows. Gold dry grass. Cows-a huge pissing, her ears out, looking around with large eyes and mottled nose. As we laugh. "-Excuse us for laughing at you." Hazy day, butterflies tan as grass that sit on silver-weathered fenceposts, a gang of crows. "I can smell fried chicken" Allen says - only the simmering California laurel leaves. The trail winds crossed and intertwining with a dirt jeep road.

TWO

A small twisted ancient interior live oak splitting a rock outcrop an hour up the trail.

Dhāranī for Removing Disasters  
The Heat Mantra  
A tiny chorten before this tree

Into the woods. Maze fence gate. Young Douglas fir, redwood, a new state of being. Sun on madrone: to the bare meadow knoll. (Last Spring a bed of wild iris about here and this time too, a lazuli bunting.)

THREE

A ring of outcropped rocks. A natural little dolmen-circle right where the Dipsea crests on the ridge. Looking down a canyon to the ocean - not so far.

Dhāranī for Removing Disasters  
Hari Om Namō Shiva

And on to Pan Toll, across the road, and up the Old Mine Trail. A doe and fawn, silvery gray. More crows.

FOUR

Rock springs. A new trickle even now-

The Sarasvatī Mantra  
Dhāranī for Removing Disasters

In the shade of a big oak spreading out the map on a picnic table. Then up the Benstein Trail to Rifle Camp, old food-cache boxes hanging from wires. A bit north, in the oak woods and rocks, a neat little saddhu hut built of dry natural bits of wood and parts of old crates; roofed with shakes and black plastic. A book called Harmony left there. Lunch by the stream, too tiny a trickle, we drink water from our bota. The food offerings are swiss cheese sandwiches, swede bread with liverwurst, salami, jack cheese, olives, gomuku-no-moto from a can, grapes, penettone with apple-currant jelly and sweet butter, oranges, and soujouki - greek walnuts in grape-juice paste. all in the shade, at Rifle Camp.

FIVE

A notable serpentine outcropping, not far after Rifle Camp.

Om Shri Maitreya  
Dhāranī for Removing Disasters

SIX

Collier Spring - in a redwood grove - water trickling out a pipe.

Dhāranī of the Great Compassionate One

California nutmeg, golden chinquapin the fruit with burrs, the chaparral. Following the North Side Trail.

SEVEN

Inspiration Point.

Dhāranī for Removing Disasters  
Mantra for Tārā

Looking down at Lagunitas. The gleam of water storage in the brushy hills. all that smog - and Mt. St. Helena faintly in the north. The houses of San Anselmo and San Rafael, once large estates...The Peacock Gap Country Club - Rocky brush climb up the North Ridge Trail.

**Figure 95 Fragments of Circumambulation of Mt. Tamalpais by Gary Snyder**

### Interview with Gary Snyder at Mt. Tam

Selections:

“When I went to Japan there were two big hills nearby called Atago and Hiei...There was a Shinto Buddhist shrine up there...and I learned from some of the priests there of one of their many practices...which was circumambulation. This involved going around the mountain by a certain route for a thousand days.”

As for other writers, you first took Jack Kerouac hiking on Tam, right?

“Yes I did, several times in the 1950s when I was living in my little cabin in Homestead Valley.”

“I started reading up about the history of hiking, especially in the late 19th century when many people got excited about it. It was not just done for wilderness travel. William Wordsworth and his sister walked 30 miles through a rainstorm all night! People could be really hardy...That’s the way most of the world was.”

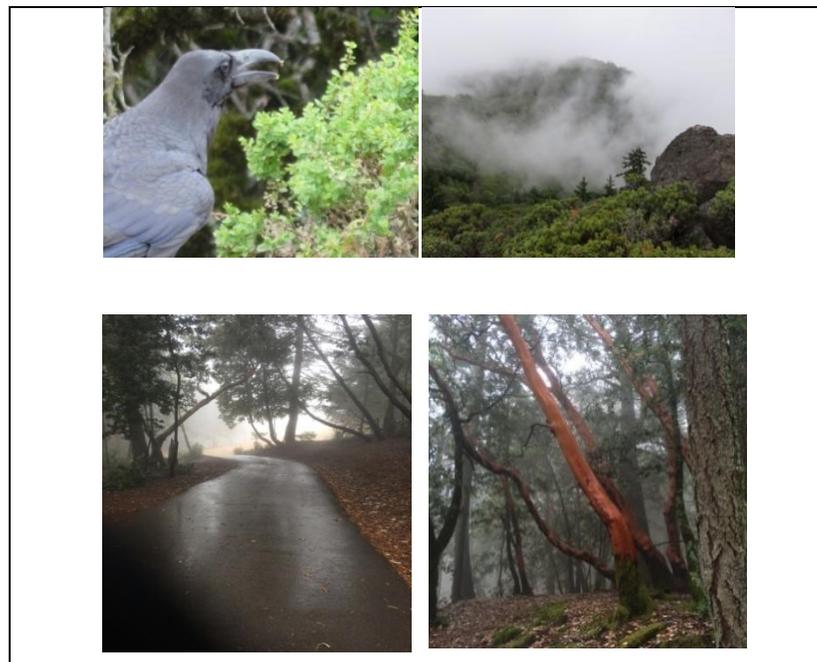
“I’ve trekked around the Himalayas, and there and in other areas walking still is the primary transport. Yes, it’s not weird to walk long distances — to not do it is what’s weird.”

**Figure 96 Interview selections Gary Snyder, Mt. Tam & Walking**

#### *f) Non-tactile Walk*

My non-tactile walk to Mt. Tam began with a long view from the road, located just north of the Golden Gate Bridge in Marin County. The mountain’s presence overtakes anyone who travels north of San Francisco. I was travelling south from Santa Rosa and it had the same effect. I was enamoured with this single peak protruding from the clouds of fog. Up the mountain, my first impression was a fog that engulfed the artist. It filters the light on the natural elements.

Patches of colour revealed themselves as the fog swirled around me. The silver plate was broken by an intense yellow seeping in from a meadow. My view was a partial view of the whole meadow due to this blanket of fog. The fog on Mt. Tam is not a mysterious impression as in other situations I had encountered. It was rather like mother's arms caressing and suspending you in mid-air. This was how I could feel the essence of the mountain that day, wrapped in the mist. Along the path next to the meadow, the robust Madrone tree attracted me; contrasting ruby red trunks with the forest green in the background. By the end of the trail, I witnessed the rare call of the Raven. I was overwhelmed with these visual elements on the walk and did not pay attention to the path carved out by Snyder. I absorbed the non-tactile perception of Mt. Tam on the upper point near Desolation trail without tactile inputs.



**Figure 97 Collage of views non-tactile Mt. Tam**

After the Snyder non-tactile walk I waited 15 days before actually creating the landscape palette. I had experimented with different colours from a wide variety of pigments, but in the end I preferred mixing the primary colours and white to achieve the effect of the palette. I felt that I had more control of the palette drawing on my sensory memories of the walk during the process of combining colours. I had forgotten to buy a tube of black for the raven, and so the journey began to recreate this colour. How to create it for the raven that was not exactly black? I started with cobalt blue and went towards adding white and until it became grey. It was quite a challenge to reach the dark shade of grey desired to match. Once I had the grey, I went back to add blue to finally get the sense of a shade of black. It was like a Flaneur experiment in a circular path. I had remembered that it was the dark blue colour of indigo on the verge of black yet never quite reaching the colour of black like a crow. I was astonished with this revelation. The yellow of the meadow was also a deep meditation into the sensory memory of the fog and elusiveness of the meadow shifting in and out of my vision. The colour of the Mt. Tam fog was a delicate experiment to achieve. I wanted to re-create the calmness that overtook me with its enveloping mantle.

The non-tactile studio work culminated in showing the work in a group show in the Calabi Gallery in conjunction with a symposium on my creative process with two other painters. I mounted four sections of the Mt. Tam palette and called it "Ode to Mt. Tam and Gary Snyder, Study I." The Zen aspect was welcomed in the gallery as a new element in its collection.



Figure 98 Snyder non-tactile land scape palette

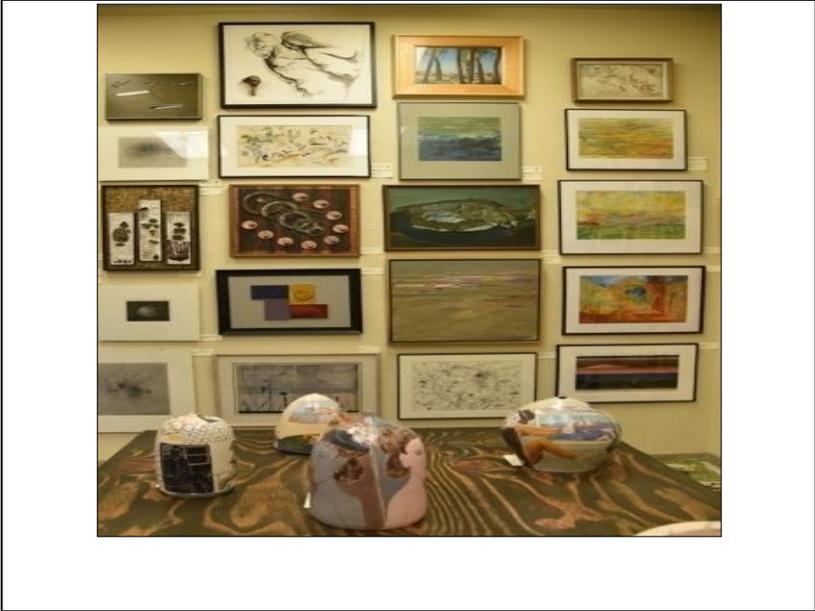


Figure 99 Calabi Collection

*h) Studio Non-tactile Poems*

Notes Streaming: Gary Snyder

Non-Tactile, Summer July 2015

**Dew Stained Meadows**

Yellows passing in the fog  
Snyder and Ginsberg  
Remember Mt. Tam from India to Australia  
Her meadows seep into their lives  
Letters following the jet  
Stream  
Remain imprinted  
On their fore-heads  
Forever the meadows of Mt. Tam

**Figure 100 Snyder non-tactile Dew Poem**

**Raven Song: Muted flute**

Feather of Raven. Mt Tam  
Hollow echo resounding  
Quills so be gathered  
A note flies solemn  
Fog streaks the wings  
Brushed back, blue black  
Howl of a raven  
You are here  
Guarding Miwok Mountain  
Your song sings clicky clack  
I wonder, what legend you repeat  
Listen with my heart  
Wind wiser than me.  
Raven's wings scattered on the  
trail  
A sweet reminder of your song  
A song so very few hear,  
And even fewer bear to listen. ---  
Foreboding our future--- of the  
muted flute players.

**Figure 101 Snyder Non-Tactile walk notes on the Raven**

**Om Sariswati Om**

**Snyder, Om**

Om Sariswati

She lives near Gayatri

Sariswati, dancing among the redwoods

Strumming my heart with her wisdom

Om Snyder Om

You lived on this Mountain

Many blues moons away

Once guided by her

Om Sariswati

Goddess of wisdom

Imparting her seven sacred notes

To a world far beneath her

Om Snyder

You chanted her name

Enchanted by wisdom—One to create verse upon  
verse

A long and winding path.

I am happy to commune

At the crossroads of the muse and amused.

**Figure 102 Snyder non-tactile walk, Om Sariswati poem**

### **Ode to Mt. Tam & Gary Snyder**

The poet and the Mountain  
Found peace so close  
To chaos  
One inside each Other

I arrived on my homeland  
After a long absence  
From the East

I read the broken tea leaves  
Left deep inside your cup  
For we met on Mt. Tam  
You & I

Riding a wave of foggy mist  
Mystic poets revered here  
On the folds of her skirt  
One Zen poet walked  
An endless circle  
Inviting us  
To join

I am here on Mt. Tam  
Chanting a poet's mantra  
A replay of your two-step  
One forehead One back

A second chance  
To admire  
*Great Mountain*

Protect us  
Draw us  
Back  
On the line  
Sane  
From  
In-sane  
Bane\* lives  
To abode by

Re-joice, re-voice  
That is You  
Gary Snyder  
Close to Berkeley  
Yet closer  
To mountains  
& rivers

So be it

1. \*A cause of great distress or annoyance: *the telephone was **the bane of my life***
2. *Archaic*: Something, especially poison, which causes death.  
(Oxford Dictionary)

**Figure 103 Snyder non-tactile Ode to Mt. Tam poem**

*i) Writing process*

The writing process for Gary Snyder was interesting for this non-tactile walk to Mt. Tam. In some ways the landscape was known to me, but the location was new. Mt. Tam had always been a towering mountain in the background of San Francisco Bay and yet I had never been there walking. My experience on the mountain was both inspiring and emotionally charged with Snyder's footsteps and the essence of the mountain. Snyder was a long time historical poet from my past and merged with my present. I suppose that is why I wrote the "Ode to Mt. Tam and Gary Snyder." A raven is hard to see up close and its presence was a gift. I was moved to jot down notes concerning its particular sound (clicks) and its wing colour. The Hindu names in Snyder's poem inspired me due to my prior knowledge, especially the Goddess of Knowledge and Creativity; Sariswati. The fog played a major role in the lighting and visual aspect of the walk as it rolled over the landscape and yet I did not write about it. I am surprised. One day after the walk in the suburbs I saw a Madrone tree dwarfed in a limited garden space. I felt sad to see it there. It was out of its natural place. It had been uprooted literally from its native soil and ecosystem. I realized that the "landscaping" idea was not necessarily good for the plants. We needed to go there to the natural ecosystem and experience it *in situ*. I need to explore this aspect more in writing. I only have some notes.

*j) Tactile walk*

Notes Streaming: Gary Snyder

Tactile

Summer August 2015

The tactile walk on Mt. Tam began on the trail prescribed by Snyder in the selected poem just outside Muir Woods. This time I approached the mountain from the seaside via Green Gulch, Zen centre. Once I had found the fourth station of the poem near the non-tactile area, I settled into the tactile walk. Here the woods are the prominent feature engulfing the eyes with a solitary appeal.

However, my surprise came when I touched the young redwood (Sequoia) trunk. I had been walking in these types of woods several times over my lifetime. Hard and dry redwood trunk chips are used in landscaping for ground cover all over California, my native home state. On this day, touching the live young redwood trunk was a huge surprise. I had assumed it was dry and hard. In contrast to my other sensory perception, it was actually soft, spongy, and a bit moist. The older Douglas fir tree trunk next to the Sequoia redwood was dry and hard. Sequoias are known to live a long time, up to 1000 years or more. I was taken aback by the sensation that did not match my previous perception. It was so inviting to stay there for an extended time enjoying its aliveness! The forest floor was soft suede brown and drew me into its powdery plush carpet. There I rubbed the delicate pigment onto my sketchpad. It was not a dry sense but rather a fine fresh sensation like the back of a wet wooden spoon.

As I headed out of the woods, the sunshine burst onto the meadows. There was no fog that day unlike the day I took the non-tactile walk. I doubled back to check the trunks of the Madrone trees. They had begun to shed a thin red surface layer of their trunks. However, some trunks were still intact and a remained a smooth robust red similar to the non-tactile walk. I had wanted to touch them since my last non-tactile encounter. It was such an elegant sensation to stoke these trunks. In the non-tactile walk I saw them as “ballet dancers” of the woods. On this tactile walk they were rounded and bending low enough to take a nap. Their fire red colour emitted warmth visually, yet they were cool in touch. Just before leaving this group of trees, I came upon a banana slug. Even though I am not at all attracted to touching slugs, I paused to admire its bright yellow colour in the muted brown leaves, almost hidden. I dared myself to touch it lightly. Instead of a slimy sensation, a soft roughness amazed me. It was so beautifully placed in the composition of the forest floor. Painting it later was one of my favourite palettes in the Mt. Tam tactile collection.

Once again, I was on the trail to find the Serpentine rock outcrop in station five as described by Snyder in the poem. I walked through the meadow and up to the ridge. There I came across a delicate stunning pink flower next to the Serpentine rocks. It was so delicate that I had to be extra careful to capture it only slightly within my palms. Its bright magenta hues radiated as they touched the lines of my inner fingers. It was amazing to experience this flora pigment in the sunshine.

The most dangerous part of walking around rocks and grass in California is rattlesnakes. I stopped at a picnic table for lunch instead of hanging out and sitting on a boulder. Snyder and friends had the same agenda, and it was incorporated into the poem. Just after lunch on the way to Collier Spring I stopped to look for Rock Springs. It seemed strange that there was no signpost and yet I was in the vicinity. Finally, I noticed a group of water plants and was delighted to have found it, no sign at all. Standing there contemplating, I suddenly heard a rustling. I thought that maybe it was a lizard. The sound persisted, and it was too loud for a small lizard.

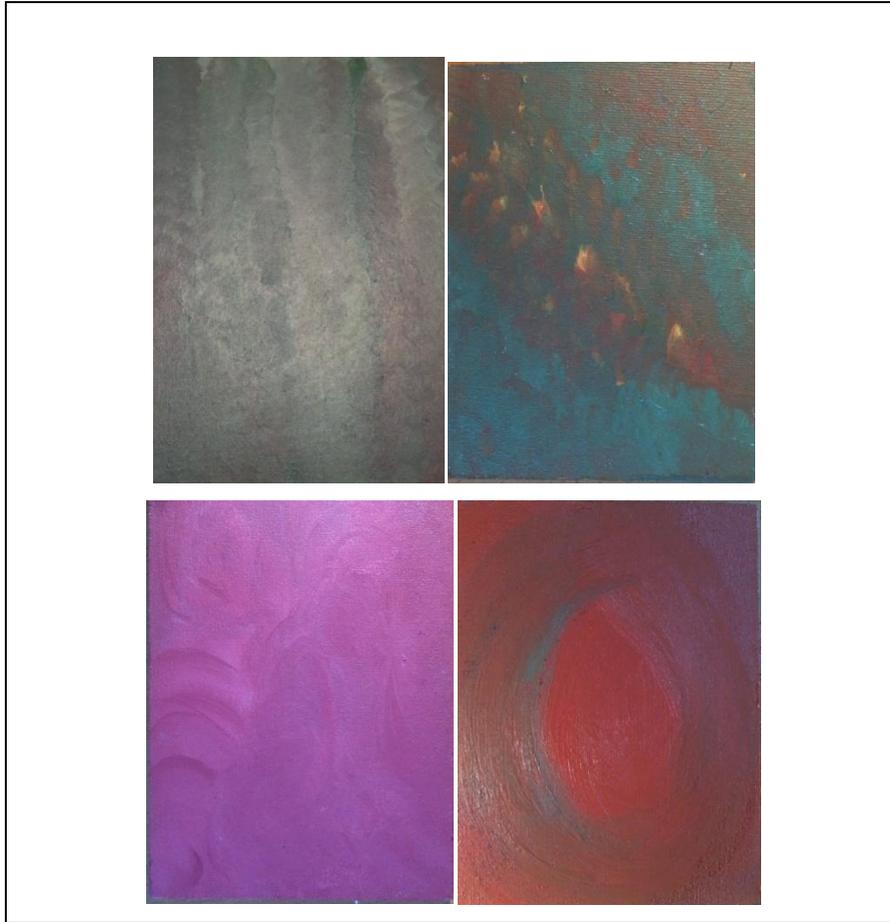
I ventured to the other side and there were two snakes dancing vertically! These were rattlesnakes; I saw their tails. Well, slowly backing away I managed to get back on the trail safely. No wonder the signpost had been removed. A whole family of snakes had taken over Rock Springs due to the extreme drought that summer. I did not dare touch these creatures, and that is the closest I had ever come to a rattler, yet alone a whole tribe! However, it stuck in my memory and I did add it to the palette. Collier Springs was waiting for me.



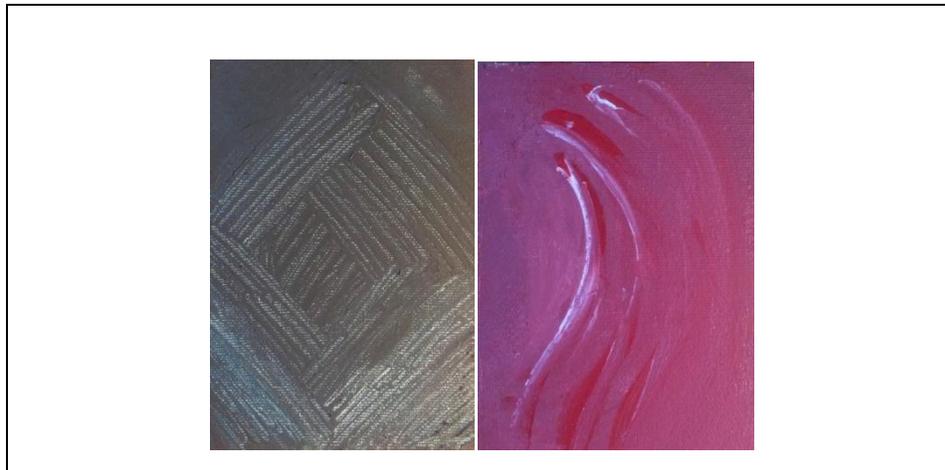
**Figure 104 Mt. Tam tactile walk; Trail (right) Picnic break (Left)**

***k) Studio Tactile Colours***

The tactile studio palette was begun 15 days after the walk. It was the same season as the non-tactile walk but the weather conditions modified the colour palette. The pink tactile memory was so bright and yet the redwood trunk was so shadowy. The sun played a major role. The slug nestled in the forest floor drew out a range of colours. This tactile studio palette was different from the non-tactile palette in that I was using a variety of brushes given to me by my mother. I enjoyed the tactile differences of the round soft Japanese brush for the fog. I explored a swirl technique with a long process for the redwood tree palette. The spongy redwood palette was difficult to achieve and took several canvas washes with white and then it turned out to be just right with a special sheen.



**Figure 105 Snyder Tactile walk Mt. Tam landscape palette (Studio)**



**Figure 106 Snyder Mt. Tam Rattlesnake palette**

*I) Studio Tactile Poems*

I combined chants and historical notes of Gary Snyder in these poems. I began the writing process after a 15+day gestation period. I had read several letters from Snyder to Ginsberg for research. Whalen also practised Zen and joined the walk with Snyder on Mt. Tam. My re-play tactile poems considered these elements and added the value of the tactile perception. I re-wrote some of the visual poems after the tactile walk and noticed some interesting changes in the choices of vocabulary and omissions. I discuss this in the writing process. I was very satisfied with the metaphors and overall ease to which these poems were created post walking. I especially like the napping Bengal tigers on the Madrone trees in this poem.

**Dew Stained Meadows (Mt Tamalpais)**

Yellows >No.2 pencils

passing in the fog

Be Snyder tween Ginsberg

Memoirs from the Bay

India, Australia

Her meadows

Seep into their letters

following the jet stream

Lines imprinted there

on their four-heads

(not to mention Kerouac and Whalen)

For-ever lore meadows  
Came home to roost  
Lightly on slopes  
of heaven's gate  
once known to a native  
as merely Mt. Tam

Figure 107 Snyder tactile walk poem Dew Stained Meadow

***Om Nama Shivaya, Om Snyder, Om Shanti Om***

I walked upon a path  
Dusted by your foot  
Carved out with mantras past  
A Path of heart and earth  
Beat O'Heart Beat,  
Om  
Om Nama Shivaya  
Here on Mt. Tam You  
Rounding out her outer sheath  
Of Redwoods and Madrone  
Whose bark shall always quiver?  
In the shadow of the bold  
She rises swift

Winding up from shining Sea

A Tower of celestial hues

I have come to find

My self

In You I found

Our Solace

Reaching ´round

In-side Out

A silver veil aloof

Embraces me in trance

Smiling on day thyme

dreams

the Poet

I

Am not

A Dharma bum

I am

Bonded on the path

I have known

Myself

At last

And you, too  
Two  
a-mused  
Om Shanti Om

**Figure 108 Snyder tactile poem Om Nama Shivaya, Om Snyder Om**

**Raven's Secret Call**  
Brushed Indigo wings  
Stroke the pinnacle  
Melting clouds swirl  
Transversing my backbone  
Cracked by winds  
Chimed sweet talk  
From Raven  
By gone, By sung  
A hero's heroine unsung  
Here lies a poet  
Once upon Time  
He walked and he walked  
He chanted to the beat  
Of Raven's blue black wings  
High on the summit of Mt. Tamalpais  
I was inspired by  
Free verse dripping

from  
Raven's tongue  
A secret  
recognized  
only by the few  
On the summit  
In the name  
of the past & present  
Future to be seen  
May we tread lightly to listen  
To the song  
of brother Raven  
Call, Call, Call  
He echoed to Wind  
  
And I  
Did call, call, call You  
Mr. Snyder  
To come back  
To show and Tell  
(the secret of Raven's song)

**Figure 109 Snyder Tactile poem, Raven**

**Madrone on Fire**

A fire from its roots  
sprouted in August  
as ripping flames  
ignited a many  
poets'  
quills

Volcanic  
crimson knots  
appeared  
smoother than  
silk weaver fingers

Growing pains  
Exploded  
Ballet dancers  
Bending backwards  
In early  
Morning  
fog  
From heaven's lips  
Blood oranges  
Dripped  
More than  
Nature's  
bliss

Resting like Bengal tigers

The flames took refuge

Napping on

your

trunk

**Figure 110 Snyder tactile poem Madrone on Fire**

**Redwood Song of Thyself;**

Lingers, printed on my finger

My finger pressed the keys of you trunk

Like a piano player I am

Absorbed by your inner face

For I knew nothing

Before this en/counter

Face to Face

Tip to tip

Embedded my pads

Upon your wise instrument

Inviting me to play your

Secret Song

Beyond Muir Woods,

And Snyder's chants

A Dharma Bum

Playing with You

Dwarfed by your canopy

Serene in your shadow

Neither blues nor greens are you

Rather the unity of Mountain and Sea

Resting high above the Pacifica  
Content am I  
To listen to your trunk  
Whisper how to stroke your keys  
From a minuscule movement  
Of your symphony  
Taller than I  
Taller than All  
You kidnapped me  
By surprise  
So elegantly soft  
So profoundly open  
Nothing as it was  
Nothing as it is  
Nearby  
a hardened trunk  
Stands at attention  
No one in the forest  
Touched me,  
as You  
Walking away softly,  
Stepping lightly on your path  
I relish this  
Moment of Truth  
Misty Mt Tam  
Holds your secret  
Song of Thyself

**Figure 111 Snyder tactile poem, Redwood Song of Myself**

***m) Writing Process:***

The writing process for the tactile walk was rapid and spontaneous creating an interesting configuration for all the poems. The unit became a beautiful spiral of words that just seemed to unravel from within me. The tactile process during the walk hit me in such a surprising way that the writing seemed to write itself with an inner voice speaking from the aliveness of the mountain. I felt part of its sediment and I expressed my sediments as such. In addition, the format of the 'beat' poets came through quite naturally in word separations or the play with symbols. For example, I expressed "Yellow >No.2 pencils" and "Be Snyder tween Ginsberg" whereas the non-tactile walk poems were more direct. "Yellows passing in the fog" and "Snyder and Ginsberg" show this contrast. The texture can be felt in these tactile poems. The reference to the "No. 2 pencil" was what I was holding while writing down the poem and the tactile perspective was incorporated into the colour of the meadow. The raven poem had also been transformed by the tactile walk. The tactile poem focused on the concise texture of the ideas:

<p><b>Madrone on Fire</b></p> <p>A fire from its roots sprouted in August as ripping flames</p> <p>ignited a many poets' quills</p> <p>Volcanic crimson knots appeared smoother than silk weaver fingers</p> <p>Growing pains Exploded Ballet dancers</p>	<p><b>Raven´s Secret Call</b></p> <p>Brushed Indigo wings Stroke the pinnacle Melting clouds swirl Transversing my backbone Cracked by winds, Chimed sweet talk, From Raven By gone, By sung A hero`s heroine unsung Here lies a poet Once upon Time He walked and he walked He chanted to the beat Of Raven´s blue black wings</p>	<p><b>Om Nama Shivaya, Om Snyder, Om Shanti Om</b></p> <p><b>I walked upon a path</b></p> <p><b>Dusted by your foot</b></p> <p><b>Carved out with mantras past</b></p> <p><b>A Path of heart and earth</b></p> <p><b>Beat O´Heart Beat, Om Om Nama Shivaya</b></p> <p><b>Here on Mt. Tam You</b></p> <p><b>Rounding out her outer sheath</b></p> <p><b>Of Redwoods and Madrone</b></p> <p><b>Whose bark shall always quiver?</b></p>
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Bending backwards	High on the summit of Mt. Tamalpais	<b>In the shadow of the bold</b>
In early Morning fog	I was inspired by Free verse dripping from	<b>She rises swift</b> <b>Winding up from shining Sea</b>
From heaven's lips	Raven's tongue	<b>A Tower of celestial hues</b>
Blood oranges	A secret of the past & present	<b>I have come to find</b>
Dripped	Future to be seen	<b>My self</b> <b>In You I found</b>
More than Nature's bliss	May we tread lightly to listen	<b>Our Solace</b> <b>Reaching 'round</b>
Napping on your trunk	To the song of brother Raven Did call, call, call You Mr. Snyder To come back To show and Tell	<b>Smiling on day thyme</b> <b>dreams</b> <b>the Poet</b> <b>I</b> <b>Am not</b> <b>A Dharma bum</b> <b>I am</b>

**Figure 112 Snyder Tactile poem configuration**

<b>Non-Tactile</b>	<b>Tactile:</b>
<p>Brushed back, blue black                      Howl of a raven                      You are here                      Guarding Miwok Mountain                      Your song sings clicky clack                      I wonder, what legend you                      repeat                      Listen with my heart                      Wind wiser than me.</p>	<p>Brushed Indigo wings                      Stroke the pinnacle                      Melting clouds swirl                      Transversing my backbone                      Cracked by winds</p>

**Figure 113 Snyder Non-tactile and tactile poetic comparisons Raven Poem**

Tactile Words in Snyder poems:

<b>Snyder</b>	<b>Poem</b>
1. Splash	Mt. Tam
2. dry grass	Mt. Tam
3. silver-weathered	Mt. Tam
4. trail winds	Mt. Tam
5. bare meadow knoll	Mt. Tam
6. fruit with burrs	Mt. Tam
7. sense of heat	Mt. Tam
8. sun glare	Mt. Tam
9. shaking the staff	Mt. Tam
10. blowing the conch	Mt. Tam
11. plucking	Old Bones

12. snaring	Old Bones
13. snagging	Old Bones
14. digging	Old Bones
15. bird entangled	At Tower Peak
16. flesh-carved rock	At Tower Peak
17. half asleep on the cold grass	For a Stone Girl at Sanchi
18. in a rubble of years, touching, this dream pops.	For a Stone Girl at Sanchi
19. Shivering on a sheet of cardboard	Siwashing it out once in Siuslaw Forest
20. under rhododendron, all night blossoms fell	Siwashing it out once in Siuslaw Forest
21. lay down these words	Riprap
22. placed solid, by hands	Riprap
23. in choice of place, set	Riprap
24. in this thin loam,	Riprap
25. creek-washed stone	Riprap
26. Granite: ingrained	Riprap

*n) Art process and materials*

Snyder spent time on the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais in a cabin. Cabins in California and the Northwest coastal areas often used tin roofing during the early settlements and it has remained a roofing material overtime. I had already found some circa 1940 tin roof ridge covers (tiles) that coincided with Snyder's birth date in Oregon. I began to design for the recycled tin sculpture. I wanted to combine new and old pieces in the design.

**o) New tin roof tiles and old heritage tiles**

I had obtained the Snyder roof tiles in Oregon on my Flaneur trail for materials, which turned out to have character from the weathering effects of rain. On the other hand new tin roof tiles proved to be much less interesting in terms of colour and aesthetics. The new tin roofing was a piece of long sheet metal and no longer a series of smaller individual pieces. It was too slick and shiny for my project. The 1940 roof tiles were intact and had colourful markings of grey, rust and green. They had sharp edges but light in their overall weight. It reminded me of Snyder's clean cut identity in the middle of the beat generation. His character was down to earth and yet he was elegantly presented for his poetry readings. His readings were sharp and concise.

**Final Choice:** I chose the heritage tin roof caps as there was an abundance of them in Oregon to fulfil my project. I abandoned the idea of using the new strips of 10-foot shiny tin.

**p) State-of-the-art technology or hand tools**

The heritage tin roof cover presented a challenge for design considering the shape and texture. The first test for lettering was to cut into the metal. I envisioned cutting out fragments of the poems from the tin. I had seen tin roofing transformed into signs or sculptures with text in Northern California as a decorative element using a torch as a cutting tool. That technique was too complicated for me, so I sought another solution.



**Figure 114 Snyder roof tin decorations N. California 2015**

I decided to start with the glass studio in UOS for a specialized technique used by glass artists, called a water jet-cutter. It uses high-powered water jets to cut the glass, so it could cut metal, too. I had wanted to first test this method given the access to the state-of-the-art technology. I wanted to find out the feasibility of creating lettering for back lighting. I mailed the heritage tin roof pieces to Sunderland.

There were several steps in the process to use the water jet cutter at UOS. Afterwards, I had reservations about the environmental footprint of using such technique. It was extremely complicated and was supported by large uses of energy to produce a small output.

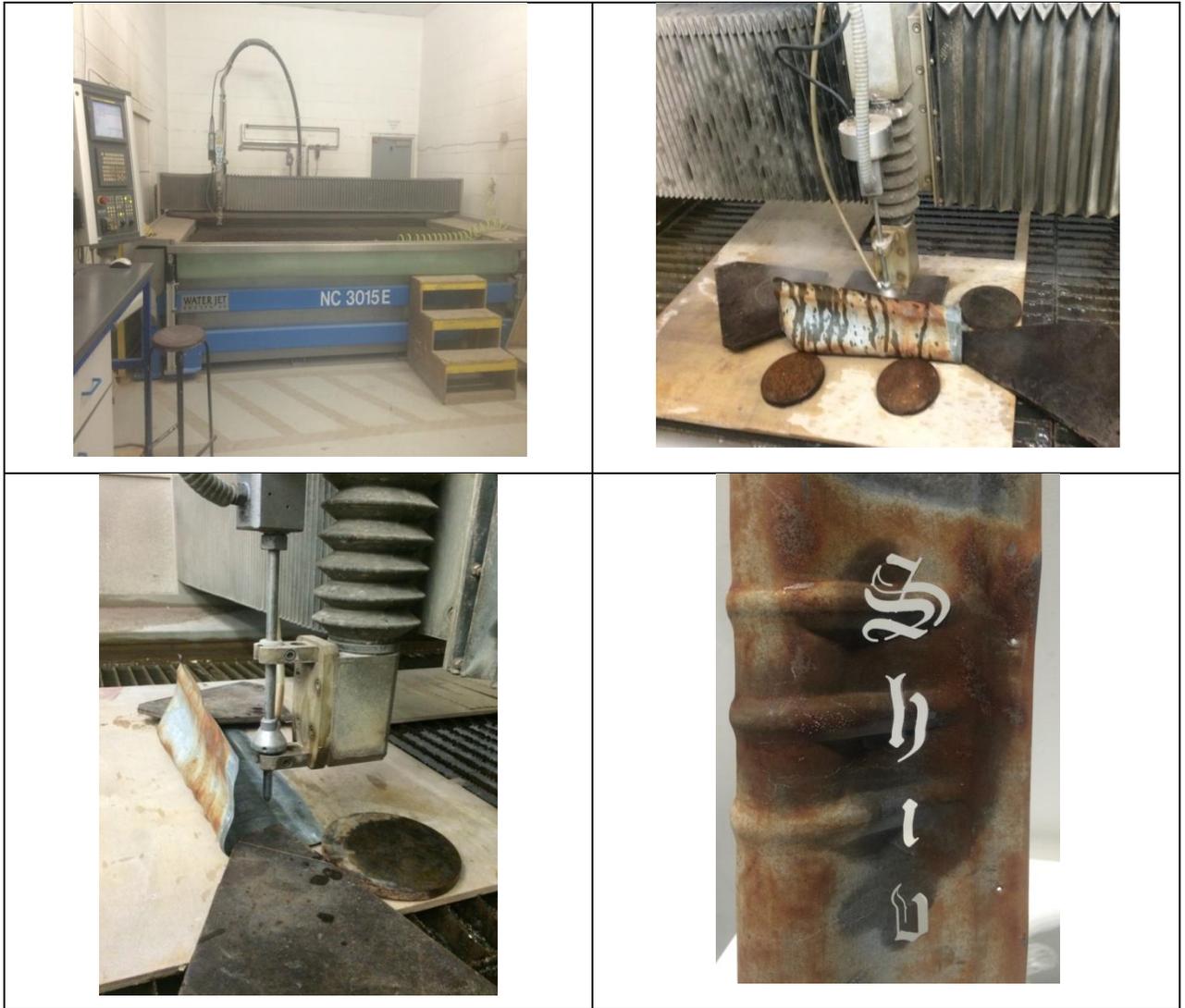


Figure 115Snyder roof tin jet cutter UOS

I did like the effect of back lighting but the environmental concern was an overriding element to find an alternative.



**Figure 116 Snyder Tin roof jet cut sample back lit**

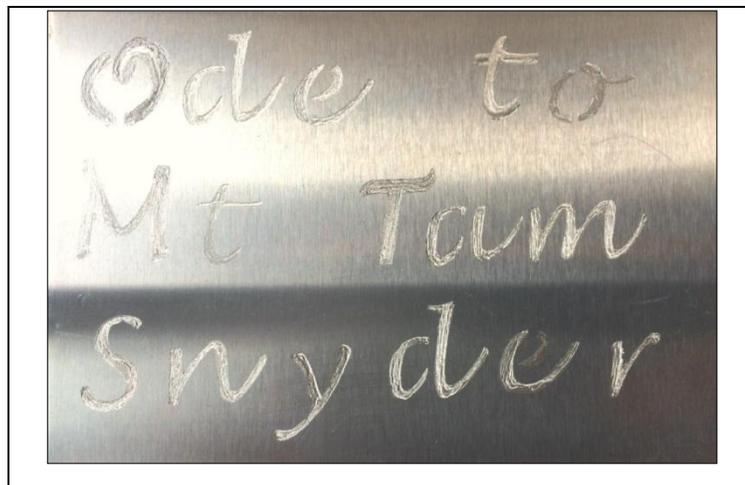
I tried using a hand tool and hammering technique, too. I thought it would enable me to meditate on the piece while slowly taking time to hammer each letter using a bevel point by point. However, the letters appeared square and not suitably elegant enough for Snyder's poetry.



**Figure 117 Snyder tin roof hand hammering sample**

I returned to Madrid to research an alternative to these two extreme methods. One was elegant but energy consuming and the other was basic and handmade. I found a solution in an old art supply store in the centre of Madrid. It was a handheld engraver with only 12V wattage.

**Final Choice:** I decided on the 12 V electric engraver. I was able to hold it in my hand and its low voltage served me as a low environmental footprint. It also produced elegant styles with stencils and the act of writing was very close with its fine points.



**Figure 118 Snyder sample with 12V handheld engraver on zinc plate**

The engraving on the heritage roof tiles for Snyder was carried out in the studio at UOS for the solo show at the Design Centre in March 2017. Samples had been tested in Spain and wonderful textures arose from this process. The engraving removed the rust of years and I was able to reach the original texture of the tin. In addition, the tin responded to the light differently than the other materials. The angles of the light rays on the tin produced varying effects.

In the engraving process, I loved the feel of handling the roof tile. I moved my finger pads over the relief of the design to find the exact spot to engrave. In doing so I was drawn in by its visceral effect on my fingers that galvanized tin emits. It is smoother than it appears. Its dimensions were at times challenging with all its curves and indentations. I had to work with them carefully to be able to fit all the letters on one area to complete a word.

In some aspects, the galvanized tin roof was not a “hot tin roof” as described in literature from Southern states but rather a cool protective cover for the rain of the Northwest.



**Figure 119 Snyder roof tiles engraving samples**

**q) Calligraphy**

I followed the one stroke calligraphy technique with a brush much like the other poets in this project using three colours from the palette. Both the text “Dharma” and “Shivaya” were painted horizontally. They were later transferred to porcelain decals. I turned “Shivaya” vertically, and it worked well aesthetically. The result of these calligraphic works is still to be determined. They may serve to supplement poetry in a publication of the project.

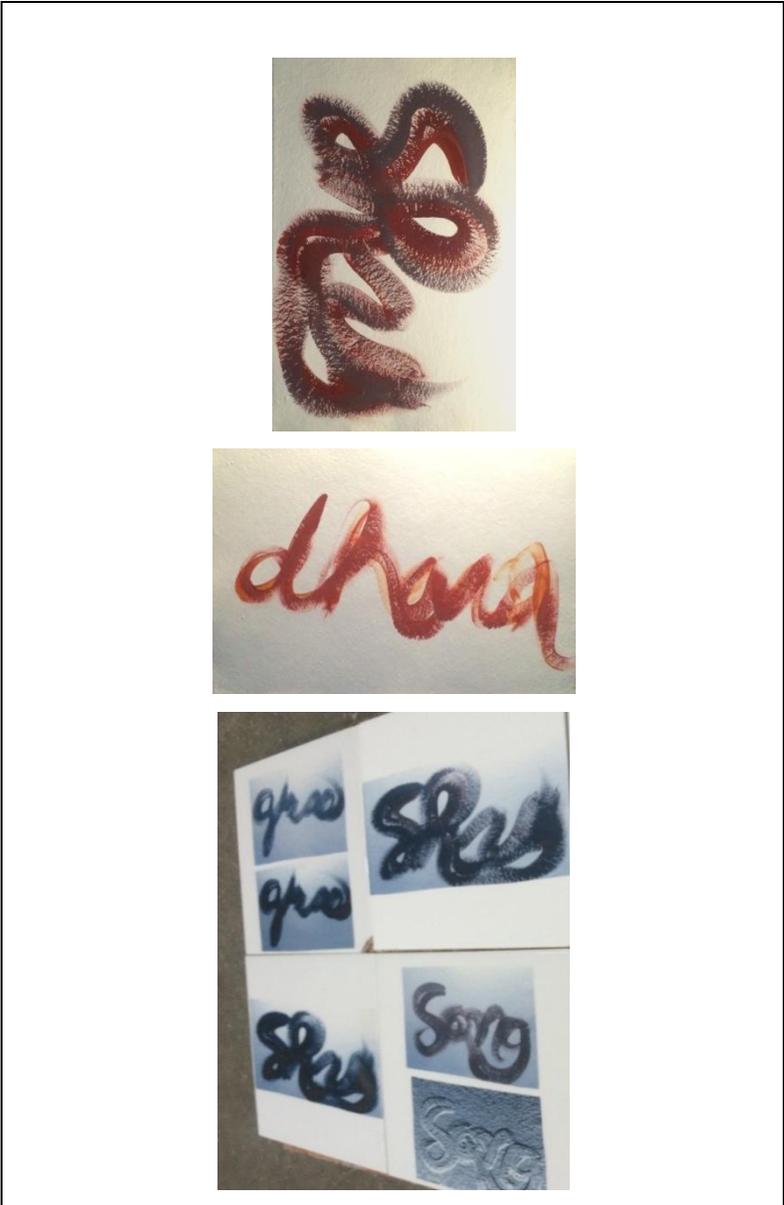
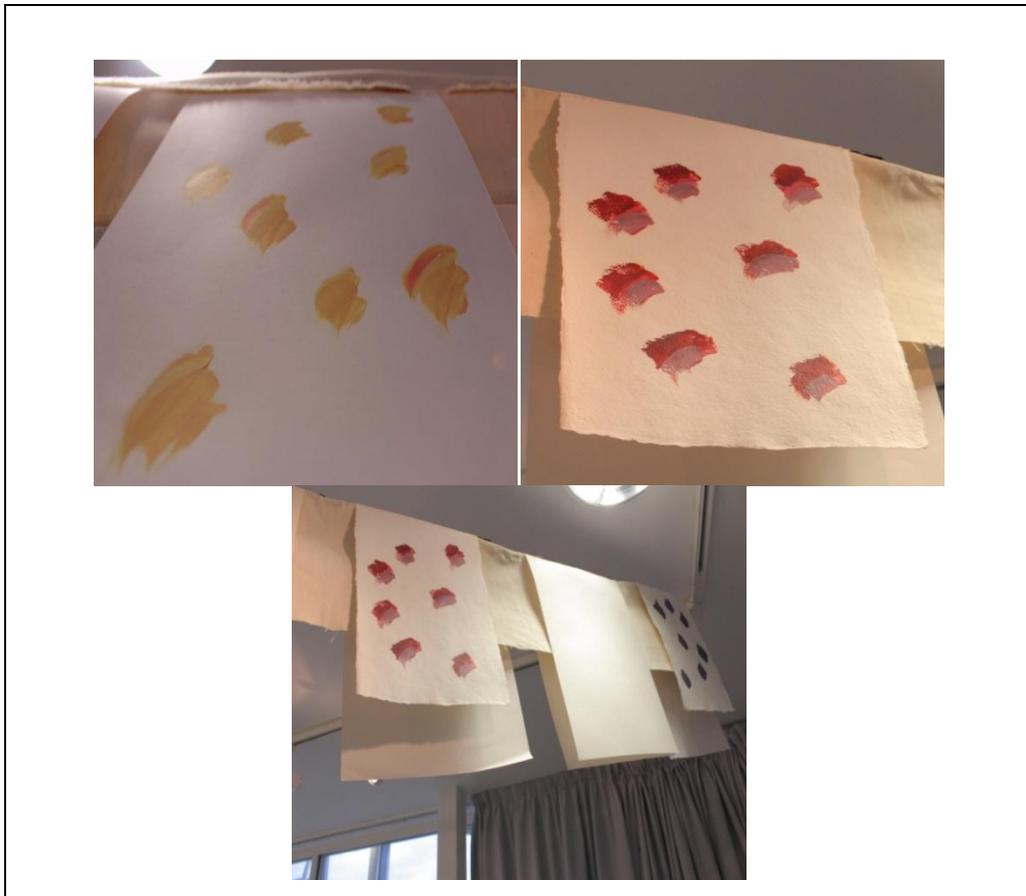


Figure 120 Snyder calligraphy for Shivaya & Dharma

**r) Colour palette application**

The colour palette application for Snyder was incorporated into the solo show at Sunderland Design Centre, March 2017 (see appendix). Hand-made paper and acrylic paper were combined to make banners for all four inspirational landscape palettes. These banners were hung in a configuration of 33. This number was derived from a Buddhist concept. There were eight palette banners for four poets (8 X 4= 32) + one (artist) for the theme of the show.



**Figure 121 Snyder Colour palette application on paper.**

**s) Fabric**

The fabric I chose for Snyder was blue denim and I used the typical Levi jeans. It was a symbol during the time of the Beat poets, especially Jack Kerouac's cafe readings. The gold miners of California had found this material durable for their hard work.

Since Gary Snyder had worked with rocks in the Yosemite trails and his tactile perception may have been first expressed in Rip Rap, I used this fabric to represent him. I found a large size pair of jeans and cut off part of the leg to fit into the exhibit in March 2017.



**Figure 122 Snyder fabric preparation**

**t) Outcome**

The outcome for Snyder culminated into part of the solo show in the Design Centre in March 2017 (see appendix). I put together the tin roof tiles and the colour palette with the fabric. The original test sample from the water jet cutter was displayed on a table over the denim with the poetry in a small booklet of my re-play poetry. I found a copy of Rip Rap to display along with the other poets' works.

There was some play on light with this set up. It was unique to this 3D poetic canvas as the roof tile engraving was projected onto the fabric with the light. Had the water jet cutter not been so environmentally taxing, I may have opted for this technique for its use, but I forwent this choice for environmental aesthetics, my choice of ecological "beauty." I was satisfied with the engraving technique and its textural effect with angles of light changes.



**Figure 123 Snyder 3D poetic canvas jet cut sample**



**Figure 124 Snyder outcome set up with re-play poems and roof tile on denim**

The most unexpected outcome with the Snyder 3D poetic canvas was the enjoyment of the textures and shape of the heritage roof tile and public interaction. First my photographer, Zack, came to take photos and we modified the set up as he enjoyed interacting with the artwork for his own expression through various angles. He explored several ways to arrange the tiles in the installation and created his own art with the textures and shapes.



**Figure 125 Snyder 3D poetic canvas interactive play 1**

The next exciting outcome was Angela, who re-arranged the Snyder roof tiles on the floor in a completely different configuration. She remarked that the text “clarity of mind” was important to her. She then placed a rock in the middle of the set of tiles. I photographed them and a playful light further added to the 3D poetic canvas. The result was astounding. She indicated that the form and texture of the heritage roof tile was pleasurable to work with as an artist.



**Figure 126 Snyder 3D poetic canvas interactive play 2**



**Figure 127 Snyder 3D poetic canvas interactive play 3**

## **Synopsis of Snyder Case**

The Snyder case was a surprising tactile playground with the redwood tree trunk and slugs in the forest. Mt. Tam provided a varied weather contrast in the two walks with sunny and foggy days. The tactile walk tapped into a stronger vocabulary bank for the final poetry with a benefit of long series of “concrete poems” that appeared at random. The palette was varied with the colour filters of the day by clouds and water content in the air.

Summary: Snyder’s Mt. Tam tactile walk transposed my entire concept of a redwood tree trunk. Given the fact that I grew up in California surrounded by dry, hard, redwood bark used in landscaping, it was astonishing to touch the living tree trunk in its indigenous soil. The tactile walk of this research project prompted a slower Flaneur walk to meander and touch the young redwood trunk rather than gaze at the height of the trees on previous walks. The trunk’s “spongy” tactile essence bounced back on my fingertips and the contrast with the Douglas fir tree trunk adjacent was remarkable. The tactile studio work in the palette was a long process to reach this sensation of the redwood trunk in order to understand its aliveness rather than dry chips of redwood trunks. The poetry was a stream of meditation in the post tactile studio work that played on the Zen concept of Snyder and the walk around the mountain. The tactile walk took me into the depth of the forest off the beaten path and meandering across the meadows on a sunny day. It seemed like a timeless walk and studio work for the palette reflected this aspect as well. In contrast, the poetic re-play was fluid and quick. I was able to write it in just two sessions from the notebook to the computer and its creation was spontaneous like a golden thread weaving itself onto the page in a set of poems with a visual pattern on the page.

## Summary Case Studies

The four case study walks were completed in 2016 with a non-tactile and tactile walk for each. These two types of walks served to explore how the tactile perception played a role in the overall creative process for both the palette of the landscape and the re-play poetry derived from the walks. Seasons and weather at times had a varying impact on the case studies. Snyder's Mt. Tam walks differed slightly with the peeling bark in late summer of the Madrone tree and presence of fog. However, the fog is a constant for Mt. Tam and any given day in any season could change the sensory inputs with its filters on the landscape. In the case of Wordsworth, I returned to the Lake District for a casual walk on a third occasion in early summer that contrasted with the other two walks (spring and autumn). I was able to touch some open pods of grasses. The tactile perception of these pods on the slopes of Helvellyn resembled the feeling of wool tufts that I had previously felt on another occasion in the same location. This experience was unique; how flora and fauna in the same location had such a remarkably similar tactile perception. As the case studies progressed, I began to attribute the creative process for the final 3D poetic canvas as a combination of the non-tactile and tactile walks. However, the tactile perception clearly influenced my creative process for writing and the 3D poetic canvas. In March 2017 the solo show at University of Sunderland's Design Centre prompted me to face challenges in hanging and exhibiting these complete four case studies (see appendix).

The palettes for all four poets were pleasing to see exhibited for the first time together. Their palette colour re-creation in a new format (paper vs. fabric) reinforced the benefit of tactile memories, even after three years in some cases. Each case study contributed to my set of knowledge to develop this procedure for applying tactile memories to my creative process expressed in a 3D sculpture and poetry. The community contact at various stages of exhibitions for the case studies helped move the research project along by incorporating a space for public response. The complete analysis of the case studies follows and the exhibit analysis is discussed in the appendix.

The results of the four case studies show:

- 1) Tactile perception was a vital element in my creative process in terms of my both poetry and sculpture.
- 2) The tactile perception *in situ* surrounding the poetic landscapes increased my bond with the living organisms.
- 3) The Forest Flaneur intuitive method of walking in a slow random manner was essential to explore environments based on tactile attraction rather than a preconceived set of objects from a sterile plan.
- 4) The handmade objects for the 3D poetic canvas was successful in terms of balancing environmental footprints against fine arts aesthetics and high tech state-of-the-art tools/materials.

The findings for the four case studies point to the tactile perception as an increased value of bonding to landscape for both colour palette and poetry enrichment. The haptic mode of collection, construction and application of palette for the 3D poetic canvas stages at various stages of the process contributed greatly to the outcome. It revealed a heightened bonding effect for the artist with the emphasis on the finger pads. The heart and cognitive linguistic link directly facilitated by the finger pads stimulated a new poetic bank of vocabulary, whereas my prior creative process had been limited by a visual perception. Finally, the tactile perception gave me new insight into the living organism perspective that had previously been dominated by a human centred perspective.

- 5) The experimental 15+day gestation period that was applied to studio work after a time lapse *in situ*. The advantage of this incubation turned out to be the ground work for long term memory and ease of recall. Considering that this project spanned over three years and the last exhibit combined all four case studies, it was a discovery to be able to paint the colour palette with no notes or sketchpad references. I found my tactile memories were embedded in me and with a focused effort I could recall the colour palette for all four poetic landscapes.

The gestation period also served to allow my vocabulary bank to be accessed from various sources of memory to combine and intertwine in new ways unknown to me. I found this process fascinating without the aid of a thesaurus on hand, the words seem to naturally flow into the poetic form. The cognitive process of waiting to write or paint was a cross between nervous and exciting. This sensation that built up over the 15+day period enriched my momentum once I hit the studio canvas or paper for both the colour palette and poetry. In the background, the 3D poetic canvas was incubating, too. All this combined, enriched the creative process in a positive and new way to approach art as a creative practitioner.

## Chapter 5 **Conclusions**

### Conclusions

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#### **Summary**

This research has advanced a new area of inquiry into the creative process forming a 'pathway' between the artist and the environment both literally and metaphorically by linking the act of slow, random walking in the footsteps of four poets.

From the first phase of the process, it became apparent that this research project, as a practiced led doctorate, stimulated new interest for private and public players including artists, academics, gallery managers and environmental groups. Conceivably this can be observed as an indication of the shift towards environmental sensitivity and haptic inputs as a compliment to the visual arts in creation and presentation. The practice-based perspective linked to ecological sustainability creates opportunities for presenters as well as artists within the creative process context, as the research emphasis and funding seems to be placed on the historical or critical analysis of art with, perhaps, less concern for environmental concern for environmental issues (though I recognise that this changing – and I hope work such as this will help move this debate forward).

This doctoral thesis is an example of a tactile perception study anchored in a phenomenological framework. It presents an extensive understanding of a walking-based artist in nature and the implication of a haptic infused creative process in the rural field. In addition, this work contributes to the advance of the understanding of the Flaneur methodology (I have termed this the Forest Flaneur methodology) extended in natural environments expressed in a 3D dimension with an emphasis on cultural heritage fused with hand-made objects. This thesis contributes the essential heart-brain link via the forefinger as the main indicator of its impact on tactile memory in the creative process.

### **Aims and Objectives**

I began this research with three primary aims:

- 1) Tactile Perception impact on the creative process and the Flaneur
  - **Collect notes through fieldwork** by using the artist's own haptic (finger pads) contact in a random walk focused on the tactile attraction.
  - **Explore the relationship between colour (visual perception)** and colour palettes and tactile experiences
  - **Fuse all data** inputs into a 3D hand-built artwork (poetic canvas).
  - **Compare and contrast** the full creative process of tactile and non-tactile based on fieldwork.
  - **Consider** how tactile perception impacts on the creative process.
  
- 2) Re-engagement with the environment through tactile experience
  - **Collect** information using notebooks and creative writing techniques.
  - **Compare and contrast** experience of tactile and non-tactile experiences.
  - **Evaluate** experience of tactile perception

However, and as previously stated in the introduction, as the thesis and research developed, it became clear that the contribution to knowledge focused on two approaches to methodology – firstly the use of the Forest Flaneur and secondly the implementation of a 15+ day gestation period between the haptic work in the field and the creative response to that experience on the poetic canvas in the studio. I therefore decided to use the exhibitions and public outdoor walks a way of finding out more about the haptic responses people had to both the natural environment and the gallery environment, but to include this information in an appendix as a source of reflective information (See: Appendix 1) rather than the main body of the text since for the purposes of this thesis, the key contributions to knowledge developed around creative methodological processes explored.

As this qualitative study developed, I decided to employ and extend the Flaneur method to rural settings (The Forest Flaneur) expressed in a 3D art work in order to evaluate the tactile impact on the creative process for an artist (first person point of view). The evaluation of the tactile perception on the creative process and the environmental were evaluated. The tactile perception impact on the creative process was positive and was shown to be a pivotal component in the holistic perception of the environment.

In all cases, my literary creative process was impacted significantly higher with tactile inputs than for the non-tactile walks. The tactile inputs accessed a wider range of vocabulary stimulating a richer essence of the poetic landscape with more descriptive details, using metaphors that extrapolated beyond the face value of the environment, reaching into the my own depth of experience. For example, the non-tactile walk on Mt. Tam did not elicit descriptions of the Madrone trees with details of sensations.

However, in the tactile walk, the Madrone trees tapped into my childhood memories linked to the comfort of napping in trees (avocado) and this sensation was re-ignited with the tactile perception exploration. The metaphor of the “Bengal tigers” accessed the memories of my travels in foggy, Asian rainforests as well. All of this tactile information influenced my creative process through the application of the tactile memories following a gestation period. This example shows the tactile memories merging with other memories for an enriched poetic imagery as follows:

Resting like Bengal tigers

The flames took refuge

Napping on

your

trunk

The 3D poetic canvas in the four case studies differed according to exhibits and manipulation of the heritage materials. The tactile perception from the walks expanded the creative process of the hand-built artwork as I began to be aware of the tactile inputs as a tool in the creative process. For example, the Wordsworth slate roof tile was first experimented with small fragments. However, the second experiment was with a longer slab, which gave me access to a new creative moment. I was able to run my hand and fingertips over the surface before applying the colours or engraving. This practice was highlighted after my tactile walks. It was during this tactile haptic action in the studio, that I began to create an alternative direction composition for the 3D poetic canvas.

I clearly saw the influence of my tactile perception training. For me, it was an improved expression of my artwork. I then composed the fragments of poetry vertically on the slate rather than horizontally, changing the conceptual idea of writing on tablets in Western style. The long strokes of my hand across the surface prompted me to use the vertical composition to match this sensation with longer eye movements down the side of the surface. The smoothness of the slate and coolness to my fingertips also changed my concept of whether or not to paint the slate. I chose to keep the natural texture and use fabric as a background for the colour palette. This new haptic experience with the Wordsworth case is an example of how the tactile perception inspired the final choices for the creative expression of the 3D hand-built poetic canvas.

Furthermore, the application of the tactile inputs in the poetry with a gestation period demonstrated how the direct contact with Nature was carried over with tactile memories through the metaphor. I found that this relationship between time and the looping of experience surprising and this is another area of new knowledge I would claim.

There are examples of the methodology applied for time-looping in the poetry resulting from the tactile walks within this study. For instance, on the Mt. Tam tactile walk in order to express the bonding with Nature, as a poet I extrapolated the sense of a ballet dance with the Madrone trees and the sensation of refreshing, crimson oranges. The metaphors I used reached into the sediment of my own “joy” from eating oranges and the taste on my lips combined with the colour in a dance. It meant “bliss” to experience this wonderful red tree trunk. However, “red” “tree” “trunk” would not have been sufficient to convey the empathy of being there in the forest “dancing” with those trees. For instance, the tactile walk on Mt. Tam accessed specific vocabulary for the colour of red with the metaphor “blood oranges,” and the joy of communing with nature as “ballet dancers, dancing backwards” fused with the metaphor “dipped...in Nature’s bliss.” This imagery fully engaged my fingertips and tactile memories to produce a rich poetic stanza as follows:

Ballet dancers  
Bending backwards  
In early  
Morning  
fog  
From heaven's lips  
Blood oranges  
Dripped  
More than  
Nature's  
bliss

Finally, the sculptural creative process took into account the high-tech applications in ceramics and metal engraving now in practice for artists. The environmental footprint for each creative step in the making of the 3D poetic canvas was evaluated, and I found myself choosing alternative methods after the tactile walks. As the poetry began to flourish with the tactile memories of the poetic landscape, the experimental stages for treatment of the heritage roof tiles stimulated a search for a lower environmental footprint. For example, the abandoned lead mines on Helvellyn I had passed on my way to the summit, combined with the photo documentation in the form of a heritage photo journal at my hostel, raised my awareness. This information merged with my tactile memories of the living organisms from the long walks in the Helvellyn area. The negative impact of the lead mine on the landscape haunted me and its fusion influenced me in the ceramic studio at UOS. I noticed the lead component in the glaze and began to re-think my creative process. The lead component of the clear glazes was not in alignment with my increased environmental concern accumulated from my tactile walks.

## **Key Conclusions:**

1. Tactile input in the note-taking for the re-play poetry enhanced the access of descriptive vocabulary for the final poetry. The artist sketchpad was not sufficient to record the physical and emotional bond; however, the poetry was a strong access point to the tactile perception memory. Notebooks on site for poetry were helpful but not adequate to capture the tactile memory fully. Studio and contemplation are essential in this creative process. The freedom and ease to move around the environment without stopping for long periods to write enabled a visceral experience to play a dominant role. This meant the cognitive process had time to incubate and be stored in an intermediate term memory rather than short term memory. The 15+ day methodology allowed for a time lapse looping in order to retrieve the visceral sensations from the tactile perception post walking through contemplation in the studio. New concepts and vocabulary arose during these studio sessions that separated the *in situ* experiential (visceral) full play mode from the studio creative mode. This freedom to fully engage in each task and yet merge the two parts of the creative process in the final outcome is richer than overlapping tasks on site with extended note taking. The trust in the tactile memories is an important factor.
2. Tactile perception is a vital component of the total perception, creating a stronger physical and emotional bond between human and nature. A sensory non-tactile survey utilized as a control helps isolate the tactile perception for evaluation.
3. The tactile perception was expressed in an abstract form beyond the Chinese poet-painters who have a long tradition in this field with symbolism and ritual motifs. Tactile perception as a contemporary poet-painter is best expressed in abstract forms, colour palette and 3D, to capture the visceral experience more fully.

4. The random Forest Flaneur style of inspiration for poetry in a rural setting provided discovery of relationships to the environment beyond the urban Flaneur that focused on human relationships. The freedom of the Forest Flaneur allowed me to explore the ecosystem in a holistic field of study as opposed to a restricted path. The random element of the Flaneur methodology encouraged the discovery of the tactile attraction as opposed to designated path movement. Random and slow movement in combination heightened the intuitive aspect. There was no prescribed path to limit the scope of exploration. I was free to follow my intuitive attraction of the ecosystem to interact with objects to touch. This greatly enhanced a deep knowledge of the subjective (organic) point of view in the environment rather than the human based sterile mapping. Backward and forward motion and repeated steps allowed for a fuller scope of data collection and deliberate elimination of a logical sequence imposed by humans and beaten trails. My fingers found objects from the visceral perspective in a tactile privileged arena.
  
5. A variety of formats that elicited public response along the continuum of the project created an accumulated presentation feedback loop. In turn, it opened me up to deal with challenges of public reactions and practical issues at the early stages. The presentation feedback-loops from the public at each phase provided essential information to adjust the project in the experimental stages (1) and (2). I have included examples of a number of exhibitions presented of work from this research in Appendix 1.

6. Artist re-engagement with Nature adds to collective memory: The primarily urban-dweller artist with childhood memories in Nature can gain dramatically from the process of re-engagement in Nature both artistically and personally through tactile perception, as it re-bonds and stimulates dormant memories. This complex process lends itself to a harmonizing of the child with the adult to enhance the creative process in an artist's life. The poetic and creative writing especially benefits from this fusion of tactile memories with a wider access to the poetic bank of vocabulary. This may be extended to further research with artist residency programs in rural areas promoted by small villages to offer the opportunity to explore Nature on a daily basis, then crafted into an artwork to be shared with the public as part of a collective memory of the landscape.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

Considering the interdisciplinary aspect of this thesis project and its wide variety of outcomes that were divided between the artistic and literary fields, I would like to note that these contributions not only address poets and artists, but also extend the research to new areas in tactile perception.

The contribution to knowledge focuses around the development of a method of revisiting the experiences of poets in relation to specific landscapes and in terms of refining that method through exploring the tactile dimension. I would suggest that the method of separating the tactile from the non-tactile has clear relevance for the creative practitioner. Through my research, I discovered an interesting relationship to time and the looping of experience when reflecting on my experiences over a controlled period after the walks. A 15+day gestation period lag between *in situ* exploration and studio work creates a rich incubation for long term memory recall to draw upon in future projects. Tactile memories play an important role in the transfer of the visceral contact experience to the cognitive process for a richer creative process.

1. *Forest Flaneur* defines a poetic walking style in rural settings combined with tactile perception.
- I formulated the definition of the *Forest Flaneur* to highlight a poetic walking style in rural settings with tactile perception. This emphasised a random and slow reflective approach to interacting with Nature, enhancing the haptic intuitive for environmental friendly bonding beyond the human language a priori.

This style of Flaneur in the natural setting combined with tactile perception enriched my poetry. The tactile inputs stirred my heart and ignited my brain at the same time through the finger pads. Upon return to the studio, I found this exhilarating in the creative writing process. The *Forest Flaneur* as defined\*\* here is the accumulation of these experiences derived from this research study.

The inspiration to write poetry has never been an analytical process for me. In this research project I delved back into my practice of creative writing and found the Flaneur best described my style. It is associated with an urban setting in Paris, and I fully understand this concept due to my travels. I was interested in exploring this random walking style as a “child’s play” (Malchiodi and Crenshaw, 2015). The tactile perception and the Flaneur in a natural setting were established as a poetic practice to follow during this research study. The Flaneur in the forest (a complex natural environment) was a unique manner in which to approach a natural setting, returning to the concept of “play.” It was not the mere walking slowly in a natural setting on a path with reflective moments to take notes for inspiration, but included the benefit of tactile attraction. I allowed my sensory perception walks to be open and random with forward and backward movements. This emulated the Flaneur in Paris on the cusp of a known environment, and yet crossing over into the unknown. This discovery element of “play” is a positive mental stimulation and thus the creative boundaries, wielded by intuition, tap into a vast vocabulary reservoir.

The walking poetic base of this project was researched by means of Baudelaire's Flaneur method, and served as an important foundation to grasp how a poet is inspired through time/space experience. The rural feature was not usually associated with Baudelaire's Flaneur poetic concept and in fact, the urban metropolis focus was dominant with the prior method and/or analysis. I found a gap in this knowledge base for what I coin the "Forest Flaneur" to flourish in a complex natural environment by encouraging a visceral connection with environmental layers through tactile attractions. This, (the Forest Flaneur), is a new contribution to knowledge in this field. Unlike Nietzsche's "wanderer," this contribution to the Flaneur highlights the urban dweller contact with his/her surrounding ecosystem or new rural encounter by expanding their analytical boundaries, as did Baudelaire with diverse groups of people in the city. This re-engagement of humanity to nature with the *Forest Flaneur*\*\* style of walking accentuates random footsteps in the environment rather than a prescribed path (point A to point B), in order to break with the urban regiment applied to an ecosystem and encourage an *environmentally friendly* bonding beyond the human language a priori.

\*\*Therefore, the definition of the Forest Flaneur would be:

- A. Takes place in a rural setting (beyond suburban development)
- B. Uses "embodied walking"
  - 1) Random movement + Slow (Open to any direction)
  - 2) Tactile inputs + other sensory inputs (separate walks desirable)
- C. Tactile examination (respectful) *in situ*
  - 1) Flora/Fauna
  - 2) Soil and detritus
- D. Texture, Shape and Form Sensitivity

## 2. Time Lapse Looping

- Separation of visceral experiential mode and studio contemplation mode allow for artist to fully engage in the environment with living organisms and sensory perception for both non tactile and tactile walks. Freedom to concentrate on a random walk to explore an environment enriches the perception with full body engagement, without a separation of tasks on site. Play mode in situ carries over to play mode in the studio post walking in the contemplation arena drawing on intermediate term memories stored for future retrieval rather than short term memories accessed on site.

The gestation period of 15+ days became part of the base for the tactile memories involving the nervous system, heartbeat, emotional response, and cognitive retrieval for a long term memory trajectory. Reflection and distance from the exploration field over a time span created a solid base to tap into for future reference (Pyc, 2010). Unlike landscape painting on site and enhanced in the studio or reproduction from photographs, the tactile memories were based on a cognitive process stimulated from the skin on the finger pads (rather than hairs) to the somosensory cortex in the brain. This prolonged touch with slight pressure ignites a deeper set of receptors in the tactile cutaneous region rather than skimming the surface with hair follicles. The length of time given for reflection has been noted to determine the difference between short and long term memory (Sleister, 2014), (Kelley and Whatson, 2013). This was the main motivation for the 15+day gestation period implementation after noticing the range of tactile memories available for future studio work.

In addition, the tactile memories stored in the intermediate-term memory (ITM) were looped back into the artwork with a studio session after 15 days. This meant the memories were available for recall and not forgotten with the creation of the colour palette. Short term memory (STM) can wane quickly if it is utilized immediately without the reflection due to the cognitive set up of storage and recall. On the other hand, the ITM with reflection time (15+ days) set up the building

blocks for the long term memory (LTM) to facilitated repeated recall of the landscape colour palette over time. The 3D poetic canvas drove the cognitive process to recall the tactile memories even after three years, signifying the cognitive process had enough time to store the palette into long term memory. This methodology of looping time to allow for the cognitive process to move the instant stimuli into the ITM storage bypassing the short term memory prevented the risk of losing the vital inputs for future recall. Moreover, working with the tactile memories in various formats with an added value of reflection during the painting and poetry sessions enhanced the outcome.

## Chapter 6 **Further Research**

### Further Research

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Further research has been identified to extend this study concerning specifically tactile perception, interactive art installations, environmental empathy and creative writing. The combination of these elements was explored in this research project through the phenomenological framework of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and could be extended to other philosophers, such as Maria Zambrano. The human bonding to the environment and its living organisms has been on the rise in recent years. Today as there is more social responsibility awareness, Zambrano's *Poetic Reason* can help move towards a healing of the heart/mind separation. Although planetary extinction is foreseeable, artists have the social responsibility to work towards avoiding such chaos and promote the harmony of all living organisms, humans included. The academic fields of arts and literature are confronted with non-tangible aesthetic choices that culminate into tangible heritage for future generations. Further research into this type of environmental aesthetic is the overreaching goal of extending this study in hopes it will motivate our current choices that shape our future with a greater environmental empathy. I would like to point out the three main areas of interest that would contribute to the fields of art and literature, notwithstanding other fields such as psychology and ecology.

1) Tactile Perception and appreciation for the environment

- a) Further research into the human relationship to ecosystems and living organisms incorporating tactile perception would enhance this research field of holistic perception for use in an artistic creative process.
- b) Further research to compare groups by performing non-tactile and tactile walks would extend this study of visceral responses to the environment.
- c) Further research to study differences in engagement with nature by comparing varying walking style groups could add to measuring the value of the Forest Flaneur utilizing two groups namely, 1) A group utilizing the *Forest Flaneur* (walking at random) and 2) a group using designated paths.
- d) Further research into comparing rural dwellers and urban dwellers in this line of research could better understand how urban dwellers engage with nature.

2) Language Enhancer and Environmental Understanding and appreciation:

- a) Further research into creative writing in combination with tactile inputs in natural settings will extend the study of how language is impacted by tactile perception exploration in the environment.

## Chapter 7 **Bibliography**

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## Chapter 8 **Appendix**

### Appendix 1

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#### Introduction

This appendix describes a reflective process using exhibitions of my work and public outdoor walks a way of finding out more about the haptic responses people had to both the natural environment and the gallery environment. This information and research was originally meant to be included in the main body of the thesis, but as it became clear that the key contributions to knowledge would be centered around creative methodological processes explored, I decided to move this research into an appendix, using it a reference and source of information for some of my reflective thinking in the thesis.

The research project included an audience participation component in order to gain insight possibly into the transfer of empathy from artist to spectator. The opportunities to interact with the public were specifically: 1) Calabi Gallery, California, 2015 (symposium); 2) GZERO, Art Basel, Switzerland, 2016 (collective); 3) Design Centre, University of Sunderland, UK, 2017 (solo). Each event drew upon a phase in the research process to present to the public. The public varied in each case. After the first event, the public feedback became an integrated part of the project and a benefit emerged in this 3-step presentational format.

Each presentation was followed by a reflective interval, permitting time to contemplate and modify the project in order to incorporate key points from public feedback. This format had not been part of the methodology and was later added as a significant element to improve audience participation. Each time a presentation arose, the project gained momentum to meet the deadlines and challenges of the event. Moreover, analysis post event was vital to improve the project for the next stage and note the audience feedback. The breakdown is as follows: 25%, 50% and 100% of the research. These points on the timeline came about naturally. However, it could be a valuable component for PhD practice led projects dealing with an audience and further research would extend this element.

### **Symposium: Calabi Gallery, California: (25%)**

Santa Rosa is directly north of the San Francisco metropolis and the destination for artists seeking an inspiration from nature. Sonoma County is a midpoint location that lies between Mendocino County and San Francisco. The Calabi Gallery is located in Santa Rosa, in Sonoma County. I organized a symposium in this gallery about my artist creative process with two locally known artists and was able to present 25% of the research. My contribution to the event was “Ode to Mt. Tam and Gary Snyder: Study I” which was a collage of the non-tactile walk palette acquired during my first walk to Mt. Tam. The symposium was based on the narrative in visual art.

Prior to the event, I was invited as a guest to participate in a roundtable on public radio. It was to discuss the art scene in Sonoma County. My art was described as a retrospective *Romantic* style during the discussion and I was asked how relevant it was to contemporary issues. I had to explain the motivation for the process that came from the threat of planetary extinction due to a drop in empathy with nature. The response came as a surprise since on the surface my art had been lumped into landscape art. I became aware of the confusion that may arise about the work during this discussion. I had to distinguish it from the *Romantics*. It prompted me to adjust my introduction to the work in all contexts.

A week later, the symposium was lively with audience feedback and questions. The public varied from artists to art collectors. It subsequently heightened an interest amongst the guests in the audience in my research on tactile memories and my upcoming tactile walk on Mt. Tam. Mt. Tam has long been an inspiration from a visual perception point of view, but my research into the tactile memories intrigued the audience. Other artists remembered Mt. Tam and its unforgettable shroud of fog was a common thread in informal dialogues post event. Artists approached me to join the tactile walk for their own inspiration as a new creative method.



Figure 1 Exhibit Calabi Gallery, California 2015 (Denis Calabi owner)

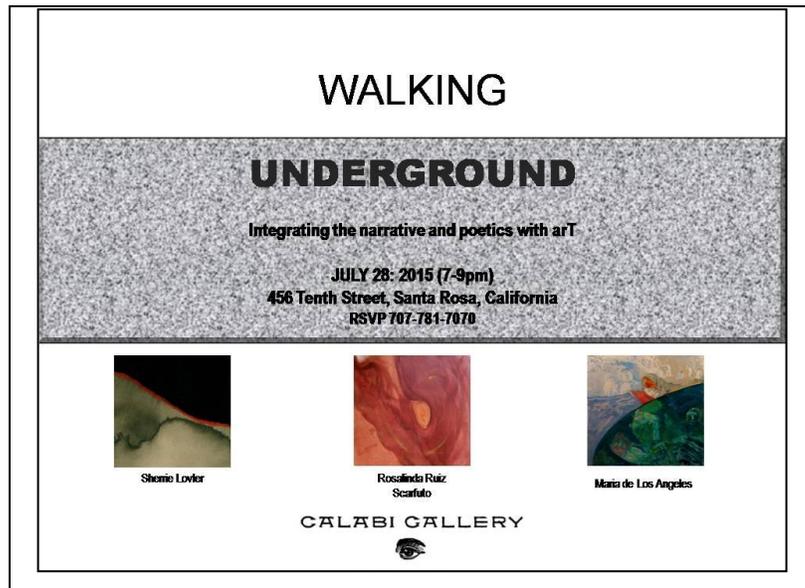


Figure 128 Symposium Calabi Gallery, California 2015 (poster)

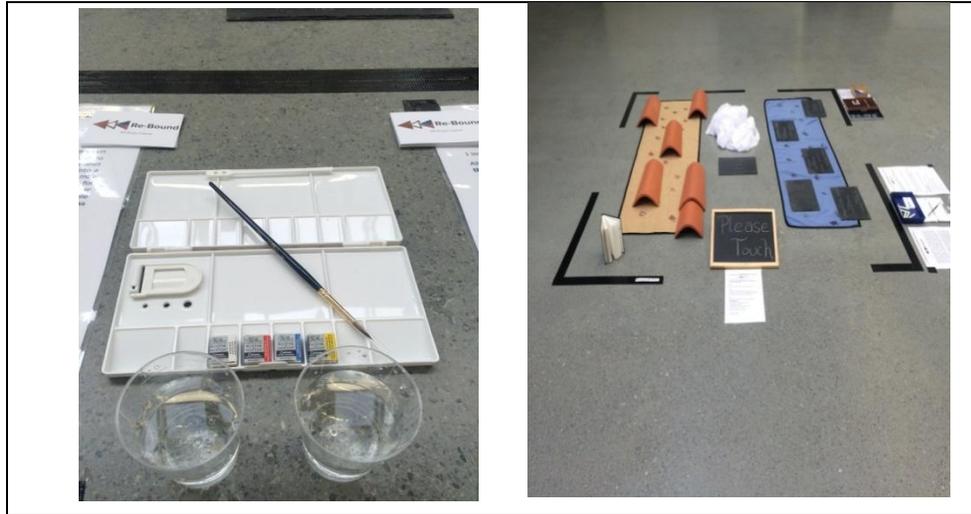


**Figure 129 Symposium Calabi Gallery, California 2015 (Public)**

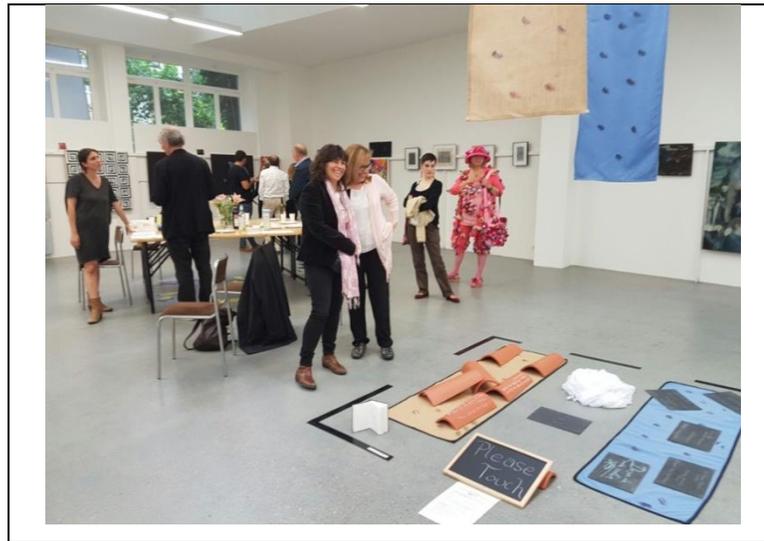
This symposium at Calabi Gallery was the first time to share the research in a quasi-academic setting and exhibit at the same time. The opportunity for feedback and dialogue was dynamic and helpful for the next steps in the project. I received a boost of enthusiasm to continue with my research questions and at the same time confirmed my creative process up to that point. I had finished the Machado non-tactile and tactile walks including the studio work for the palette along with the poetry. This was the first public reading of the Machado re-play poems and its complete visual-tactile palette (reproductions) was discussed. The Snyder case study was in the beginning stages. Only the visual palette had been mounted and framed for exhibition. I believe this advanced the project mainly due to the feedback from the public both verbal and non-verbal as they observed the piece on the wall and aired their questions. It gave me points to reflect upon to enrich the overall research project for following phases.

## **Collective Show: Art Basel, Switzerland (50%)**

Art Basel in Switzerland gathers international contemporary galleries and European collectors on an annual basis in a citywide event. GZ Gallery from Barcelona participated in a sideline event with an art fair featuring artists from several continents including South America, North America, Oceania, Africa, Europe and Asia. It was a vibrant crossroads of mediums with visual arts, performance, video and mixed media installation. It drew a mixed crowd of local and international visitors. I was able to present 50% of the research in this event. The installation I presented fit into a 2 X 2 m square section of the floor with 2 m long fabrics hung from the ceiling. This was a mid-point (50%) opportunity in the research project to test out audience interaction. This point had completed two of the case studies. The Wordsworth slate was engraved with texts in English while the Machado terracotta tiles engraved in Spanish. Burlap and sailcloth painted fabrics were the background for the ceramic and slate roof tiles respectively. The texts on the tiles were arranged vertically and simulated Chinese writing format. I had wanted to create a playful Zen garden. The installation was marked off on the floor as a square with black duck tape. Each group of roof tiles were placed on the corresponding fabrics within the square space. Placed in the middle of the installation was an engraved slate tile with a white fabric in the shape of a flower. All was touchable except the centrepiece to maintain balance. There a sign, that indicated "PLEASE TOUCH" in white chalk on a blackboard in the middle of the installation. Colour chalk and a watercolour set were placed at the border for use to interact with the installation. I was present for two days, absent for two days and present again for one day. I recorded the results for both types of observation with notes, photos and the assistance of the organizer.



**Figure 130 GZ Basel, Switzerland (set up)**



**Figure 131 GZ Basel, Switzerland (opening)**

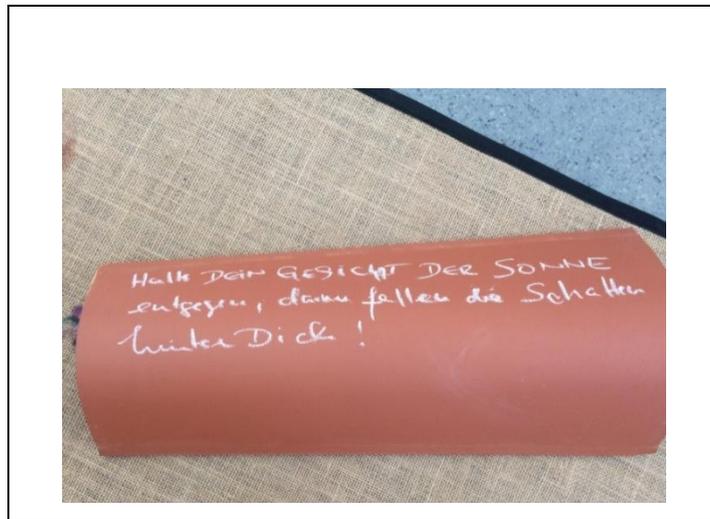
I would like to note the following highlights from my observations:

- a. Artist present
- ❖ I interacted with a woman (mid-twenties) who lived in Paris. She was standing next to the overhanging burlap and I encouraged her to touch it. She was well dressed and did not seem to want to bend down to touch the floor pieces. She began to touch it and remarked that it reminded her of her younger days in the countryside in France. At first glance, I would have never realized that she grew up in a rural small village outside Paris. She enjoyed the interaction smiling like a child. Her journey back to her childhood through this tactile interaction was noted.
  - ❖ A Spanish woman (mid-forties) bent down and began to write with the chalk provided on the terracotta tile. She had remembered a line from a poem and wanted to add it on the blank tile. She understood the Spanish texts of Machado. His poetry inspired her to participate and write. She wanted a photo of her contribution from her husband. He stood apart and took the photo. I noted her connection with the literary aspect of the installation. She commented on the feel of the roof tiles. She also commented that she had not had much experience with new tiles. She liked the cultural heritage aspect of Spain represented in such a manner.



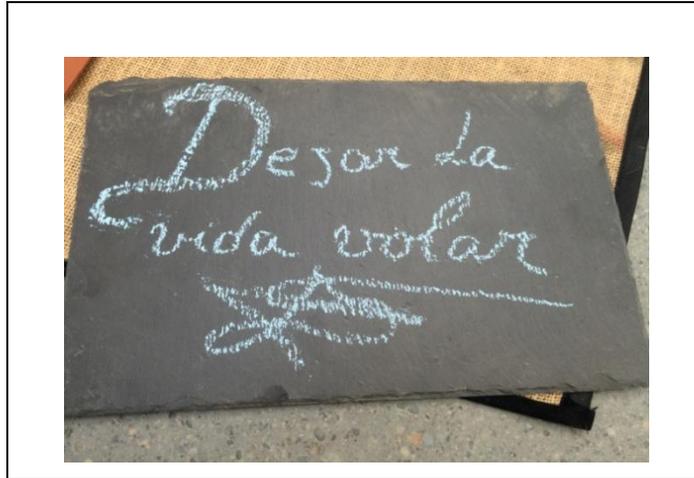
Figure 132 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 1)

- ❖ A German woman (early-forties) understood the English texts of Wordsworth and did not understand the Spanish texts. She participated by bending down on the floor and re-arranging the tiles on both sides. Then she wrote on the blank terracotta tile. She remembered a line from a German poem and wrote it out on the tile. She commented that she enjoyed the playfulness of the installation and was inspired with the nature. She wrote about how one should face the sunshine recalled from a German poetry fragment.



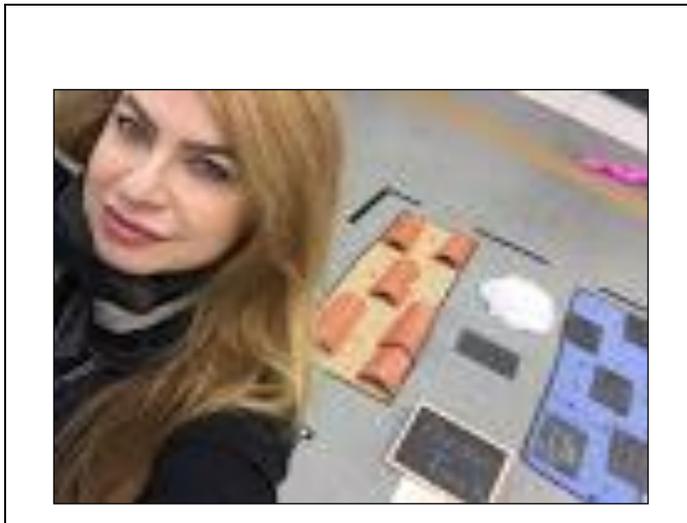
**Figure 133 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 2)**

- ❖ A Chilean woman (late-twenties) whose native language is Spanish rearranged both sides of the installation. She re-arranged the Wordsworth slate tiles and wrote on the blank slate tile. It was a line from the poet Victor Jara. The tile says, "Dejar la vida volar" (Let life fly).



**Figure 134 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 3)**

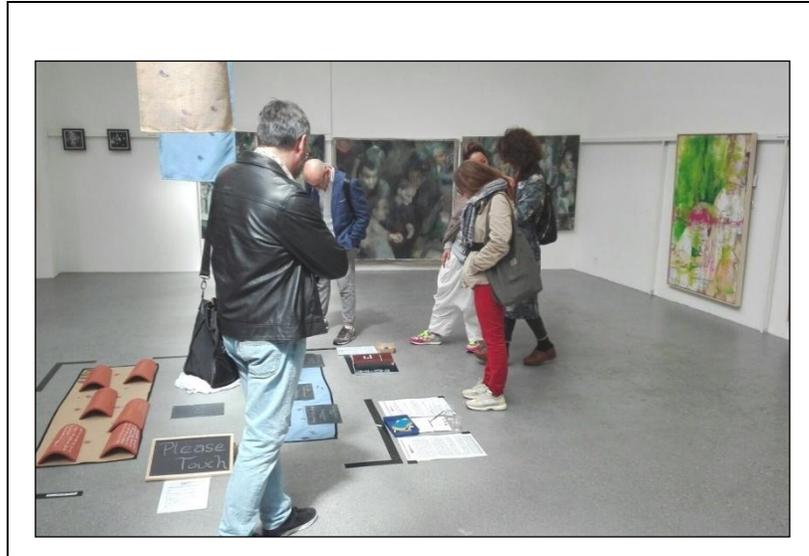
- ❖ A Brazilian woman (late-thirties) wanted to take a *selfie* with the installation after touching it.



**Figure 135 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 4)**

b. Artist non-presence

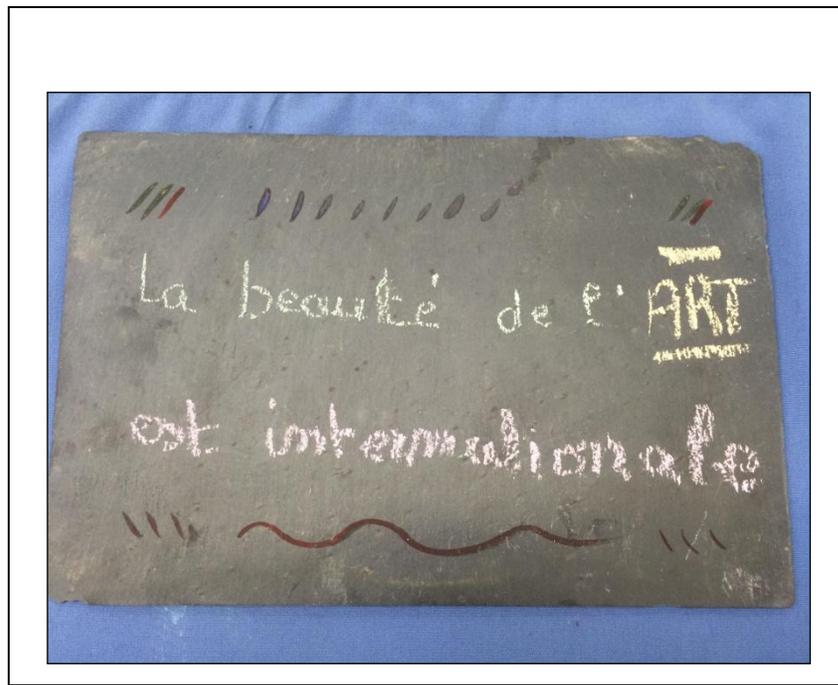
- ❖ The organizer offered photos from a group of visitors who participated in the installation. The watercolour paints and chalk that were provided resulted in a blank tile being painted in French: “La beauté de l’ART est internationale.”



**Figure 136 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 5)**



**Figure 137 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 6)**



**Figure 138 GZ Basel, Switzerland (public interaction 7)**

c. Post GZ Basel Exhibit

The GZ Basel exhibit was the first interactive installation to be presented with the research at this midpoint junction. I noted the results and began to think about improvements. The square marked space seemed to form limits to the installation that may have been an obstacle to encourage free touch. The hanging fabric gave an added dimension to the installation that I wanted to repeat. The transportation by train to set up the installation was physically challenging heavy and cumbersome to manage by myself in stations with no lifts. However, it was convenient to assure that all the artwork arrived safely considering the delicate ceramic contents. I would choose this option again. Chalk was sufficient to allow for public interaction. Watercolour could be messy if no one was there to supervise children or clean up. It was not necessary for the outcome. The signage "Please Touch" was provocative and drew attention. I would include it again in another installation. The following improvements or changes were considered:

- ❖ A computer available for instant uploading of photos to a folder could be interesting for on-line sharing. This folder could be accessed from a remote in order to upload more quickly on the website [www.re-bound.org](http://www.re-bound.org) blog. Photos could be removed if requested.
- ❖ Floor installation needs to be varied to encourage more participation. In addition, a table with items is needed to provide accessibility to all participants.
- ❖ A circular space with no borders could change the outcome and may invite more participation.
- ❖ A video could be added to explain the process of tactile data collection in nature to increase empathy and stimulation to embark on similar walks.
- ❖ Natural elements (branches, soil, rocks or leaves) could be mixed with the tiles for tactile memories and connections to nature in the installation.

### **Solo Show: Design Centre, University of Sunderland (100%)**

The Design Centre at University of Sunderland, UK (UOS) gave me the opportunity to test out a space dedicated solely to my work. It was available for a 'touchable' context in the format of an interactive installation during the month of March in 2017. This exhibit was arranged to explore all four case studies in the same space. I was able to exhibit 100% of the research. I envisioned a circular space. I arranged to have tables available to give access to physically challenged visitors in addition to the floor exhibit. All items were available for touch except the hanging banners due to their delicate condition. Participants could manipulate all parts of the installation on the tables and floor.

The low ceilings, static centre wall and delicate hanging of heritage pieces presented unique challenges to the overall project. However, the neutral aspect of white walls, white tables and grey floor first attracted me to create a low impact colour show to focus on opening up the space. A solo show based on my practice art research enabled me to test out my touchable art in a gallery setting with audience interactive participation; utilizing their visual and tactile perceptions. The

presentation drew on the poetry, palettes and 3D sculptures of the four poets post walking. I will divide the outcome into three parts, preparation, participation and analysis.

### **Preparation: Challenges and New Perspectives**

Three main challenges were presented and I had to overcome them in order to carry out a successful show: 1) Heritage tile hanging; 2) Static centre wall; 3) Low ceiling & banners. Each challenge became a learning curve that culminated in a new perspective to the public presentation.

#### **a. Heritage piece hanging**

Heritage tiles are delicate and for the integrity of the show, I needed to adhere not only to colour choices that fit with the piece but also the laws of physics for weight with the least amount of damage. I tested out the different ways in the studio and avoided glue, drilling holes or mounting on wood in order to remain as close to the originality of the heritage piece. The two tiles that required wire hangers were Wordsworth's slate and Machado's ceramic.

##### *Machado ceramic tile*

The Machado tile was the only piece that needed an innovative approach to conserve the heritage tile and hang it with clean lines. It was approached from a plate hanger premise that could suspend the ceramic tile with an apparatus on the backside made from wire. I bought plate hangers but they were too small to hold the length of the tile. Hence, I opted for a handmade wire hanger that I would create. The weight of the tile needed a strong wire to grasp the top and bottom edges for security. I created two wire hangers from copper wire, one short for the top and another one long for the length of the tile. I used a pulley action by slipping a piece of thin rope through the bottom hanger and then the top one to create tension to hold it all together. This dynamic utilized the mass of the tile (weight) with the rope to hold the tile in place against the wall.



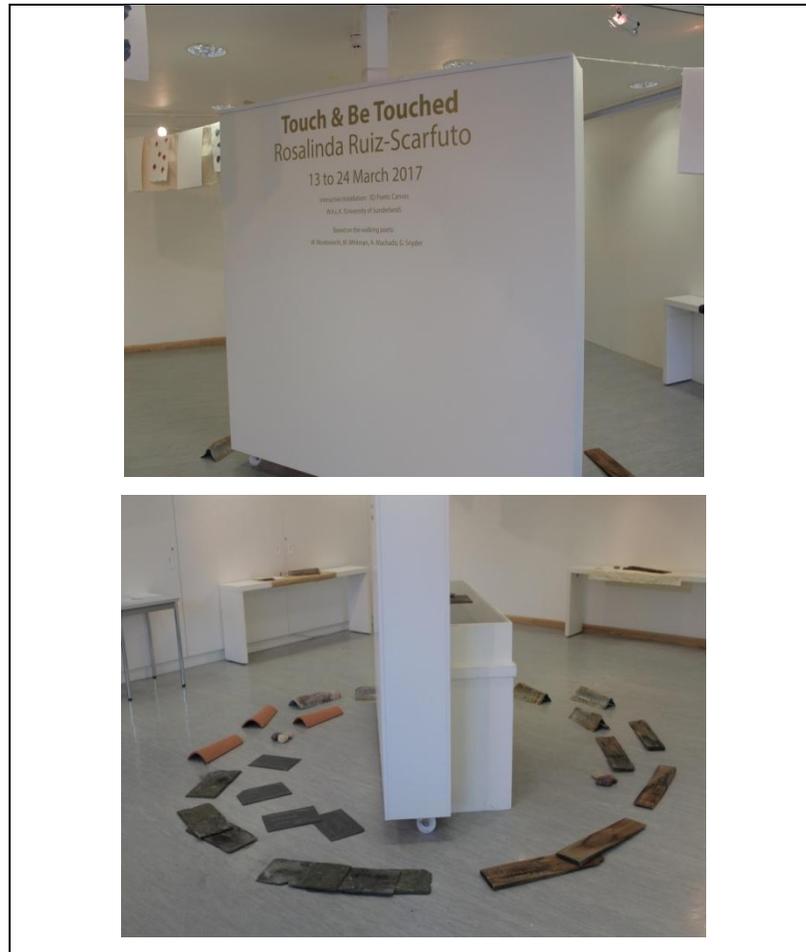
Figure 139 Design Centre Exhibit; wire hanger for ceramic heritage tile.



**Figure 140 Design Centre Exhibit; Ceramic tile hangers in place on wall**

### **b. Static wall**

A static wall in the middle of the space complicated the circular design of the installation. It could not be moved but only rotated. It could change positions from North-South to East-West. I had originally envisioned a blank centre, no wall. I decided to put it at a diagonal angle in order not to cut the room in two parts. This solution created the circular path for the floor tiles. I understand that this had never been done before and presented a new approach to the space.



**Figure 141 Design Centre Exhibit; Ceramic tile hangers in place on wall**

### **c. Low ceiling & Banners**

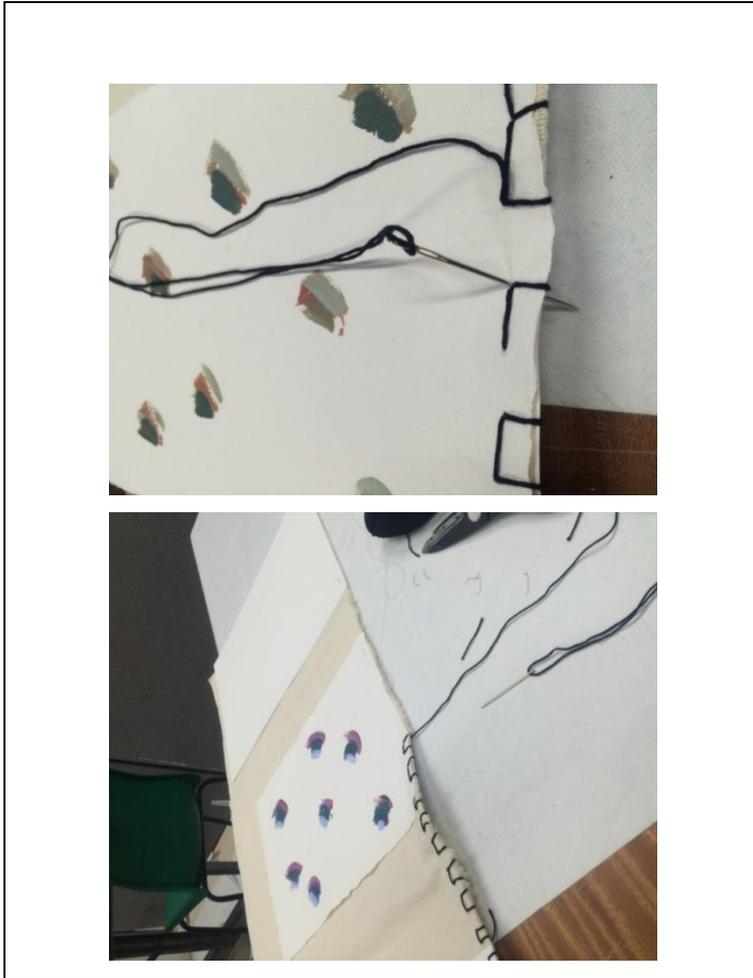
The space did not offer enough room for long fabric banners. I had to change the format for the palette colour banners. I opted for a Tibetan flag short banner motif that would be hung with jute and the sagging could fit in with the authentic flag hanging. The theme of the exhibit was Buddhist with 33 banners and this was the simplified manner to achieve the goal. I was advised to prepare as much as possible in the studio before the installation date. I had a deadline and worked to meet that goal.



**Figure 142 Design Centre Exhibit; Banners**

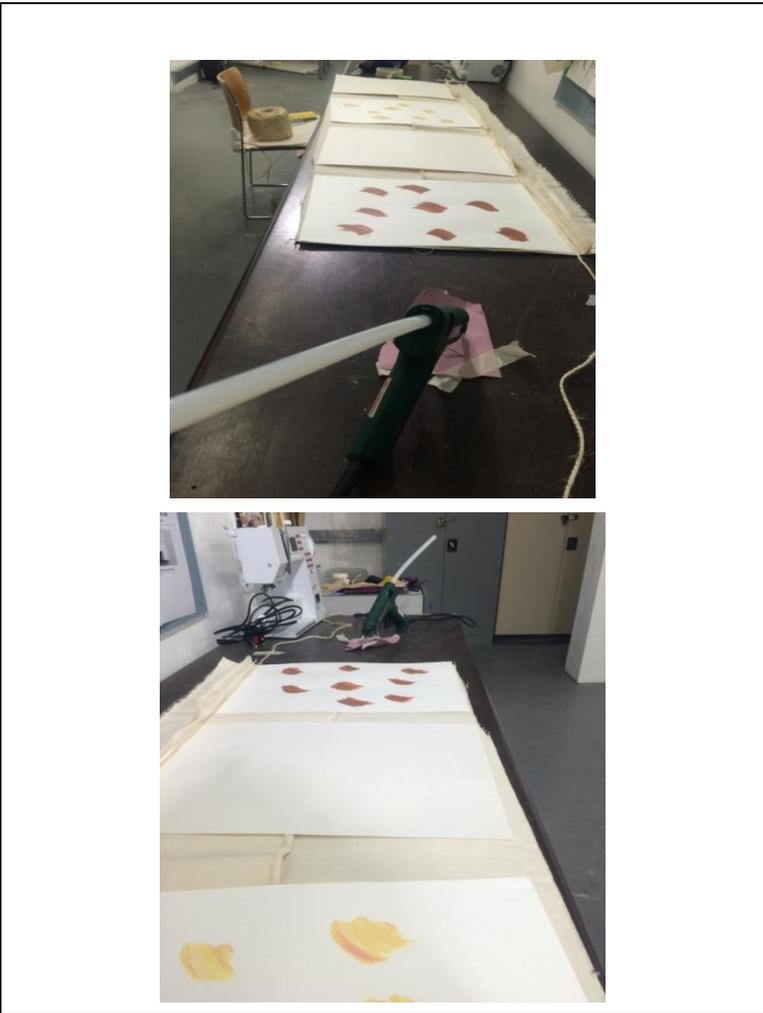
The construction of the banners was to combine paper and fabric. Hand stitched binding simulated old style bookbinding. The glue technique fit in with the book binding method. I felt I was able to keep the integrity of the overall installation that related to the theme of literature and nature. Each step of the way was new to me. I stitched the paper colour palettes on to long canvas banners to hang horizontally instead of vertically.

Hand stitching was not new but under the conditions of paper and heavy canvas I had to be careful not pinch myself and make blood stains on the white paper and ivory canvas fabric.

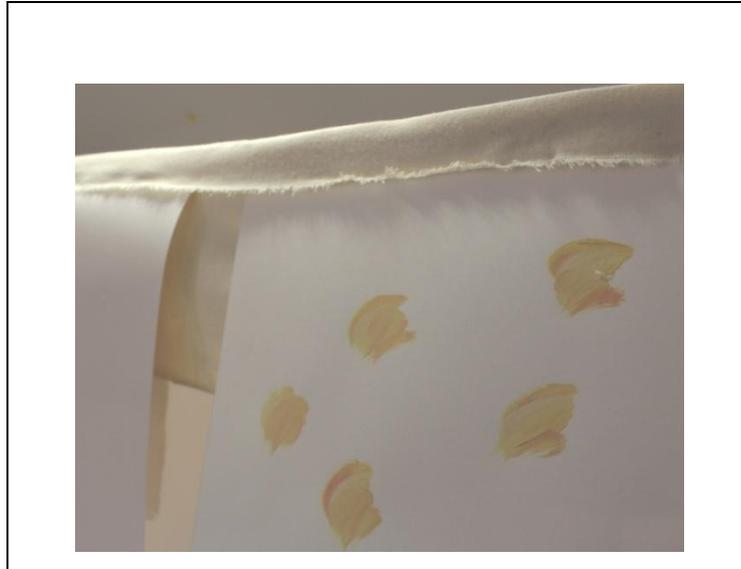


**Figure 143 Design Centre Exhibit; Banner Binding (hand stitch)**

The glue technique was also tricky to get everything in place before the binding. I was advised to tape everything down including the jute to be fitted into the seam. The circular pattern of the exhibit would mean the public could walk in any direction. Hence, I glued the banners on both sides of the jute, spacing them out with a blank white paper.



**Figure 144 Figure 6 Design Centre Exhibit; Banner binding (glue)**



**Figure 145 Design Centre Exhibit; Banner Binding (close up)**

I wanted to create as much white space as possible to give the illusion of air and light. The low ceilings could become claustrophobic with 32 banners. They needed to be hung high and yet spaced out. The palette for each poet was painted on hand made paper as well as industry shiny paper. I experimented with these types of paper in the studio. I liked both effects with the light. The variance would add depth to the exhibit.

The final stage of transporting the banners was easy. I designed them to fold up and fit into a bag to transfer to the installation site. Once they were stacked, I found a new element of surprise. They looked like large oversize books: landscape palette books. This method would make the installation uncomplicated to archive.



**Figure 146 Design Centre Exhibit; Palette Books**

### **Show participation: Public & Art students**

The Design Centre is a University of Sunderland operated space. It was not open in the evenings or weekends. Thereby it limited the general public interaction. I drew on art students who frequented the building for classes and professors to interact with the installation. I was able to give two mini lectures about the process and invited classes to participate. The results were varied and it should be noted that these are design and art students. There were undergraduate and graduate participants.



**Figure 147 Design Centre Exhibit (art student participants)**

### **New 3D poetic canvases arise**

The surprising element was the creation of *new* 3D poetic canvases that arose along the path of the exhibit. As participants arrived and interacted with the space, the exhibit turned in a new direction. This contrasted with the Basel event, where I had put the tiles back into original place. In this exhibit, literally the path of the tiles changed the configuration on the floor. Colours were added by the chalk provided and designs appeared on the tiles with the public interaction. However, I had thought the language would have been a driving force to create new 3D poetic canvas. In contrast, the forms of the tiles became the forefront of the interactions. New ways to present the tiles were achieved through the audience participation. Tiles were turned from horizontal to vertical standing.



**Figure 148 Design Centre Exhibit (participant poetic canvas 1)**

Groupings also were transformed by inter-collating old and new tiles, which created a new path. Strangely enough, the literary factor was less pronounced and accidental formations with Spanish and English fragments aligned with no apparent reason. The exhibit had its own journey and took a turn as each participant interacted. The original configuration was merged into a new one created by the public.

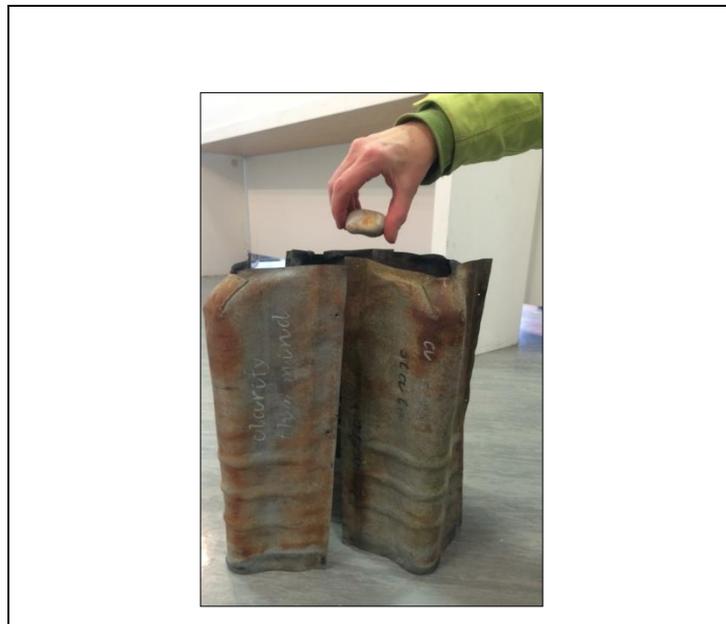


**Figure 149 Design Centre Exhibit (participant poetic canvas 2)**

My immediate response to these interactions and comments was positive and full of wonder how such an exhibit could grow into a style of presentation. The show went beyond my expectations in that it was able to allow the 3D poetic canvas to transform beyond words, colours and shape. This transcendental aspect of the exhibit that combined the visual and tactile perception of my own art and that of the participants' reached a new level of artistic expression.



**Figure 150 Design Centre Exhibit (participant poetic canvas 3A)**



**Figure 151 Design Centre Exhibit (participant poetic canvas 3B)**

This new form of art presentation verges on the collective memory in action. Additionally, the playfulness of tangible objects in a digital era was exciting to watch amongst the participants.

I was present during the mini lectures to observe art and design students interact with partners or alone to redesign the exhibit to their own liking. I dialogued with participants after their interactive session to gather some sense of their experience verbally. One participant in her early twenties, design student, described the experience as “fun.” Written comments were collected in a small book left in the exhibit. One comment expressed a memory of walking in the countryside as a child.



**Figure 152 Design Centre Exhibit (participant poetic canvas 3C)**

I realized after the show how the various dimensions of the presentation worked out for the participants. It offered a depth of intellectual material due to its conceptual base of the abstract painting of the palettes of the four landscapes, and yet it was attractive enough to an audience to interact physically to “play” out their own creations. In some cases, these new 3D poetic canvases were done in a sophisticated manner balancing objects or creating paths with design and colours of their choice.



**Figure 153 Design Centre Exhibit (participant poetic canvas 4)**

I believe that this may be an important element where the audience members of contemporary art and vary in backgrounds from intellectually inspired visits to participatory visits to join the artist in the creative experience on site at the exhibit.

### **Summary Public Shows**

The public shows were originally designed to create community outreach and an exploration into spectator empathy. Venues were difficult to secure for exhibits to study spectator empathy fully and to test the indoor/outdoor combination concretely within reach of the poetic landscapes. However, opportunities for exhibits arose during the research project and the public feedback was part of alternative venues served to put me in contact with spectators ranging in age, social status, culture and art experience.

The installations themselves were walking in an organic visceral manner with the “please touch” mode that merged artist and public in a unique way: a *Flaneur happening*. Both types of artist presence and non-presence enriched the exhibition: a) artist on-site and b) artist off-site. Interactions via comment books and signage or direct contact provided different information for observation through silence and dialogue. The new poetic canvases became part of the collective memory of these heritage poets and yet transcendent and temporal with the fluctuations added by the participants.

I will discuss the positive outcomes of these shows in terms of improved audience interactions because of the adaptation process over a span of three phases. In addition, I will explain the complications that occurred during the process to target specific nearby venues of the four designated poetic landscapes.

### **1. Tri-Phase analysis:**

The three phases of public shows came about at different intervals in the research timeline. This tri-phase presentation method had a positive outcome. It built up confidence in exhibiting skills for interactive art and enabled changes to be made for better exhibits based on public responses along a continuum rather than waiting for 100% completion. It became a tool to augment the experimental stages of the methodology for adaptation and modification of the artwork. Each presentation gave me new insights into how the public understood my work and the analysis for each phase is vital to appreciate this component of a practice led art research project. The following analysis is broken down into three phases.

#### *a) Phase I*

The first phase was the California Calabi gallery symposium/exhibit and it surprised me for positive and negative reasons. First, I was welcomed back to a comfort zone of my homeland and second I was criticized from abroad. A European curator responded during the radio show roundtable, that my work was not exactly current and rather a throwback to the “Romantics” as my base. She had not understood the environmental emphasis of the project and my motivation.

In addition, in this first phase presentation I had been dealing with Machado colour palette and poems. Hence, I could make changes for the next public encounter (Phase II). I was able to make changes on my art blog and then in the signage for Art Basel in Switzerland to clarify my objectives in the exhibit after these viewer comments. In the blog, I added text about my motivation based on the climate changes and nature deterioration to set my art apart from the *Romantics* clearly stating that my own spiritual quest was not involved in the project.

During the symposium at Calabi Gallery, considering that Mt. Tam was relatively accessible to the audience members, there was a renewed interest in the landscape from a tactile perception. Artists were especially motivated to understand the creative process that involved the Merleau-Ponty philosophy. The symposium mode gave me the opportunity to field questions from the public about my creative process inspired by this project in an open dialogue format. The new awareness from the radio show prior to the symposium directed my responses to clarify my motivations based on tactile perception and Mt. Tam as a watershed worthy of conserving. In the informal talks after the symposium, there was a significant interest in participating in a tactile walk on Mt. Tam. This presentation was the closest to the hypothesis of combining indoor and outdoor interactive participation to elicit empathy from the public due to its location. Attempts to exhibit at the foot of Mt. Tamapalis in Marin County were complicated by the high-end galleries that dominate the area. A Marin based literary-art magazine has been approached for publication of the Snyder poems and 3D poetic canvas. Santa Rosa was a viable alternative given familiarity of Snyder as a poet and the landscape of Mt. Tam. The symposium was in June and I was invited to participate in a Beat Poet exhibit in October at the gallery. The following year, I was invited to exhibit the 3D poetic canvas of Snyder in another collective show to represent an environmental aspect of the group. Calabi gallery currently represents my artwork for Snyder.

*b) Phase II*

The second phase in Basel, Switzerland was a collective show in a new location on an international stage. The atmosphere was in some ways more relaxed with a longer timeframe and less spotlight on my particular artwork. In contrast to California, I had two poet case studies completed with colour palette and transfer to fabric. The 3D poetic canvas was more visible with this second presentation and the interactive element was put into place for the first time. I had expected to deal with breakage of the artwork, but actually all arrived safely by train with hand carried suitcases. During the exhibit, nothing was broken. I had built in the possibility of breakage considering that fragments of poetry could also mean shards (fragments) of ceramics or slate in order to maintain integrity. I believe this helped allow me to share my art in the interactive format and at the same time remain relaxed. It was crucial to be ready for damage and incorporate it into the installation process or spectator interaction to involve the public fully to “touch” art. Transportation of the whole exhibit by hand alone from Madrid to Basel via Barcelona and Paris was tremendous but meant all arriving with me and less tension to set up without missing pieces. A foreign place to set up an exhibit meant relying on the curator and owner of the building to find supplies at the last minute, and all was fairly easy and economical with their collaboration. The public response was positive and varied with each spectator but did not depend on cultural factors. One French participant was hesitant while other French participants were interactive leaving behind a slate written with their ideas. A German participant felt free enough to write on any roof tile and gravitated towards the tactile aspect and shape of the Machado terracotta. A Spanish speaker from Chile chose a Wordsworth slate to express her favourite poetic line. A Brazilian woman took the opportunity to interact via a “selfie” as a memoir. This show was insightful into the cross-cultural aspect of this type of 3D poetic canvas. The square marked “Zen Garden” with no sand or rocks had not reached my intention of a participatory ally. It was not ideal for interaction and an open circular format could be a solution to this hesitation for the public to participate more easily.

*c) Phase III*

The third phase was the solo show at the Design Centre, Sunderland. It was challenging due to the space and timeline for the set-up preparation. It was completely different from Phase I presentation in California that only provided a partial view of my research. It had the potential to improve on the Basel layout in Phase II with a new circular layout. However, the audience could not be considered a common public.

The interaction with the audience was mainly through art students, and the common public presence was limited due to the exhibit space being closed at weekends and open for limited hours in the evenings. The preparation was far more complicated in this presentation as compared to Phase I or Phase II. Several real-life obstacles presented themselves and solutions required quick responses with guided help by experts, however application was up to me to carry out with real deadlines and printed publicity posted around Sunderland campus. The space at the solo show spoke to me in its emptiness when I walked the space days prior to the actual hanging. Hanging a show was completely new to me and as the installation in Basel was floor based with only two fabric-hanging scrolls, I only had to fit into the collective limited layout. Thus, this solo show was actually a bit fearful and yet exciting to design with more freedom.

The natural element that was missing from Phase II in Basel was solved with rocks from the Sunderland coast. My recent father's death prompted me to gather rocks from the Sunderland sea coast and incorporate them into the installation in his memory considering my great grandfather used to work as a crews member on British ships from Bilbao, Spain. These rocks seem to add the natural touch element to the installation that I had wanted to add since Phase II in Basel. The rocks were a wonderful combination with the heritage pieces and gave the presentation continuity around the space. The public liked to touch and move the rocks. I would definitely include this aspect again and find a way to collect and replace them, even though heavy to carry.

The cultural heritage element was dynamic in Phase III as compared to Phase I or Phase II. I found a set of slate roof tiles two days prior to the hanging of the show. I was able to mix them into the exhibit and it gave the installation depth. I had acquired them by luck on my Flaneur outing to relax before the show. I found an abandoned house down by the sea on a long bus ride along the coast. Upon returning on Monday morning, I was given six vintage tiles (circa: 1820's). I had to hand-carry them by bus to the exhibit space.

Some of the spectators were students of UOS and ranged from undergraduates to graduate fellow PhD students. Some of the undergraduate participants participated in my mini lectures with their art and design professors. As the installation changed with each participant's interaction, a new 3D poetic canvas emerged. It was a new aspect of the installation that I had not planned. The new 3D poetic canvases for the duration of the show created their own route and became an artist-spectator journey reaching beyond the original installation layout. It was an embellishment to the project. It shows how an interactive installation can take on its own "walk."

#### *d) Comparisons and Contrasts of Phases*

All of the installations required physical stamina from jet lag to luggage bins and delicate handling with mailing and customs. This sense of tactile perception across borders and languages was exciting as a cross-cultural event. Dialogue in a cross-cultural setting about poetry, art, childhood memories and the environment arose in direct and indirect (comment book or interaction) observation with spectators-participants. The feedback-loop with public responses was generally positive and the critical responses guided me to modify the 3D poetic canvas at each phase of the project.

Phase I was a positive response mode to reach out to the community in the form of a presentational symposium with an open question format for feedback. This early phase interaction with the public was vital to be updated with the latest audience perspective of how the art will be received with only 25% completed. There is ample room for new considerations and modifications to adhere to the methodology steps. Whether or not the responses changed the outcome, it was not the objective. However, the information was meant to take an informed decision for the final choices and to enhance the research method. Phase I analysis propelled me into Phase II with changes to improve the research technique for empathy transfer. Phase II contrasted greatly with Phase I with the 3D element present in the installation. The cross-cultural background of spectators at this international event in Basel expanded the dialogue across borders and enabled me to test the interactive installation on a global village level.

Public dialogue in Phase III was similar to Phase I with signage and artist on site for questions and feedback. However, the installation on its own brought a new level to spectator interaction and empathy. A range of empathy appeared in the texts written on the tiles and choice of tiles. Direct contact with the spectators gave insight into the motivation to choose one tile over another due to tactile or visual reasons. Rearrangement of the tiles did not adhere to cultural background with the texts but rather tactile or visual based perception. One English participant wrote, "I like overlapping" and chose the Wordsworth tiles to demonstrate her text. Another English participant restacked the Machado tiles because he noted he like constructing. This variation was divergent from the framed work hung on a wall for observation by the audience at the symposium in Phase I.

Phase III was similar to Phase II with an interactive 3D poetic canvas base. The spectators manipulated items on the floor as well as on the tables. The layout even changed each time. Art students drew on the tiles more than wrote texts. Colour chalk was used more than the white chalk with this Phase II installation as well.

Phase II with its mini lectures enabled an explanation of the research project with a feedback session similar to Phase I symposium. However, the artists were less experienced as undergraduates than the professional artists and collectors that attended the Phase I Calabi Gallery event.

Phase III layout was circular in contrast to Phase II installation and lent itself for interaction and walking within the exhibit rather than walking on the borders of the installation in Basel. This element highly contributed to spectator participation. The variation of floor and table height for the items encouraged different responses with more user-friendly access to the interactive component of the installation for more types of visitors. Phase III incorporated the best practices of Phase I and Phase II to exhibit the research and provide a space for spectator empathy to arise given the limitations of the project and landscape locations.

## **2. Indoor-Outdoor exhibit venue process:**

Over the three years of the project, exhibits were attempted to allow the spectator an opportunity to flow in and out of the landscape to explore empathy beyond the artist experience. Venues nearby the four poetic landscapes were contacted for an indoor/outdoor interactive exhibit. The time and resources available narrowed my scope of venues and I targeted three nearby locations namely Marin County (California), Lake District (UK), Madrid and Segovia (Spain), Long Island (New York). Each situation was a complicated decision making process to approve an exhibit involving authorities, permissions and boards of directors.

### *a) UK: Wordsworth*

In the UK, three years of negotiations failed to yield any prospects of an interactive installation nearby the Wordsworth landscape at Dove Cottage. The first meeting was in 2014 and meant as a gesture to meet the director and explore the relationship between Machado and Wordsworth via Cervantes and Shakespeare. Whitman and Snyder were both influenced by Wordsworth and needed no introduction.

I followed up emails and phone calls. I proposed several scenarios and considering a small exhibit was initially approved. Mixed messages from Dove Cottage led to believing that this option was a reality. I offered workshops for adults, families and children. I offered artwork and, and merchandising as fundraisers, but still there was no response. Two visits in person with the director on two different occasions and emails were used to attempt to solidify this option. Both thesis directors were involved in negotiation. Less than expected responses by early 2017 led to an incompleteness of this negotiation. A final phone call was not returned and no further time permitted Dove Cottage to be incorporated in Phase III near Wordsworth landscape.

The Design Centre at University of Sunderland was the alternative. Mt. Helvellyn could be reached within a day of Sunderland. Potentially, the spectators could venture on their own post exhibit to the Lake District to experience the landscape themselves. Glenridding village should have been elicited for an exhibit in the town hall, which is near Mt. Helvellyn. In the future, an installation nearby Helvellyn would close the gap on the indoor-outdoor tactile perception concept for spectators to participate fully and more easily with direct contact with the landscape. Several venues could have been approached to ensure an informed choice for an interactive installation near the landscape: this may have provided more potential spectator tactile perception exploration *in situ* to elicit empathy more directly.

*b) Spain: Machado*

The Machado Guadarrama landscape is delicate considering the political atmosphere and his rejection in Madrid. The Segovia residence and Madrid gallery venues were approached with several emails and visits. Finally, the most viable venue was in Soria, another Machado poetic landscape and more accepting of the poet. This option was solicited after the Madrid and Segovia options were exhausted.

A Soria exhibit is not exactly within the scope of the research project. This exhibit and book project was solicited to celebrate a 100-year anniversary of selected Machado poems that combined with my 33 abstract paintings derived from walking a Machado landscape of Soria with tactile perception. The Antonio Machado Foundation has partially agreed to a symposium and small exhibit in their next environmental event in December 2017. Final approval is pending as of September 2017.

*c) Long Island: Whitman*

A Whitman exhibit on Long Island was targeted at the Walt Whitman Birthplace Museum in Huntington and the ecological reserve with Friends of Hempstead Plains early on in this research project to coincide with the Dove Cottage exhibit. Director Dr. Gulotta of Friends of Hempstead Plains was enthusiastic and partially approved the exhibit on site. The Walt Whitman Birthplace Museum director was focused on special funding grants for other projects and was not interested in this type of exhibit. The Hempstead Plains reserve was a unique venue that had the open field of grass within immediate reach of their visitor centre. I opted to continue negotiations there. There was a positive response from two board members and it was set to coincide with their anniversary event in October 2016. However, changes in the board of directors caused a lag in this negotiation. Several presentations and visits in person have not yielded a productive outcome given the variety of changes in the organization over the past two years. It had been planned to combine a mini exhibit with the Public Library in New York City (deposit of the original *Leaves of Grass* editions) to incorporate city dwellers to visit the grasslands with a direct train line from Penn Station, Manhattan. This exhibit may have to change venues back to the Walt Whitman Birthplace Museum, nearby Hempstead Plains' grasslands.

*d) Marin County: Snyder*

Marin County is one of the richest locations in the San Francisco area and has several prestigious galleries and registered artists in the vicinity including Joan Baez. Mt. Tamalpais is located in this county. Several attempts to exhibit in

galleries in Marin County have not yielded an exhibit to combine an indoor/outdoor show. Berkeley and San Francisco were options to explore as well. An attempt to participate in the UC Berkeley Blake Garden (Environmental Landscape Faculty) with an interactive installation was partially approved, but delays have occurred since the new Federal administration has taken office January 2017 with budget cuts related to environmental issues. Sonoma County is adjacent to Marin County and was the next option to be within a day's journey of Mt. Tam. This could stimulate spectators to visit Mt. Tam after an interactive installation. The Calabi Gallery is in Santa Rosa within Sonoma County was contacted. This venue received my proposal and was open to the poet (Snyder) and abstract art. The owner provided a space to exhibit the 3D Snyder poetic canvas in a collective show, however there was no space available for an interactive installation.

The opportunity to participate and organize a symposium about my creative process early on in the research process was unique and helpful to be acquainted with the players in the art world of the San Francisco area. Note: The prestigious California wine country begins in Sonoma County and art collectors, dealers and spectators who frequent these galleries are sophisticated as well as educated in the market trends. This was the best option for the Snyder case and gave me valuable public feedback. Walks to Mt. Tam were encouraged during this symposium and could be achieved easily given the nearby distance. Follow up studies would provide data for this spectator group in the future.

**Synopsis:**

A larger scope of possible venues would have improved the third line of research to study spectator empathy more fully and evaluate its outcome. Perhaps local town halls or businesses could have been approached for a smaller exhibit near each location. Further outreach and community commitment to achieve this aspect of the project would have taken time and resources away from the main line of research. This aspect was a secondary line and further study is warranted to achieve sufficient data collection for analysis. Future comparative studies may extend this line of research to examine whether a spectator's empathy increases with direct contact with an indoor/outdoor exhibit related to the poetic landscape.