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MINDFUL REPETITIONS: ECOLOGICALLY INFORMED
BUDDHISM AND CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING

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in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Arts

Elam School of Fine Arts
National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries
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Abstract

*Mindful Repetitions: Ecologically Informed Buddhism and Contemporary Printmaking* proposes that Buddhist teaching, informed by contemporary ecological concepts, may influence environmentally conscious printmaking. The argument of this thesis is that mindfulness and an understanding of the Buddhist notion of interconnectedness have the potential to contribute to and generate more ecological printmaking practices. This thesis also investigates the interwoven histories of woodcut and Buddhism, and their contemporary positions. Repetition, which sets in motion meditative qualities, has been extensively explored through my practice. As the integration of intellectual and physical action has been employed as a key constituent to my creative practice, the thesis examines embodied and somatic ways of knowing. The research has been conceptually underpinned by the philosophical ideas of Baruch Spinoza, Arne Naess, Gilles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Their constructions of art, nature, deep ecology and phenomenology have been examined in relation to Zen Buddhism. Exploration of embodied ways of knowing instigated the processing of large wooden plates that, in turn, influenced the methodologies of my research. Furthermore, my thesis investigated assimilation of art with craft, through ideas derived from Zen aesthetics, Buddhist ideas of oneness and my own training in Japan; none of these separates art from craft or mind from body. Investigating expanded forms of printmaking, my research affirms that contemporary print continues to cross and push borders, merging with other fields of art, and bringing process-based and hybridised print practices to the forefront of discussion.

Keywords

Printmaking, print installation, expanded field of print, woodcut, nontoxic printmaking, ecologically engaged Buddhism, deep ecology, hybrid print, repetition, embodied knowing, art/craft, process-based art.
For Ema.

Figure 1. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions* (installation detail, exhibition testing). George Fraser Gallery, Auckland. August 2014, three woodcut prints, each print consisting of six 80 cm x 122 cm prints; size of each print: 480 cm x 122 cm
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INTRODUCTION

*Mindful Repetitions: Ecologically Informed Buddhism and Contemporary Printmaking* investigates key aspects of creating woodcuts as an environmentally conscious printmaking method. This extends beyond merely nontoxic practices into contemplation and employment of processes that engage mind as well as body. The written and creative parts of my thesis together encapsulate my passion for woodcutting, in particular its labour-intensive processes. My research also integrates this enthusiasm with my fascination for safer and contemporary forms of expanded print, and my Zen practice; the mindful repetitions of my title are intimately entangled with my approach to woodcut printmaking. I should emphasise, however, that my thesis is not focusing on meditation *per se*, but mindfulness in relation to processes of making prints: printmaking engenders meditative processes.¹ In Buddhism, focusing on breathing is part of the ritual and practice of meditation and I experience aspects of similar rituality to be embedded in the practice of woodcarving and printing. I relate mindfulness to the experience of being present within the process of making, so my practice of woodcutting becomes a practice of mindfulness.² Repetition has been explored through my creative practice, and in writing, by investigating somatic and phenomenological ways of knowing. Repeatedly carving *mantras* and *sutras* into wood and printing them has long been part of Buddhist practice (and continues today at Dege Parkhang, also called the Printing Temple).³ It is believed that such practice instigates a spiritual transformation in a devotee. For me, it involves bringing body and mind into harmony while carving the wood.

The merging of ecologically mindful print methodologies that I use with Buddhism grew from my previous studies of Japanese woodcut printmaking methods. This formative experience informed my conviction that each person’s ecological act counts and that artists with their practices may contribute towards ecological ways of living today. For me, it is not

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¹ Such practices derive from a 2500 year-old Buddhist practice called Vipassana, or Insight Meditation, but take many forms today.
² The Chinese written combination for mindfulness is composed by two characters: presence and heart.
³ Dege Parkhang is devoted to the printing and preservation of Tibetan Buddhist literature. It was founded in 1729 and it keeps one of the largest collections of hand-printing sutras from carved wooden-blocks. Printing is done in pairs: one person puts ink onto the wooden press, while the other prints by using a roller, which is imprinted red with the sayings of Buddha. “Dege Parkhang: Sutra-Printing House,” accessed April 29, 2011, http://www.degeparkhang.org/.
enough to make art with political content; it is the nature of the undertaken actions that exemplifies a useful attitude towards effecting long-term change. Research on technological progress of printmaking, its alternative and less-toxic methods has been extensively explored by many artists and technical experts. My research, on the other hand, explores if practices that nurture mindfulness and awareness, such as Buddhism, may encourage and also contribute to ecologically-conscious printmaking.

Mostly because of its capacity to multiply and repeat images, printmaking from its earliest histories has been a tool for distributing ideas to wider audiences. It also contributed to the dissemination of Buddhist teaching, as this is how print itself was transmitted from China to Korea and Japan. The earliest dated evidence of the spread of Buddhism and printmaking is the 9th century manuscript *The Diamond Sutra*, which contains the earliest dated woodcut prints. The story of this *sutra*, as well as histories of print and its relation to Buddhist practice will be briefly discussed in my thesis. Woodcut’s long history interwoven with Buddhism is therefore one reason why this method informs my practice through the course of my doctoral study. But as my research centres attention on what I will call, after Rosalind Krauss, the contemporary, expanded field of printmaking, it is necessary to limit the investigation to these areas of greater relevance to my current practice. The further argument of this thesis, that mindfulness and interconnectedness can contribute to engaging with more ecologically conscious printmaking practices, is investigated through selected philosophical concepts of Baruch Spinoza, Arne Naess and Gilles Deleuze.

The rationale of this PhD investigation is to augment existing knowledge and bridge a gap within or across each of these fields of my research. To tackle the question of whether and how Buddhism, in synthesis with ecology, can motivate and nurture environmentally friendly attitudes and approaches to printmaking practices, my study integrates two mutually complementary parts – a written thesis and a creative practice. Both components are explored

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4 The first prints in China were stone rubbings and then woodcut prints of Buddhist manuscripts and images of the Buddha. Many such scripts were found in early 20th century, in many of over 400 Dunhuang caves. Among these was the earliest known woodcut print, *The Diamond Sutra*. The sole original is preserved in the British Library, and The International Dunhuang Project has digitized the manuscript, and so the Chinese version of the sutra is accessible online, accessed February 6, 2011, http://idp.bl.uk.

5 Rosalind Krauss (b. 1941) is an influential American art critic and theorist. More discussion on her work and how it informs my thesis follows in the main body of the text, below.

6 The relevance of some aspects of Baruch Spinoza (1631 -1677), Arne Naess (1912 – 2009), and Gilles Deleuze (1925 – 1995) philosophies to my research will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.
through the following four chapters. These are organized around the main themes that underpin the research question, scrutinising relevant subjects from different angles. The Buddhist idea that all phenomena are perpetually in a process of becoming, resonates through this research challenging both traditional approaches to environmentalism and to printmaking.

This thesis will examine some modern-day Buddhist art (for example *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, 2004), as well as key exhibitions and themes discussed at conferences related to print, such as the Impact 8 International Printmaking Conference (2013), the 30th Biennial of Graphic Art Ljubljana (2013), and the *Password: Printmaking* conference, also in Ljubljana (2014). Largely focusing on the process of thinking through making itself, my creative practice combines print with installation and sculpture, as well as with this written thesis. In so doing, my research clearly merges Buddhism with ecology, Spinoza with Naess and Deleuze, and each of these with contemporary art. My thesis also embraces fluctuation and the notion of hybridity.

I will explore the work of artists who have informed and influenced my practice, such as the woodcut installations of the contemporary German artists Thomas Kilpper and Christoph Loos. Through the written thesis and my practice I will examine notions relevant to my research: repetition, Zen aesthetics, the relationship of art and craft, and theories of embodied ways of knowing. My background in traditional Japanese water-based woodcut, originally a nontoxic printmaking method, also needs some introduction as it has informed key aspects of this research. I will discuss my research methodologies before I continue an investigation into aspects of my creative practice and its supporting concepts. Although some reference to my artworks is made throughout the written thesis, I ask for the reader’s patience as creative practice is most fully encountered in the final chapter.

A vital requirement of an early stage of my research is to find out what others have already done within the areas my thesis scrutinises, and therefore to establish what my research may contribute. Thus, the initial chapter is a literature review. The significance of this first chapter, *A Literature Review: Inquiry into an Ecologically Engaged Buddhism and Fine Arts*, is in unfolding an opportunity for my research to reconcile three critical areas of my research: Buddhism, fine art printmaking, and ecology. The review investigates if there is literature and/or artworks that join the fields of eco-Buddhism and fine arts, starting with ecologically
engaged Buddhism and then its relationship with fine arts, particularly nontoxic practices of printmaking. It also briefly examines the burgeoning field of environmentally engaged art, exploring relevant to my practice. In this chapter I therefore investigate the work of Buddhist practitioners and scholars such as Thich Nhat Hanh and Joanna Macy. Lindy Lee’s works in the 2001 exhibition *Three View of Emptiness*, and the work of artists presented in the 2002 publication *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, are amongst those artists informed by Buddhism I discuss. The 2009 exhibition *VOIDS: A Retrospective* also provided interesting insights into Western interpretations of Eastern concepts. The key aspect of the review is that it must combine these quite disparate fields of enquiry: eco-Buddhism’s relation to printmaking is not a pre-established field of research. To the best of my knowledge, a similar synthesis involving printmaking – its extended fields, ecology, and Buddhism – has not been conducted before.

Chapter II, *Methodology*, examines fine arts PhDs and the methodology of this particular practice-lead PhD. It begins with a research into different models conducted by now mostly at European and Australian universities. The objective of this investigation is to pave the way for determining the research methodology for both my creative practice and theoretical research. It has been useful to consider such models, as I am the first to do a PhD at the Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. I explain the concept and design of my research, which have had an impact on my choices and methods in creating my artwork within this doctoral project. One key task of my thesis, which echoes throughout all the chapters, is to identify and describe how theory and practice integrate, and how the two reciprocal parts inform and synchronise with each other. In Chapter II, I also investigate the increased greening\(^7\) of contemporary print practices, especially from 1990s onwards, including research on practices of artists who pioneered nontoxic printmaking, such as Friedhard Kiekeben, Keith Howard and Mark Graver. This chapter also scrutinises the embodied ways of knowing relevant to my methods of processing large-size woodcut prints, which I carve at scales greater than my own height, thus engaging the body as much as mind. That is why it is necessary to investigate aspects of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and related theories, such as somatic learning.

In relation to embodied knowing and green printmaking I elaborate on some aspects of the labour-intensive work through which I explore repetitive actions of carving and printing. The predominant effect for me as the maker is largely meditative, although I apply a variety of approaches through my creative practice. Initially, I explored woodcarving by making calligraphy-style paintings with sumi ink directly onto the plate, and then carving the painted image out. I then printed (with the same ink, which is traditionally used in Japanese woodblock printmaking), onto thin rolls of Chinese, Japanese and Korean handmade and machine made papers, by rubbing (burnishing) the back of 300 cm long papers by hand, using baren (see Figures 2 and 3). Later, I experimented with carving the plates directly, with no previously prepared drawing or painting. Further into the research, I gradually increased the size of the plates. In this later stage, I investigated printing using Western nontoxic water-based inks and papers, of which more in Chapter IV. Integrating theory and practice, and writing about affects, effects and ways in which each aspect of the thesis reciprocally informs the other, represents a key objective.

The interrelationships of art and craft and how this informs my practice is also one of the key topics of Chapter II. My experiences of living and studying in Japan have profoundly influenced how I understand this subject. I also discuss some influential thinkers on craft such as Mary Caroline Richards, and try find out how my practice may further bridge a gap between art and craft that still exists today in Western cultures. I examine art/craft as an inseparable junction, as it draws upon Buddhist notions of interconnectedness and oneness, an idea, if interpreted from the position of artistic research, best expressed when encompassing both theory and practice.

Chapter III, Theory and Creative Practice, examines and reflects on the creative practice of my thesis from theoretical, conceptual and philosophical positions. First, I investigate the work of artists who, in certain phases of their careers, created monochromatic, black paintings. This includes the work of Ad Reinhardt, although he denied any relation of his art to Zen or other Eastern philosophies. My use of black for woodcut prints is linked to wabi-sabi aesthetics, but I consider it necessary to investigate how black has been used before in Western art in order to position its application in my own work. By this means, I aim to more comprehensively elaborate on the transition of my practice from multi-coloured prints to large-scale monochromatic print installations. Further, I investigate the implications of the
work of the above-mentioned 20th century artists with the Buddhist idea of emptiness, or its more Western interpretation as void and/or nothingness.

As repetition is one of the central notions to my research, there is some discussion of Gilles Deleuze’s work, as well as examination of Buddhist practice’s rituals and reverberations of sutras and mantras. The processes of woodcarving and printing involve a number of motions and actions which I find to be contemplative and thus comparable to a sensation I experience in Zen practice; hence, I analyse the notion of repetition by interweaving Buddhist practice with my art. I employ Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of the rhizome, through which they tackled the idea of nonlinearity and/or nonduality; I examine this idea in relation to the Buddhist concept of interconnectedness. Furthermore, I explore the concept of deep ecology founded by Norwegian 20th century philosopher Arne Naess. Like Deleuze, Naess draws on the work of 17th century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza’s theory of immanence, by which God is Nature, common to all living things, an idea that has been profoundly influential on the development of ecological thinking. As my objective is to find how practice and theory reciprocally inform and guide each other, the third chapter discusses my creative practice’s contextual augmentation, which continues into Chapter IV.

Chapter IV, Extending and Rethinking Contemporary Printmaking, is where I mostly fully discuss my practice and the art made as part of my candidature. It begins with reflection on the pedagogical approach of my previous studies in Japan, which democratises all parts of printmaking processes – a concept and a craft of making, placing an equal emphasis on each step constitutive of creative practices. I discuss the relationship of my art to what is often called Process Art. By emphasising doing / creating, alongside the body-mind nexus, chance and automation, Process Art has succeeded in shifting attention away from finished artworks towards the act of making itself. My practice relates to this in two ways, firstly by employing chance in unlimited repetition of actions I implement when carving my plates, and secondly by exhibiting process itself as in my second doctoral exhibition Presence of Absence (2013). During the 42 months of this study, I have moved away from prints on paper towards a greater emphasis on the plates and the methods of working on them. My practice concentrates on the repetitive actions of carving, focusing on the tangible act of making and how carving

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8 Process artists use methods such as cutting, hanging, and dropping, or organic processes such as growth, decomposition, and more.
the wood becomes the substantial conception of the work. I underpin this notion with Robert Morris’ seminal 1968 essays Anti-Form and Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated, which radically nominated the creative process itself as the central aspect of any artwork.

I reflect on my creative practice processes in parallel with the progress of my theoretical research, and examine some of my previous exhibitions, two exhibitions at Elam School of Fine Arts galleries, and conclude with some (necessarily limited) discussion of key methods and of the overall installation and design plan for my final exhibition. I investigate how my practice turned towards the experimental and expanded field of print, examining the work of artists that inform my practice. Although using one of oldest known printmaking methods, woodcut, I explore my practice’s position in relation to the contemporary print by linking it to the ideas of nontoxicity and print installation.

This dialogue will develop through analysis of my three major doctoral exhibitions: Unlimited Resonance of Repetition (2012), Presence of Absence (2013), and Mindful Repetitions (2014). Each exhibition in different ways involves installations with woodcut prints and their processes. Unlimited Resonance of Repetition explores repetitive actions of carving and printing by hand, use of sumi ink and the display of prints in the space of the gallery. Presence of Absence brings attention to processes of making and the materiality of woodcut print: the practice strongly moves towards exploring the act of making as the key focus of the research. Prints are present only in the form of carved wooden matrices displayed on the floor and on the walls: prints on paper are absent. Wooden shavings created from the carving are spread over the floor of the gallery as critical elements of the show. The presentation personifies opposing concepts: roughness and sophistication, asymmetry and harmony, blends that may best be understood through the values of Zen wabi-sabi aesthetics. The creative practice component of my thesis culminates in my final doctoral exhibition, Mindful Repetitions. Large-scale prints created through labour-intensive processes sum up my research through embodied knowing and its meditative and ecological aspects. Prints surround the space of the gallery, its walls and floors, and provide the viewer with an experience of woodcut as a meditative yet dynamic contemporary practice. Mindful Repetitions represent the development of both conceptual and artistic constituents of my
research while, at the same time, treasuring long-standing woodcut printmaking processes. (see Figure 4).

Furthermore, Chapter IV also discusses my position in relation to these key 2013 and 2014 printmaking exhibitions and conferences, some of which I was able to attend and participate in. The purpose of these investigations is to discover how my own practice came to cross the borders of print and merge with fields of sculpture and installation; if and how my woodcut printmaking, informed by some Buddhist concepts, stands in relation to contemporary art. As mentioned, I have researched installations and site-specific woodcut prints of several artists who have profoundly influenced the ways in which I extended my thinking around printmaking practice. Thomas Kilpper, Christoph Loos are the key artists that have inspired my practice, but I also reference the work of Valgerdur Hauksdottir, Michael Schneider, Richard Woods and Nicola Lopez among others who push and cross boundaries of printmaking today. Kilpper is a Berlin-based artist and, although trained as a sculptor, he has been creating large-scale wooden floor-prints in historic and desolated buildings since the 1990s. His large carvings, as well as printing directly off the parquet and linoleum floors of carefully selected abandoned buildings, alongside the way he treats print as an installation (suspending the large prints in or on buildings) especially inspired my practice. Kilpper’s work is conceptually informed by histories of the site, and his use of scale has left an imprint on my final exhibition Mindful Repetitions, even if my work is not socially and politically engaged as Kilpper’s but rather ecologically, and informed by the values and ideas of mindfulness and interconnectedness. Over the course of my study, I have presented my doctoral research and artwork in solo and international group exhibitions and international conferences, some of which are also briefly discussed in this chapter.\(^9\)

The key task of my PhD research has been to find out if and how such spiritual teaching as Buddhism may inspire the greening of print practices, and how contemporary printmaking

\(^9\) Kilpper’s imagery and the selection of building is related to German history – such as for example his large carving in the State of Control, Exterior facade former Ministry of State Security of GDR, 2009, twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. After the Kilpper’s carving and printing, the building became accessible to the public for the first time. E-flux, “Thomas Kilpper,” accessed June 8, 2015, http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/thomas-kilpper/.

has become a progressive artistic form, through its extended forms. Within this research, there are, however, several important topics that will not be covered. It will not be possible to explore in detail 2000 years of printmaking in Asia, or 500 years of printmaking in the West. Because of Buddhist origins of woodcut printmaking, the discussion on these topics will be limited to specific print histories, heritages and terminologies of relevance to this thesis. I here investigated Western art that is related to – and informed by such Buddhist ideas as emptiness, which has sometimes been also interpreted as void. The Western uses of Buddhism in art, however, does not continue in other chapters; nor does this further explore environmental and installation art, beyond a survey in the Literature Review. Although reviewed, they do not form the basis of more pressing concerns of other chapters. The investigation of topics that did not evolve through other chapters, as for example the discussion on environmental art, however, contributed to direction of my research. I have therefore focused on topics around print, its extended and ecologically friendly forms, as well as relationships of these forms to pertinent philosophical ideas. I hypothesise that the practice that integrates the art with craft and body with mind may enhance compassion, as understood within Buddhism, which may have positive effects on creativity as well as inspire mindful approaches towards more ecological art. The absence of studies that link nontoxic printmaking with areas other than the technological have also provided an opportunity for my research to make a contribution within its field.

Although there is more to follow on contemporary print, this thesis (in particular in its final chapters) includes a discussion of key print-related conferences and exhibitions in 2013 and 2014. While setting such parameters for this thesis has been necessary, my research remains mindful of different aspects of print, its histories as well as its continually developing forms and concepts, such as aspects of Luis Camnitzer’s thoughts on printmaking. The expectation of this research is to enlarge the existing knowledge in the field of print by opening up new perspectives and thinking around it. It is my hope that my work will create a

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platform for further and new investigations, both my own and of other artists or researchers who may build on it.
Figure 2. Traditional Bamboo *baren*. Parts of the *baren*: tsuna (core cord), shin (core coil), ategawa (back disc) and barengawa (bamboo sheath for wrapping). Photo: Tuula Moilanen. From: Kari Laitinen, Tuula Moilanen and Antti Tanttu, *The Art and Craft of Woodblock Printmaking*. Helsinki: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2001 (Finnish version, 1999), page 197. Reprinted with permission of Tuula Moilanen.

Figure 3. Irena Keckes. *Flags*. 2005 (detail of the printing on fabric by use of *baren*) Haslla, South Korea.
Figure 4. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions* (work in progress; image of one work from the cycle). 2013-2014, woodcut print, 480 cm x 240 cm. (Please note work is in progress – the paper underneath the print is not part of the final installation.) Exhibited at George Fraser Gallery, Auckland, September 2014.

Figure 5. Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence*, (installation detail). 2013, carved woodblocks and woodcut shavings. George Fraser Gallery, Auckland. Photo courtesy of Ivan Mršić.
CHAPTER I: A LITERATURE REVIEW: ENQUIRY INTO AN ECOLOGICALLY ENGAGED BUDDHISM AND FINE ARTS

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13
Imagine a multidimensional spider's web in the early morning covered with dewdrops. And every dewdrop contains the reflection of all the other dewdrops. And, in each reflected dewdrop, the reflections of all the other dew drops in that reflection. And so ad infinitum. That is the Buddhist conception of the Universe in an image.

- Alan Watts

This chapter investigates links between Buddhism and the fine arts via ecology, and then considers how they might inform printmaking practices. The literature review begins with a survey of the existing research on ecologically engaged Buddhism, and then looks at how these have informed fine arts. It then briefly examines relevant histories of printmaking before focusing on its contemporary and ecologically mindful aspects. By identifying if and how these concepts interrelate, and by scrutinizing how they have been transmitted through scholarly writing and works of art created in the course of the last 50 years, the literature review seeks to reveal if and how the idea of green Buddhism resonates within the fields of printmaking.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no existing study that explores the interrelationship of these fields. My study, including this literature review, is necessarily a hybridizing practice, melding fields together. I, therefore, explore the separate fields of eco-Buddhism, and fine arts and Buddhism, as well as all fields that might be relevant to the research question of my thesis.

2 Ecologically Engaged Buddhism

The aim of the section is to analyse and explain the flowering of ecologically engaged Buddhism and its growth from early models into more mainstream variants, especially in the

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13 Green Buddhism as a term was coined in the late 1990s and signifies ecologically engaged Buddhism, or in other words, Buddhist environmentalism.
last twenty years. It begins with Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of interbeing, Arne Naess’ Deep Ecology, and Thailand’s Ecology Monks’ activism. It is only since the 1960s, after it spread in the West, that writers and thinkers have offered a myriad of arguments (in support or in opposition) to the thought that Buddhism is essentially ecological. With Buddhism’s growth in the West and growing ecological problems from the mid 20th century onwards, linking spiritual and religious doctrines with ecology became possible. Approaching ecology from a spiritual or/and religious point of view was also one of the ways in which 2500-year-old teachings have been implemented within contemporary settings. From its beginning, Buddhism has been closely aligned with nature – there is a deep connection between the two, although nature is not often directly discussed. Buddhist teaching has been adopted and practiced in the West in the 20th and 21st centuries, therefore reflecting and responding to specific contemporary circumstances. These conditions, in particular ecological ones, greatly differ to times in which Buddhism originated in the East over 2,500 years ago, when the concept of ecology (as well as situations as environmental effluence or climate change), did not yet exist. There are, therefore, scholars who argue for new interpretations of Buddhism and its extension to present-day situations, ecological and more, and those who argue that ancient teachings cannot be related to something as ecology and contemporary environmental issues, but only to nature itself – and then, primarily to human nature.

The 1960s was also a period of rising of political and social activism, in some cases related to Eastern philosophies. Christopher Queen reflects on the beginnings and the development of engaged Buddhism.14 Queen discusses how Buddhism developed in the United States – transformed by different circumstances and cultures. He examines how Buddhism may respond in useful and efficient ways to such modern issues as peace, education, health, gender equality, and more. His book also investigates the life of Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh15 and the development of his Order of Interbeing, whose ideas promote the evolution of Buddhist ideas in harmony with our times. Nhat Hanh, one of the most influential engaged Buddhists today, supports the view that Buddhism is inherently engaged socially and/or ecologically. He blended his ecologically informed teaching with Zen, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, as well as Western psychology, a fusion that was

14 Christopher S. Queen, Engaged Buddhism in the West (Boston, Mass: Wisdom publications, 2000). Queen is a lecturer in World religions and Buddhism at Harvard University.
15 Thich Nhat Hanh lives in France. He published more than 100 books as well as The Mindfulness Bell journal. Although engaged Buddhism encompasses a wide scope of political and social activism, this journal focuses only on its ecological aspect.
unusual in the 1960s. He suggested that cultivating mindful awareness, central to Buddhist teaching, might contribute to the growth of a more peaceful and ecologically awakened humanity. This idea was transmitted largely via his oral teachings, and the hundreds of publications through which his teachings are known. The concept of codependence and interconnectedness of all beings in a complex web of social and historical causalities runs throughout his work. In 1967 book *Vietnam: Lotus in the Sea of Fire*, he embraced ecological, social and political activism into his Buddhist practice, which became known as engaged Buddhism. This term was coined by during his involvement as a peace activist in the Vietnam War. It has often been examined in close relation to the Western idea of deep ecology, a term created in 1977 by Arne Naess, whose ontological belief in the interconnectedness of all things clearly parallels Nhat Hanh’s. Since then, ecologically engaged Buddhism has been called both green and eco-Buddhism, seeking to raise awareness on contemporary ecological issues and ecologically-conscious ways of living. Naess and Nhat Hanh’s theories agree on the hypothesis that nonsentient beings too are part of a net of interdependence, a key Buddhist concept; they both saw the world as an interconnected entity where all actions mirror and cause each other. Rooted in such thinking, Nhat Hanh in 1966 formed the Order of Interbeing and established monastic centres around the world to promote teaching of the non-self, as well as the practice of mindful, ethical and compassionate deeds.

The philosophy of interbeing derives from an older tradition of the *Hua-yan* (in some translations called *hua-yan*) philosophy of mutual codependence of all phenomena. This in turn was derived from the metaphor of the *Jewelled net of Indra*. This 3rd century teaching

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16 Although this thesis builds upon philosophical commentary, it remains mindful of religious Buddhist practice and teaching. Buddhism is both religion and philosophy, but the border between them is rather blurred. There are two main schools, Theravada (The School of the Elders), and Mahayana (The Great Wheel) that embrace many sects and sub-schools in the East and West. Theravada is the oldest, and it spread in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, while Mahayana teachings that disseminated through East Asia embrace Zen, Shingon, Pure Land, and Tibetan Buddhism among many schools and branches.


19 Deep ecology will be explained in greater detail in Chapter III.

20 In 1982 Nhat Hanh established the Plum Village Buddhist meditation centre in Dordogne.
portrays the image of a net of many jewels where each reflects the other through infinite repetition of mutual relationships, and each reflection repeats in an unlimited suite of reflections. If one jewel is removed, the balance of the jewels and their countless reflections are damaged. Francis H. Cook’s interpretation of Hua-yen philosophy is that mutual interdependence and interconnectedness signifies the same notion as emptiness, a concept that will arise later in discussion of fine arts and Buddhism. It is widely considered that Hua-yen represents a philosophical foundation for Zen Buddhism. Cook observed that, as everything is interrelated, Hua-yen and ecology have similar principles. They both indicate that all things live in inter-causality: what affects one being affects every other individual or phenomenon in the universe. To clarify this, Cook used the analogy of the human body where no part exists separately from the whole, but only in relation to, and dependent on, other parts. In the image of Indra’s Net, the way each jewel reflects all others in infinite repetition of mutual relationships reinforces this idea. For the eco-Buddhists, interconnectedness is a key concept, which may be understood only by practicing compassion, another important tenet of Buddhist thought and praxis.

1975 saw other significant contributions to eco-Buddhist activism by a group of monks in Thailand, often called the ecology monks. Thai monks believed that greed, ignorance, and hatred – the core cause of suffering – are the core cause of environmental destruction. Their activity became more evident in the late 1980s and 1990s, and they have continued practicing environmental activism to the present day. Thai monks base their practice and belief on the philosophy of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

21 Francis Harold Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977). Hua-yen philosophy emerged from Mahayana Buddhist philosophy in China, during the 7th and 8th centuries. In Chinese it means *Flower Ornament*. In Sanskrit it is called *Avatamsaka*. The main protagonist of the *Indra’s net of Jewels* story is Indra, an Indian Vedic God who had a net of jewels that symbolized nonduality and interconnectedness of all phenomena.

22 The principles of biodiversity are similar to ideas expressed through the metaphor of Indra’s net. Arne Naess saw this connection too: his concept of Deep Ecology is based on the ideas of interconnectedness as in Buddhism.


24 Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906-1993) was one of the most influential and innovative re-interpreter of Buddhist teaching in 20th century. Bhikkhu was famous for his social activism and philosophy of “no religion.” Religious academic Donald Swearer has compared Bhikkhu’s impact and charisma to Nagarjuna, the 3rd century Indian
similarities among the key world religions, Bhikkhu’s progressive philosophy provided an important link between traditional and the new engaged Buddhism. Proposing that all beings manifest Buddha nature, Thai monks perform a ceremony of tree ordination. Among the remarkable outcomes of these rituals was a successful prevention of rainforest destruction in the southern Thai province of Surat Thani.

In the 1990s, the idea of addressing the accelerating ecological crisis from a position of religion or philosophy became more prominent. At the time of the Thai monks’ major activities, German scholar Lambert Schmithausen discussed Buddhism and Nature at the International Symposium that was part of 1990 EXPO in Osaka. He related the position of Buddhist tradition towards nature to contemporary ecological problems, pointing out, as had the Thai ecology monks, that behaviour such as greed and egoism are the main cause of environmental damage. Schmithausen used the parable of the hermit to illustrate Buddhist attitudes of compassion and kindness toward nature, suggesting that resolving big issues starts with small actions from each individual, by cultivating everyday life habits toward more environment friendly actions.

Ecologically informed Buddhism developed and spread in the United States, which was not slow to develop similar ideas to Schmithausen, the Thai monks or Nhat Hanh. One of the most prominent agents of spreading Buddhist teaching in America in the early 20th century was the Japanese Zen monk Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki. Although he supported an idea that Zen is intrinsically ecological, he did not base his philosophy on it. Instead, he declared that personal experience is everything in Zen and, to bring Zen closer to Western understanding, “Emptiness which is conceptually liable to be mistaken for sheer nothingness is in fact the reservoir of infinite possibilities.”

Buddhist teacher and philosopher who established the central idea of Buddhist teaching: the notion of emptiness (shunyata).

25 Schmithausen is a Professor Emeritus of Buddhist Studies, University of Munster and University of Hamburg. At the symposium in Osaka he presented the paper “Buddhism and Nature” at The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, 1991.


A second influential wave of Buddhist dissemination was triggered by the occupation of Tibet in 1950 and resulting exile of the Dalai Lama to India. He subsequently began to lecture across the world, often in the United States. Many Western Buddhists who embraced his teaching became active in the field of an engaged Buddhism, addressing political, social and environmental issues.

More recently, Nhat Hanh’s apprentices Joanna Macy and Stephanie Kaza, as well as poet Gary Snyder have emerged as key figures.28 In her book Dharma Gaia; A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology, Macy emphasised the necessity of developing compassion in order to preserve and protect life on our planet.29 She suggested a gradual replacement of the ego-self by an eco-self, through the process she named a “greening of the self.”30 As co-author of Coming Back to Life; Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World,31 Macy provided a further argument on how refining and cultivating the self is necessary for cultivating and nurturing ecologically adequate understanding. Notably, as the Dharma Gaia before it, Coming Back to Life too had begun with a message from the Dalai Lama: “All around us signs of nature’s limitations abound. Moreover, the environmental crisis currently underway, involves all of humanity, making national boundaries of secondary importance.” Macy reinforced the idea that in order to facilitate a more sustainable environment, it is necessary to understand the profundity of the nature of universe as whole, and our codependency within

28 Gary Snyder is an American poet, writer, environmental activist and Zen Buddhist. The beginning of his career is associated to the “Beat generation,” a group of American post war writers who experimented with drugs, sexuality and Eastern philosophies. Snyder was a Professor of English at the University of California in Davis. His books of poems Turtle Island (New York: New Directions, 1974) and Axe Handles (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), link Buddhism with environmental activism. He published Mountains and Rivers Without End, (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008), Nets of Beads, Webs of Cells in Stephanie Kaza and Kenneth Kraft, Dharma Rain; Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism (Boston, Mass: Shambala, 2000). The Buddhist Peace Fellowship is an international network of engaged Buddhists concentrated in Hawaii and San Francisco Bay, founded in 1978 by Robert Aitken. The scope of the Fellowship’s engagement involves pacifistic social activism and environmentalism. Joanna Macy is an adjunct professor at three graduate schools in San Francisco Bay area. She gives lectures, workshops and training on environmentalism internationally. Stephanie Kaza is a professor of environmental studies at the University of Vermont where she teaches religion and ecology.

29 Allan Hunt Badiner, Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism, Berkeley (CA: Parallax Press, 1990). The title of the book was derived from the concept of Gaia philosophy or Gaia theory, firstly proposed in 1970 by British chemist James Lovelock. Gaia was the name of the Greek goddess of the Earth. In modern terms Gaia symbolizes an idea of connection between all species and Earth in one single organism.

30 An international collaborative publication Thinking like a mountain: towards a council of all being, which consists of essays by Joanna Macy, John Seed, Pat Fleming, Dailan Pugh, and Arne Naess, is another example of ecologically engaged thinking. John Seed, Joanna Macy and Pat Fleming, Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1988). John Seed is an Australian environmentalist and director of the Rainforest Information Centre notable for saving the subtropical rainforests in New South Wales.

31 Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown, Coming back to life: practices to reconnect our lives, our world (Gabriola Island BC: New Society Publishers, 1998).
it.\textsuperscript{32} Similarly, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A. Grim in \textit{Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment} underlined the necessity of altering human attitudes toward the environment.\textsuperscript{33}

The event that fully established the field of eco-Buddhism in the 1990s was a chain of twelve conferences entitled \textit{Religion and Ecology}.\textsuperscript{34} The closing conferences in this series were held at the United Nations and at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. They stimulated the forging of a territory that connects ecology with religions, usually considered separate. Ten books united under the title \textit{Religions of the World and Ecology} were generated after the conferences, each one analysing and interpreting positions of world’s major religions towards nature. One of them, \textit{Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds}, consists of nineteen essays arranged into eight parts explaining different aspects of Buddhist philosophy and history.\textsuperscript{35} The third section of the book, \textit{Mayahana Buddhism and Ecology} describes the relationship between Buddhism and nature through the metaphor of Indra’s Net of Jewels. Paul O. Ingram in \textit{The Jewelled Net of Nature}, explains how ancient Buddhist teaching regarded nature and suggests how these views may be extended into contemporary times. He outlines teachings of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century monk Kukai and the 13\textsuperscript{th} century monk Dogen about a complete unity of all nature and the balance of opposites. Graham Parkes’ essay, \textit{Voices of Mountains, Trees, and Rivers: Kukai, Dogen, and a Deep Ecology}, explores concepts of nonduality and Buddha-nature.\textsuperscript{viii}

The extension of traditional concepts and methods to contemporary issues has not gone without challenge. British scholar Ian Harris expressed concern that Western interpretations

of a word “nature” are not part of classical Buddhist doctrine.\textsuperscript{36} In Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology (1995), Harris argued that eco-Buddhists misconstrue Buddhist teaching.\textsuperscript{37} Eco-Buddhist interpretations are un-Buddhist, and deform its anthropocentric and ethical tradition. Hakayama Noriaki, a Japanese scholar of Critical Buddhism, also thought that shunyata (emptiness) and Buddha nature are not Buddhist notions (I will return to the topic of emptiness in the section on the art-Buddhism nexus). The critique of eco-Buddhism by its most vocal antagonist, Harris, lies in his assertion that it “represents a modern American attempt to articulate an authentically Buddhist response to present environmental problems,”\textsuperscript{38} a misinterpretation of Buddhist teaching that never commented on nature or ecology. He especially opposes Joanna Macy and Gary Snyder, attesting that they twist the meaning of original teachings. His argument is that Buddhism is at the core escapist and therefore cannot be related to Western environmentalism. In response, eco-Buddhists argued that the values of Buddhism had played an important role in the development of ecology in the West and that ecologically engaged Buddhist ideas are not geographically restrained to America. Further, for over 2500 years practitioners in diverse geographical, historical and cultural environments have interpreted Buddhist doctrines. It is resilience, adaptability and capacity to meet the requirements of these different circumstances, including contemporary ecological issues, that keeps the teaching still alive and appealing to many across the globe. As Schmithausen said, Buddhism developed and spread precisely because it has continually been concerned with and engaged contemporary times and traditions.\textsuperscript{39} Its essence persists even though over centuries it endured many modifications and adaptations through its many schools and sects. After all, the historical Buddha’s advice to his followers was not to blindly accept tradition or dogma but to constantly remain mindful of their own experience, observation and reason.\textsuperscript{40} Hence, it would be reasonable to assume that this mindfulness would today necessarily involve pressing environmental issues. Harris attests that ecology has no relevance whatsoever to authentic teaching, despite the teaching of the Dalai Lama and others who grew within Asian

\textsuperscript{36} Ian Harris, Buddhism and the Discourse of Environmental Concern: Some Methodological Problems Concerned in Tucker and Williams, Buddhism and Ecology: the Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds, 1997. Harris is co-founder of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies (UKABS) and author of many books on Buddhist ethics.

\textsuperscript{37} Ian Harris, “Getting to Grips with Buddhists Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology,” Journal of Buddhist Ethics 2, 1995: 173-190.

\textsuperscript{38} Harris, “Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology,” 1995: 173-190.


Buddhist traditions and not on its Western interpretations. Harris seems to perceive Buddhism as doctrine that utterly must remain pure, untouched by any contemporary concern. For Harris, compassion and loving-kindness that are at the core of Buddhism, are “intended to promote one’s own interests (kamma), rather than reflecting a concern for the interests of other beings.” He seems to disregard key Mahayana notions of interconnectedness or interdependence or all beings, which inevitably extends beyond humanity, not just focusing on flourishing of single self, alone.

The argument that the ecological crisis is in essence a spiritual crisis has been promoted through Nhat Hanh’s *Interbeing*; it has been shared by Macy, Tucker, Kraft and others. Donald K Swearer also proposed that Buddhist environmentalists extend a loving kindness and universal compassion beyond the human and animals onto plants, earth, stones, minerals, and more. Swearer brought together most (if not all) of what have now been identified as the key comments on the subject of eco-Buddhism, in *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*, published in 2000. Renowned writers and practitioners (Macy, Snyder, Daido Loori, Nhat Hanh, and the Dalai Lama) agreed that, to find solutions to growing ecological problems, science and technology has to collaborate with spiritual philosophy. They argued that compassion has the potential to collaborate as a power to unite eco-activists, economists, politicians, poets, and artists in cross-disciplinary, ecological projects.

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44 While I remain mindful of an idea that collaborative and cross-disciplinary approaches that unite efforts of diverse scientists and experts (and also artist) to searching and finding solutions to contemporary environmental problems would be ideal, this thesis and my work within this doctoral research project, at this stage, investigates variety of ideas and arguments represented in the literature regarding fields of its research scope. This research is, however, necessarily limited and thus cannot embody all ideas encountered in the literature and reviewed through this chapter.
The same year also saw the publication of Engaged Buddhism in the West, in which Nhat Hanh’s philosophy was recognised as one of the most influential teachings in this arena.\textsuperscript{45} This is the first comprehensive study of socially and politically engaged Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet, Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan. Stephanie Kaza in her chapter To Save All Beings: Buddhist Environmental Activism discussed social action as an inseparable part of Buddhist practice.\textsuperscript{46} Macy went further, categorizing environmental activism into three groups: 1) Holding-action of resistance (including discontinuance and minimization of activities destructive to the environment), 2) Analysis of social structures, and 3) Creation of new alternatives and cultural transformation, via activity in eco-retreats, workshops in Buddhist centres, lectures or publications. Macy also led a group of activists to protest and stop the disposal of nuclear waste under the Yucca Mountain in Nevada. Swearer, in his article, An Assessment of Buddhist Eco-philosophy, encompassed existential, moral, universal and ontological Buddhist worldviews, classifying different eco-Buddhist approaches into five categories: eco-apologists, eco-critics, eco-constructivists, eco-ethicists, and eco-conceptualists.\textsuperscript{47}

In Zen and environmental ethics, Simon P. James aimed to prove Zen’s moral relationship to the natural world.\textsuperscript{48} He proposed that Buddhism and Aristotelian ethics are alike: while in Buddhism it is nirvana, in Aristotelian ethics it is eudemonia that provides the final end. He argued that Buddhist sense of happiness is eudemonistic because it is directed toward nurturing human and sentient life, rather than abiding by any specific rule. Both Aristotelian and Buddhist ethics believe that enlightened life means to act wisely, compassionately and truthfully; both provide an insight into the nature of things. But Aristotle’s ethics are more theoretical, while Buddhist ethics are more experiential and emphasise practice. James refuted accusations that Zen is amoral, anthropocentric and quietist. He argued that the Buddhist appreciation of nature also came from the concept of dependent origination and the

\textsuperscript{45} Queen, Engaged Buddhism in the West, 2000. Also see: Christopher S Queen and Sallie B. King, Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia (NY: State University of New York Press, 1996).

\textsuperscript{46} Stephanie Kaza, “To Save All Beings: Buddhist Environmental Activism,” in Queen, Engaged Buddhism in the West, 2000: 159-183.

\textsuperscript{47} Donald K. Swearer, An Assessment of Buddhist Eco-philosophy (Cambridge University Press, 2006). From an eco-apologist’s perspective, Buddhist ecology naturally emerged from classic Buddhist worldviews. According to Swearer, publications such as Dharma Gaia and Ecology and Dharma Rain, exemplified the eco-apologetic position.

\textsuperscript{48} Simon P. James, Zen and environmental ethics (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004). James is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Durham University. His research areas include an environmental philosophy, a philosophy of Buddhism, Phenomenology (Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty), and virtue ethics (environmental ethics).
interconnectedness of all things. His discussion of Zen and ethics reflects Damien Keown’s study of Buddhism and virtue ethics, The Nature of Buddhist Ethics. In his fourth chapter, The Intrinsic Value of Nature, James observed a link between Zen and deep ecology. Both find intrinsic values attributive to all living beings, virtues of selflessness and empathy. In his fifth chapter, James challenged the claim of Zen’s quietism in history, its incapacity to facilitate efficient solutions to ethical, social and ecological problems. For James, Zen has potential to help developing intellectual ability that in turn may contribute towards cultivating, identifying with and practicing environmental ethics. The Buddhist idea of being mindful and compassionate and living in harmony with nature has showed that humans and nature are indivisible. Accordingly, he claimed that mindfulness, selflessness, nonviolence and compassion are deeds which, when cultivated, extend to the entire environment, which resonates with Nhat Hanh’s teaching and the thinking of other eco-Buddhists.

Today, the debate seems to be largely developing in new social media and other networks, such as websites organized by proactive Buddhist communities and individuals. The formation of new research groups and a large quantity of discourse via online articles and websites illustrates that contemporary Buddhist environmentalists are reaching out to wider audience. One such site is Ecological Buddhism, A Buddhist Response to Global Warming, where scholars and Buddhists including Macy, Daido Loori, Hozan Alan Senauke, Susan Murphy, Naess, Nhat Hanh and others discuss Buddhist involvement with ecology, and participate in problem-solving with scientists. Macy, Kaza, and Swearer were early supporters of eco-Buddhism, but today there are many who think that interconnectivity of all beings implies connection to nature. Traditional elements such as the eightfold path remain equally important to eco-Buddhists, and also, as we will soon see, many artists. In the next section I shall investigate if and how eco-Buddhism relates to the thinking of Naess, Spinoza and Deleuze. I suggest self-realisation might be a concept that entwines the ideas of these three philosophers. But first, some relationships between Fine Arts and Buddhism need to be examined.

Simultaneous with the spread of Buddhism, art travelled across borders and continents from India to South and East Asia, over a period of over a thousand years. Although Eastern aesthetics have been established in European arts since the late 19th century, Buddhist philosophy was more widely disseminated in the West in the 20th and 21st centuries. A key trading route that affected the distribution of merchandise, as well as knowledge and religions, between East and West was the Silk Road. Along that road lies Dunhuang, a major trading centre in western China, well known for the Buddhist art discovered in nearby caves in the early 20th century. The caves include a large complex of temples; best known among them are the Mogao caves, also known as *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*. They consist of 492 temples, dating from 336 AD, and they were initially places of worship and meditation. Many among Dunhuang caves’ walls were decorated with repeated Buddha images that were made by blowing red chalk through patterns made in paper (Figure 6). Creating such stamps, practitioners believed, was a fast way to earn merit. Over a period of thousand years, paintings on silk and paper, textiles, sculptures, murals and manuscripts containing woodblock prints were collected and kept inside the caves. Among the thousands of works discovered was *The Diamond Sutra*, dated 11th May, 868, a manuscript that contains the world’s earliest dated woodblock prints (Figure 7). Earlier examples exist, since *sutras* and Buddha images were printed ever since paper was invented in 105 AD, but this is surely the first known dated example, preceding the Gutenberg Bible by 578 years. This astonishing copy of the *sutra*, found by British archaeologist Sir Mark Aurel Stein in 1907, is restored and preserved in the British Library. Although its full history remains unknown, *The

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51 A founder of Buddhism is the historical Buddha Siddhartha Gautama [b. 563BC or 624BC in Lumbini, what is now Nepal]. His teaching spread from Northern India to Sri Lanka and Burma in 3rd century BC as Theravada Buddhism. In the 2nd century BC, Buddhism was established in India (Mahayana Buddhism); in the 2nd and 3rd century it arrived in Vietnam, and around 3rd century in China (Mahayana Buddhism, developing into Pure Land and Chan (Zen) Buddhist schools, both later adopted in Japan). It reached Korea in 4th century where monks also established papermaking in Korea. From there it went to Japan in the 6th century, and lastly to Tibet, in the 7th century.

52 The largest stimulus on Western arts came from Zen and Tibetan Buddhism. Making of prints originated from Buddhist practice in China, and although aware of the roots of Buddhism in India and mindful of it rich history, this survey does not review Indian Buddhist art, or further explore the myriad ways in which Eastern philosophies and aesthetics influence Western art.

53 On the inner end of the sutra is written: “Reverently made for universal free distribution by Wang Jie on behalf of his two parents on the 15th of the 4th moon of the 9th year of Xiantong,” which by Gregorian (or Western) calendar is May 11, 868.

54 British writer and historian Frances Wood, head of the Chinese section at the British Library, contributed this copy of the sutra’s restoration and preservation. Wood, Francis, Mark Barnard, “Restoration of the Diamond

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Diamond Sutra is a Mahayana Buddhist text from the Prajñāpāramitā, which in Sanskrit means the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom. It draws attention to the notion of impermanence: “All composed things are like a dream, a phantom, a drop of dew, a flash of lightning. That is how to meditate on them, that is how to observe them.”


Buddhism played a major role in developing and transmitting print technologies from China to Korea and Japan, and later to the West. Printing of sutras and manuscripts that contain Buddha images still continues today in some Tibetan temples, such as earlier mentioned Dege Parkhang (Figure 8). In the Lotus sutra, Buddha Sakyamuni (the historical Buddha) had taught that the creation of sacred images brings merit to their creator. Merits contribute to a practitioner’s spiritual personal growth and deliverance. Similar beliefs have also extended to the making of prints generally, which became the major method of reproducing sutras and Buddhist images. Such meritorious repetitions, in making prints of Buddha’s image or reciting sutras, accumulate good deeds, acts or thoughts that may echo not only in this life but in a practitioner’s future incarnations. Repetitive chanting is a subconscious act, and it is believed that the subliminal is where enlightenment or nirvana may flourish.

Void or emptiness, which Buddhists equate with the idea of interconnectedness, has been one of the Eastern concepts most exploited by Western art. It continues informing fine arts. My investigation must necessarily concentrate on contemporary interpretations of these notions and uses key exhibitions and publications to move across the terrain quickly. While my methods diverge from the creative methods of the work of artists that follow, their work has been important in mainstreaming Buddhist ideas with contemporary art. For example, Bill Viola’s The Reflecting Pool (1977-79) recapitulated some of the central Buddhist notions as interconnectedness of all human beings and nature (Indra’s net), as well as the introspective reflection and moderation of the ego through meditation. Viola’s video showed a pool placed in nature; a man emerges from the surrounding forest, stands by the pool and contemplates it. Then he jumps. The image of his body freezes in the air, halfway to the water surface. We do not see him entering the water. A few moments pass in silence; then man emerges from the water naked, and walks back into the forest.

Many galleries and museums internationally have exhibited traditional art with elements of Buddhist iconography, of which Visions of Dharma; Japanese Buddhist paintings and prints in the Honolulu Academy of Arts is one example. 56 Each of the major schools of Buddhism in Japan – Zen, Pure Land and Esoteric – was represented in this exhibition. The 2001 exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Buddha: Radiant Awakening, combined

traditional with contemporary art to explore Buddhist art across different cultures over the past 2000 years. The Western interpretations of Buddhist art in this exhibition included themes such as Buddhism in the West and Buddha goes Pop that demonstrated some of the ways in which artists in Australia redefined Buddhist imagery and ideas in a contemporary context. Australian artists included in this exhibition were Robert Owen, Lindy Lee, Tim Johnson, Karma Phuntsok and Liu Xiao Xian. 2001 saw Three Views of Emptiness: Buddhism and Art of Tim Johnson, Lindy Lee and Peter Tyndall, another exhibition of Australian art influenced by Buddhism. All three were inspired by the Heart sutra, which says “form is emptiness, and emptiness is form.”

Lindy Lee brings Chinese Zen into her practice in several ways; through the use of strong saturated colours (red, black, blue, orange, purple, and gold) and more directly through an act of meditation she sometimes performs in a gallery alongside her works, for example during her exhibition No Up No Down, I Am the 10,000 Things. Her art often explores relationships between herself, nature and the universe. To symbolize her dual Chinese and Australian cultural heritage and question her self-identity, she often combines photocopies of human faces with paint applied in abstract gestures of brush strokes, thereby contrasting ideas – figurative with abstract, lightness with darkness, and original with copy. Mimicking the traditional Chinese practice of flung ink painting performed by Zen monks, Lee investigates an act of releasing all that was held inside. She often performs an act of Zen meditation by just sitting in the space of the gallery, surrounded by her work. While Lee’s brush strokes often appear to annihilate the imagery underneath, raising notions of non-existence and nothingness, Max Gimblett’s gestural strokes inspired by calligraphy and koans, depict a transformative spiritual energy as a central trope of his work. Like Lee, Gimblett is a practicing Zen Buddhist, and also a monk.

58 Linda Michael and Adele Hulse, Three Views of Emptiness; Buddhism and Art of Tim Johnson, Lindy Lee and Peter Tyndall, Clayton, Vic: (Monash University Museum of Art, 2001).
59 The Heart Sutra is the part of the Perfection of Wisdom Scriptures in Sanskrit called Prajnaparamita, it is a fundamental to both Zen and Tibetan Buddhism.
61 Just sitting or zazen is a Zen meditation method in which a practitioner observes his or her thoughts while letting them go.
62 Wystan Curnow and John Yau, Max Gimblett (Craig Potton Publishing, 2002). Max Gimblett is practicing Rinzai Zen Buddhist. Rinzai and Soto are two main Zen sects in Japan; former was founded by the 8th century monk Kukai, and later by Dogen in 13th century.
Besides Zen, Gimblett’s work draws inspiration from Carl Gustav Jung’s concept of individuation. In 2013, during his visit to Elam School of Fine Arts, I participated in Gimblett’s Zen-inspired calligraphy workshop, which he conducted by stirring students’ creative expression through the use of *koans*. Each student was able to generate a set of *enso* (which in Japanese means circle) to symbolise enlightenment and the universe. *Enso* implies the circle of life and the notion of selflessness – the void or emptiness. Gimblett often paints his Zen paintings in the form of quatrefoil, a Christian symbol, combining Eastern and Western aesthetics and heritages. As part of the research I experimented with an idea to use my calligraphy painting produced during this workshop to make prints on the top of these brush works, in this way integrating Zen work with the creative practice of this thesis.

While *Three Views of Emptiness* showed Australian artists exploring void, *Invisible threads: Buddhist Spirit in Contemporary Art* represented some American artists exploring The Noble Eightfold Path. This prescription to reduce or free oneself from suffering represents the following principles to be contemplated: Wisdom (or the Right View), Thought (or the Intention), Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness and Concentration. The title *Invisible Threads* drew on the Sanskrit words *sutra* and *tantra*. *Sutra* literally means “thread” or “string” that embodies continuum, and *tantra* illustrates a thread woven into the fabric. The exhibition embraced contemporary artists including John Cage, Agnes Martin, Bill Viola, James Lee Byars, Marina Abramovic, Yoko Ono, Max Gimblett, Terry Winters, Lewis deSoto, John Daido Loori, Isamu Noguchi and Nam Jun Paik. The exhibition was part of the “Buddhism Project,” a series of exhibitions and programmes throughout New York City in March 2004. The Project explored a multi-faceted relationship between Buddhism and fine arts in contemporary American culture.

Several influential art movements of that past century were influenced by Buddhist concepts. Arte Povera, Art Informel, Abstract Expressionism, and even aspects of conceptual art

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63 Carl Gustav Jung’s concept of individuation is central to analytical psychology and this approach is often compared to Buddhist thinking. Jung himself wrote an introduction for D.T. Suzuki’s *Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, 1964).

64 Jennifer Poole and Sarah Wyatt, *Invisible Thread: Buddhist Spirit in Contemporary Art*, (New York: Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 2004). This exhibition was part of the Buddhism Project that included a series of exhibitions and programmes throughout New York City in March 2004. The Project explored a multi-faceted relationship between Buddhism and the fine arts in context of contemporary American culture.
accepted key ideas from Zen, such as those of the Gutai group and Mono-ha from Japan.\textsuperscript{65} The Gutai group was an artistic movement in Japan founded in 1954, by Jiro Yoshihara.\textsuperscript{66} The group had a formative influence on Fluxus, Georges Mathieu and Michel Tapié, among others. Mono-ha was an artistic movement of the late 1960s. Artists included in this group draw attention to the interdependent relationship between phenomena and materials in nature and the space around them. Although remaining mindful of the extensive influence these significant movements made on art since the 1950s, this chapter must focus on surveying art more directly informed by Eastern ideas; thus the discussion necessarily moves to examine key texts on Buddhism and fine arts.

One such book is the 2004 publication *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, edited by Jacquelyn Baas.\textsuperscript{67} This book examined the state of the art influenced by Buddhism in turn of the centuries, focusing mostly on Eurasian and American art. Eleanor Rosch’s essay in this book posed a key question that has also inspired this thesis: “Buddhism teaches us to relate to the world with openness, acceptance, generosity, and joy. Could it teach us to relate to art in the same way?”\textsuperscript{68} The *Buddha Mind* also contains interviews with prominent artists: Bill Viola, Ann Hamilton, Marina Abramovic, Mariko Mori, Kimsooja and Rirkrit Tiravanija and others. They work mostly in video, photography and performance; although related to Buddhist notions, their work and approaches greatly differ. Mariko Mori, for example, has been mixing Eastern and Western cultural elements through a fusion of pop-culture, fashion, design, music, manga, science fiction, and Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism, often juxtaposing three realms: spirituality, photography and fashion. In *Oneness* (2002), she reflected on a Buddhist idea of oneness between all beings. Her installation *Wave UFO*\textsuperscript{69} (1999-2002) was a surrealistic creation sitting between the fields of architecture, machine,

\textsuperscript{65} Parallel Views: Italian and Japanese Art from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Edited by Alan Schwartzman. Dallas, Texas: The Warehouse, 2014. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at The Warehouse, 2013; accessed May 1, 2015. http://www.ntbca.org/assets/The_Warehouse_Parallel_Views2.pdf

\textsuperscript{66} In Japanese *gutai* means *embodiment* or *concrete*.

\textsuperscript{67} Jacquelyn Baas and Mary Jane Jacob, *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004). Baas is a director emeritus of the University of California Berkeley Art Museum, and also a co-founder and a director of the arts consortium *Awake: Art, Buddhism, and the Dimensions of Consciousness* (1999-2004). Jacob is an independent curator and Adjunct Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

\textsuperscript{68} Essay *If You Depict a Bird Give it Space to Fly: On Mind, Meditation, and Art*, and essay by Marcia Tucker *No title* in the *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art*, 85.

\textsuperscript{69} *Wave UFO* was exhibited first in New York, subsequently included in the Venice Biennale 2005, and later, in 2007, in the Groninger Museum in Netherland, as part of the *Oneness* installation.
and sculpture, where visitors could enter and experience a relaxing meditative environment. This installation also included two-dimensional, computer manipulated photo-montages, in which she put herself in front of different backgrounds in order to represent her version of the Pure Land - an ideal place or a perfection envisaged by the Pure Land Buddhist sect, and in another instance, her vision of Nirvana.

The key feature of Mori’s work lies in juxtaposition of modern technologies with traditional Japanese mythologies and spirituality. She not only merges past with contemporary but also envisages what may be called futuristic forms of life. Mori criticizes collective mentalities of highly-capitalistic, materialistic societies dominated by commercialism. Using in her artworks photographs of her own transformed self into, for instances, a cyborg, Mori invents choreographies that are both fictional and real. She emphasises the divorce of our capitalistic environment from traditional spirituality. Mori thinks this a consequence of deep separateness and loss of unity in both Eastern and Western worlds: her work is often a critique of how East and West have lost connection with spirituality, such as Love Hotel (1994), Empty Dream (1995), Nirvana (1996-1998), and Pure Land (1996-1998). Such critique however may be largely directed at her native Japan, as the work predominantly reflects on its specific cultural aspects, for example the simultaneity of the traditional alongside the contemporary.

Mori often spoke of her work as driven by an idea of universal spiritual consciousness that connects us all, an idea she related to Buddhism. Ann Hamilton, by contrast, revealed that although her works often embody Buddhist concepts, she is not a Buddhist. Her work Reflections (1999/2000), a suite of twelve Iris prints on Arches watercolour paper, represented twelve different blurred images of the artist behind a glass surface, over which water was poured. The images personified transience and perpetual change, created from reflections of the artist herself during the construction of the United States pavilion for the Venice Art Biennale in 1999.

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Smile of the Buddha: Eastern Philosophy and Western Art from Monet to Today by Jacquelynn Baas

explores Eastern aesthetics in art by Edouard Manet, Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin. She also discusses Georgia O’Keeffe, the abstract paintings of Kandinsky, Marcel Duchamp’s installations and Ad Reinhardt’s black paintings on nothingness. Bass argues that John Cage’s important work 4’33” is an application of Zen in music and performance, and that the work of Yoko Ono, Laurie Anderson and Nam June Paik explore ideas of selflessness, mediation, and the void. The significance of this publication lies in linking the history of Buddhism and arts across the twentieth century; that such a survey took place in 2005 is a clear indication of rising interest for the implications and reinterpretations Buddhist ideas within fine arts.

Emptiness or void has been one of the Eastern ideas most explored by contemporary Western artists. Two major exhibitions organized around this concept are Japan and the West: The Filled Void, held at the Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg (2007-2008), and the Voids: A Retrospective, at the Centre Pompidou, Centre Pompidou-Metz and Kunsthalle Bern (2009). Japan and the West juxtaposed Western modern art and Japanese traditional arts and crafts – Zen paintings, calligraphy, ceramics, swords, tea ceremony tools, textiles and lacquer work. Ad Reinhardt’s Black On Black (1963) was paired with a tea bowl from the later Edo Period, while Yves Klein’s Monochrome Blue (1957) was put beside a 30 cm flower vase from late sixteenth century Japan. A very radical combination was Joseph Beuys’ Two Felt Suits And Felt Angle (1970-1979) and a vertical hanging scroll painting in red ink (kanemono), titled Daruma In A Red Robe and attributed to Kichizan Mincho (1351-1431). By linking ancient Zen crafts to 20th century Western art, this show was conceptually unprecedented. My way of using woodcut printmaking as one of the oldest and traditional printmaking methods chimes with these juxtapositions, extending and tailoring my heritage in mokuhanga technologies and combining it with Western print methods into contemporary print installations.

“Form is Emptiness; Emptiness is Form,” a well-known verse from the Heart Sutra, is a theme that runs through much of the Western art influenced by Buddhism. It also inspired Voids: A Retrospective, a contentless exhibition: absence and emptiness are its only

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material. By literally exhibiting nothing, *Voids* symbolized a significant moment in the field of Buddhism and Fine arts, questioning what museums, exhibitions and art represent and do. The inspiration for *Voids* was Yves Klein’s empty exhibition *The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility, the Void*, with his 1958 *Leap Into The Void* as one of the most famous works.\(^7\) Klein was perhaps one of the first Western artists to explore the notion of emptiness through literally exhibiting gallery rooms devoid of artefacts.

Over the course of my doctoral study, alongside emptiness and interconnectedness, the notion of repetition has emerged as one of the vital concepts of my work. I will investigate this by exploring repetition in Buddhism and through the work of Gilles Deleuze. Before moving to that discussion, the literature review will now investigate the connectivity of printmaking practices in relation to both ecology and Buddhism.\(^7\) In so doing, this research will seek to further identify if and how printmaking may become more ecologically mindful.

4 Contemporary Print Practices: Expanding the Field of Print / Indicating Ecological Concerns and Art

The theme of my investigation is the nexus between ecologically engaged printmaking and green Buddhism. This literature survey, therefore, examines written and creative works from these currently distinct fields in order to examine the potential of linkage between them, and so find the possibilities for developing my research. First, I had to examine areas outside print that deal with ecology and/or with Buddhism, and to see if some elements in philosophies of these artistic approaches might be applicable or useful to printmaking methodologies, or if crossing disciplines might be achievable. A discussion about the expansion and then greening of print practices has been informed by a broad exploration of environmental art. This includes some temporary art forms based around weather, time, seasons or the actions of

\(^7\) Yves Klein exhibited *The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility, the Void* in Iris Clert Gallery, Paris, 1958.

\(^7\) An artist whose practice is informed by Buddhism and who came to my attention towards the final stage of my thesis is Gonkar Gyatso, a Tibetan based in London. Gyatso’s work is figurative and often addresses political, social and cultural issues, but in a way that requires his audience to think and find such implications in his works; for example, his *Buddha*, exhibited in Museum Angewandtkunst in Frankfurt, Germany (26 February – 7 June, 2015).
animals in composing and/or decomposing artworks, practices that noticeably correspond to the Zen notion of decay, transience of life, and perpetual change. For example, to explore the notion of impermanence, British artist Chris Drury took daily meditative walks over the course of a year, which resulted in the creation a path in the shape of a *mandala*. His extensive field of activity also includes a series of nature-based works with coal that allude to carbon-dioxide emission and global warming problem. Works such as *Carbon Sink* (2010), or *Rhine Mosel Slate Whirlpool* (2011) are made of carbonated wooden logs that form a spiral shape suggesting whirlpools.

Even though most among artists would agree that there is hardly any material or method that is entirely nontoxic, this term is generally accepted terminology among printmakers because it directly endorses an ecological approach. I will, therefore, use the terms nontoxic and green (which recently became broadly accepted) throughout this document. Also, as Luis Camnitzer has proposed (more on this in Chapter IV), print has always seen its technological aspects as integral to its methodology, concerns about materials used more to the forefront of discussion. Most printmakers in USA have abandoned highly toxic materials over the past twenty years; today nearly all the leading printmaking centres are practicing nontoxic printmaking methods. This transition in the USA and other parts of the world will be explained in the Methodology chapter.

Ruth Johnstone, a lecturer in printmaking at RMIT University in Melbourne, has created prints, installations and objects informed by ecological ideas, although not inspired by Buddhism. The art and environmental sustainability group at RMIT is a trans-disciplinary research group that collaborates with the research institutes Globalization and Culture in the Global Cities Research Institute, and Intervention through Art in the Design Research Institute. Their work focused on investigation of human-animal relations, climate change, species loss, the city and globalization, social relations, and culture-science-technology intersections and interactions.  

The method I brought to my woodcut printmaking practice is based on my previous training in Japanese water-based woodblock printmaking, which uses natural, ecologically conscious

materials and approaches. This method is derived from Buddhist traditions that spread from China in 8th century and evolved into Ukiyo-e – an original Japanese multi-coloured woodblock printmaking system that incorporated some aspects of Zen within its themes and processes.\textsuperscript{76} In Europe, printmaking developed some time after paper technologies were imported from China in 13th century. Although the first European woodcuts date to the 14th century, woodcuts gained fuller recognition through the work of key artists such as Albrecht Dürer in the late 15th and 16th centuries. The innovation Dürer brought to printmaking includes new conceptual engagement of the imagery.\textsuperscript{77}

My woodcut printmaking practice is inspired by Rosalind Krauss’ influential 1979 text *Sculpture in the Expanded Field.*\textsuperscript{78} By expanded field (Figure 9) Krauss meant a stretching of the idea of sculpture in the second half of 20th century, seen in the work of Richard Serra and Robert Morris, among others (Figure 10). She questioned traditional thinking of sculpture and showed that it now may merge with landscape or architecture. I find the term expanded very applicable to contemporary printmaking that expands into the space of the gallery or into outdoor spaces, that blurs the boundaries between art forms and merges with other disciplines. Contemporary practices also liberate printmaking from multiple originals and reproductions. This is critical to my method: I make original, single print, large-scale works that blend with both installation and sculpture.

\textsuperscript{76}The only predecessor of woodblock printing was a stone rubbing method that was first applied after a paper was invented in China in 1st century. Traditionally, a team of craftsmen produced Ukiyo-e and divided the process into the three steps. One artist created an image; another transferred the image on a block and carved it, then the third printed it. Until around the 18th century, printmaking was an inexpensive form of communication, available to many. In the 19th century, however, the disposition of labour changed and a single artist took over the whole process.

\textsuperscript{77}Among his most important independent prints are those of religious subjects: *Adam and Eve* (1504), and groups of prints *Master Engravings* featuring *Knight, Death, and the Devil* (1513), *Saint Jerome in His Study* (1514), and *Melencolia I* (1514). Two of his most well known series of woodcuts are: *The Apocalypse* (1498), and the *Life of the Virgin* (1500).

\textsuperscript{78}Rosalind Krauss, “The Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* 8, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979. Krauss (b. 1941), an American art critic and theorist and was a Professor at Columbia Art University, New York. Krauss wrote about the work of Constantin Brancusi, Mary Miss, Robert Morris, Serra, and Smithson in her research article from 1979. She has been influenced by Greenberg’s ways of assessing how an art object works and how it is been created.
Some of the first examples of expanded print that I came across early in the study include the work of British artist Marilène Olivier, Chilean printmaker Alexia Tala, Dominican printmaker Belkis Ramirez, American artist Nicola Lopez, and German artist Thomas Kilpper. Olivier’s inkjet prints, for instance, represent a cross-disciplinary approach; in
particular a collaboration of art and science. She uses medical resonance imaging (MRI) scans to reconstruct 3D images of human bodies, often using up to 90 scans per body, as her 2003 work *Family Portrait* shows (see Figure 11). Each member of her family was scanned and the resulting images were printed onto clear acrylic sheets, which are then piled up one above other two centimetres apart, until a whole image of each body is recreated. The images look ethereal, appearing and disappearing as a viewer moves around them; the work is simultaneously printmaking and sculpture. Alexia Tala geometrically arranges and displays her art on the floor of the gallery; *First Memory* (2008) comprises words first carved then moulded into plaster. Belkis Ramirez installs her carved and painted wooden plates instead of the actual prints. Her approach, in a way inspired the exhibition of my work at the George Fraser Gallery, December 2013, which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

![Figure 11. Marilène Olivier. *Family Portrait*. 2013, installation made of (MRI) scans arranged into 3D images of human bodies. Photo courtesy of Marilène Olivier. Reprinted with permission of Marilène Olivier.](image)

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Nicola Lopez creates large size print installations with woodcut prints on Mylar. Austrian printmaker Michael Schneider, by contrast, has modified woodcut printmaking methods in unique ways. Trained in Japanese woodblock printmaking, Schneider created many of his early prints by beating into his wooden plates by use of sharp stones. In 2010 Schneider extended his print methods by creating a site-specific installation in Vienna subway (see Figure 12). In this multifaceted, urbane installation, each print reflects different subway stations’ histories and voices its specific stories, hence it not made the mundane space of subway stations more animated but it also created connections between people and places.

Aspects of these artists’ work have been influential but it is Thomas Kilpper whose practice has been most important to me. Kilpper’s practice revolves around creating site-specific woodcut print installations. He carves floors of uninhabited but historically, culturally, socially or politically momentous buildings as part of his socio-political activism, such as his site-specific print The Ring, 2000, was carved and printed on the floor of Orbit House, a former boxing ring, in London (see Figure 13). In this way, Kilpper sees his cutting as working “into the very substance and material of the building,” unravelling his view of the history of the site. He considers that a choice of materials and processes serves a specific artistic concept, in his case one that is politically and socially informed. Such, for example, is the world’s largest print, his 2009 site-specific work State of Control, covering around 400 square meters (see Figure 14). He carved images reflecting periods from the Nazi period to the present into a linoleum floor of the building that once was a secret police headquarters of the German Democratic Republic. Images were printed on textiles with large, heavy rollers. Printing section by section of the floor, the textile was sewn and hung on the building’s exterior. One of the reasons why he remains one of the key artists who inspire my work is because Kilpper continues to evolve, challenging and pushing the limits of printmaking. He presented his artwork in the 30th Graphic Arts Biennial Ljubljana, as well as an academic paper at the 2014 Password: Printmaking International Printmaking Conference in Ljubljana; of which more in Chapter IV, where I will discuss directions in contemporary printmaking.

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Figure 12. Michael Schneider, *Transfer* (since 2010), a design for the subway line 3 at Johnstraße station (intermediate story) in Vienna/Austria, 43 enamel panels (total length ca. 36 m, height 1.50 m). Photo courtesy of Michael Schneider. Reprinted with permission of Michael Schneider.

Contemporary and hybrid print practices are also explored through sculptural work and architectural interventions of British printmaker Richard Woods. His site-specific printmaking borders on architectural interventions, through which creates new surfaces of existing structures. Woods use woodcut technique, to sometimes resurface entire buildings’ facades as in Super Tudor in New York (2002), Seoul Tudor (2010), as well as interiors, both walls and floors as in Logo no.1, Zwemer Gallery (2000), or his Import/Export Sculpture, an outdoor over-sized ‘floor’ print installation (see Figure 15).\(^2\) Woods repaved of a cloistered courtyard for The Henry Moore Foundation exhibition at the 50th International Venice

In his book *Printmaking at the Edge*, Richard Noyce, an independent writer and author of several publications on contemporary print, discussed new directions of contemporary printmaking, finding a confirmation that new technologies are gradually influencing today’s praxis. Prints are no longer limited to two-dimensional products presented on the wall or in a portfolio. Brian Shannon, whose work was featured in the publication *Contemporary Printmaking in the Northwest*, treasured printmaking processes over final results. A similar idea has been embraced and explored in my practice, in particular from its mid-phase onwards, which will be discussed in the third and fourth chapters. Shannon saw the potential of printmaking to be one among the leading mediums of the 21st century, because of its ability to evolve technically. This perception resonates with those of Luis Camnitzer, which will also be discussed in Chapter IV. He experimented with an expanded field of print, and hypothetically, his practice leans towards a Zen-like, spontaneous approach. In 2010, Noyce created a term for large-scale printmaking and print installation, calling it “The Third Dimension.” He underlined how printmaking continuously develops new technologies and ways to be (re)presented, including printing on three-dimensional surfaces and other kind of objects.

The discussion of printmaking’s expansion and trans-disciplinarity parallels topics presented at the 2013 and 2014 printmaking conferences and exhibitions that I attended, after most of this chapter was written; the topic will therefore be revisited in the final chapter. How such innovations in methods and presentation have evolved in only a couple of years was exposed through these events, which may signal rapid change in printmaking today. Because my research is more focused on the investigation of contemporary printmaking and my practice

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83 Woods (b.1966) is known by exhibitions and projects such as Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Royal Academy of Art, London, Grieder Contemporary, Zurich, Deitch Projects, New York and Miami, and Cosmic Galerie, Paris.


86 The Regional Arts and Culture Council commissioned an installation *up towards bottom* in 1996. An installation was placed in the lobby of the Portland Building in Oregon. Shannon carved thirty square woodblocks and inked them in the building’s colours, dark pink and teal-green. The blocks remain as the lobby’s floor, and prints cover the walls.

87 Richard Noyce, *Critical mass: Printmaking Beyond the Edge* (London: A & C Black, 2010). This publication was dedicated to the Professor Witold Skulicz, late president of the International Print Triennial Society of Krakow.

88 South Korean artist Jeoungeun Lim creates objects by screen-printing on glass, and in 2009, at the Sidney Nolan Trust in Wales for the first time a road roller has been used for printing outsized plates.

within this perspective, I have dedicated the last chapter of my thesis to greater analysis and discussion of such cutting-edge tendencies in both printmaking practice and theory.

Professor Paul Coldwell’s publication *Printmaking: A Contemporary Perspective*, 2010, demonstrates the widespread uptake of the terms *expanded* and *hybrid*. In relation to print, *hybrid* is used to describe a combination of processes, including printing on various and unconventional surfaces, other than paper. Artists who have experimented with these methods are Robert Rauschenberg, Valgerdur Hauksdóttir, Joe Tilson, and Hugh Merrill, amongst others. Hauksdóttir, from Iceland, not only combines techniques and three-dimensional display methods, she also incorporates sound in her work. Her approach has informed my practice and thinking around print installation, particularly her exhibition *Euponony II* (2003), where she collaborated with composer Richard Cornell (see Figure 16). This mixed-media installation comprised several large-size prints hanging from the ceiling of the gallery, like wavy scrolls. Beneath the prints were placed dark polished objects that reflected each print from below. This work inspired my woodcut print installation *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition*, where I exhibited ten prints, each 350 cm long, suspended from the ceiling in the space of the gallery. I printed on thin *washi* so the prints were transparent, that is, visible from both sides; these prints embodied Zen aesthetics and the notion of repetition embedded in processes of carving. Moreover, Hauksdóttir’s approach to ecologically friendly printmaking and print installation again signifies a direction wherein my printmaking has moved, which necessitates a further exploration within my methodology section.

Ten years after creating *Euphony*, Hauksdóttir was one of the panellists-presenters on the topic Environmental, at the 2013 Impact 8 International Multi-disciplinary Printmaking Conference in the UK. Artists such as Kilpper, Woods, Hauksdóttir, Schneider and Loos challenged and transformed the practice, extending our way of looking at printmaking today. At the outset of this research I was examining work by Lopez, Ramirez, and Tala and others; but after attending several international contemporary print conferences and exhibitions, I explore alternative directions, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter IV.

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91 Hauksdóttir studied nontoxic printmaking at the famous Grafisk Experimentarium workshop in Spain, with Danish printmaker Henrik Boegh. Non-toxic printmaking and studios and printmakers that promote it will be in greater detail explained in the methodology chapter.
The review found that an extensive body of research exists within the field of ecologically engaged Buddhism, as well as in the relation to Buddhism and fine arts. It might never be resolved if original/traditional Buddhism was ever ecologically concerned, and the academic resolution of that debate is outside the scope of this thesis. For myself, I consider both print and philosophy, including Buddhism – can and must change and adapt to new circumstances of contemporary times. The topic of eco-Buddhism may not appear again in this thesis per se, but two related aspects might: ethical aspects as applied to art practice, as well as being on the lookout for other artists interested in this combination. Links do already exist between ecology and printmaking, but my research focused on practices informed by eco-Buddhism.

In regard to nontoxic print, this review showed that the research and innovations on alternative methods commenced in 1970s, and that from that time, it progressively moves toward ecologically conscious methods. A growing number of nontoxic print studios across the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe, endorse the greening of printmaking practices. Friedhard Kiekeben, Dan Welden, Keith Howard, Mark Graver, Liz Chalfin and Henrik Boegh are some of the prominent founders and promoters of nontoxic print technologies today. To the best of my knowledge, nontoxic printmaking methods are, however, still not generally adopted in educational institutions and universities in New Zealand, Japan, and other countries. There is awareness, however, that nontoxicity represents a substantial topic within contemporary printmaking and this signals that ideas about green printmaking will, in turn, spread further.

Crossing borders with other disciplines such as sculpture, installation, or architecture is a key characteristic of contemporary print practices and concepts. Related to this, printmaking today has moved from reproduction as its core principle. The field of expanded print today includes print installation, site-specific and experimental, multi-disciplinary print practices. The implications of Camnitzer’s proposal that contemporary art now aspires to what once were key features or print, especially its entanglement with technologies, will be borne out

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92 Some of the nontoxic print studios and workshops are Zea Mays in Florence, Massachusetts, Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, California, Making Art Safely Artists Workshops, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Canadian School of Non-Toxic Printmaking in Alberta, Warringah Printmakers Studio in NSW, Australia. An outstanding model of nontoxic printmaking in New Zealand is Mark Graver’s Non-toxic Print Studio Wharepuke in Kerikeri, and in Europe there is Henrik Boegh’s Grafisk Eksperimentarium in Copenhagen since 1997, and Edinburgh Printmakers in Scotland, among many others.
over the next decades. Argument if and how Buddhist ideas may instigate ecologically mindful attitudes of printmaking will continue to be explored throughout the following chapters.


Figure 16. Valgerdur Hauksdóttir. *Euphony* II. 2003, mixed media prints (lithography, etching, collage, painting). Installation consisted of 16 prints on both sides of the paper, includes sound in cooperation with composer Richard Cornell, 240 cm x 20 cm, 240 cm x 55 cm, 240 cm x 90 cm. From: http://www.hauksdottir.is/ (accessed August 15, 2014). Reprinted with permission of Valgerdur Hauksdóttir.
CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

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3 Art, Craft and Embodied Ways of Knowing  67
Artistic Research and the Fine Arts PhD

The main task of this chapter is to examine the strategies for my research and investigate how both parts of the thesis, the written and creative component, are integrated. The text first explores the major existing models of fine arts doctorates, in order to determine my chosen model for this new type of the creative practice PhD, consisting of an approximately 60% written thesis and a 40% creative component. Although theory and writing constitute the majority, throughout my research I have placed equal importance on developing my creative practice. There are two reasons why I organise my thesis in this way. The first is that the institution does not prescribe the nature of the interrelationship between the two aspects of the thesis, only saying they are to be “an integrated whole,” so it was important to gain clarity around this. Secondly, and more importantly, the predominance of writing across these nearly four years represents a huge change in my own research behaviour, which has led to new processes and insights. I also position my research in relation to the three topics of the literature review: fine arts and Buddhism, eco-Buddhism, and green printmaking. I will reflect upon the processes and methods of my practice, and touch upon the relationship of crafts and theories of embodied knowing, as an introduction to the more detailed discussion on these subjects in the following chapter. There are, however no clear borders regarding methodology. Several aspects of what follows within my research could usefully be included here, in order to support the theoretical underpinning of thesis, so the division is made partly as an attempt at simplicity.

To identify key developmental phases and types of fine arts PhDs, my objective is first to examine how higher education artistic-research was formed and conducted in places where such programs have been established. In Europe they have existed for over the past forty years, and in Australia, twenty years or more. In New Zealand, the PhD in Fine Arts is relatively new, available at the University of Auckland only since 2011. In America, where

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93 Fine arts PhDs have been obtainable at the Sorbonne University in Paris since the 1970s, but have only become more widely available within an international academia during the last two decades.
95 Some of the American existing models and programmes in higher education, and articles and publications that I investigated are Lesley Duxbury, Elizabeth Grierson and Dianne Waite, Thinking Through Practice: Art as Research in the Academy (Melbourne: The School of Art, RMIT University, 2008). Hazel Smith and Roger T.
the MFA has remained the terminal degree in fine arts, PhDs that include artistic research have not yet been established (although analysis is underway to establish a basis for moving towards the development of doctoral programmes). American art theorist Graeme Sullivan emphasized the critical importance of combining practical and theoretical research: study that is reflexive and equips the researcher with a capacity to outline his or her specific understanding or perception of subjects related to the topic. According to Sullivan, there are three cross-disciplinary strategies in conducting visual arts research: 1) using visual methods to gather and interpret data based on theoretical enquiry in areas such as sociology, anthropology, or cultural studies; 2) drawing on art history, art theory, criticism, based on historical enquiry and/or literary-interpretative strategies; 3) by artistic educational inquiry that broadens our perception and understanding. My research has combined the second and third strategies, drawing upon available literature, philosophies, and theory as well as research through creative practice.

American theorist of visual arts James Elkins in his book *Artists with PhDs: On the new Doctoral Degree in Studio Art* noted the UK Quality Assurance Agency's definition of the fine arts PhD: the practice-led PhD is an in-depth study of a particular field or topic in order to become an expert in that research area. He identified the primary step in this process as the literature review, necessary to locate the research within the broader context of a field and to construct the argument of the thesis. The second step includes developing a research methodology. These strategic steps are important because they provide a pertinent concentration on a specific research question or problem that, in turn, aims toward generating new knowledge or a new perspective on existing knowledge. Elkins categorized three main models of the fine arts PhD. The first and the most common is where dissertation informs art practice: the artist positions the theoretical research to support, modify, or facilitate creative practice. The second is interdisciplinary research where written thesis and creative practice harmonize.

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98 The five variations of this first model: 1) dissertation is based on art criticism, 2) thesis is derived from art history and covers how history of practices has guided a researcher’s own practice, 3) generating student’s own...
are equally important. The third is where the artwork alone is the thesis – the creative practice is the research and accordingly, the final art exhibition with supporting documentation is the PhD.99

My thesis mostly complies with the second model, because writing and creating are both of nearly equal importance, although written part is larger. While such a proportion is generally adopted in most European universities, it appears to be especially common in the UK. Educational theorists Jan Kaila and Mika Hanuula, on the other hand, explained the model of fine arts PhD adopted by the Finnish art schools.100 Like Elkins’ third model, they differ from those in the UK mainly by emphasizing practice over theory: the art exhibition is the PhD, while a written component serves as a supporting document to the artwork.

While types of visual arts PhDs have been extensively analysed through such publications, how the creative and written constituents of thesis integrate has not been sufficiently examined. At the University of Auckland, integration has been specified as vital – it is written into the regulations – and it represents a major challenge for creative practice PhDs. However, integration may be made simple through what it aims to affect: it is designed to preclude a thesis accompanied by unrelated creative material, or a body of work presented alongside a parallel theoretical investigation.

At the Impact 8 International Multi-disciplinary Printmaking Conference at Dundee University (UK), one panel discussion specifically focused on the question of how to integrate theory and practice as applications for generating or contributing to knowledge.101 The panellists were Ruth Pelzer-Montada, a lecturer in Visual Culture in the School of Art, at the Edinburgh College of Art; Paul Coldwell, a lecturer at Chelsea College of Art and Design; and Marian Crawford, a coordinator of Print media and Artists Book Studios at Monash University of Art, Design and Architecture. They consider that fine arts PhDs have

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99 This model is usually a professional art practices doctorate in Australia and New Zealand.
100 Artistic research (Lier en boog) Series of Philosophy of Art and Art Theory, Volume 18, NY Amsterdam/New York: Rodolphi B.V, 2004). This volume gathered academics from Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Finland, Germany, UK, Sweden and France who discussed fine arts PhD models at their universities. Jan Kaila is a professor of artistic research at the Helsinki School of Art, and Mika Hanuula is a Director of Helsinki School of Art.
101 The conference will be further discussed in Chapter IV, in relation to contemporary printmaking practices.
become a natural extension from the MFA. Appropriately, given the conference, they focused on fine arts PhDs with printmaking practices, commenting on the constant search for new technologies and concepts. The discussion was centred on questions of what is research in and through art, and how artistic research relates to academic research. No answer or formula on how to do a PhD in fine arts could be provided, but a lively discussion was developed around the necessity of doctoral level study, methodologies of doctoral research, and desirable proportions of theory and practice. What also remains in flux is the question of the role that artistic practice plays in examining a chosen research question, although surely it is certain that artistic research intimately links two key methods, creative practice – the making, and theoretical reflection – the thinking. This has become evident through my own research, especially from the mid-phase towards the end: action and thought are inseparably entwined through artistic research. The idea of artist-researchers derives from conceptual art of the 1960s; artists themselves are the authors of theses. Critical and reflective thinking, are norms of a research praxis. Accordingly, generating innovative knowledge through artistic research, as discussed by Dieter Lesage in *Agonistic Academies*, is more about “a process of reflection, of interrogation, of thinking,” rather than the finished product.

The UK-based study *Identity Change* is one of the first empirical explorations based on personal experiences of students. It revealed how their research, as well as their artist-researcher identities, were evolving and changing over the years of their studies. The imbalance between the students’ existing experience with creative practice and with academic writing, where their skills were basic at the outset of their doctoral research, is the main difficulty students experienced in the initial phases. I can relate to their experiences, as research through academic writing was relatively new to me. The first year was critical in terms of structuring the enquiry, while towards the end of my second year and especially during the third year the integration of theory and practice has become a rewarding process. I have found that writing brings more a critical and reflexive element into practice and, in turn, practice brings a new perspective into writing. One outcome of this process was evident in my *Presence of Absence* exhibition. Knowledge gained through practice alone is often

102 Wasseling, Janneke (ed.), *See it Again, Say it Again: The Artist as Researcher* (Amsterdam: Antennae Valiz, 2011).

103 Dieter Lesage “On Supplementality” in Jan Cools and Henk Slager (eds), *Agonistic Academies* (Brussels: Sint-Lukas Brussels University College of Art and Design, 2010), 78-79. Dieter Lesage is a philosopher and a professor at the Department for Audiovisual and Performing Arts of Erasmus University College, Brussels.
intuitive and private; the pressures of a course that requires delivery – writing and exhibiting – can push practice in transformative directions.\(^{104}\)

*Thinking Through Practice* also investigated how some contemporary artists have constituted their creative practice PhDs. All six projects in the book emphasized the importance of methodologies; however, most treated writing as an accompanying document to a practice-based project. My research, however, follows none of these models. Instead, it comprises a larger written thesis than the creative component, although to some extent it equally values both parts.\(^{105}\) My creative practice has not been used to prove or disprove a written thesis: the relationship of the creative work and written thesis has been one of symbiosis. It has been practice-led research, with the writing being initiated from questions raised while creating work. It has not aimed to be a “theoretical, linear, cumulative, consequent, and verifiable either through experimentation or through order of logic and sequential argumentation.”\(^{106}\)

Hazel Smith and R.T Dean’s *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in Creative Arts* is also relevant to my study, because it explored the idea of interconnectedness based on Arne Naess’ deep ecology.\(^{107}\) This book included Keith Armstrong’s *Sustaining the Sustainable? Developing a Practice and Problem-led New Media Praxis*, a project that found processes of making to be as significant as, or more important than, the final product. My practice throughout my doctoral studies privilege process over product, and process has become its key methodology. While reflecting on Buddhist notions of repetition, emptiness and Zen

\(^{104}\) If integration of creative practice with the written part of the thesis is a necessary requirement of this PhD, there are other aspects of integration that are still to be addressed. Earlier, I briefly discussed the situation around the fine arts PhDs in Europe and Australia. In New Zealand, the first fine art doctorate with creative practice was that offered by the University of Auckland, Elam School of Fine Arts, the Doctor of Fine Arts degree (DocFA). This named doctorate is principally a professional artist degree; hence, it does not demand an explicit research methodology and a literature review, which, conversely, have been required as part of the creative practice PhD. The programme for PhD with creative practice at Elam was initiated in 2011, and I was the first candidate to enrol. It is expected that a creative practice PhD will consist of not more than 60,000 words of written thesis, and of a body of artwork. New knowledge gained through this study is expected to be internationally putative, and comprehensible to audiences outside the fine arts discipline.

\(^{105}\) In the first chapter, I mentioned Ruth Johnstone’s print installations and the ecological connotations of her work. In *Thinking Through Practice* she discussed her PhD project, *The 18th Century Print Room*, through which she applied an exemplary creative practice PhD methodology by employing an extensive and a reflexive description of creative procedures. I employed a similar strategy throughout Chapters III and IV.


\(^{107}\) Smith and Dean *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in Creative Arts*, 2009).
aesthetics, my art has been positioned between craft and art; moreover, it considers them inseparable; of which more in section three.

Another key method that I have employed is interdisciplinarity. French philosopher Jacques Rancière has discussed the idea of interdisciplinarity in research, explaining how he crossed divisions between disciplines because he couldn’t find all the answers only within philosophy. By extending his inquiry into other arenas he found new perspectives, proposing that borders between disciplines are permeable: not sharp but inexplicit and interdependent. My research has necessarily crossed several borders, such as the interrelationship between print practices and Buddhism. I have also noted that the concept of ecological Buddhism has been transmitted, as well as interwoven, through different sects and schools; for example Nhat Hanh’s Buddhism is cross-disciplinary through its engagement with ecological concerns, rather than being a philosophy of one specific school per se. Intermixture is similarly of great importance throughout this thesis.

Above I mentioned that the methods of theories of integration between writing and the artistic parts of the thesis are not well studied. This thesis rests on the proposal that an ecologically sustainable print practice informed by Buddhism can inform artwork, and vice versa. This proposition also includes the hypothesis that my practice may suggest new methods that could in turn generate ideas about those same practices. Given that this research experiments, analyses, and hypothesizes through both writing and creative practice, it bears some comparison with empirical methods; in particular learning from the experiences of others across fields of printmaking and other forms of contemporary art. Although the empirical method is often regarded as a key component of scientific methodologies, I conduct my research from an artistic, rather than a scientific position. However, I do not oppose the two. A hypothetical example of a science PhD could directly examine feeding habits in sea creatures in order to create more sustainable fishing practices. My thesis similarly explores the grounds upon which an ecologically sustainable print practice could be based; necessitating experimentation within domains of practical research alongside theory.

The objective of my creative practice within this doctorate has been to explore the idea of process as a concept through the labour-intensive method of woodcut printmaking. In the East, the relationship between Buddhism and print is over 2000 years old, predating most other forms of art. Notably, it also predates the institution of the university (let alone the idea of creative practice PhD or artistic research in academia). 20th century movements, as discussed in the literature review, have engendered the widespread dissemination of many key Buddhist ideas. In recent decades however the need to create links between human activities and nature has arisen as a new concern (one reason that Spinoza has become so relevant today). In my practice, I am forming a synthesis of Western ideas about deep ecology and safer printmaking processes alongside Eastern ideas relating to Zen aesthetics and Buddhist spiritual teaching, including its more contemporary ecological engagements. I have come to consider these relationships through my artistic practice, which involves labour-intensive repetitive actions that will be explored in relation to the theory of embodied knowing. These will be discussed in the following section.

2 Greening of Contemporary Printmaking

Can centuries-old Buddhist philosophies affect choices in contemporary print practices? The answer to this question will be sought by examining the proposition that concepts such as mindfulness, as understood in the Buddhist tradition, may be tools for altering traditional practices and actively encouraging new behaviours, including but not limited to the use of nontoxic technologies. The following discussion will synthesise green Buddhism and nontoxicity in printmaking. Zen aesthetics and notions of repetition follow afterwards.

At the outset of my study I placed a greater emphasis on Zen, but as my research progressed, I realized it was necessary to include other schools involved with environmental issues. Green Buddhism is unmistakably an international, cross-sect movement embracing Eastern and Western Buddhists, as well as academics and researchers from various universities and institutions. As we have seen, many scholars have argued in support of ecologically engaged Buddhism, while others have proposed that some Buddhists texts mention an admiration for nature but cannot be linked to ecology in its contemporary sense. This difference has a deep implication for this thesis as it foregrounds the issue of ideas, as well as practices, adapting or
expanding to meet new circumstances. It must be added that traditional Buddhist thought itself was not static. For the Zen teacher Kukai (8th century), nature was a sacred source of wisdom. He promoted an idea that resembles the contemporary concept of ecosystems, a network of bio-diverse life forms arranged into multifaceted structures, which form bigger systems, while each system at the same time contains smaller systems. Kukai’s conception of nature resonates with the idea of Indra’s net. As a Zen monk, he promoted a philosophy of nonduality, blurring the borders between mind and body, as well as humans from nature and all other life around us. This mind/body entwinning and profound interconnectedness and oneness in some ways resembles theories of embodied knowing, as does the thinking of Nhat Hanh and others. This diminishing body-mind border is perhaps closest to the pedagogical methods at the university in Japan where I conducted my earlier studies, a foundation on which I have developed my doctoral research. Embodied ways of knowing will be discussed in greater depth in the third section of this chapter.

Environmental issues are as much discussed by artists as by scientists, architects, philosophers and others. Ecologically-aware art is now a huge field, manifested through performance, video, photography and land art, as well as by printmakers who employ and promote nontoxic methods. The term nontoxic or green printmaking has become generally accepted terminology over the last ten years, and I use it in relation to my own creative practice. The expression nontoxic warrants some clarification; it refers to the processes that use less dangerous materials and methods than have often been employed. While the technical vocabulary of printmaking remains unchanged, the materials used in practice have changed, often considerably. Mark Graver is a pioneer in this area in New Zealand (Figure 17 shows one of Graver’s nontoxic printing methods). He is also the author of Non-toxic Printmaking, exploring the methods of some of the most prominent contemporary practitioners and studios.109 These included Edinburgh printmakers; Akua Inks from the US, Keith Howard, author of The Contemporary Printmaker; Dan Welden, an inventor of an etching method using solar plates.110 Henrik Boegh, a promoter of nontoxic printmaking in Denmark and Spain, Liz Chalfin from Zea Mays studio in the US, and Friedhard Kiekeben, a well-known researcher of nontoxic printmaking have contributed to the development of

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109 Mark Graver, Non-toxic Printmaking (London: A & C Black, 2011). Mark Graver is a printmaker based in Kerikeri, running and owning the first and still only nontoxic print studio in New Zealand.

alternative print methods and have influenced my approach to the practice (see Figure 18). All these artists agree that although the term nontoxic is not entirely ideal, it is effective as its purpose is also to raise awareness, drawing attention towards the use of alternative materials and methods. I will thereby hereafter use this term when referring to printmaking with safer and ecologically friendly methods, whether my own or others’ practices.

It can be argued that nontoxic printmaking preceded today’s conventional print methods that often employ highly toxic methods. Instead of poisonous solvents such as turpentine, the old masters of the traditional European printmaking used various soaps and oils to clean up their plates (petroleum distillates are products of modern chemistry, invented in the mid 19th century). Unfortunately, hazardous organic solvents such as mineral spirits and turpentine are still commonly used in many print studios today. After the harmfulness of solvents became known, many print studios began to close down in USA. Awareness about the effects of toxic solvents has resulted in installing either proper ventilation systems in print workshops (this includes art universities in Japan, including the Tokyo University of the Arts, where I studied, as well as some studios in USA and Europe), or shifting to nontoxic practices (such as in over thirty universities in USA, and Canada, and an increasing number of studios in Europe and Australia). Friedhard Kiekeben has identified the most common hazardous solvents as turpentine, mineral spirits and acetone, presenting extensive evidence revealing that these chemical solvents pose a greater hazard than has been commonly thought. Benign alternatives include water, soaps, sodium carbonate and vegetable oil. Hence, in order to maintain and as well further develop the art and craft of printmaking, the necessity of adapting to nonsolvent printmaking technologies has become apparent.

111 Liz Chalfin is a printmaker from Zea Mays nontoxic print studio The Green Print Studio, Massachusetts, USA; Henrik Boegh is a Danish printmaker based in Spain, where he runs a nontoxic studio-workshop; Keith Howard is an American nontoxic printmaker and an author of The Contemporary Printmaker; Nick Semenoff is an American printmaker who invented the nontoxic method of waterless lithography; Dan Welden is an American printmaker who invented “printmaking on the sun” - an alternative method of etching by the use of sun light on photo-sensitive plates; Friedhard Kiekeben is German nontoxic printmaker based in Chicago, USA. Kiekeben has an informative website on safer printmaking methods, materials, and resources for printmakers and educators. Friedhard Kiekeben, “Non-toxic Printmaking, Safe painting & printed Art,” Nontoxic printmaking, accessed March 23, 2011, http://www.nontoxicprint.com/.

112 It is known that vegetable oils clean up the oil ink of etching plates effectively. In case of water-based etching inks, they can be cleaned with water, such as the Caligo Safe Wash Inks I used in the later stages of my research.

113 Hydrocarbon solvents or VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) are nervous toxins. Short-term exposure causes dizziness; long-term exposure can cause brain damage, doubles the risk of cancer, and may harm a foetus during pregnancy. Chemical solvents such as turpentine and mineral spirits can be absorbed through skin, eyes, and respiratory organs, and prolonged and continual exposure to its vapours can cause dermatitis, skin allergies, headaches, nausea, fatigue, loss of coordination, respiratory irritation, and asthma. Further, it may cause kidney,
Fumes and toxins are more hazardous indoors: a print studio of the City College in Santa Barbara that I used during my stay in California placed the etching space outdoors, in an especially protected area. Turpentine and mineral spirits were replaced with vegetable oils for cleaning ink from the plates. Graver’s nontoxic print studio went a step further, replacing nitric acid for etching with an Edinburgh etch, a completely nontoxic substance that is safe to use indoors. He prints with water-based Akua Kolor inks that can be cleaned with water and soap.
My training in Western printmaking through the 1990s at the Academy of Fine Arts (University of Zagreb) was dominated by the use of such hazardous substances mentioned above. When I experienced working with natural and nontoxic methods of water-based Japanese woodblock printmaking during my MFA in Tokyo in early 2000s, my practice shifted more towards ecologically mindful art making. I have subsequently revisited Western methods such as etching, silkscreen, and lithography, using safer methods. During the first phase of my PhD research I used Japanese woodblock printmaking methods of printing with water-based, nontoxic sumi ink. In the second stage of my research, after my attendance at and participation in international printmaking conferences and exhibitions, I moved towards Western woodcut printmaking methods. This was in part due to the use of a new material: Caligo Safe Wash Inks, which give rich and deep black tones unachievable by water-based inks. These inks are especially designed for safer printmaking and may be washed off plates and tools by soap, without damaging the environment or the health of the practitioner, or other artists sharing the print studio. I think that adopting green methods will not end printmaking traditions. If we can accept that printmaking was originally not toxic, then the new “greening” is a return to older methods. By this, I do not mean that printmakers should turn to ancient forms of Buddhist printing. Instead, I suggest that the use of toxins is nowadays unnecessary because eco-alternatives are available. Clearly, nontoxic methods and materials are not diminishing the field, but extending and ensuring its survival.

Woodblock printmaking requires methodological knowledge, as it involves a series of meticulous technical and artistic steps: from paper and wood preparations, to carving and printing tool maintenance, to the multiplicity of carving and printing methods. The materials I use with Japanese woodblock printmaking methods are wood, paper, and water-based inks. I print by hand pressure with different types of baren. The nontoxicity of these materials enables me to work in an open studio without exposing the health of others to harmful substances, nor producing any waste that would contaminate the environment. Wood as a material is important to me for it qualities of naturalness, warmth and texture – knots and grains are often integral parts of my prints. To carve blocks I mostly use Japanese handmade

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114 I encountered nontoxic printmaking at Santa Barbara City College, CA. Among the safer practices I learnt there are waterless lithography, the process invented by Nick Semenoff that, instead of toxic solvents, uses silicon and detergents. The method is similar to offset printing because it uses thin metal plates instead of a stone.

115 If toxic fumes of acids and turpentine are used daily in shared, open access workshops and studios, they harm everyone who works in these spaces, not only the person who directly uses them.
professional carving tools, although in some instances I use power tools in order to achieve desirable surfaces. The black sumi ink I worked with in the first two years of my research was used for centuries in Chinese and Zen calligraphy. When thinned with water, it creates rich scales of grey, as well as transparency. The Western Caligo ink, which I have employed from the third year of my doctorate onwards, enables me to print large blocks using presses, and achieve darker, deeper tones on my prints.

To produce large-scale prints I have regularly used two types of soft plywood, meranti and radiata, 240 cm long and 120 cm wide. I do not carve in great detail or use thin lines, as to do so I would require a much thicker and harder wood, such as cherry or pear. My method is to combine two such boards to create one print. I frequently process both sides of the block so as to make my practice more sustainable and more economical. Because of the large size of the wood, I use the floor of my studio as my working surface, but the more important reason I carve my woods on the floor is to be able to sit, stand and work directly on/in the plates. I thereby engage my whole body enhancing mind/body integration and embodied ways of knowing. I learnt this method during my studies in Tokyo, as carving and printing on the ground allows an artist to use apply power of the whole body, thereby processing the work with less effort. By having a plate placed on a lower surface or on the floor, one may experience deeper immersion in the work, as well as have more control over the processes. This is one aspect of my methodology that has remained relevant throughout the course of my study.

In my first phase of research I painted and drew on the plate with sumi ink and brush, which has been closer to a calligrapher’s approach; the paintings on the plate have been repeatedly created in a single motion of a brush stroke. The mind becomes focused, often on breathing as in Zen meditation, and the resulting artwork could be considered a form of controlled

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116 Plywood is usually made of wooden sheets that are glued together to the desired thickness, usually 6mm or 12mm. I have used both types. Even though my practice is directed towards the use of safer methods and raising awareness of less toxic practices, I must acknowledge that the glue is not organic and so potentially harmful; toxic material in the glue is formaldehyde. Today, alternative, eco-friendly or formaldehyde-free adhesives are being researched. Abhijit Phadke, “Adhesives used for making Plywood,” accessed April 22, 2014, http://blog.positiveindians.in/plywood/adhesives-for-plywood.html. “Formaldehyde and Cancer Risk,” National Cancer Institute at the National Institute of Health, and: http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Risk/formaldehyde. The ply I use is not the typical home construction ply examined here. MDF sheets contain large amount of formaldehyde but I did not use such material for carving.
spontaneity. This relationship of process to state of mind, by which things take place in our perception as much as in an actual physical location, is the basic principle of a calligraphers’ approach to art making. Calligraphy and Buddhism are closely related, and this method, which has been used for centuries by Chinese and Japanese artists, has its roots in the idea of interconnectedness. A central Buddhist thought says that all phenomena arise in dependence upon conditions. Calligraphy is created with such knowledge in mind, and the subsequent artworks often manifest a certain state, energy, or a perception. This process has been embodied in my carving.

After working calligraphically on the plates I carved, following the brush strokes. Lastly I would print section by section, because water-based ink dries fast and the size of the plate was too large to print by hand all at the same time. This method derives from ukiyo-e woodblock printmaking, but my method extended it through the scale of the block, the monochrome printing, as well as some other technical details. Due to the scale of the work, and to bypass the traditional purpose of reproduction, I also abandoned printing the edition. Prints created as part of my doctoral research have therefore been made as unique, original artworks. In the March 2012 show Unlimited Resonance of Repetition, my light and semi-transparent prints were suspended from the ceiling of the gallery space. This first exhibition during my candidacy displayed a cycle of ten long prints arranged as a three-dimensional installation filling the whole space of the gallery. Figures 19-26 present the making of Unlimited Resonance of Repetition, and the actual installation in the Projectspace Gallery. With viewers in the gallery, the paper would subtly move. The print installation was therefore not static but contained a responsive motion, not unlike Zen ideals of the natural world, where nothing is fixed. Each print was approximately 3500 cm long and 150 cm wide, but dimensions were deliberately variable rather than fixed. This exhibition represented an important foundation for the next two years of doctoral research.

Abandoning the calligraphic approach to creating woodcut prints, however, marked the second phase of my research. In order to more fully explore the meditative notion of repetition, I carved the blocks without any previously prepared image or drawing/painting. The last stage of my research through making was informed by my participation at the 2013 Impact 8 International Printmaking Conference in the UK, examined in Chapter IV. In that final part of my study, I used print studios and presses to print both large and small plates, all
of which were part of my investigation into ideas of nothingness/emptiness – another concept reserved for the chapter focusing on creative practice. I was recarving the wooden plates until nearly nothing was left of them. Throughout this time-consuming process I collected all the shavings. For the 2013 exhibition, *Presence of Absence*, the shavings were kept and became an important component of the installation, of which more in Chapter IV. This chapter will, however, conclude with several topics that affect my methodologies. The first is the relationship of my practice with craft, followed by an exploration of embodied knowing, which flows from aspects of the former discussion on calligraphy and Buddha mind in art making. This discussion will create a base for the dialogue that follows in Chapter III, when these topics continue to further interweave and develop.
Figure 19. Irena Keckes. 2011, carving process.
Figure 20. Irena Keckes. 2011, printing process on thin calligraphy paper rolls, by use of *baren* and *sumi* ink. Elam School of Fine Arts.

Figure 21. Irena Keckes. 2011, rolled prints on calligraphy paper rolls, from the cycle *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition*. Elam School of Fine Arts.
Figure 22 (above) and Figure 23 (below). Irena Keckes. *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition*. 2012, woodcut print installation. Unryu (dragon cloud) calligraphy paper rolls, *sumi* ink. Installation consisted of 10 prints, each approximately 150 cm x 350 cm. Elam Projectspace Gallery, Auckland. Both images reprinted with permission of artsdiary.co.nz.
Figure 24. Irena Keckes. *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition*. 2012, woodcut prints installation, 10 prints: 150 cm x 350 cm (Installation detail). Image represents testing of the installation in the studio space at Elam School of Fine Arts.
Figure 25. Irena Keckes. *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition*. 2012, woodcut prints installation, 10 prints: 150 cm x 350 cm (Installation detail). Elam Projectspace Gallery, Auckland.
Earlier, I established the importance of the notions of oneness and interconnectedness to my research, and I briefly explained how I explore embodied ways of knowing through my practice. I will now examine, more closely, the relationship of art and craft, because my art comprises both and can rarely be considered solely as one or other. By craft I mean art at the same time, as in the Eastern tradition. Below I will explain some major aspects of the Western split between art and craft in the 18th century, as well as contemporary tendencies to bridge a gap between the two. Besides investigating Eastern concepts of art/craft inseparability, this section also examines some aspects of Western contemporary philosophies of craft.

The methods and materials that are used in Japanese woodblock printmaking are traditionally associated with craft. In Japan, in my experience, craftsmanship is exceptionally valued. The boundary between craft and art is often unclear, and almost indefinable. Hence my MFA study included training in all the crafts related to Japanese woodblock printmaking, such as all the steps of papermaking, baren-making, carving and printing tools maintenance, visiting craftsmen’s workshops such as brush-makers, baren-makers, and other tool makers. This training included ordering tools directly from them, which they would design especially for an individual artist’s need. The pedagogical methods I experienced during that time were based on very old traditions that include student-mentor teaching customs, another method older than even the European notion of a university. Mentorship includes not only academic and conceptual connotations of the work, but also methods and technical skills related to the practice.

Both physical and psychological experience related to the art and craft of printmaking are important to my practice because that they unite mind, idea, and body. Crafts may be seen, for example in the previously described Japanese tradition, as activities resulting not only in creating an object – but as a way of transforming, cultivating self, and the environment. The key difference in the Japanese synthesis of art and craft is that they have not been influenced by theories and aesthetics of dualism. The division and conflict of opposites (for instance, beautiful/ugly, mind/heart, or art/life) is alien to Japanese cultural history, philosophy, and
aesthetics. The Zen-based concept of wabi-sabi essentially strives towards finding and revealing the real nature of self.\textsuperscript{117} In wabi-sabi, all that is beautiful comes to existence from what has been previously destroyed or transformed out of unrefined material that is neither beautiful nor ugly. In this system, what was ugly can easily become beautiful, and what was beautiful inevitably transforms into ugliness. In a cycle of life in which everything comes from and disappears to nothingness, all oppositions may exist at the same time, embodied in one entity. Since there is no separation between life, nature and art, oppositions are also united in the art/craft object. Yoshida Kenkō, a Buddhist priest from 14\textsuperscript{th} century, influenced Japanese aesthetics and philosophy by his explanation of the concept of beauty in the \textit{Essays of Idleness}.\textsuperscript{118} According to this model, beauty has four main characteristics: an implication or a hint, an irregularity, simplicity, and impermanence. Although these key distinctions are broad and do not represent a fixed set of rules, they clearly exemplify a nondualistic view.\textsuperscript{119} The beauty of art/craft objects created within this philosophy lies in their imperfection and a way that present their suchness or absence of self-nature.

In addition to not separating the beautiful from the unattractive, Buddhist philosophy also makes no contrast between good and evil, a model ingrained in Western traditions associated with Christianity. Dualism also has roots in the Cartesian division of the intellectual from material world, giving dominance to intellectual capacities. This model remains influential in the West today and its absence in Eastern thought is perhaps one of the reasons why craft had a different position and perception within Asian arts. Mind, from a Buddhist point of view, is inseparable from heart. By connecting craft, nature, and the human heart through his writing in \textit{The Unknown Craftsmen}, Soetsu Yanagi demonstrated traditional Buddhist thinking.\textsuperscript{120}

I believe Richards’ notion of centring is very close to this approach. For Richards, centring is the “speech between the hand and the clay,” a language “spoken by the whole body, by the

\textsuperscript{117} A real nature of self in Buddhism is no-self.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Tsurezuregusa (Essays in Idleness)} is a collection written mainly between 1330 and 1333.
\textsuperscript{119} This explanation of wabi-sabi, Zen, and non-dualism in Japanese aesthetics, however, does not mean that there were no contradictions in lifestyle. Even Kenkō’s writing technique is called “following the brush” and reflects these Zen notions, because it embodies the asymmetrical, free, and spontaneous shifting of topics and modes.
\textsuperscript{120} Soetsu Yanagi, \textit{The Unknown Craftsmen} (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1972). This publication explored Eastern ways of comprehending, seeing as well as appreciating everyday art and craft objects created in pottery, lacquer, textiles, and woodwork. Yanagi was a theorist of Japan’s \textit{mingei} movement, a movement that promotes of traditional crafts.
whole person, speaking and listening...”121 Richards linked morality embedded in the process of making to the feeling of compassion: “From the child’s capacity to imagine grows as well the adult’s capacity of compassion: the ability to picture the suffering of others, to identify. In one’s citizenship, or art of politics, it is part of one’s skill to imagine other ways of living than one’s own.”122 Compassion is equal to the act of centring, “of bringing together the known energies of the universe,” and closely related to perception.123 Even though Buddhism doesn’t talk about morality per se, I find Richards’ holistic thinking around craft to be related to Buddhist ideas of interconnectedness and mindfulness.124 Her work can thereby act as a model linking the two essentially different traditions.

*The Craft Reader* offers some useful insights on the subject of Eastern positions on craft.125 Part of this publication is Soetsu Yanagi’s essay titled *The Way of Craftsmanship* that emphasized the importance of the artist’s individuality to the art, a characteristic that has long been considered crucial in Japanese craft.126 *The Soul of a Tree*, George Nakashima’s essay in *The Craft Reader*, discussed the possibility of spiritual dimensions to craft. Nakashima is a Japanese American woodworker, and even though his work has little in common with mine, I found some parallels with my work especially in regard to materials, but also his liberties of approach in combining Japanese and Western tools and methods.127 According to Nakashima, each craftsman is free to work out of his own spiritual training to attain a deep concentration, resulting in a union with an ultimate reality.128 My practice corresponds well with a craft-oriented approach to art; it uses particular materials and explores the idea that knowing arises from making, that making and thinking are intertwined notions, happening simultaneously.

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122 Ibid., 115.
123 Ibid., X.

124 Morality, the concept explaining good versus evil, right versus wrong, is derived from a Latin word *moralitas* that means manner or proper behaviour. Such concepts do not exist in Buddhism. East did not discuss morality as concept – because the idea of duality is inexistent in Buddhist philosophy. Nothing is either good or evil, no one is either good or bad, but both sides are contained in one. Everyone is intrinsically good. Because of the absence of duality there is, therefore, no morality or immorality per se. “Fundamentals of Buddhism,” a *Buddha net production*, accessed July 12, 2013, http://www.buddhanet.net/fundbud6.htm. See also: D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).
128 Even though many have related his work to Zen, his inspiration did not come from Buddhism but was more likely influenced by Hinduism, to which he often referred when teaching his woodworking apprentices.
This idea informed my practice during the first year of my doctoral research and matured in the making of Presence of Absence, toward the end of my third doctoral year.\footnote{The exhibition was inspired by the publication and exhibition: Martin Herbert, Fiona MacDonald and Matilda Strang, Thinking is Making: Presence and Absence in Contemporary Sculpture (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2013).}

The Western position on art and craft has taken a rather different path. In Europe, guilds preserved and transmitted knowledge about a certain technique.\footnote{Guilds were associations of craftsmen who controlled the practice of their craft in a particular town. They existed from the early 13th century in France and Italy, and become a central European handicraft organization in the 16th century, eventually losing popularity in late 18th and 19th century.} How has art, a term that for over 2000 years signified both technique and concept, come to be split in two? In The Invention of Art: A Cultural History, philosopher Larry Shiner refuted the idea that art or fine art, distanced from or higher positioned than craft, began in ancient Greece.\footnote{Larry Shiner, The Invention of Art: A Cultural History (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).} Shiner explained that the term art was derived from the Greek word techne and the Latin word ars, arguing that art and function in these classical periods were indivisible. Both terms simply signified a skill, which was constitutive equally in a range of activities that involved making things, whether painting or shoemaking, sculpture, poetry, pottery, or carpentry. He pointed out that these acts were very clearly distinguished from the products of nature. Shiner further rejected idea that art and craft separated in the Renaissance, arguing that both Michelangelo and Shakespeare’s work integrated both.\footnote{The split in the Renaissance had to do with favouring some disciplines over others. For instance, painting was valued over sculpture, as evidenced in Dürer’s correspondence.}

Shiner states that fine art is a more modern invention – a creation of 18th century Europe, which saw the establishment of public libraries, concerts, museums, fine arts, artists and the idea of aesthetics, concluding that the split resulted from social and cultural changes. He cites new market economies, the growth of the middle class and the subsequent secularization of art forms such as music, the rise of literary criticism and the establishment of new institutions – notably the art museum – as key elements in the division. Thereafter, the artist was seen as an inspired genius, a creator of fine art, while a craftsman or artisan was a maker of less aesthetic and more functional, thus less valued objects. 19th century Europe accordingly raised art to the level of its highest values and spread institutions of fine art across Europe and America. Holding that art is transcendent and universal, Shiner was aware of disadvantages and limitations produced by the art/craft split, often seeking to assimilate the
two, thereby reconnecting art and life. The transformation of the modern system and the emergence of new art lead to the creation of what he called a third system of art. He observed, “A third system of art transcending the divisions of the modern fine art system has yet to establish itself. But even if it were possible in some wild anti-art dream to dismantle existing institutions and replace the one-sided ideals of fine art with the norms of craft and popular art, we would simply be reversing an invidious polarity rather than healing a fracture that occurred long ago.” The core of his argument is that imagination and creativity unites with function and skill to achieve a balance. For aesthetician David Clowney, Shiner’s blending of art and life was seen more as an “aesthetic of everyday like that of traditional Japan, which values the elegant union of form and function.” Further, the image of the artist as creative genius remains, but is not dominating: the third system of art is manifested in a variety of ways and supports a greater (re)integration of art and life.

Other contemporary commentators have also found the split problematic. British scholar Glenn Adamson converted notions of craft that have often been seen as the inferior, into its strong and distinctive points. He therefore categorized craft through three interconnected hypotheses: craft is supplemental, while art is autonomous; craft is material, and art optical experience; craft represents a skill, while art integrates that skill. In so doing, Adamson provided a stimulating overview, positioning craft’s uniqueness and distinctiveness by comparison with contemporary art. However, he preserved the split by defining contemporary craft as a form that is independent from tradition, materials and processes, a position I find not particularly useful and strangely lacking in insight.

133 Shiner’s thesis was inspired by Paul Oskar Kristeller’s essay The Modern System of the Arts. There was a traditional “system of the arts” in the West before the eighteenth century (traditional cultures still have a similar system) in which an artist or artisan was a skilled maker or practitioner, a work of art was the useful product of skilled work, and the appreciation of the arts was integrally connected with their role in the rest of life. Art, in other words, meant approximately the same thing as the Greek word techne, or in English skill, a sense that has survived in phrases like “the art of war,” “the art of love,” and “the art of medicine.”


135 David Clowney, “A Third System of the Arts? An Exploration of Some Ideas from Larry Shiner The Invention of Art: A Cultural History,” Journal of Contemporary Aesthetics, Vol. 6, 2008. Clowney thinks the third system of art can rise above not only the division between art and craft but also the splitting up of class, race, and gender.

136 The studio craft movement in second half of 20th century brought a new, more artistic, view of craft, merging it with art. It challenged more traditional view on art, seeing craft not only as production of functional objects but also uniting aesthetics and process, materials, and technical skills.

137 Glenn Adamson, Thinking Through Craft (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2007). Adamson is a deputy Head of Research and Head of Graduate Studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

138 A useful exploration of the connection between life and art was made at a symposium at the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies: Gloria Hickey, Making and Metaphor: A Discussion of Meaning in Contemporary Craft (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Institute of Contemporary Craft, 1994).
In 1997, art historian and theoretician Sue Rowley had argued that the art-craft debate of the second half of 20th century was linked to broader critiques of norms in art, norms that have roots in art history and were constructed in the Renaissance. Since that time a hierarchy in the arts that degrades crafts has been established. Painting and sculpture enjoyed an elevated status in relation to arts that created everyday things. Painting was considered as more intellectual than sculpture and, in turn, sculpture was considered to have greater intellectual substance than printmaking. A contributing factor may be that print methodologies facilitate a production of multiples, as distinct from the single, unique objects of sculpture or painting so highly prized in that time. Furthermore, the characteristic of producing multiples from one plate made printmaking less expensive and thus more accessible to many more people, something the fine arts tradition and its focus on exclusivity sought to resist.

Although this is the kind of argument Shiner sought to refute, it is hard to argue against experience: the art market considers reproducible items generally as being of a lower value than unique objects.

As my research is permeated by Japanese perspectives on art/craft, it is a challenge to work with and within that traditional Western distinction – not only a splitting of the two, but also an historical hierarchy, with printmaking often seen as inferior to other forms of art making. My observation is that this hierarchy fails to comprehend the concept of transformation of an image or an idea through the repetition of actions embedded in the printmaking processes. Each iteration, however, enables new and different facets for an artwork, so that the same print is considered an original, and not a copy. The notion of fine differences between same


140 Prints in Renaissance were mainly woodcut and engraving. Both are related to the rise of printing of books, therefore, with text. Clearly, woodcut-printing processes developed in Asia several centuries before Europe. The earliest examples of woodcut prints are from China, around the 2nd century after paper was invented in 105 AD, even though the 9th century The Diamond Sutra was the first to be clearly dated. Woodcut prints were unquestionably associated with Buddhist texts. In Europe, printmaking was at first also related to texts and books, only after the development of movable type of press. Dürer, who elevated printmaking into a form of art independent from text, revolutionized woodcut printing. Engraving has been used from earliest times of human history, by goldsmiths for the decoration of metalwork and, as an independent art form developed in Germany in the 1430s. Etching, derived from engraving, was invented by German goldsmith Daniel Hopfer between 1470-1536 (the exact year of invention is not known), who applied his method of decorating military armour to printmaking. Even though examples may be made in nearly every printmaking methods, the history of silkscreen printing growth perhaps best describes what I mean by easy and fast dissemination of printmaking among broader masses. Silkscreen, a method invented in China in 13th century, but which developed as artistic method in 20th century printmaking in America, was introduced as a fine art technique with an exhibition of serigraphs at the New York World’s Fair in 1939.
and different was analysed by Gilles Deleuze. In relation to Adamson’s thought provoking analysis, my position perceives art and craft as inseparable and deems that the debate around dominance or superiority of one over the other is unnecessary. We can see why Luis Camnitzer’s position has been so radical, in part because it upturns this deep-seated hierarchy.

Another aspect of craft is its relationship to an embodied, phenomenological way of knowing, also often called tacit knowledge. This way of knowing through hands, body, and feeling is best accessible through experience. I suggest here that mind-body engagements and the repetitiveness of actions characteristic of printmaking have something in common with everyday Buddhist practices, which perceive body and mind as inseparable entities. These practices consider separation on subject-object, common in Western cultures that divide mind from body, world from self, culture from nature, and reason from emotion, as illusory. As a philosophical approach, phenomenology explains how we perceive the world around us (or activities we engage with) through our bodies and, furthermore acquires knowledge through such experiences. Embodied knowing is one method of understanding our interconnectedness with all beings, all phenomena, as well as nature.

The connection between Eastern philosophy, which invokes bodily sensed knowledge, and Western philosophy, which describes a similar notion through theories of embodiment, necessitates more detailed investigation.141 Edmund Husserl, the German philosopher who established the school of phenomenology, said, “the body is, in the first place, the medium of all perception.”142 Embodied experience are shaping our connections to the world around us. This concept shares with Zen the implication that art making can be based on bodily perceptions within a given environment.143 This had consequences for the repetitive actions that have been the key component of my woodcut printing practice, even as it has extended into installation.

142 Husserl lived between 1859 and 1938. The quote, from Volume II of his *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* was found in: Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 3.
143 Anna Essen and Sara Winterstorm Varlender, “The mutual constitution of sensuous and discursive understanding in scientific practice: An autoethnographic lens on academic writing,” *Sage Journals*, 2012:400, accessed May 9, 2014.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav.
Art historian Robert Hobbs has investigated Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology in relation to installation art. Hobbs’ suggestion has been based on the idea that installation art involves exploration through the body, as much as through mind. He therefore explored a connection between phenomenology and Zen Buddhism, through which a see-er becomes one with what is seen, an idea suggested by Merleau-Ponty. Hobbs has particularly focused on Western aspects of Buddhism and aesthetics related to Zen, including wabi-sabi. While my research employs methods from Eastern Buddhist traditions (monochrome ink and the ritual, repetitiveness in the process of creating an artwork) in relation to ecologically engaged practices, I have extensively explored and referenced Western sources and methods. D.T. Suzuki, who largely introduced Zen to the West, popularized terms such as satori – a sudden understanding, and kensho – coming in terms with one’s “original face.” Hobbs thinks Zen and Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology have common points, as both see mind and body as inseparable, interwoven entities.

Hobbs also commented on Rosalind Krauss’ position on Richard Serra’s 1983 exhibition in Musée National d’art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou. Krauss mistakenly thought Abstract Expressionists could not have known Merleau-Ponty’s *The Phenomenology of Perception*, as his work was translated in English only after 1962. But Hobbs established that Merleau-Ponty had contact with the critic Harold Rosenberg before his books were available in English, and so phenomenological ideas were accessible to American artists. Hobbs thinks Merleau-Ponty’s books influenced Rosenberg’s concept of action painting, because he emphasised the generative aspects of art – the processes of making, the act of painting itself, rather than the finished product. Aspects of these ideas continue to interest artists, as it was evident in the 2013 *Thinking is Making* exhibition of sculpture and publication that inspired my *Presence of Absence* exhibition. Hobbs compared Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy to Edmund Husserl’s epoché, which he describes as “a method of becoming aware of one’s initial relationship to the world, and as a means of coming to terms with consciousness through one’s acts rather than from a preconceived perspective or a later reflection.”

146 This is related to the philosophy behind martial arts, archery, calligraphy, flower arranging, as well as the Japanese tea ritual.
147 Ibid., 18.
148 Ibid., 19.
possible to see traces of Merleau-Ponty’s influence in the work of Jackson Pollock or, more importantly for this thesis, Robert Morris. The latter's exposition on process in art and as art has been a powerful platform from which my own relation to the topic has developed; more on Morris in Chapter IV.

Phenomenology offered artists an alternative to intellectualism, forcing “people to choose between a world that imposed its reality on them, making them its subject, and a world that was forced to accommodate itself to their thought.”149 This is one reason why Merleau-Ponty’s theory of embodied knowing has been a fruitful ground for installation artists. By proposing that artists make and also apprehend art via the body, Merleau-Ponty suggested that the role of see-er identifies with what is seen. To explain this further, Hobbs used the example of Yayoi Kusama’s 1996 installations Repetitive Vision and Infinity Dots Mirrored Room, for in these works each viewer sees her/himself as both object and subject – the observer becomes the observed. Phenomenological aspects in my work are evident in each step of the large-scale print process where I explore the idea of being “in” the work, with my body and mind inextricably engaged. I seek balance between inner and outer worlds; the maker and making are one. In Zen, both artist and viewer’s insights and awareness are equally important. Hobbs noted the Japanese tea ceremony, which creates the whole atmosphere for mind and body to immerse in well planned sensory simulative environment and process – the rituality of tea making, the aroma, the scrolls on the walls, the design and the architecture of the room.

The philosopher who coined term tacit knowledge, Hungarian Michael Polanyi, believed that creative activity is connected to strong personal feelings and dedication towards personally chosen work. He titled his most important book Personal Knowledge, stating that “all knowing is personal knowing – participation through [embodied] indwelling.”150 Polanyi proposed that this involves what he calls “skilful action”. He identified two types of

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149 Ibid., 20.
knowledge: an explicit one, usually presented in written form, and tacit knowledge represented through skilful actions. Tacit knowledge refers to what we possess at an almost intuitive level; it is not easily described orally or by the rules of explicit knowledge.\textsuperscript{151} It refers to skills we did not learn from written texts, such as riding a bike or recognizing faces. The skilful action of tacit knowledge is associated with simultaneously intelligent and spontaneous action that is never completely definable. Exploring diverse aspects of the idea of craft as well as phenomenology illuminates how an active, practical approach to chosen material and media – as compared to shifting from one media to other – is neither traditional nor contemporary, but can usefully be directed towards an integration of art and craft. Polly Ullrich extended Polanyi’s thinking to the physical experience of craft making and the decision-making processes related to it, through Merleau-Ponty’s thought that perception is indivisibly linked to the body and its senses and that embodied perception is one of the characteristics of craft.\textsuperscript{152}

A concept that is closely related to experiential and tacit ways of knowing is somatic learning. It explores how we learn through and from our bodily experiences, through movements (kinaesthetic learning), feelings (affective learning), senses (sensory learning) and self-awareness (spiritual learning). Jonathan Matthews\textsuperscript{153} defines somatic knowing as “an experiential knowing that involves sense, percept, and mind/body action and reaction – a knowing, feeling, and acting that includes more of the broad range of human experience.”\textsuperscript{154} He defines somatic learning as an “embodied experience of being and doing. To embody something is to give it a body.” In the same year, Bonnie Durrance also discussed tacit learning and how it pulls together mind and body through practice.\textsuperscript{155} When working on my large woodblocks, I utilize movements engaging the whole body, the awareness of interconnectedness – the art making become a spiritual experience. The assimilation of art

\textsuperscript{151} James Elkins offers another understanding of tacit knowledge that explicitly is not “the subsidiary awareness of the world” defined by Polanyi, but “the sum total of elements in a visual practice that can be brought into words and presented as knowledge.” James Elkins, Artists with PhDs “5 Positive Ideas for the PhD,” accessed June 7, 2015, http://www.jameselkins.com/yy/?page_id=300.


with craft in my practice is predominantly based upon Buddhist philosophy and Zen aesthetics. The Buddhist idea of oneness does not separate art from craft, or mind from heart; continuing from the previous discussion on embodied knowing, the processes of printmaking therefore involves gaining knowledge through actions that are learnt by the body as much as by the mind. Such methods, characterized by integrating intellectual and physical action, are a key constituent of my creative practice. The discussion will now gradually move to reflect on this nexus.

Buddhism sees existence as a ceaseless state of flux – *samsara* – a Sanskrit word that means a cycle of birth and death, considered to be a circle of co-dependent origination. According to this view, everything is empty of independent existence: emptiness equals fullness, absence equals presence, and vice versa. I have endeavoured to embody these concepts in my creative practice. Work made prior to this doctoral research was very colourful; the new series of prints are monochrome and attempt to attain simplicity, one way in which I reflect Zen ideals. Printing my blocks on several sheets of paper to create one unit and displaying them as an installation in the open space of the gallery, as in the installation *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition*, has been another way of employing Zen aesthetics, in particular simplicity. *Presence of Absence* also investigated these *wabi-sabi* ideals by asymmetrically disposing carved plates on the walls and floor, and by shavings displayed on the floor of the gallery, which emphasised the notion of impermanence (see Figures 27-30). The notions of emptiness and void were often implied in monochromatic works of some 20th century artists; famously explored by Ad Reinhardt in his Black paintings and Yves Klein by exhibiting empty space.156 In order to consider if and how aspects of these artists’ approaches to the monochrome may bear a relationship with my project, the following chapter will examine black paintings.

156 Yves Klein, Exhibition *Le Vide* (The Void), Iris Clert Gallery, Paris, 28th April, 1958. Klein emptied the space of the gallery aside from the display case, which he painted in white.

Figure 28. Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence* (installation detail, carved wooden plates, 45 pieces, approximately 50 cm x 50 cm each). 2013, George Fraser Gallery. Figures 29 and 30 (next page). *Presence of Absence* (installation detail), 2013.
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1 Outline

The key objective of this chapter is to explore the theoretical and philosophical concepts that underpin this PhD research. It therefore inspects notions of repetition in printmaking, Buddhism and the thought of Gilles Deleuze. It investigates if and how the philosophies of Arne Naess, Baruch Spinoza and Deleuze interconnect. In relation to the monochromatic quality of my work, this chapter also examines aspects of and ideas contributing to black paintings, predominantly through the work of mid 20th century artist Ad Reinhardt, but also Mark Rothko and Robert Rauschenberg. Reinhardt’s espousal of non-Western paradigms in his paintings and writing has paved the way for my work to be more easily read in relation to Eastern, particularly Buddhist, ideals. The research in this chapter will also introduce what I have been describing as the expanded field of print, a discussion that will further evolve in Chapter IV.

2 Black Paintings

*Newman shut the door, Rothko pulled the blinds, and Reinhardt turned out the light.*

- Harold Rosenberg

During the course of my doctoral research I continually created monochromatic, black prints. I consider the use of black alone, without any other colour, characterizes a form of simplicity. At the same time, one capacity of black ink is to create both translucent and very dark, opaque tones, as it has been used by Zen calligraphic artists as well as in Buddhist prints for centuries. Although my project was not directly influenced by the black paintings of Reinhardt and Rothko, this chapter will explore their ideas about the use of black, in particular in regard to the blend and application of Western and Eastern thoughts. In mid 20th century New York, a significant number of artists produced black paintings. They wanted

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158 Francisco Goya’s *Black paintings* consist of fourteen paintings created between 1819 and 1823, depicting and symbolising his fear of insanity and pessimistic view on humanity, developed after the Napoleonic wars. Edouard Manet extensively used black in his paintings. Russian constructivist Kazimir Malevich in the early 20th century stated that black was a colour, producing a remarkable suite of geometric works that became highly influential for artists in later generations. Jean Dubuffet stated the opposite – that black is *not* a colour – for him, black doesn’t exist, only black substances.
to end the reliance or overuse of illusionism within visual art, and also to make paintings that became self-sufficient objects. In Mark Rothko’s work, I read the black to connote emptiness and nothingness; his paintings absorb the viewer by the deepness of his black, made from mixing different colours together, as well as its texture. I believe he was expressing profound, sublime emotions through his abstract paintings. The idea that he painted formlessness or emptiness evokes Zen ideas. Although Reinhardt did not define himself as a Buddhist or that his art was informed by some aspects of Buddhism, I do not think it is a mistake to sense Zen ideals of emptiness or nothingness in his Black paintings.

The notion of sublime was interwoven in Reinhardt and Rothko’s large-scale paintings. Rothko’s fourteen large-scale, black, textured paintings of 1964-1967, commissioned for the Rothko Chapel in Houston, invoke physical and experiential sensations of the interior space of the canvas. The Chapel was intended as an “intimate sanctuary available to people of every belief”. Rothko created a spiritual space for contemplation and reflection that bears some comparison to a Buddhist meditative ambiance. “The Chapel is not just a bench, on that one may sit in Zen tranquillity…. It is a house of no escape: a place where desolation must be acknowledged and in that sense a station on a pilgrimage,” he wrote. The Chapel today hosts religious ceremonies of all faiths, promoting ideas of peace, freedom and equality among all people.

Other artists who used black in some stages of their career created their own distinctive visual arts vocabularies. For instance, Rauschenberg’s cycles of black paintings Combine – the dirt paintings – of the 1950s, explored the process of growth, change and decay by using natural materials and processes: earth, seeds, grass. What also interested me about Rauschenberg was his extensive use of printmaking and the involvement of his print practice

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159 Clement Greenberg, a key theorist of Modernism, defined the idea of painting’s self-sufficiency or self-justification, according to which this process may be done only through a specific, chosen medium: “Modernism is not a radical breaking away or liberation from all that is old and established in art. It is not something radically new. It is merely art’s self-awakening.” Timothy Quigley, “Summary: Clement Greenberg “Modernist Painting,” (1996), accessed May 8 2014. http://timothyquigley.net/vcs/greenberg-mp_sum.pdf.

160 The Chapel was completed in 1971. Rothko did not live to see its completion. From 1973 onward the Rothko Chapel has been a place for mutual understanding on issues affecting justice and freedom throughout the world and has hosted numerous meetings, discussions, and artistic performances on these topics.


163 Prior to his black paintings, Rauschenberg created a cycle of white and a cycle of red paintings. The idea of these series was to reveal painting’s essential nature. Walter Hopps and Susan Davidson, Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1997).
with ecology. In 1970, he created the first Earth Day poster using lithography and another, in 1990, by screen-printing. For the Earth Summit in 1992, he made another screen print, Eco-Echo. In 2008 the Jacobson Howard Gallery in New York hosted Last Turn - Your Turn: Robert Rauschenberg and the Environmental Crisis, that represented his ecological and social engagements over these decades.\textsuperscript{164}

Rauschenberg is well known for his Black and his White paintings, and his Elemental Sculptures. The former began from around 1949 with a series of woodcuts, This is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time. The series comprised fourteen squares printed from a single block. The first print was made from the solid block; each subsequent print was made by carving a single line in the block, until the initially black surface became white – i.e., entirely carved out. In this way Rauschenberg emphasized the process of the passing of time. Rauschenberg created his cycle of Black Paintings between 1951 and 1953. Works by Jack Tworkov and Franz Kline he had seen while at Black Mountain College influenced him to start painting entirely black paintings. Even though they are clearly geometric and, as Rauschenberg stated, nonrepresentational, these paintings are evocative of nature, for example of trees and the moon. In the same way, my prints may suggest the movement of tectonic plates, or landscapes, although they are abstract and research the concept of repetition and printmaking as a meditative practice.

Rauschenberg’s White Paintings, unlike the thick impasto surfaces of the Black Paintings, are smooth and flat. They look “cool and aloof when juxtaposed with black paintings, which appear variegated, warm, and literally earthy.”\textsuperscript{165} For Rauschenberg, both his Black and White paintings are “either too full or too empty to be thought – thereby they remain visual experiences. These pictures are not art.”\textsuperscript{166} Even though he would deny this statement has a Zen-like nuance, in Zen the master essentially denies the existence of anything, just as Rauschenberg denied these paintings were art at all: I propose they are experiences – full and empty at the same time. For Ad Reinhardt, on the other hand, black offered a way to represent an ambiguous notion of void, denial and invisibility; as James Joyce wrote in

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{165} Black Paintings: Rauschenberg, Reinhardt, Rothko, Stella (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007), 30.
\item \textsuperscript{166} Branded Wayne Joseph, Robert. Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-avant garde (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003), 57.
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Ulysses, “Shut your eyes and see.” By explaining his black paintings as “pure abstract, non-objective, timeless, spaceless, changeless, relationless, disinterested,” Reinhardt’s thought came very close to Deleuze’s view of perception. Reinhardt himself often denied a connection to Buddhism: “I have been called a Zen Buddhist, a neo-Christian, a Calvinist, a Hindu and a Muslim, simply because there were people that wanted to read the paintings as symbolic of those religions…but painting has no relation to any of the religions nor ever has.” His goal was to create the ultimate abstract painting: exploring shades of black and deprived of narratives, emotions, beliefs, thoughts – paintings empty and full at the same time. These attempts or qualities may be easily linked to wabi-sabi; I wonder if his disowning the connection is in itself a Zen-like attitude.

Alternatively, it may be a Western mid-20th century tendency to collapse terms together, failing to see that Nietzsche’s idea of nothingness is not the same as the Buddhist notion of emptiness. Reinhardt claimed an unconditional separation of art from life, an idea directly opposed to the notion of interconnectedness. “Art is art and everything else is everything else,” he said. This separation represented an absolute artistic freedom. Other artists such as Ellsworth Kelly, Donald Judd and Frank Stella embraced Reinhardt’s ideas of creating a pure, abstract painting through the use of black and his paintings came to anticipate something of the minimalism’s aesthetics of the next generation of artists. “The more stuff in it, the busier the work of art, the worse it is. More is less. Less is more. The eye is a menace to clear sight. The laying bare of oneself is obscene. Art begins with getting rid of nature,” Reinhardt claimed. But, while Kelly, Judd and Stella used black as Reinhardt did, to eliminate all non-essentiality and turn away from abstract expressionism, they manifestly directed black painting towards the art of minimalism. Minimalist artists pushed painting towards an absolute, geometric order of often-repetitive, inorganic forms. Artist of this generation in general, were inspired by the idea of “the primal nature of artistic creation;

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170 Nietzsche’s concept of nothingness is called nihilism (der Nihilismus in German), derived from the Latin word nihil, or nothing, meaning: not anything, that which does not exist.
freedom from rational, ethical, and aesthetic control; the physical presence of images; the
creative process as a comprehensible experience that expands consciousness; and the
immediacy of the viewer’s experience.”

Stella, for example, as an artist of younger
generation than Rothko and Reinhardt had been influenced more by Existentialism and the
Theatre of Absurd, especially Jean Paul Sartre, such as Being and Nothingness (1943).

Reinhardt intentionally denuded his paintings of representation, attempting thereby to limit
their interpretation. He related these square black paintings (of the kind he worked on for
much of the last ten years of his life) to monochrome Chinese paintings he considered as
formless but “complete, self-contained, absolute, rational, perfect, serene, silent, monumental
and universal.”

Some recognisable elements of Zen are present in his black paintings. One
of these characteristics is simplicity in use of colour - only black - profound and rich, that
varies in thinness or depth and contains all other colours: “A speck of dust holds a universe
and complete emptiness stores inexhaustible treasures.”

Reinhardt wrote extensively in support of abstract art and stated that his painting itself is a
thought. He did not want his art to be read as a symbol of any religion, although his aesthetics
and approach to art making was influenced by both Western (European) and Eastern art. He
was attracted to the idea he discovered in Chinese painting, which instead of the descriptive
or the symbolic, artists could create paintings that were abstract, formless and timeless.

Reinhardt thought that the idea of the timeless in art has been long understood and practiced
in Asia, saying: “Nowhere in world art has it been clearer than in Asia that anything irrational,
momentary, spontaneous, unconscious, primitive, expressionistic, accidental, or informal
cannot be called serious art. Only blackness, complete awareness, disinterestedness; the
“artists-as-artist” only, of one and rational mind, “vacant and spiritual, empty and
marvellous,” in symmetries and regularities only; the changeless “human content,” the
timeless “supreme principle,” the ageless “universal formula” of art, nothing else.”

Besides his comprehensive writings on art history, Reinhardt also commented on art and
religion, a discussion of a particular interest for my thesis. His thoughts on Buddhism are

(Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007), 19.
176 Ibid., 217.
provocative, as he denied any relation between his work and Eastern philosophies as well as Christianity (even though some of his works contain crosses) because he didn’t wish to ascribe specific associations for his work. Nevertheless, he provided many reasons to believe that his art is echoing aspects of religious or spiritual sensibility and aesthetics, including Buddhist ones. As an example, for Reinhardt, the cross that exemplifies an embodiment of opposite directions/notions, horizontal and vertical, may also chime with Eastern thought, where nothing exists without a relation to its opposite. Furthermore, in many Eastern cultures, art often supports one’s introspection and reflection on a broad range of everyday activities. Such art fascinated Reinhardt because it is abstract and, at the same time, material and spiritual. It does not worship any deity; it is detached from any specific image and, thus, he thought, aids cultivation of (self)consciousness. 177

Reinhardt’s black square paintings, resonant of an abstract black *mandala*, remain “changeless as the Buddha image,” timeless and absolute. 178 In one important interview he discussed the squaring of the circle, geometry, repetition and ritual, amongst other associations. 179 “The goal of contemplating the processes depicted in mandala,” wrote Swiss psychiatrist C.G. Jung, “is that the Yogi shall become as God again, and thus returns from the illusions of individual existence into the universal totality of the divine state.” Jung saw the *mandala* as a soul’s centring process, as a sign of the “eternal cycle of wholeness as it changes and returns to itself,” as an “archetype of wholeness.” 180 In this sense, Reinhardt’s black paintings can be related to one sort of purifying process, in which “matter is transformed with the aim of achieving spiritual knowledge.” 181 Gudrun Inboden compared Reinhardt’s art to alchemy, where such spiritual transformation through making and consuming art is possible. The teachings of alchemy also see black as the “primordial darkness” – and this is how Reinhardt too describes his relation to black, as a “prime matter”. This is very close to the Buddhist explanation that everything is an expression of *oneness*.

One of the twelve rules for a new academy that Reinhardt applied in his work was, “No sketching or drawing. Everything, where to begin and where to end, should be worked out in

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177 Barbara Rose, 1975.
178 Ibid., 185.
179 In an interview with Bruce Glaser, Reinhardt clarified his position about the notions of repetition as well as the position of his art within his time and art history. Bruce Glaser, “An Interview with Ad Reinhardt,” Art International 10, no.10 (Winder 1966-67). Reprinted in Rose, 1975:12-23.
181 Ibid., 42.
the mind beforehand." This is akin to methods from the second stage of my studies onwards, when I abandoned painting the image on the wooden plate before carving. Reinhardt’s other rules include: “No line or outline. No forms. No design. No colours...Colours are an aspect of appearance and so only of the surface... Colours are barbaric, unstable, suggest life. Colours are a “distracting embellishment.” ...No Light. No Space. No time. No size or scale. No object, no subject, no matter. No symbols images, or signs. Neither pleasure nor pain. No mindless working of mindless non-working....No forms, figures, space, mass, No sounds, sights sensing, sensations. No intensity. No images. No concepts, ideas, thinking, meaning, content. Even if he continues “The fine artist need not sit cross-legged,” a practice used by many religions for example in meditation, I believe the comment refers to the artist not needing to be humble in the face of society’s demand for subject matter. He used Zen koan-like statements to contradict contemporaries and predecessors. For example, in 1947, Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb said, “There is no such thing as a good painting about nothing;” and Reinhardt replied, “There is no such thing as a good painting about something.”

As evident in his art, poems and writing, Reinhardt had a fascination with black. For him black was the “medium of mind, no distractions, no intrusions.” For the purposes of this research, this could be understood in Buddhist terms as interested in the core of suchness: “Colours are an aspect of appearance and so only of the surface.” He reflected deeply on the use of black in his art and gave several talks examining black as a symbol, as a colour and as a concept in Western cultural contexts. In 1955, he commented for the first time on his black paintings, describing them as “free, unmanipulated and unmanipulatable, useless, unmarketable, irreducible, unphotographable, unreproducible, inexplicable icon(s).” He spent the last decade of his life creating only black canvases, to “push art beyond its thinkable, seeable, graspable, feelable limits.” In this last decade Reinhardt’s already established approach reflected the values of cultures other than the Western that embody profoundly

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184 Ibid., 166.
185 Ibid., 98.
186 Ibid., 166.
187 Ibid., 81.
188 Ibid., 81.
distinctive aesthetics and ideas; they engage viewers in different ways; they are meditative.\textsuperscript{189}

A contemporary of Reinhardt, the writer and philosopher Alan Watts, was also interested in the idea of emptiness as distinguished from the Nietzschean idea of nothingness. By arguing there is no such thing as nothing he refuted the Latin saying \textit{ex nihilo nihil fit} (out of nothing comes nothing). Unlike Reinhardt, Watts was openly Buddhism-orientated. So too was the Beat poet Gary Snyder. His collection of poems \textit{Mountains and Rivers without End} was influenced by and titled after the Chinese monochrome horizontal hand scroll painting \textit{Ch'i-shan wu-chin (Streams and Mountains Without End)}. In an interview given to Jesse Hamlin for the \textit{San Francisco Chronicle}, Snyder commented that the inspiration for the poems was the respect for nature that ancient civilizations such as the Chinese held. In 2008, Snyder read the poems in the presence of Chinese landscape scroll paintings and 17\textsuperscript{th} century Buddhist woodblock prints.\textsuperscript{190} Although, to the best of my knowledge Reinhardt, Watts and Snyder have not directly commented on each other’s views or work, I find that there are threads of Zen implicated through their work. Nevertheless each of them has contributed to a much greater acceptance and knowledge of Eastern aesthetics and philosophies in West.

Regarding my own practice, the use of black ink relates directly to Zen aesthetics. Where my use of black intersects with that of Reinhardt and Rothko is in the association with void or emptiness, a Buddhist concept. In Buddhism, emptiness signifies a state where one realizes interconnectedness with everything else, and so realizes one’s real self: a no-self, an empty self, an egoless self. Interdependence leads to a profound understanding of the true nature of reality: nothing exists in self-sufficient way; there is no duality. “I am not, I will not be. I have not, I will not have,”\textsuperscript{191} said Nagarjuna, a 2\textsuperscript{nd} century Buddhist teacher and philosopher. Things appear to be independent but they exist in dependence upon causes and conditions. The Buddhist concept of emptiness thereby emancipates its practitioners from dualistic thinking, the cause of all sufferings. Once Buddhist practitioners realize that all phenomena are marked with emptiness, being empty of fixed self, they can, for example, treat agony in the same way as pleasure.


\textsuperscript{190} Gary Snyder, \textit{Mountains and Rivers without End} (Berkeley, Counterpoint, 1996).

My printmaking practice expresses interdependence by nominating the process of making as the key concept and by making visible how one part of the process depends on all others and how all these parts are conditioned one by other. In Presence of Absence, I removed the physical print. In this way the interconnection of making and thinking became the centre of attention. The carved out parts exhibited on the floor of the gallery that were once part of the wood represented the Buddhist notion of impermanence. Displayed matrices that once were part of large-scale woodcut plates were cut into smaller pieces and recarved several times, some almost to the point of nothingness.

Over the course of my candidacy, I have persisted with large wooden plates because such scale enables deeper immersion into body-mind exploration. The discourse on my practice and my exhibitions in relation to printmaking’s contemporary, multi-disciplinary approaches will be discussed in more detail in the Chapter IV. But before this, the relationship of aspects of relevant philosophies followed by examination of one key idea constitutive to my practice – repetition – must be addressed and investigated from different angles. The investigation on repetition starts with the Deleuzian concept of repetition and the repetition employed in Buddhist practice, as well as in printmaking.

3 Relevant Philosophical Concepts: Spinoza, Naess and Deleuze

This section explores the nexus of philosophical ideas that inspire and underpin this thesis. I investigate the correlations between Baruch Spinoza’s ontology, his concept of substance and oneness of God/Nature, Arne Naess’ theory of deep ecology and Gilles Deleuze’s discourse on art, including his idea of deterritorialization of image. I begin with the importance of Naess’ work and his interpretation of Spinoza, and then follow with Spinoza’s importance for Deleuze. The discussion also considers, via the concept of mindfulness, ecology’s spiritual dimension. I examine how the theoretical connectivity of Spinoza, Naess and Deleuze may relate to eco-Buddhism, as encountered in the literature review. Furthermore, I propose that the concept of self-realisation as the main goal of Buddhist practice is, in distinctive ways, also present in the concepts of all three philosophers. In so doing, I seek to understand if and how this metaphysical juncture may contribute towards the understanding of the significance of ecological art making, particularly printmaking.
Spinoza argued that man is a as part of nature and thus fits into a larger reality, a unity with whole what’s surrounds him, and that mind might be perceived as a body or an idea of a body. Spinoza, to my understanding, recognizes emotions through the relation of the body to the mind. The human mind for Spinoza is only the idea of the body. To truly understand ourselves is therefore to understand our bodies. Spinoza proposed the unity of substance and that substance was God, identifying God with Nature. Everything is essentially codependent, God simply exists and has no power of performing acts such as granting human wishes – man is the one responsible for his fate. The traditional Judeo-Christian conception of divinity sees God as a superior creator; for Spinoza, God is the cause of all things because all things follow causally and naturally – we are Nature’s infinite variations and in this oneness, we are all modes of God. The key to understand God or Nature, therefore, is philosophy and science, rather than religious worship. “Nothing comes to pass in nature, that can be set down to a flaw therein; for nature is always the same and everywhere one and the same in her efficacy and power; that is, nature's laws and ordinances, whereby all things come to pass and change from one form to another, are everywhere and always the same; so that there should be one and the same method of understanding the nature of all things whatsoever, namely, through nature's universal laws and rules.”

His theory “Deus sive Natura” (God or Nature) proposed that there is only one substance that extends into everything else so that everything that exists is an aspect of it: “What ever is, is in God.” Spinoza’s theory of immanence did not negate Deity. As only God/Nature is substantial we, humans, are modes of that one substance; we are codependent and just one part of that one substance – we share it and it exists in each one of us. Put differently, the one substance spans attributers – thinking and extension – and modes: beliefs, desires, shapes, sizes, etc. What makes his theory revolutionary is that there is only one mind and one body, of the same substance.

Spinoza also proposed that natural things, plants and animals are not created for humankind's benefit – God did not create everything for humans to use and he does not act exclusively for human advantage. To think that God helps people is only an anthropomorphizing fiction: “The perfection of things is to be reckoned only from their own nature and power; things are not more or less perfect, according as they delight or offend human senses, or according as


they are serviceable or repugnant to mankind.” Furthermore, “That eternal and infinite being we call God, or Nature, acts from the same necessity from that he exists.” Nature is indivisible unity and the only whole, therefore, is one – a substance that exists and extends in everything and everyone. Individual things, therefore, are expressions of the attributes of God and are interconnected through the relationships of causality (that has touching points with Buddhism). In proposition 36 he asserts: “There is no cause from whose nature some effect does not follow,” providing a proof for this statement, “Whatsoever exists expresses God’s nature or essence in a given conditioned manner; that is, whatsoever exits, expresses in a given conditioned manner God’s power, which is the cause of all things, therefore an effect must necessarily follow.” Unquestionably, Spinoza rejected the dualism of Christian orthodoxy, such as spirit/matter, soul/body and good/evil, God/Nature, etc. The true understanding thereof – a substance of “infinite attributes” – is equivalent to all existence. These ideas eventually profoundly transformed thinking around the concept of divinity. Through his view that Deity is not an anthropomorphic being, but instead his substance is shared through existence of all beings, everything becomes connected to everything else.

Spinoza opposed Cartesian Dualism, the idea of mind and body as two separated entities. The theory that mind is distinctive from body may be traceable all the way from Greek philosophers, but René Descartes was first to methodically discuss the mind/body relationship, claiming the mind and body (brains) are “substances of different kind,” two substances. Spinoza’s idea of one substance was not quickly accepted during his time. He was excommunicated from the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam in 1656. But his philosophy has had far-reaching resonance. Spinoza’s philosophy of mind and metaphysics of substance informed both Naess and Deleuze’s philosophies, but in different ways. Naess used it to support his deep ecology concepts, which are close to eco-Buddhist ideas.

Extending feelings of compassion toward not only people but to all beings everywhere and

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199 By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e., that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from that it must be formed.
every time is a Buddhist concept. Unmistakably, embracing all living beings as equal within environment and life is the fundamental non-anthropocentric principle of Naess deep ecology. In *Freedom, Emotion and Self-substance* (1975), Naess referred to the key idea of Spinoza’s *Ethics* that Nature or God is perfect in itself and that humanity is part of the world as whole. Through the concept of deep ecology, he promoted codependent relationships between humans, animals and plants. Shallow ecology, by contrast, is human-centred and does not see humans and all other life interdependent and equal.200 In 1984, Naess and George Sessions summarized basic deep ecology principles while camping in Death Valley, California. Deep ecology supports ecological egalitarianism, diversity and symbiosis and is also called ecophilosophy or ecosophy. They introduced the term in the article “The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement.”201 Naess and Sessions held that, as in ancient time, clear philosophical thoughts might come if time is spent in an adequate natural environment, especially the desert, where one may be more focussed on mind. They believed that wilderness has a special role in awakening spiritual wisdom.

Not surprisingly, the scholars of deep ecology are coming from the fields of ecology, philosophy, poetry and Buddhism or other spiritual teachings. Nhat Hahn’s *Interbeing, The Jewelled Net of Indra* and *The Diamond Sutra* talk about oneness and interconnectedness of all things. *The Diamond Sutra* sees self as a process, but one different for everyone because of different individual experiences, proposing that self is but a continually recreating and perpetually changing over the lifetime. To reach that goal, one must abandon ego. That is why Buddhism, in particular Zen, emphasises spontaneity, to transcend subject-object dualism. Spontaneity was one of approaches to my woodcarving practices that investigated notion of repetition and its meditative effects. Printing processes, in contrast, require detailed planning of each step, just as some aspects of Buddhist practice require discipline and patience.

In both Buddhism and deep ecology, self-realisation is perceived as a process through which every being attempts to unwrap and develop her or his essence. Self-realisation in Buddhism

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200 The thought that ecology is spiritual and not only scientific has been previously discussed by Fritjof Capra, an Austrian-born American physicist and a founding director of the Centre for Eco-literacy in Berkeley, California. Capra sees deep ecology as a necessity of our and future times.

implies a concept of emptiness that is comparable to idea of interconnectedness. Such thinking, that emptiness is the same as interconnectedness in that we all coexist in codependent relationships as previously described through the concept of Indra’s net, positions humanity neither lower nor higher in relation to God. Moreover, Buddhism does not perceive God as a supernatural being; historical Buddha was a spiritually awakened human and, in their terminology each of us has a potential to realize their Buddha nature, to awake. Spinoza’s conception of the all-encompassing reality of Nature as non-hierarchical was explored in his 1667 book Ethics, cited earlier in the text. This radical repositioning opened the door to Naess’ deep ecology, proposing a new ontology that sees humans inseparable from nature. For Naess, deep ecology questions ontology with purpose to explore our perception of the world, with a different focus to that of Spinoza.\textsuperscript{202} One of connecting concepts that links Spinoza and Naess with Buddhist philosophies is self-realisation, which certainly informed Naess’ formulation of deep ecology. Eccy de Jonge investigated self-realisation as the core concept that relates Spinoza and Naess in Spinoza and Deep Ecology: Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism.\textsuperscript{203}

Naess proposed six key points that may assist a more ecological way of living, including letting go of ego – the narrow self, identifying self with all living beings and, consequently, understanding our ecological self. It also embraces understanding our oneness with all beings to see ourselves as others, thus cultivating compassion and assisting others in their egoless (and ecological) growth. In Self-Realisation: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World, Naess candidly acknowledged how Zen Buddhism and Spinoza informed his writing about deep ecology.\textsuperscript{204} Akin to Spinoza’s metaphysics of ultimately only one substance, which is God or Nature and our unity with that substance, Naess identified all life in our bionetwork as deeply interconnected. Gary Snyder discussed similar ideas and compared ecosystem to mandala. “An ecosystem is a kind of mandala in which there are multiple relations that are all powerful and instructive. Each figure in the mandala – a little mouse or bird (or little god or demon figure) – has an important position and a role to play. Although an ecosystem can


be described as hierarchical in terms of energy flow, from the standpoint of the whole all of its members are equal." To remove the anthropocentric illusion that humans have a dominant position in nature, Snyder suggested adopting the practice of compassion whenever possible.

Spinoza’s thesis of union between mind and body as an extension of nature informed Naess’ concept of deep ecology, pointing towards his ideal of fulfilling a larger, the more ecological sense of self. Influenced by Spinoza, Naess introduced the concept of the concrete content – the essence of all things; for Buddhists, true nature or suchness. Naess, like the eco-Buddhists Macy and Nhat Hanh, emphasised that the teachings of mindfulness have to work together and that ecological awareness may also be considered spiritual. Ecosophy is, moreover, a personal philosophy – each person has an individual nature that may be cultivated, while self-realisation is a process that includes a wider interconnected self, not an egocentric self. Spinoza’s philosophy makes it possible to accommodate some central parts of Buddhist philosophy and practice within a Western philosophical framework and from there to Naess’ ecological ontology.

In 1992 Deleuze wrote in which ways a solitary thinker and a “prince of philosophers,” as Deleuze called Spinoza, influenced him. He admired Spinoza for his treatise of theory of immanence, and his theory of ideas, or epistemology, and also for his theory of modes, passions and actions, or political anthropology. In A Thousand Plateaus, Deleuze and co-author Felix Guattari developed idea that Nature is expressive, using as a base Spinoza’s metaphysics and the coherence of his theory of immanence. “To be a mutilated Spinozism one must really believe that there is no essence, that there are only relations, if I believe that there are only relations and no essence, then it is obvious I have no need of the third type of knowledge, I don’t need it, and not only have I no need of it, but it loses all meaning. So you

206 Drengson and Inoue, 1995. In fact, the idea of the individual being connected to the cosmos is expressed by the Latin word religare (‘to bind strongly’). 
have to see…you can be a truncated Spinozism only if you think that, finally, there is no
being, there are only relations”.

Deleuze’s lectures on Spinoza well explained why Spinoza called his ontology an ethics
which clarifies that the infinite substance is being and all beings and things are only modes of
this one essence. Deleuze also discussed that mode means a particular way of being of
substance. He writes: “Et un mode c’est quoi? C’est une manière d’être. Les étants ou les
existants ne sont pas des êtres, il n’y a comme être que la substance absolument infinie” [And
a mode is what? It is a way of being. Beings or existents are not being; there is only being as
an infinite absolute substance]. Ethics are therefore about our way of being as a mode of an
unique infinite substance. This unique infinite substance is what Spinoza was thinking about
and everything else is a mode of that substance: the essence is same but the existence of all
beings that share that essence is different. For Deleuze, Spinoza’s Ethics are concerned with
the existence of singular things that are modes of one substance.

Furthermore, for Deleuze and Guattari, art is the most direct way for the body to sense:
“Sensations are not coloured, shaped, formed in the artwork, but through the artwork are
colouring, shaping, and forming forces”. Rhythm is what runs from objects to organs, from
organs to the objects. It is rhythm that is transmitted directly from universe to artwork to
body and back, intensifying itself as it circulates. Deleuze’s ontology of Radical Empiricism
or Transcendental Empiricism proposes that everything becomes a reality – our dreams, our
hallucinations, our touch, even our thoughts – in human relations. When nothing is really
there, everything is the mind. The rhizome is therefore an image of thought. His
quintessential question for contemporary art, “what am I capable of creating?” may be related
to Spinoza’s question “what am I capable of becoming?” For Deleuze, modes are a manière
d’être – a way of being, ways in which we exist and/or manifest ourselves, as parts of one
infinite substance. Informed by earlier discussed aspects of Spinoza’s philosophy, Deleuze
considered art to be involved with the actualisation or realisation of a potential that surrounds

210 William Large, “Spinoza’s Ethics,” accessed June 20, 2015,
212 Lectures on Spinoza’s Ethics by Dr. William Large, Gloucestershire University, accessed May 13, 2014,
http://drwilliamlarge.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/spinozas-ethics-lecture-1/. In his lectures, Dr Large discusses
Deleuze’s 1978 lectures on Spinoza and his interpretations of Spinoza’s major concepts.
us here and now. He distinguished two different kinds of contemporary art practices: the production of actual artworks composed of things in the world, and the practice of treating one’s life as work of art.²¹³

In Chaos, Cosmos, Territory, Architecture, Australian-American researcher Elisabeth Grosz explores Deleuze’s philosophy of art. For Grosz, art is one of the ways in which bodies may cultivate and develop awareness through sensations. She is also concerned with the rhythms embodied in artistic disciplines that resonate and transmit energy through each discipline’s structure. Deleuze thought this energy could not be something specific to humankind alone, but “rather a nonhuman, unlivable power that runs through all of life and connects the living in its various forms to the nonorganic forces and qualities of materiality itself.”²¹⁴ This sentence echoes the élan vital of French philosopher Henri Bergson, another important influence on Deleuze’s thought. Informed by the idea of a creative process of actualization, Deleuze argued against the Aristotelian idea that everything is determined by its possibility and instead discussed the indivisibility of happenings and what follows later.²¹⁵

In this view, there is no a predetermined scheme of events. Instead, events occur spontaneously and actualize in any given moment. Bergson saw such actualization as something immanent in time, and that time has a quality as proposed by his well-known phrase l’épaisseur de durée. He presented the duration as a theory of time and perception in his doctoral thesis Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness.²¹⁶

Bergson developed his theory as a response to one of his influences, Immanuel Kant. Free will, according to Kant, exists only outside time and space, so we can never be sure of its existence; therefore free will is based on faith, alone. Bergson’s counter argument was that

²¹⁴ Elizabeth A. Grosz, Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 19. According to Grosz, although Deleuze is one of most well known critics of phenomenology, his philosophy is in some points very related to phenomenology. As example to support her theory Grosz referenced the following book: Daniel Smith and Henry Somers, The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19: “A territory is established only once qualities/properties come to have their own resonances, their own forms or repetition and reconstruction; territory is the spatiotemporal configuration and containment of these rhythms and forces. Territorialisation is “the act of rhythm that has become expressive or of milieu components that have become qualitative.”
time and space are not the same, that the duration of time is based on movement and cannot be comprehended through anything motionless. Furthermore, motion can be understood through intuition. His third critical concept is *élan vital*: vital energy or a force that moves us and is responsible for our creative impulses. This idea of spontaneity or intuition as a creative force, embedded in time, has similarities with the Deleuzian concept of deterritorialization.

Using Spinoza’s ontology of pure immanence, art writer Stephen Zepke saw a link with Deleuze’s interpretation of art, which goes beyond mere representation. According to Zepke, Deleuze saw art as nonrepresentational onto-aesthetics. Furthermore, deterritorialization is the prevalent force in all creative processes through which the artist expresses an interconnectivity of life with the universe. For Deleuze, deterritorialization signifies a process of vanishing of defined territories. The following section will discuss the philosophies and aspects of the notion of repetition that underpinned and informed my research.

4 The Notion of Repetition

Repetition embedded in my work is not related to the reproduction of prints, but to the actions employed in the processes of making. The repetition of actions in the processes of making is one subject of my work; it embodies a meditative quality, comparable to an effect gained from recitations of Buddhist *mantra* or *sutra*. For centuries it has been believed that the process of making multiple prints of an image and the recitation of *sutras* will bring enlightenment or *satori*, as I have mentioned earlier. Repetition has been also practiced through the reverberation of different *mantra* sounds and through the oral repetition of different *sutra* texts that facilitate the harmonisation of mind and body. Similar belief in the power of the repetition of words has also been long present in Taoist and in Christian traditions. Although a fascinating subject, it is beyond the scope of this thesis; sound is currently not a key factor in my processes.

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219 The key text recited daily in Zen temples is the *Heart Sutra*. 
Just as my woodcut practice integrates aspects of Eastern philosophies with Western methodologies, it is necessary to explore what both traditions have said about the notion of repetition. Among Western philosophers, Deleuze’s idea of repetition, which he studied in correlation to the idea of difference, is one of most developed concepts. In *Difference and Repetition*, he cited 18th century philosopher David Hume: “Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind that contemplates it.” For Deleuze, repetition takes place in the imagination. It signifies a connection between one who performs an act of repetition and the repeated. Put differently, this is a relationship between subject and object. Repetition, Deleuze thought, is not a stereotyped or an automatic replication or an identical element; instead the repeated elements reflect each other, rather than being merely a copy. Since repeated elements are not the same but different, repetition therefore contains a difference within itself, that indicates that subject and object are, in effect, one entity, even when it occurs in a different space and time. What recurs, therefore, relates to the present in an alternative way; Jorge Luis Borges exhibited this in his story *Pierre Menard author of the Quixote*. Repetition is an act of our mind: in every instance, there is a difference.

Deleuze never claimed any relation to Buddhist or other Eastern philosophy, but I think it is possible to draw some parallels between his work and Buddhist contemplation on nonduality and oneness. This is perhaps best explained through the 14th century Buddhist monk Kukai’s thought on difference, mind-matter and subject-object relationships. “Differences exist between matter and mind, but in their essential nature they remain the same. Matter is no other than mind; mind, no other than matter. Without any obstruction they are interrelated. The subject is the object; the object, the subject.”

Deleuze’s complex analysis included what he describes as internal and external repetition. He held that there are at least two different stages of repetition: one material and superficial – that he termed external, and the other profound, internal. In the heart of material, there is a deep or a real repetition, which manifests as a movement that is the basis of every external repetition, and as well as of every difference. Deleuze held that *difference in itself* and

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222 Deleuze systematically compared work of two philosophers of repetition, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche. Their objection to Hegel was that he failed to see repetition beyond external movement. Søren Kierkegaard (1813 -1855) was a Danish philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic, religious author, and
repetition for itself are essential to any concept of identity; that for humans, repetition is inherently transgressive. He defined repetition as “difference without a concept” that is thus genuinely dependent on difference. Movement for Deleuze is not just a physical transition from one point to another, but also an internal motion in the idea and/or mind. He drew a series of comparisons between Plato’s idea of movement of thought and Aristotle’s kinesis – movement from potentiality to actuality, concluding that repetition is an alternative to mediation. Between external and internal repetitions, Deleuze continued, there is a field of difference. When theorising his idea of difference-in-itself, he investigated Nietzsche’s idea that everything exists in an unceasing process of becoming and, therefore, never is. This seems rather Zen-like, but Nietzsche’s knowledge of Buddhism, before its expansion from Asia, might have been incomplete. Deleuze by contrast never made any direct connection between Nietzsche and Buddhism.

In Buddhism one meritorious effect of repetition is its potential to achieve a state of no-mind, a Zen Buddhist concept that signifies egoless state, and that symbolises interconnectedness. “Nothing exists; all things are becoming”; change is the only perpetuity; mind becomes one with doing, and one with surrounding. Mind and body are inseparable – all phenomena, things and beings are interconnected. The Diamond Sutra also interprets no mind as a serenity of mind. No mind actually means understanding that "All that has a form is illusive and unreal.” It is then when one may become aware of his/her Buddha nature. The sutra, (discussed in greater detail in Chapter I) was a product of belief that the spoken and written repetition of its words, as well as reproducing and viewing the image of the Buddha, will bring merit to its commissioner and so help him to escape from the endless cycle of rebirth. Though informed by Buddhist notions, my practice does not, however, manoeuvre within the religious frameworks or addresses religious beliefs. It is also informed by elements of processor of existentialist philosophy. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 -1900) was a German philologist, philosopher, poet and composer. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 -1831) was a major figure in German philosophy of Idealism. His ideas revolutionized European philosophy, preceding Marxism.


Deleuze also represented repetition itself as the form of time. He argued that difference is un-separated until something starts to repeat as something other, developing the theory of difference and repetition through critique of the traditional image of thought. The image of thought signifies a common sense that is shared among all men – something that everybody naturally knows, as Descartes postulated. Deleuze’s theory is based mostly on Nietzsche’s critique of Western philosophy (such as Descartes’ common sense concept).


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Deleuzian repetition. I may repeat same actions numerous times, but no single cut into the wood is precisely the same nor are there any entirely identical prints. Actions that embody difference simultaneously generate a contemplative psychological-emotional state, comparable to that achievable through Zen practice. The dynamic methods of monochromatic woodcut printmaking alongside the written research that I conducted over the course of my studies, and in particular after the 2013 *Presence of Absence* exhibition, reveal a greater immersion with a phenomenological approach to practice. The emphasis was on motion (action embodied in printmaking) and on the exploration of mind-and-body amalgamation through the carving and printing processes (sees Figures 31-33). The following, final chapter will more closely examine my practice, and its position in the context of contemporary printmaking.
Figure 31. Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence*. 2013, woodcut installation detail, shavings. George Fraser Gallery, Auckland.
Figure 32 (above) and Figure 33 (below). Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence*. 2013, installation detail representing carved woodblock, 240 cm x 240 cm, and shavings on the floor. George Fraser Gallery, Auckland.
CHAPTER IV: EXTENDING CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING

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Developmental Influences on Current Practice

This last chapter of my thesis reflects on some aspects of my previous practices that created a base for my doctoral research. A discussion of work created prior to the candidature would not usually be part of the PhD thesis, but some aspects of previous practice (study in Japan) are specifically relevant to my doctoral research. By examining these foundational experiences I aim to provide a more nuanced representation of methodologies, as well as touch upon the future orientation of my research.

In its larger part, this chapter also contains an investigation of relevant contemporary practices and discourses within which my practice operates. This includes expanded fields of printmaking, print installation, cross-disciplinary graphic art practices and environmentally responsive art inspired by eco-Buddhist philosophy. In addition to the academic and critical discourse around contemporary printmaking, this dialogue will be formed around the themes of the 2013 and 2014 printmaking conferences and exhibitions. The conferences included are the 2013 Impact 8 International Multi-disciplinary Printmaking Conference at Dundee University, UK and the 30th Graphic Art Biennial in Ljubljana, Slovenia, as well as the 2014 Password: Printmaking International Printmaking Conference, also in Ljubljana. The purpose of examining these print events is to present a more complete overview on my research question: if and how a Buddhist-informed ecological thinking may influence the practice of nontoxic printmaking. Each of these aspects will form the final basis for examining if and how my creative practice fits within the new trends and it is my hope that this will also provide grounds for my research’s future directions.

My current research methods grew over many years of my involvement with printmaking, dating from my undergraduate studies at the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Zagreb.227 During that time, I learned nearly all Western, oil-based printmaking methods.228 My interest in Asian arts and philosophy, however, began in 2000 with my participation in a

227 Although my studies included nearly all printmaking techniques, linocut was the method in which I produced my graduation work, a cycle of 10 prints named the “Undersea World.” Because they were larger than the press, I printed them by rubbing the back of the paper with a spoon, itself a longstanding practice in printmaking.
228 The main printmaking categories are: intaglio (etching, aquatint and dry point), relief (linocut) and planographic printing (lithography and silkscreen). The printmaking was also studied alongside art history, art theory, psychology and sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy, so the combination of theory and practice has been there from the outset of my practice.
three-month project in Japan as the Mino Washi Artist in Residence. The project was situated in Gifu Prefecture, well known for the production of high quality paper for printmaking and painting, and for numerous paper-crafted objects. The study of different types of paper for printmaking has been important to my work, as its qualities affect the print. Figure 34 shows Snake (2000), presented at Mino Washi Museum, one of my first installations of prints into a free space of the gallery without walls to support them. Based on my experiences in Japan I organised several solo exhibitions between 2000 and 2002. Prints of Joy (2002) in the gallery Vjekoslav Karas in Karlovac, Croatia (Figure 35) was a large installation of over forty prints hanging in the space of the gallery; the prints were multi-coloured and printed on very thin handmade Japanese papers. This was a critical show for the further moving of my practice in the direction of print installation.

Continuing to create woodcuts and using handmade papers to print paved the way for my master’s study at the Tokyo University of the Arts (2002-2005). Tokyo Geidai, where I learnt methods of woodcut printing, is the most prestigious art university, not only Japan but arguably in Asia. This school fosters the study of traditional methods alongside contemporary ones. Studying there deepened my appreciation for crafts (more on this below) and extended my perception of the limitless ways in which we may engage with art. Besides visiting contemporary artists, on several occasions traditional Ukiyo-e printmakers visited our studio; at other times, we visited craftsmen’s workshops, including those of a brush maker, a chisel maker, a paper maker and a baren maker. In Japan, methods that originated in the West were altered to meet the different aesthetic and technical requirements of their cultural environment. In woodblock printmaking, water-based ink usually is used in combination with washi, because of its capacity to absorb water and for aesthetic reasons - translucency, texture and softness. Water-based inks as well as nontoxic Western inks are progressively being introduced because for their ecologically friendly qualities.

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229 Tokyo University of the Arts formerly was called Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. In Japanese it is called Tokyo Geidai and is largely known as such.

230 Terry Winters, Liz Ingram, Yoshitomo Nara and Jorg Schmeisser are some among artists who visited Tokyo Geidai to give talks and lectures and to present artwork, or were part of the school’s artist-in-residence projects.
Figure 34. Irena Keckes. *Snake*. 2000, woodcut print installation; 900 cm x 300 cm. Mino Washi Museum, Mino City, Gifu, Japan.

Figure 35. Irena Keckes. *Prints of Joy*. 2002, woodcut print installation; dimensions variable. Gallery Vjekoslav Karas, Karlovac, Croatia.
For me, the processes involved in woodcut printmaking have a contemplative quality. A tacit philosophy underlines the ethics of teaching in Japan, with roots in Buddhism. Importance is placed on mindfulness involved in every part of the process whether it is related to the concept or to the technological skill of sharpening chisels, preparing the paper, carving or printing. This pedagogical approach, where the emphasis is on the processes of creating, as much if not more than the results, has had a profound impact on my art practice. Such teaching methods that I have been exposed to, democratise all parts of the process of making: concept, technique, time spent with tools, maintenance and so on. In this context, separating art from craft has been unnecessary. Furthermore, at Tokyo University of the Arts, all studios are shared between undergraduate, master’s and doctoral students; therefore the principle is to work together in a shared space (Figure 36). Such organizational structure encouraged learning from each other and created a teamwork atmosphere that, I believe, reflected some traditional Japanese societal ideals. I cannot overestimate the impact of this pedagogy upon my research and methodologies.

Another transformative experience for my practice was the first-hand experience with less-toxic printmaking at the Santa Barbara City College in the United States. It was a time of experimenting with diversity of print methods and their combinations: screen print, intaglio,
relief and collagraphs. There, as in many print studios around the United States, printmaking practice shifted towards safer technologies and so less-toxic substances are increasingly replacing harmful solvents. Working in such an environment brought a new focus to my thinking around printmaking that I have extended into my doctoral research project. The nontoxic practice I used in the first two years of my doctoral study is Japanese woodcut (mokuhanga), a method that traditionally does not employ chemicals. Carving was navigated by calligraphic painting directly on the wood – a reverse image of an actual drawing. The image was first freely applied by brush and black sumi ink, created in one brush stroke as in Zen calligraphy. I initially used plywood of 120 cm x 120 cm, and then combined two sheets of these dimensions, thereby extending the size of print. From the mid phase of my research onwards, I carved a full sheet of plywood and abandoned the image preparation. I then began to carve two large sheets together, as one entity. I printed the plates by hand, rubbing the back of the papers by baren and later on in my third year, by press. All these works consolidated and extended my previous knowledge especially through the dramatic shift in scale, but also in the conscious shift of emphasis around process.

Ten of the large-scale woodcut prints created during the initial phase of my study, for Unlimited Resonance of Repetition exhibition, were installed in the Elam Projectspace Gallery at Elam School of Fine Arts. Sizes varied, but were approximately 300 cm long and 150 cm wide. One objective of this presentation was to emphasize the spontaneity of repetitive actions embedded in printmaking as a process-driven form of expression. Another aim of this exhibition was to extend the conceptual boundaries of printmaking by using sculptural and installation methods. Some of the wooden matrices were placed on the floor of the gallery, in juxtaposition with prints, and some were installed to lean against the walls, also using diagonal corners of the gallery. I explored the notion of repetition not as a

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231 Acids for etching are still used at the SBCC, but only in outdoor, secured areas. Currently, the only print studio in New Zealand that promotes nontoxic printmaking is Mark Graver’s intaglio-based studio in Kerikeri. Graver employs Edinburgh etch as an alternative to nitric or sulphite acids that are typically used in traditional printmaking. Edinburgh etch was invented by Friedhard Kiekeben in 1997. It is a solution of ferric chloride crystals mixed with citric acid. Because this solution does not release toxic vapours it is of lower risk than nitric acid; ferric acid can also be disposed of safely. When ferric acid is mixed at a certain ratio with citric acid, it gives better results and speeds up the bite. Friedhard Kiekeben, Non-toxic Print, accessed June 29, 2011, http://www.nontoxicprint.com/etchcopperandbrass.htm.

232 Turpentine used for cleaning the ink of the plates and surfaces is replaced by vegetable oil and acid for etching plates was kept outdoors in specially designed containers to minimize harmful effects on human health. But students have employed whenever possible, instead of traditional etching, the solar plate method invented by Dan Welden. More details on this have been provided in the methodology section.

233 Elam Projectspace Gallery (former Projectspace B431), March 21 – April 1 2012. This exhibition was part of my thesis submitted for provisional year review.
reproduction of one object, but as process embodied in nearly all steps of woodcut printmaking. The whole idea was informed by Zen aesthetics: asymmetry, simplicity, naturalness, spontaneity, inexplicitness, unlimited freedom (a rule of no rule) and energized tranquillity (an active calm); of that, more later. Carving blocks and printing was approached as ritual and a potentially spiritual, meditative process. This approach aimed to coalesce Japanese and Western traditions around making and displaying methods, as well as to investigate its phenomenological aspects.

Expanding the scale of work to be larger than my own body and working directly onto (and in) the board, created a platform for a more intense exploration of more physically-informed ways of knowing. What for me connects mind and body is a set of repetitive actions within rather complex process of printmaking that contain something of rituality as well as meditative values. Mary Caroline Richards coined the term creation-centred spirituality to describe a notion of interconnectedness between creativity and compassion. To bring compassion in relation to creativity is a brave idea because like wisdom, karuna or compassion is also one of the central Buddhist conceptions that signify a spiritual path towards enlightenment. In Buddhism, compassion and wisdom are not separated, just as mind and heart are one. Kindness, mindfulness and selflessness, however, are not limited to practitioners; Buddhism as a philosophy can, in fact, be practiced without any direct reference to religious ideas. I expect that the findings of my research informed by these ideas may be implemented in forthcoming artistic as well as pedagogic processes. If artistic practices have potential to enhance compassion and if compassion may have positive effects on creativity, or even influence pedagogical processes of teaching and learning, by what means may this occur? These questions represent the future aims for my research that I will revisit later.

2  Contemporary Print

Formerly specific visual languages of printmaking are today absorbed across media and entwined with diverse fields. This section will focus on artists whose experimental

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235 One example amongst many is the video and animation projects of Japanese artist Tabaimo, who drew on both the aesthetics of traditional 18th century ukiyo-e and contemporary manga. Like her famous models
practices and technologies push the boundaries of printmaking, often extending into the
domain of sculpture or installation. I will thereby examine and compare crossing and merging
disciplines in the work of Thomas Kilpper, Richard Woods, Nicola Lopez and Christoph
Loos. Although they are not the only innovative printmakers working today, their oeuvres
have informed my practice in specific ways. An important part of this investigation will be
Luis Camnitzer’s ideas on contemporary printmaking, in particular his proposition that today,
it is contemporary art that needs to aspire to the status of print.

In late 1960s Kenneth E Tyler established Gemini G.E.L, a master printers’ print studio in
Los Angeles. Tyler’s aim for the studio was to support the combining diverse processes and
hybridity of print. When collaborating with Frank Stella, he embraced the three-
dimensionality of print. Or he encouraged artists to consider aspects of papermaking in their
work, such as David Hockney’s work Paper Pools of 1978. Rauschenberg’s early career
work Automobile Tire Print, which he created in collaboration with John Cage in 1953,
embodies the physicality of process. In 1970s he worked with Gemini G.E.L. on his series of
screen prints Hoarfrost, exploring collaging potentials of print. Rauschenberg’s example has
been influential for many artists that followed. In 1980s, Anselm Kiefer, in quite painterly
approach, experimented in a different way collaging his prints, combining them with painting,
sculpture and photography. To create his Der Rhein in 1983, he used woodcut as a starting
point, as a constituent to build his image mostly by use of shellac and other materials. There
are some linking aspects in painterly approach to print between Kiefer and Howard
Hodgkin’s 1990s work that experimented with combining and layering different print
techniques, and also painting on the top of the print. Another extended form of print is
represented in Christiane Baumgartner’s woodcuts that are often mediated through her own
video work. A league of artists who contributed towards expanding and hybridising
printmaking in 1990s and in 2000s onwards, therefore include Kilpper, Loos, Hauksdóttir,
Kiki Smith, Terry Winters, Paul Coldwell, Michael Schneider, Marilène Oliver, Kathy
Prendergast, and many others.

Wenda Gu’s installation Forest of Stone Steles – Retranslation and Rewriting of Tang Poetry,
1993-2005, was first shown at the Contemporary Art Center of He Xiangning Art Museum in

Hokusai (1760-1849) and Hiroshige (1797-1848), she sets her work in the contemporary world, and describes
everyday life while using their ancient techniques, transforming them into a contemporary realm by combining
them with animation.
China in 2005. This installation was created of fifty stone blocks bearing the text of Tang poem which was translated from Chinese to English and back, several times, so to express how meaning changes in translations from one to another language. Gu arranged the stone matrices on the floor of the museum’s gallery, and prints on the walls, surrounding the stones. He printed the stone blocks by applying ink on them and rubbing the back of the paper. Thomas Kilpper and Christoph Loos have also used similar approach.

German artist Christoph Loos, in his exhibition Chiasma II, exhibited wooden sculptural objects and the prints he took from these objects (Figure 37). Loos, like Gu, often places the wood on the floor and prints on the wall, as if in communication with each other, marrying print with sculpture and installation. A distinctive part of his practice is printing on the peeled wooden barks, often exhibiting whole series of works printed from one singular matrix, or of a combination of matrices-sculptures. Loos uses wood as a medium for self-reflection. Grains as well as knots of the wood play an important role in his prints; the original texture of wood’s pattern is an integral part of the final work. Loos processes his prints employing large, rough cylinders of a type usually used in the timber industry, peeling off layers or wood as thin as a sheet of paper upon which he later prints. Loos’ practice also includes carving the whole of the cylinder itself, so the work becomes intrinsically unified: prints and matrices are both made from the same piece of wood. These totem-like cylinders become sculptures and are frequently installed together with his prints, placing his practice in the field between sculpture, printmaking and installation. He titled one of his exhibitions Chiasma, a concept borrowed from French phenomenology that means a crossing-over, an intersection or interconnection, thereby foregrounding this interdisciplinary approach.236 Ralf Weingart’s essay Vanishing Point perhaps best describes Loos’ relationship with his material: “As a product of a process of organic growth, wood is imbued with a memory of this genesis, a sense of the natural context in which it originated – thus it stores energy both in real and a metaphorical sense – in its potential for artistic reflection and transformation.”237 He has as well in his work ZimZum, 2000, predominantly presented wooden sculptures and matrices from which he printed, one idea I explore in my practice too (see Figure 38). Though they both are moving print practice over and beyond its borders, reconciling it with other fields, Kilpper, in contrast to Loos’ sculptural print, prints on fabric using strong black-white

236 Chiasma was exhibited in Goethe institute in Kyoto 2005 and Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum Aachen 2005.
contrasts or bright colours, entwining matrices and often-colossal prints on façades of buildings. I share this enthusiasm for fabric as material; but, instead of printing on wooden peels, my early method of printing with water-based inks allows a transfer of knots and grains of the wood to the paper, while at the same time facilitating a wide range of different tonal values. I also relate to Loos’ contemporary approach to relief printmaking in treating carved blocks as sculptural objects, and exhibiting it together with prints as an interconnected entity. In my *Unlimited Resonance of Repetition* exhibition I included my plates alongside the prints. This choice was informed by knowledge of Loos’ practice. It was extended in my second independent presentation, *Presence of Absence*, in particular via proximity of matrix and shavings, both constituents of the process of creating a print.

Another artist who unites art, craft, design and architecture with traditional and innovative ways of printmaking is Richard Woods that I briefly discussed in Chapter I. In 2012, Paul Bonaventura in *The Art and Craft of Richard Woods* paraphrased the artist’s statement that making is one way of thinking.\(^{238}\) Thinking through making was a theme of my 2013 *Presence of Absence* show. Woods has also used repetition as a dominant compositional tool in his site-specific installations. The innovation in his work is in intensifying and expanding print by creating large, site-specific works. In the installation *Wall and Door and Roof* (2009), at the east and west entrances to New York City Hall, he covered the security guards’ boxes with red brick woodcut prints. In his 2002 installation *Super Tudor and Daisy House*, shown at Deitch Projects in New York, Woods transformed the exterior and interior of the gallery by covering them with ornamental prints and relief woodcarvings. These were covered with paint, paintings and print-block paintings; the installation extended from ceilings to walls and floors, revealing his obsession with surface and pattern. Even though Woods’ outcomes are very different to mine, his passion for materials and hands-on approach to the work is similar. What I find most inspiring in his work, however, is the use of printmaking to create outdoor as well as indoor installations, in symbiosis with architecture. This is may be a future direction for my research; I see the potential of my carved wooden blocks to become a part of an interior and so cross borders with design. I can also see my work extending into outdoor spaces, in conjunction with buildings that have a greater interrelationship with nature. Woods said, “The art isn’t really art, craft isn’t really craft, the design isn’t really design and the architecture certainly isn’t architecture. … I like occupying the position of the enthusiastic

outsider in each of the disciplines.” For Woods, comparable to Loos, art is more about making, and merging different art methods and fields; for it is Loos melding sculpture and print, and Woods print, design and architecture.


Figure 38. Christoph Loos. Gegengift (Kath’hauto). 1997, woodcut, 340 cm x 400 cm x 300 cm, From: Christoph Loos: ZimZum. Köln: Wienand Verlag, 2000, page 71. Reprinted with permission of Christoph Loos.

Many artists are exploring ways to extend and/or cross the boundaries of printmaking today, moving more and more towards multi-disciplinary approaches. Nicola Lopez’s huge woodcuts onto Mylar, for instance, combine traditional and nontraditional print styles and are also installed into open spaces. Her 2013 work *Land of Illusion* deployed imagery inspired by construction sites, and used a reduction woodcut process in combination with variety of intaglio methods to build up layers and alter the surfaces on her prints. She prints her woodcuts onto Mylar, then constructs them onsite into installations that both physically and visually flow from ceilings to walls, to floor, for example in her 2005 installation *Vertigo*. Lopez and other artists such as Brazilian Regina Silveira and an Israeli printmaker Orit Hofshi demonstrate how printmaking today is a flexible arena. Silveira, as mentioned in Chapter I, works with three-dimensional optical illusions installing them over entire walls and floor of the gallery (Figure 39). Hofshi creates monumental woodcut installations sometimes using only wooden plates, but often combining both prints and plates (see figure 40). Contemporary Chinese artist Chen Qi, on the other hand, employs a water-based woodblock printmaking method and prints up to 100 matrices onto a single custom-made large-scale paper, creating large indoor and outdoor print installations. The single piece of paper is itself a phenomenon even before the printing occurs. Xu Bing, when explaining his installation work *Book from Heaven*, pointed that printmaking is an indirect process, unlike other art-making processes. He relates printmaking to what may be called the process of epersonalization or de-individualisation, through which he finds it possible to reach the essence (in Buddhist sense, the suchness) of the substance, object or phenomena he works with. In his installation *Book from Heaven*, Bing created four hundred of books, handmade by meticulously carved Chinese characters into thousands small square woodblocks. He exhibited 50-foot long prints as books displayed in large rectangle across the floor of the gallery, and as scrolls arranged above the installation on the ground (Figure 41).

Some key contemporary developments in printmaking were presented through exhibitions and scholarly discussions at the Impact 8 International Printmaking Conference in Scotland, (August-September 2013), as well as at the 30th Graphic Art Biennial Ljubljana (September-November 2013). I have also included the Password: Printmaking International Printmaking

240 Nicola Lopes’s installation *Vertigo* was presented in the Caren Golden Fine Art, New York, 2005. Permission to use image of the work in the thesis was not obtained, therefore, the image was removed from this thesis.

Conference in Ljubljana (March, 2014). Topics discussed at the conference in Scotland included 3D printing, expanded print, nontoxic print, collaboration between scientists and artists, experimental and mixed-media print, as well as animations and video installations created by the use of print. These confirmed that printmaking is undeniably undergoing incessant development and it is constantly in search for new approaches in collaboration with rapidly evolving technologies.

Figure 40. Orit Hofshi. *If the tread is an Echo*. 2009, woodcut, markers drawing and stone stick tusche rubbing on carved pine wood panels and handmade kozo+Abaca paper. Dimensions: 136"height x 287"width x 36"deep.

Figure 41. Xu Bing, *Book of Heaven* (sometimes also called *Book from the Sky*). 1987-1991, 50-foot long prints displayed as books across the floor of the gallery and as scrolls above the installation on the ground.
International print events and exhibitions in 2013 and in early 2014 indicate many new tendencies in printmaking today. The oldest print biennial in Europe, The Biennial of Graphic Art Ljubljana, was themed “Interruption,” potentially signalizing the disconnectedness of print rather than integrating it with other artistic forms, a radical breaking with traditional concepts and colliding with other disciplines. These new methods and concepts have initiated further thinking into how and why these new directions might be important to my own practice.

As introduced earlier, the Impact 8 conference provided the opportunity for much discussion regarding the contemporary position of printmaking. Among the 52 presentations that took place at the Impact 8, the academic papers, illustrated talks and themed panels most relevant to my own research included those on nontoxic / eco-aware discussions, and experimental print methods. Including 3D printing, these seemed to be dominant topics in 2013, as well prevailing themes of some of the recent printmaking journals and magazines such as *Imprint*, *Printmaking Today* and *Contemporary Impressions*. This also confirms Hugh Merrill’s statement that “Print is not an object, a technique, or a category, but it is a theoretical language of evolving ideas.”

Camnitzer’s idea that art should aspire to reach to the print took this Merrill’s thinking even further.

The Impact 8 conference provided a new view about the contemporary position of printmaking. British print artist, scholar and researcher Stephen Hoskins gave two presentations on recent developments in 3D printing. Although an emerging technology, this field is gradually receiving recognition, as was the case with inkjet and digital printing a decade ago. Hoskins suggests: “as in the case of all printmaking processes, there is a necessity for both a tacit understanding of materials and knowledge of a process craft skill,”

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243 Stephen Hoskins is a professor of Fine Print and Director of the Centre for Fine Print Research at the University of the West of England Bristol, a researcher in the field of 3D printing technology and one of founders of Impact International Printmaking conference - first one took place in Bristol, The University of West England, 1999.
before one can create 3D printed art of merit.”

For me an understanding and knowledge of materials and skills is essential for creating a print, if not in all art fields.

There are strong similarities between the Impact 8 and the Ljubljana Biennial in thinking around the extending printmaking practices, as well as novel approaches to presentation. Both events looked into identifying the position of printmaking within the global, contemporary art scene with both its particular histories and future directions in mind. Both emphasised technological developments, new media, and experimental forms of printmaking. Video works, collage installations, drawings transmitted into video and animation, photography, robotic paintings, performances and not prints, were a dominant feature. Two examples were Dragan Ilić’s installation *Roboation* 8 (see Figures 42 and 43), or Erik Brunvand’s talk at Impact 8 on the notion of automated drawing (both taking place in same time, but in different places). Ilić’s robotically generated machine-painting processes engage in conversation between contemporary art and technology, and Brunvand’s work explored how drawing may be created by use of programmed machines. Although Ilić’s practice is interactive and embodies performative aspects, I ultimately perceived the work to be divorced from the meaning of print and, aligned with the curatorial theme of interruptions. It hence becomes printerly. The difference between the two events is that Impact 8 invited artists to cross borders and explore print media in relation to and/or collaboration with other disciplines. The Biennial however, prefers work that could diminish or even annihilate borders between disciplines: print is merely one node in a constantly shifting rhizomic network.

At Impact 8, Valgerdur Hauksdóttir discussed green printmaking, promoting the ecologically involved print workshop and related artist in residence project in Iceland, which seeks to combine art with sciences such as geology, ecology, and history. In an oral panel presentation

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245 In the second talk, Hoskins discussed under-glaze tissue printing for ceramics, especially in relation to English 19th century commercial printing skills. By examining and testing a number or technical processes, he connected contemporary digital print technologies with historical under-glaze ceramic printing in an attempt to retain this fascinating industrial process.


247 Simon Ingram, New Zealand contemporary artist’s practice also painting by use of programmed machines and new robotic technologies, an approach that bore a strong resemblance and used similar methods as Ilić in his work at the 30th Ljubljana Biennial.
at Impact 8, Hauksdóttir tackled the questions saying, “is art making sustainable? How do we know what is truly nontoxic or/and sustainable?” To answer these questions, it may be necessary to know why it is important for each individual to care, an idea that my research promotes as well. For Stephen Hoskins, whose 2008 research Hauksdóttir referenced, sustainability is entwined between the fields of ecology, society, economy, culture, and politics, a position that I agree with, as it is important to see such thinking spread throughout all spheres of contemporary life. An example of ecologically aware printmaking practices and crossing disciplines to collaborate with science is the work of British artist Judy Macklin and her partner, geographer Mark Macklin. Their work is important because it considers that art-science collaboration is necessary today in time of rapid ecological change. Integrating text and print, they reflected on catastrophic floods caused by climate change due to anthropogenic activity, and its influences on communities and cultures. I perceive this as one way of crossing the borders of print through collaborating (and not breaking or negating, it as it seemed to be the case with some art exhibits in Ljubljana) with other fields.

After its inception in 1955, the Biennial had strong links to socialist politics, gathering artists from both Eastern as well as Western Europe. The Ljubljana Biennial was the first printmaking biennial in Europe and a key idea was to draw on the socialist Yugoslav politics of that time, that remained unusually open towards creating international relationships. Some have suggested that printmaking was chosen as a focus as it was very developed and had a long tradition in Slovenia. Others think that founder of the biennial, a prominent Slovene

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Hauksdóttir also took part in the World Plate and Print Art Exhibition – Millenial Wind, in Korea (2011). This was a millennial anniversary of the Tripitaka Koreana – wooden engravings of Buddhist scriptures that have UNESCO World Heritage listing. Even though all the exhibited work did not relate ecology and Buddhism, it once again points to the relationship of Buddhism and woodcut printing, in which I recognize the ecological potential.


The Macklin team has explored changes in the environment caused by climate change, especially concerning water, in the UK, Mediterranean Europe and Australia.

Science in print was also discussed in the presentation session of Dutch printmaker Monika Auch. As a former physician, Auch interlaces within her practice her previous medical research in the field of neuroscience. By investigating the relationship between printmaking and anatomy, she examines the position of craft and tactility in the contemporary digital world, asking, “what is the intelligence of the hand in creating printed Artwork?”

The 30th Graphic Art Ljubljana Biennale included a survey exhibition of the event’s own history. The Biennial had a special focus on print alongside other contemporary graphic arts, and one of its major characteristics was that from inception the Biennale accepted and integrated new artistic tendencies and contemporary art streaming. (Robert Rauschenberg was the recipient of the Biennial’s Grand Prize in 1963.)
printmaker Božidar Jakac in 1955 (the same year as the first Documenta in Kassel), and the people around him simply wanted to organize a large international exhibition and print was the most available, transportable medium. It is unclear which view is correct, although I think that the first proposition is more likely – that the international exhibition was chosen to be a specifically print show; the founders were printmakers themselves and Slovenia has a long tradition of printmaking, that grew from the Ljubljana Graphic Art School grew (Zoran Kržišnik, Janez Bernik, and Lojze Spacal, amongst others are alumni of that school, amongst others). The Ljubljana Biennial was the first printmaking biennial in Europe and it exploited the socialist Yugoslav politics of that time, which remained unusually open towards creating international relationships. However, the 2013 Biennial seems more aligned with the second suggestion, in part because the organisers wish to break with the socialist past and its traditions, but also because printmaking today is more integrated with other fields. This conceptual change of the biennial began after 1990, a time of large political changes in the region. Due to these cultural, political and technological developments, the curators of the Biennial came to rethink its founding concepts and thereby go beyond the boundaries of printmaking and create new multi-disciplinary, conceptual exhibitions within which print is but one part. In socialism, print has often been used as a form accessible to the masses and democratic. Since the 1990s, printmaking as an egalitarian artistic discipline has lost its position. It is possible to witness how the change in politics is reflected in art: no-print biennials have dominated over the past twenty years in Ljubljana.

Figures 42 and 43. Dragan Ilić. Roboaction 8. 2013, interactive, site-specific drawing, remote-controlled electric machine, aluminium, paint, and gravity over one hour. The 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts Ljubljana, Interruptions. Photo Irena Keckes.
The 29th Biennial of 2011 openly promoted alternative understandings of graphic art, and drastically turned away from printmaking; video artist Regina Jose Galindo won the graphic arts Grand Prix. The 30th Biennial of 2013 even more boldly continued redefining print, so that the path of the traditional graphic arts has been successfully interrupted by printerly technologies, such as web-based and social media networks. I perceived this as an attempt to convince the audience that this is a new life (or death?) of the medium, both technically and conceptually. In either case the dominant theme is constant transformation. The 30th edition of the Biennial, however, still recognized, embraced and responded to the evolution of graphic art, new applications and interpretations, mirroring twenty-first century approaches to printmaking.

Breda Skrjanec, a curator of the 2001 Biennial that started to expand the concept of print, stated how “the essence of graphic art is neither its multiplicity nor its originality. Its essence lies in the dual nature of the graphic work; this means that graphic art is something that has two opposite sides in the way it exists: a negative side and a positive side.” The 2013 Biennial investigated if and how our visual literacy and daily communication have been transformed via contemporary print media. In this situation, some artists have returned to basic forms or printmaking methods, although it is rare to see exhibits that still use some form of traditional print, while most others chose performance, sculpture, or digital world to blur the borders between disciplines, creating hybrid works that are sometimes hard to see as a “print”. For example, Volodymyr Kuznetsov hired a firing squad to shoot hundreds of bullets into an old car and in this way create a folk pattern, naming the work VIP Car, Monument to the ’90s. Venelin Shurelov created Tabula Rasa, by lying inside a box covered with many tiny doors, so that the audience may draw on his skin piece by piece, as they open each small door of the box, until his body is covered with tattoo-like drawings. Ivan Marušić Klif transferred images into gestures by the use of movement and sound sensitive receptors, linked to TV monitors. André Komatsu created a large installation of photocopied A4 sheets – arranged in tall stacks in the middle of the room – and installed

large fans in the corner of the room to blow the sheets around.\footnote{André Komatsu, “Construção de Valores” (Constructing Value), 2012, accessed August 18, 2014, http://www.pipapriz.com/2013/10/andre-komatsu-at-the-30th-edition-of-the-ljubljana-biennial-of-graphic-arts/.} None of these examples, in fact, has relation to print or its extended forms. Camnitzer framed and installed onto the wall 196 pages from the Montevideo Telephone Directory in which, he incorporated the names of nearly 300 people who disappeared in Uruguay during the military dictatorship between 1973 and 1985. By inserting their names in the ready-made phone book, the missing people reappeared again. He named the work \textit{Memorial}, and presented it first in 2009, in the Para and Romero Gallery in Madrid, Spain (see Figure 44). For Ljubljana, Camnitzer recreated this same artwork.

Even though some of the installations in this exhibition represent an innovative take on printmaking, and represent conceptually engaging works, they seem not to challenge printmaking substantially enough.\footnote{Adam Peddleton also works with photocopied images of various geographic areas, collaging them into larger compositions, and combining them with silkscreen. Tomas Vu-Daniel created hand-carved and laser-engraved surfboards \textit{The Beatles’ “The White Album”} (1968) songs, relating the work to his childhood in Vietnam, Maria Elena Gonzalez transforms wood into song by methods of scanning and laser cutting the wood.} It could be argued that the graphic Art Biennial was demonstrating the typical characteristics of an international contemporary art show, replete with a variety of art stars.\footnote{Rirkrit Tiravanija, an artist who seldom produces prints \textit{per se}, nevertheless exhibited a 27 foot-long silkscreen print \textit{The map of the land of feeling III} (2008-2011). Xu Bing continued his ongoing project \textit{Book from the Ground}, which was an interactive chat station with two computers separated by acrylic with printed vinyl, allowing the audience to communicate by the use of various fictitious Internet cryptograms. American / Cuban duo Allora & Calzadilla in their large woodcut prints on linen addressed the war in Afghanistan. Caraballo-Farman’s work \textit{Extractions} addressed the problem of breast cancer employing a scientific take on printmaking. They created UV blockout photographic prints based on combination of techniques fusing medical imaging, 3D modelling and shamanic extractions. This needs some explaining: they used an MRI image of a tumour, before the surgeon (shaman) extracted it, which was then rendered in 3D software, translating the image of biological matter into an abstract form.} The question remains as to why the exhibition still bears the term “graphic” in its title, given these new priorities.

An artist who exhibited at the Ljubljana Biennial and whose installations influenced my thinking around expanded print is Nicola Lopez. Mobility, hybridity of mixture of methods (woodcut, intaglio, topography, and architecture), perpetual change and contemporary urban landscapes are some of the key topics of her work. In Ljubljana, her work was conceptually intensified; it presented a ceaseless cycle of creation and obliteration, opposites entangled in cause-effect relationships. It however was not one of her large-scale print installations, but a digital print in combination with screen-print.
Some of the ideas introduced at these 2013 events resonate with the “new” status of painting as a part of a network, discussed by David Joselit, in *Painting Beside Itself*. Proposing an idea of contemporary painting as network of distribution and exhibition, Joselit posed the question “how does painting belong to a network?” He thinks everything and anything may be encompassed by the term art, including floors and the architecture of the gallery. To support this idea, he took the example of Jutta Koether’s 2009 exhibition *Lux Interior* at Reena Spauling’s Gallery in New York. Koether investigated a notion of painting’s transitivity, presenting the painting as a combination of performance installation and painted canvas. She placed a painting on the installed wall - more like a screen on which she hung a large painting to face the main, empty wall. Joselit argued that the transitivity of painting is a form of transformation and that once it enters into networks, painting is a subject to endless disruptions and disintegrations. Contemporary print discourse is comparable to these dislocating and interrupting discourses within painting today.

The discussions of 2013 print events showed that print today is rather a broad and blurred art form. It may be a machine-made painting, a video, a photograph or a photocopy; large-scale woodcuts may seem traditional. I think that transforming and revolutionising print practices and presentation modes involves extending print technologies and concepts, such as in Kilpper’s woodcut print installations or Hoskins 3D printing methods. This extension, however, does not inevitably call for the annihilation or cessation. A multiplicity of approaches can usefully coexist; furthermore, there is still more to be learnt from traditional methods, especially in the West. I remain unconvinced that video, painting and photography are merely “interrupting” print. Therefore I find imbalance between the concept of the 30th biennial and it retaining the “Graphic Arts” in its formal title.


4 Existing and Anticipated Print Approaches

Printmaking methodologies and technologies have been rapidly evolving, as evident from the examples discussed in the previous section. At the beginning of this century, contemporary dialogue was centred on digital printmaking but now, 12 years later, 3D print, installation, and more have also surpassed these issues. Print, therefore, is in a somewhat similar position to painting; perhaps all art is now part of what might be called an unlimited art rhizome. The rhizome is a key concept introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* that emphasizes principles of connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, cartography, decalcomania and the ability to rupture. Any part of a rhizome may be connected to anything else; even when broken, it will start again on either one of its old lines or on new ones. Put differently, it has neither beginning nor end – it is in the middle, between two things. I can well envision this idea applied to printmaking, although my question is: will such multiple, nonhierarchical representations and new interpretations of graphic art, find a balance, so that disruptions may serve as stepping stones in further development of the field?

A key constituent of printmaking that remains present in both its traditional and innovative forms rests in the fundamental uncertainty of results. Even when methods are well mastered, each iteration of a repeated process has the potential – irrespective of method chosen – to be
quite different in each instance. This idea of making prints while remaining open towards differences and uncertainties liberated processes of printmaking. I abandoned editioning and immersed in such an exploration through creating my large carvings and printing them by hand and press.

By using traditional Japanese printmaking methods alongside Western print technologies, I have investigated large-scale, indoor woodcut print systems. One of questions that interested me when starting to use these methods inspired by Buddhist concepts and Zen aesthetics was how to challenge and redefine printmaking by detaching it from the wall, while remaining mindful of technical aspects of each process. For me, each part of the printmaking process, not only its final end, represents thinking through making as a key concept within contemporary art practices. This was a critical idea for Presence of Absence, in which carved wooden plates were hung asymmetrically in proximity to wood shavings carved from them, and installed on the floor (see Figure 45-48). The installation entwined art and craft not as a dual, but conjoined concept. The display stimulated the audience to explore the process of making as a concept, akin to Joeselit’s idea of transitive painting as a network with tenacity to engage with the audience. The show was inspired by Zen aesthetics, mainly by the notion of shibumi that embodies notions such as unpretentious naturalness and void. The essence of wabi-sabi aesthetics contains an ideal of beauty that is hidden, natural, and imperfect.

By creating a “carpet” of shavings Presence of Absence pointed towards the idea of impermanence: the wooden shavings had once been the plates. One could ask – why not carve until the plate was completely transformed into shavings? But showing transition rather than representing only void better emphasises the status of change, of being in-between, subject to flux. Prints were taken from all the displayed plates in the exhibition, as Figure 54 shows, but were deliberately left out of the exhibition. The idea was to contribute towards the understanding of printmaking – absent yet present.
Figure 45. Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence* (installation detail). 2013, woodcuts and shavings. George Fraser Gallery, Auckland.

Figure 46. Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence* (installation detail). 2-13, woodcuts and shavings. George Fraser Gallery, Auckland.
Figure 47. Irena Keckes. *Presence of Absence* (installation detail). 2013, woodcuts and shavings. George Fraser Gallery, Auckland.

Figure 48. Irena Keckes. *Black prints*. 2013, woodcut prints installation. Elam School of Fine Arts testing space. (Artworks printed off the carved plates exhibited at *Presence of Absence* show in the George Fraser Gallery).
Like Thomas Kilpper’s carving into the wooden floors of abandoned historical buildings, I aim to further develop the ideas introduced in *Presence of Absence*. Serialisation and variability of both image and object will potentially be key to my future practice. The presence of plates and the absence of print emphasized the processes of making, as well as the sculptural element in my work that drew some inspiration from the *Thinking is Making* exhibition catalogue. That exhibition and its catalogue investigated the problem of marginalizing a particular kind of sculpture and its increasing absence from the art scene, that resonates with the status of print: “Dematerialised during the 1960s and 1970s, buried in the 1980s, made playful, ephemeral and transient during the 1990s and into the new millennium, sculpture has become anything that an artist wishes to name.”

So, there is a lot of disciplinary anxiety in the new era of the expanded field. I have not, however, dematerialised my plates in the manner of the postmodern. Instead, my presentation embodied the essence of the process of making as well as thinking through such making. One possible criticism of printmaking may be that it involves largely labour-intensive methods that appear not so contemporary, although the prevalence of process art would suggest otherwise. By presenting woodcut printmaking as both subject and concept, I wish to reduce a tendency to see printmaking as a discipline disconnected from a wider network of ideas in contemporary art. Also, in Western concepts of art, thinking has long been dissociated from making. My investigation into Buddhist philosophy and its concept of interdependence, Naess’ deep ecology, and Spinoza’s philosophy of pure immanence have shown a need to bring thinking and making together. My practice continues searching for ways to reduce what I perceive as an unnatural separation of the conceptual ideas and methods or technologies within an artwork.

Robert Morris, one of the artists who extended the field of sculpture, thought the process of making itself embodies both the visual and the physical aspects of the work. With his 1968 show and his seminal *Artforum* essay *Anti Form*, Morris proposed moving away from minimalism by focusing on materiality and processes of making that involve physical as much as conceptual aspects of practice. He was among the first to discuss process in art, linking it with Jackson Pollock’s action paintings. Pollock emphasised thinking through

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260 Joselit, “Painting Beside Itself”, op. cit., 7. Krauss also used similar argument when discussing the expanded field of sculpture, an art object. (See page 2 of my thesis, footnote 5).

261 A radical step by which Process Art moved away from minimalism was the 1968 exhibition organised by Morris, *Notes on Sculpture, Part 4, Beyond Objects*, including the work of Richard Serra, Eva Hesse, Alan Saret and Bruce Nauman. Exhibition took place at Castelli’s warehouse, *Artforum* (April 1969).
making, the mind-body interweavement, as well as the nature of material and tools.\textsuperscript{262} By using his entire body, Pollock investigated the interrelationships between properties of materials, physical laws of gravity, and actions of the body in his process of making. In his 1970 essay \textit{Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated}, Morris argues that art is a way of making rather than the final product. His work treasured the act of art-making itself. Sometimes, the viewers are invited to participate in the work’s completion. Automation and use of chance play an important role, while not completely excluding the notion of control over the labour-intensive and repetitive processes of carving, as in my work. Even if the process seems automatic, it is not – it must be mindful. Process as the key concept of my work was the theme of a proposed exhibition \textit{To Carve, to Sit, to Work, to Live} (2013) in which the gallery would become a space inhabited by my Japanese training in woodcutting. I wanted to carve the large plates directly in the space of the gallery during the show so as to engage with visitors as they enter the space, as visible in Figure 50.

My Japanese training and its pedagogical method – of master and beginner together in the same space – was important to the exhibition concept, as was the melding of Eastern and Western traditions with a contemporary mode of practice. The Yangjiang group that participated in the third Auckland Triennial (2013) at the George Fraser Gallery nominated the Asian custom of tea drinking as art. I wanted to present the process of woodcut printing as the main (and only) subject of \textit{To Carve, to Sit, to Work, to Live}. This could demonstrate mindfulness present in each part of the process and not just in the final resulting print. My aim was to intertwine print, Buddhist practice and ecological values, and to challenge Western ideas about printmaking methodologies. Performative aspects of my practice were supposed to be one of the main elements of this show. Although it remained a proposition only, it represented one of the key conceptual ideas of my doctoral research and deserves mentioning. Additionally, my intention was to practice Zen meditation that would take place during intervals of carving, to which audience would be invited to participate, if they wished. The idea to live in the gallery during the show, inspired by Lindy Lee’s practice of meditating in the gallery space among her work (\textit{No Up, No Down, I am the Ten Thousand Things}, 1995) offered to create an interactive space, open for discussion of these meditative process of woodcarving and on-site actualization of both carving and meditating. To emphasize the

\textsuperscript{262} Process art emerged in the U.S. and Europe in the mid-1960s. John Cage, Pollock, and Frank Stella all made process a central part of their art.
processuality of actions and the ephemerality of materials in the carving process, I would have integrated the waste – particles that were carved out – into a dynamic juxtaposition with matrices and prints. This idea has further evolved in the Presence of Absence exhibition, where for the first time I had included the wooden shavings – a key element of the process woodcut carving process – as part of an exhibition. This has been extended further in Mindful Repetitions, my final doctoral presentation of the creative component of my thesis.

Kilpper, an artist who has inspired my practice with the daring scale of his installations, developed site-related projects in vacant buildings to create what he calls “floor cuttings.” Figure 49 shows his 2011 floor-cut at the Teatro Pablo Tobon Uribe in Colombia, in conjunction with Encuentro Internacional de Medellín. Kilpper transformed the floor of the theatre’s orchestra pit into an enormous wooden plate that was subsequently printed on textile. His more recent work, which he presented at 30th Ljubljana Biennial, includes such floor carving and print exhibited in juxtaposition to it – on the ceiling. In this work, he converted the floor into printing medium, and ceiling into print. Kilpper has spoken about his choices of materials and his labour-intensive process. It is hard to carve with chisels, as the wood often splits during the process of carving. He thinks these characteristics of material and methods result in strong black-and-white contrasts. In my practice, that has proved to be true: contrast of black and white has been the dominating element of my prints. I find his approach inspirational and further exploring these ideas will be one task for my future practice.

Jennifer McKnight’s paper at the Impact 7 International Printmaking conference at Monash University in Melbourne compared printmaking to other disciplines of fine arts. McKnight identified the strengths of printmaking as a methodological process that lay emphasis on developing problem-solving skills.263 Printmaking implies a planning and a methodical set of processes and, by successively moving from one stage to another, one simultaneously acquires and develops analytical and practical skills, useful in other fields and disciplines as well as in life.

Camnitzer, in Printmaking: A Colony of the Arts, wrote, “Making prints is the task. Art seems

263 Jennifer McKnight, University of Missouri–St. Louis, “Cross-disciplinary Projects: How Blended Disciplines Activate Change.” Impact 7 International Printmaking conference, 2011, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. Encompassed in previous Impact conferences were some of the following topics: Pedagogy, hybridity of print and identities, print as form of cultural expression, expanded field of print such as 3 and 4 dimensionality of print as an art form, digital printmaking technologies and its impact on contemporary printmaking, interdisciplinarity / transdisciplinarity, traditional and alternative printmaking technologies and nontoxic methods. “Intersections and Counterpoints,” accessed September 4, 2013, impact7.org.au/about.html.
to be a miraculous by-product.”

Like McKnight, he emphasized a way of thinking through process, while criticizing the obsessiveness of many print artists with complexities of method and craft, instead of using printmaking techniques to focus on and try to realize conceptual objectives. He achieved that goal in Memorial. Pages of a telephone book are no longer novel in art and the telephone book itself is an outdated means of contact. In this way he has made his work politically engaged, addressing the issue of memorial for missing people but making them indistinct from all other free and present people in the book. His theoretical writing even more radically opens up and tackles thought-provoking questions related to printmaking practice. “How to reclaim printmaking as means and not as a goal in itself,” he asked in 2010, “and, more importantly, how to make visible the various forms of print that are at the core of contemporary artistic practice?”

Ideas from Camnitzer’s 2006 article were further developed in that 2010 interview, in which he also discussed his practice and work as a theorist and an art critic. He started as a printmaker and then, after moving from Uruguay to New York in the 1960s, his practice expanded to include aesthetics and conceptualism explored in art, writing and curating. Amalgamating printmaking, sculpture, drawing, photography, installation and, literally any media in a truly cross-disciplinary work, Camnitzer addresses and challenges, most commonly, Latin American political and social issues. Although he broke away from printmaking, in undeniable ways it still remains a basis of his work. He co-founded The New York Graphic Workshop in 1964 with Liliana Porter and José Guillermo Castillo and founded Camnitzer Print Studio in Tuscany, Italy, in 1971.

Two years later, he presented a paper titled Art and Literacy, discussing art and pedagogy. He stated, “Art is not really “art,” but a method to acquire and expand knowledge.”

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believes that art can play an important role in defining educational projects with the university and should not be narrowed into a discipline. Commenting on art education that often teaches how to do things, while neglecting the critical question of what is being made and what to do with it, Camnitzer postulates that pedagogical goals should be directed to promote investigation and self-consciousness and focus on the concepts of an artwork.

Furthermore, he does not think there is a difference between writing about art and creating art, as art may be approached in multiple ways. The concept of the disparity between copy and original has been long present in his practice, through which he investigated how labelling something as original may change its value. He assimilates text into his conceptual art work, questioning the merchandising of the art object that in his view distorted the value of art. His approach to Conceptualism employs language / words as a medium for art first manifested in his work Reflections and Reflections (Reflejos y Reflexiones), 1966, using text as object such as “This is a mirror. You are a written sentence,” instead of depicting and representing the actual objects. The idea of this and other installations in which he uses text, such as the Living Room, 1968, where he replaced furniture with textual descriptions has been to place the viewer in the middle of the creative process.

At the conference Password: Printmaking, Camnitzer, the keynote speaker, addressed the question of how to establish a momentous connection between art and craft, using the idea from the 1952 film Scaramouche: to imagine a bird – if held too tight, the bird will die; if held too loose, it will fly away. Camnitzer here seemed to be asking how to establish a meaningful connection between both art and craft, suggesting that to define art and craft separately is not advisable. He then continued to his most radical ideas. Rather than print seeking to merge with or become more like other disciplines, such as sculpture, the opposite is true: contemporary art now aspires to the status of print. He suggests that print has always been engaged with process, repetition, and technology, key tendencies most other art now regularly embraces. With this astonishing idea, he single-handedly upends conventional attributions of status. This is liberating.

Deborah Cullen, curator of the 2013 Ljubljana Biennial, examined another aspect of contemporary printmaking. She explained how, in 1961, artists of the New Tendencies experimental art movement in Zagreb instigated computer art. Nevertheless, she noted, digital technologies were integrated into printmaking practices only during the last 20 years and in more extended ways only over the last 10 years. She considers the 1992 project by Dennis Ashbaugh and William Gibson, A Book of the Dead, to be the first full integration of print with computer technologies. The Password: Printmaking organizers were therefore primarily focused on these new expanded definitions of graphic arts. Printmaking is no longer an autonomous medium, as it was before the late 20th century; the conference showed that thinking around the medium has radically changed. Contemporary print practices can sit alongside traditional print practices: all are now part of the new network. Print is “beside itself.” Or perhaps, if Camnitzer’s view is accepted, print is leading the way. I will also give a presentation on my practice at the 2nd International Mokuhanga conference at Tokyo University of the Arts, in September 2014 (too late for inclusion in this document). This conference is an appealing venue for presenting work and research relating the histories of woodblock printing, as well as Buddhism.

My work, over the course of my study, has merged print with aspects of installation, sculpture and performativity. My first installation as part of this PhD, Unlimited Resonance of Repetitions (2012), a provisional year exhibition, represented the early stage of my research. The exhibition comprised ten 3.5m long prints created in mokuhanga method and hand-printed in sumi ink by use of baren. Prints hung from the ceiling in the space of the gallery; some carved plates were placed on the floor beneath prints and others leaned against the walls of the gallery. These prints were created by carving the painted calligraphic images on plywood. 2013 saw a shift in my creative practice, with the formulation of a proposal for an exhibition titled To Sit, To Carve, To Live, mentioned above. Although the exhibition remained at the proposal stage, the idea of exhibiting processes of making further evolved in the Presence of Absence show that took place later in 2013. For that presentation of my research, I included shavings and carved plates on the floor and walls of the gallery. Presence of Absence emphasised printmaking as a step-by-step process and used repetition as a key creative and compositional method. The idea that making is thinking and thinking is making represented the key theme of this exhibition.
The creative practice of my research culminated in my final creative component presentation, *Mindful Repetitions* (2014). This exhibition presented two large woodcuts that summed up my entire practice-led doctoral study. Prints embodied all the information about the processes of making. Rich, black ink (that, due to the embossing element, came in sharp contrast with the whiteness of the paper), was absorbed by the prints, together with the colour of the wood and, in some parts, the wooden chips. The prints were the result of the countless actions of my hand on the block, and engaging whole my body/mind in creating this artwork.

The George Fraser Gallery, where *Mindful Repetitions* was exhibited, has two rooms. One of my works occupied the floor of the front room. To create this large (480 cm x 240 cm) print, using chisels and power tools, I carved twelve plywood blocks, each 80 cm x 120 cm. This monochrome print bears innumerable marks created by use of a wide variety of chisels, and also power tools. The second print, 1440 cm long and 122 cm wide, was installed on three walls of the gallery’s back room. The marks again were created by repetitive actions of hand that resulted in white shapes hovering over the black background, like a dance in the rhythm with the whole universe. The forms are abstract, created entirely without relation to any specific imagery or metaphor, except that the images are sort of mind-maps or mindscapes. To create them I used large-scale relief printmaking as a meditative practice. I carved each successive block in connection to the previous one, on the floor of my studio at Elam. The connections in the final eighteen prints are not hidden; there was no intention to be pedantic in carving. Imperfection and interconnectedness are some Zen notions this work demonstrates.

Further, it has been vital for my work to be presented in harmony with the space of the gallery; hence my decision to exhibit only two exceptionally large and dynamic works. The most important ideal of Zen I wanted my work to represent is *shibumi.* I therefore abandoned my initial idea to exhibit wood-carved plates and shavings together with my prints. Less is more. That is why it has been fundamental that my prints and the way I display them, achieve balance with the architectural space of the gallery. It was also important to

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An American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe used the phrase as a principle for architectural design in the 1960s.
create the prints from many parts, leaving the connections between them uncovered yet joined together. Imperfection, naturalness, impermanence, interconnectedness, and the so-called element of active calmness – the shibumi ideal of Zen aesthetics that my work embodies through marks, blackness of ink that varies from one part of the print to another, the movement and rhythm that streams through prints, surrounding the space of the gallery. Shibumi is an overreaching concept. It is more than one thing; it a complex notion captivated in the very essence of an object, while the object itself is rather simple in its manifestation. This is not explicit – it is more grasped or sensed through experiencing the artwork, to embody “Elegant simplicity. Effortless effectiveness. Understated excellence. Beautiful imperfection.”

My work responded to these concepts by entwining its characteristics in the very process of carving and printing in black ink only – no other colours, no other meanings. This Zen ideal is constituted from seven notions. The first is austerity: to restrain, to exclude, and/or to omit, as well as thinking around art making and its display that avoids adding what is not absolutely necessary. I made a decision to print the work in black only, to carve plates directly – which liberated my practice, and to exclude blocks and wooden chips, emptying the space. No shavings, no plates, no more than two works. In turn, such an approach emphasised the two works I exhibited in this exhibition.

This leads to the second Zen art principle, simplicity. The work of art does not need to be overstated; it is necessary to eliminate “what doesn’t matter to make more room for what does.” The third principle is naturalness: the artwork is using natural materials and elements yet it is distinct from nature per se. My prints are not pretentious and the rhythm of forms in my prints naturally occurred as a result of repetitive, meditative actions of carving – that is how I named the work Mindful Repetitions. The fourth Zen principle my work bore in mind is subtlety. This mostly means that artwork should not completely disclose all it represents, in a literal or direct ways, but limit the information so as to leave something to the imagination, so the viewer creates her or his way of seeing when observing the work. The

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idea is to instigate or tackle the viewer’s curiosity and activates thinking or imagination. The fifth principle is asymmetry: “The goal of fukinsei is to convey the asymmetry of the natural world through clearly asymmetrical and incomplete renderings. The effect is that the viewer supplies the missing symmetry and participates in the creative act.” By so doing I wanted to leave a space for the viewer to actively participate in the process of perceiving my artwork. The sixth principle is break from routine. This means breaking a habit – thinking creatively in a given situation, being prepared to improvise and interrupt the work in one or another way.

I tested the Mindful Repetitions installation in several different ways. It was important for the work to harmonise with the space of the gallery. The print on the wall curved at one end instead of symmetrically ending as it started (or finished) on the other wall. The print on the floor was pushed to touch the wall on its one, shorter side. The other three sides were open in the space, and the viewer could walk around the print, approaching these sides. Such non-aggressive, subtle solutions, addressing both asymmetry and break from routine, have been what both the prints and their display attempted to embody. The last, seventh Zen aesthetic principles is tranquillity, which does not mean absence of vigour in an artwork.

Using one of the oldest print methods, my final doctoral project explored how hybridity of practices not only extends but also transforms print practices. Print as a contemporary practice has power to transmit ideas of how practicing mindfulness may contribute to ecological approaches within both Eastern and Western environments. I believe each mindful act may be meritorious and can contribute to bettering the world. In the same way, I consider it can also enrich print practices. In my work it is manifested through the process of carving. The process I have used to create my work from the mid-phase of my PhD research is as follows: I have placed two sheets of plywood on the floor of the studio and worked simultaneously on both, treating them as a single artwork (see Figures 50 and 51). The rhythmic, reflective action of carving the wood brings a nuance of rituality to the process. Over the course of my study I increased the employment of labour-intensive processes, but one method I have used from the outset of my research altered in one significant respect: I have shifted the main focus from controlling the final outcome of the print to the process of carving itself. To more profoundly explore perception and the meditative qualities of the process, I carved the plywood sheets without a predetermined image. This approach greatly

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273 Ibid., Co.Design.
intensified the mind-body connection in the act of making the work.\textsuperscript{274} Uniting mind, action and outcome is thus the key research method of my practice. Technique, intention and physicality are entangled in each part of creating a print, in both carved wood and prints on paper. For me, printmaking represents a way to investigate embodied ways of knowing. I see the bodily part of the activity as the most direct way of transforming mind into outer, material expression. In this way, attitude becomes form and process becomes concept.\textsuperscript{275}

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\textsuperscript{274} In the second phase of my research through printmaking I carved two plywood sheets at the same time, extending matrices and print to the size of 240 cm length and 240 cm width.

\textsuperscript{275} This phrase “attitude becomes form” is consciously taken from Harald Szeemann’s influential 1969 exhibition of Arte Povera. The phrase is relevant here as it is the emphasis away from product towards nexus of process and thought. The show included Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Barry Flanagan, Bruce Nauman, Carl Andre, Gilberto Zorio, Joseph Beuys, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Jannis Kounellis and Lawrence Weiner.
Figure 50. Irena Keckes. 2012, process of carving a large plate, (120 cm x 240 cm).

Figure 51. Irena Keckes. 2013, process of carving two 120 cm x 240 cm large plywood sheets.
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Can Buddhist thought, in synthesis with ecology, motivate and nurture environmentally conscious attitudes and approaches to printmaking? Can Buddhist notions such as mindfulness and interconnectedness contribute to and generate more ecologically informed printmaking? My research has identified links between Buddhism, ecology and fine arts and, through both practice and writing, explored the implications of these relationships. The research has been conducted through four chapters, which include literature review and methodology, followed by chapters on theory and creative practice and contemporary printmaking. The first chapter defined the direction of my research, identifying the missing link; the study relating woodcut printmaking and Buddhism, as informed by ecology, had not been done before. The Methodology chapter categorized models for fine arts PhD, and defined the appropriate one for this specific PhD with creative practice. As one of the important aspects for my practice, this chapter also explored the notion of greening the contemporary printmaking, the melding of art and craft, and the embodied ways of knowing.

There are many models for how a PhD with creative practice can be organized; my thesis mostly corresponds to Elkins’ second main model for fine arts PhDs (see page 51-52, Chapter II). For my PhD, the creative practice has not been an experiment but it had leaded the topics for investigation, thus the results of the research have been more open-ended. Certainly, my research sought to generate such creative practice knowledge, which is not based on prescriptive models for PhD, or fully theoretical thesis.

My practice-lead research also investigated developmental influences on my current practice, and how it increasingly employed potentially performative as well as sculptural and architectural elements as it progresses over the course of my PhD. My practice has evolved methodologically and conceptually, which manifested through three major doctoral exhibitions where I presented the creative component of my thesis. This vital component of my research includes: Unlimited Resonance of Repetition (2012), Presence of Absence (2013), and Mindful Repetitions (2014).

Extended printmaking practices and hybridizing of print have been the vital focuses of my research. This includes exploring print as installation and its merging with sculptural forms of
expression, while exploring process-based practice and how my woodcutting processes inform the visual content of my prints. In particular, I think that Joselit’s notion of contemporary painting operating within a network and Camnitzer’s radical reversal of art’s relationship to print have opened ways for my practice to remain contemporary.

My research has sought to know if and how eco-Buddhist concepts in juxtaposition with contemporary printmaking may motivate and encourage artists to use safer practices and engender novel print processes. I have proposed an unconventional framework for this research, primarily by examining repetition of ideas of causality or relations among a set of actions employed in my woodcarving practice. I therefore examined how key Buddhist concepts such as interconnectedness and emptiness may extend to the realms of print media in 21st century. I have been driven by an aspiration to raise mindfulness about environmentally friendly art practices and methods and in particular my interest in alternative, nontoxic printmaking. To this end, I have examined literature and authors who wrote in the domains of eco-Buddhism, fine arts and Buddhism, contemporary printmaking, non-toxic methods and an ever-expanding field of print. The research has been theoretically underpinned and informed by the philosophy of Spinoza, Naess and Deleuze, as well as phenomenology and the art/craft dichotomy.

Buddhism’s 2500-year-old history has seen many interpretations of its teachings. Since the middle of the 20th century, different teachers and interpreters, reflecting their specific cultures and environmental concerns have revitalized Buddhism in diverse ways, for instance through eco-Buddhism. As crises due to pollution caused by human activities have increased, Buddhist concepts once again found fruitful ground in contemporary life. Similarly, just as art crosses disciplines to collaborate with science, it may traverse borders to work with fields that are both philosophy and religion. The impact of ecologically engaged Buddhism on my practice is not only in nurturing awareness of using ecologically friendly methods and materials but also altering life perspectives through practices of mindfulness, especially in relation to repetitive actions. When I began this thesis, I was aware of the critical role of repetition in printmaking but over the course of this study, the emphasis has changed in relation to this: now the repetition is an opportunity to affect the mind of the maker. This has roots in my Japanese training, but here became informed by Western thought on the subject also – qua Deleuze and Bergson – while also considering that meditative qualities of
repetitive actions can affect the resulting artwork. This can be seen in both subtle and
dramatic shifts in the movement of the carving tool; the flow and variation of the marks made
embody rather than represent the passage of time and the movement of thought.

More than any other practice, woodblock printmaking has enabled me to explore Buddhism,
in part because of the unique historical relationships between the two. Historically, woodcut’s
ability to multiply and replicate echoed the Buddhist idea of meritorious repetition.
Implementing aspects of Zen meditation to my carving practice allowed me focus on the
processes of doing itself. This method has furnished the “mindfulness” of my thesis title,
transforming mundane actions into the site and event of a more careful, aware mode of
making art. I have found the recurring actions of carving to awaken sensations close to those
 gained by meditation or the reverberation of Buddhist chants. This awareness led me to see
process itself as one of the vital aspects of my research. This mindfulness blossomed in the
later stage of my research; I acknowledge that research on process in art may not be
substantial within my thesis, but it undeniably indicates an exciting direction for my future
research. My work has been profoundly altered by the course of this study through a shift in
emphasis away from the mark as image to the mark as mindful process.

In my doctoral exhibitions I have explored various forms of presentation for printmaking,
related to the space and viewer in both visual and tactile senses. Creating three meters long
prints by hand, using baren and sumi ink on thin calligraphy papers for the installation
Unlimited Resonance of Repetition, resulted in painterly translucency and an intriguing
fragility in the prints. Presence of Absence in particular focused the phenomenological idea
of thinking through making combined with Zen notions of asymmetry and transience. By
creating an installation of wooden matrices and carved out shavings, I focused on presenting
the process of carving itself. Using relief printing, non-toxic inks and Western papers for the
works in Mindful Repetitions, on the other hand, emphasises strong black and white contrast,
that in turn reflected repetitive and liberating actions of carving, and each one is a physical
consequence of the previous action. I have not used images to prepare these prints but carved
in automated recurring movement of hand while sitting on the plates. Carving was navigated
by mindful attention of being simply present in the moment. I have used the same approach
to my art making that I have learned through Zen meditation of just sitting and paying
attention to the breath.
When processing my plates I did not dismiss or ignore thoughts as they arose, but merely observing them as if they are passing clouds in the sky. In intervals of absorption with processes of making, carving was neither forced nor entirely deprived of control, although indubitably, chance and automation have become increasingly important aspects of my practice. Woodcut printmaking consists of labour-intensive but systematic steps. These unite art to craft, echoing the method of thinking through making or, put differently, the idea of oneness of mind and body. Furthermore, my practice merged woodcut printmaking with installation, sculpture and aspects of performance. This hybridity of my practice has first been unveiled with the To Sit, To Carve, To Live exhibition proposal, where I wanted to perform carving the plates in dialogue to Zen meditation practice. The crossing of art fields and mixing print with components of sculpture and installation evolved in Presence of Absence and culminates in my final show, Mindful Repetitions. Figures 52-65 show my processes of carving and printing, and prints from the cycle Mindful Repetitions, which have been created by assembling 12 and 16 sheets of 80 cm x 120 cm papers in one print, as in a collage or a visual riddle.

Performativity or bodily engagement has been present in the combination of plates, scale of prints and shavings. Both practice and writing have engaged with fields that usually are not put together. Combining the disparate bodies of knowledge and investigating them through both theory and practice was challenging. Merging apparently distinct theories, philosophies, methodologies and overlapping processes, my work sought to represent an example of expanded practice. Having said that, I did not find it completely necessary to adopt some of the more typical outcomes associated with expanded print, which are often now more sculptural or installation oriented. As mentioned above, Camnitzer’s challenge that print embodies aspects that much art aspires to, actually allowed me to retain some of what might be considered traditional print formats (ink, paper, rubbing/printing). Nevertheless, I employed a multiplicity of approaches that lead beyond seeing the print as the only or final product, instead fusing and equalising it with all parts of the making process.

In conclusion, the research on interconnectedness between ecologically engaged Buddhism and fine art printmaking represents a contribution within the field of my practice. One of the findings is, nonetheless, that although attention to processes and materials has a capacity to improve more ecological approaches to printmaking, it is still extremely difficult to make the
practice fully sustainable. I also found that non-predetermined, yet intellectual and bodily engagement with carving allowed unconstrained immersion with processes. Carving large plates and making hand-pulled prints alongside those made by presses enabled dynamic physical and intellectual absorption within processes; it is this integration that was my key methodology in investigating embodied ways of knowing.

By integrating written research and creative components throughout the chapters that examined my practice, I sought to analyse the development of my practice-based research, and also to position my art within the conceptual framework of the extended field of print and hybrid print practices today. My study has observed and responded to some new trajectories in my field, by attending up-to-date print exhibitions and conferences. These events placed a new light on my practice, specifically on my thinking around print installation and its crossing into the domain of sculpture. The 29th and 30th Ljubljana Biennials have endeavoured to deliver a critical edge for printmaking by inviting video, painting and installation alongside print. The problem of these biennial exhibitions is that it is not print that pushes borders but print that is pushed into nearly inexistent or invisible form. As mentioned above, I found Caminitzer’s position liberated me to embrace methods of traditional print, while remaining aware of other practices and possibilities.

Through my practice, I moved away from print as technology to print as mindful process. For me, the mutability and flexibility I have developed around my practice informed by combination of different theories and processes has been transformative. This may not necessarily bring identical results for all print practitioners. My intention was not to provide a recipe, but contribute to print as a field of expanded practice. All printmaking methods can contribute towards development of affirmative skills, such as perseverance, vigilance and thinking through making that may be well employed in education. I do not however propose that eco-Buddhist philosophy must be widely employed in combination with printmaking practices. Instead, I think that research on the interrelation of printmaking and eco-Buddhism has a power to contribute to knowledge through practice and theory; it has a potential to positively influence ecological directions of contemporary art.

Furthermore, there is no magic formula that can transform a practice or a process into something that can have an impact either locally or even more widely. However, it is possible
to reinvent methods that may alter the impact of the process on both the environment and the person carrying out the task, which is a good place to start. Ecological ideas encouraged by a spiritual teaching such as Buddhism cultivate and alter art-making approaches; they are one way of supporting the shift from harmful processes and materials towards safer technologies and methodologies. Following Camnitzer’s 2008 statement that art is a method to acquire and expand knowledge, I posit that print too is a system of developing particular creative and intellectual skills and knowledge. In view of pedagogical systems and strategies, the plausibility and perhaps inescapability of implementing non-toxicity in printmaking, seen through a prism of Buddhist values, represents a territory for future developments beyond this research. The educational aptitudes of printmaking to provide students with the practical, methodical and critical dexterities to manoeuvre across the contemporary art scene represent a conceivable perspective for my future research. Employing what I have learnt about printmaking through my practice and research in literature and theory in my future work I aim to cultivate the awareness about ecologically mindful art practices and support ‘green printmaking’ studio practices. My future work will aim to integrate and further extend the idea of ecologically friendly methods and to bring aspects of mindfulness regarding green printmaking, as well as embodied ways of knowing. This research will grow further, through thinking how my practice may evolve and involve with other forms of art.
Figures 52. Irena Keckes. 2014, process of carving one plates for *Mindful Repetition* cycle of prints.
Figure 53. Irena Keckes. 2014, printing process, inking the plate. Elam School of Fine Arts, print studio.
Figure 54 (above). Irena Keckes. 2013, process of carving.

Figure 55 (below). Irena Keckes. *Black Print 8*. 2013, woodcut print 240 cm x 240 cm.
Figure 56. *Black Print 9*. 2013, woodcut print, 240 cm x 240 cm. Exhibited at *Printmaking: Beyond the Frame*, group exhibition at Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, July/August 2014. Photo courtesy of Philip Tse.
Figure 57. Irena Keckes. *Mindful repetitions 1*. 2014, woodcut print 240 cm x 240 cm.

Figure 58. Irena Keckes. *Black Print 8* (detail). 2014, woodcut print 240 cm x 240 cm. Exhibited at *Printmaking: Beyond the Frame*, group exhibition at Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, July/August 2014. Reprinted with permission of artsdiary.co.nz.
Figure 59. Irena Keckes, *Mindful Repetitions 3*. (Image shows just printed artwork, one of prints from the cycle). March 2014, woodcut print, 122 cm x 480 cm. (Please note work is in progress – the paper underneath the print is not part of the final installation).
Figure 60. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions 4*. (Image represents just printed artwork, one of prints from the cycle). March 2014, woodcut print, 122 cm x 480 cm (Please note work is in progress).
Figure 61. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions 5*. (Image represents just printed artwork, one of prints from the cycle). March 2014, woodcut print, 122 cm x 480 cm (1/3 of entire print). (Please note work is in progress – the paper underneath the print is not part of the final installation).
Figure 62. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions*. August 2014. (Image shows testing of the exhibition in George Fraser Gallery).
Figure 63. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions*. August 2014. (Image shows testing of the exhibition in George Fraser Gallery).
Figure 64 and 65. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions*. August 2014. Woodcut print, 1440 cm x 122 cm. (Images show testing of the exhibition in George Fraser Gallery, Auckland).
Figure 68. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions*. September 2014. Final PhD exhibition, detail of the print on the floor, and the print on the wall in the background. Print on the wall: 1440 cm x 122 cm, print on the floor: 240 cm x 480 cm.
Figure 69. Irena Keckes. *Mindful Repetitions*. September 2014. Image shows detail of the woodcut print exhibited on the floor of the George Fraser Gallery, Auckland. Full size of the print: 240 cm x 480 cm, print consist of twelve 80 cm x 120 cm prints on BFK Rives paper.


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‘The Hermeneutics of Buddhist Ecology in Contemporary Thailand: Buddhadasa


--------. The Legacy of Asia and Western man. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1938.


i Sutra is in Sanskrit means a text in Hinduism or Buddhism. It literally means a thread or line that holds things together. Older sacred Vedas were, by contrast, memorised and never written onto paper. Mantra in Sanskrit means a sacred utterance, a sound, a syllable, a word, or group of words. Hinduists, Buddhists and also Christians believe that repetitions of these words have spiritual and healing power.

ii Eco-Buddhism, or ecologically engaged Buddhism, sometimes also referred to as green Buddhism, is the field that merges traditional Buddhist teachings to ecology. This field looks into how Buddhism may inspire mindful ecological attitudes and raise awareness towards contemporary pressing environmental issues. The idea to combine Buddhism and ecology, a movement that initiated in 1960s and fully developed in 1990s.

iii Sumi ink is black water-based ink used for centuries in East Asian calligraphy, Chinese painting, Japanese sumi-e paintings, and woodcut printmaking in China, Korea and Japan. It is believed that sumi was invented in early Han China (206 BC - 8 AD). “Sumi is made by kneading together soot from pine and other plants' seed oils, and bone glue, then adding perfume, casting it in a vessel, and letting it dry. It seems simple, but in order to make the most of these ingredients, it is best to use traditional methods by which Sumi was made 2000 years ago.” See: “The Producing of Sumi Ink Sticks,” Boku-Undo Co., @Ltd. http://www.boku-undo.co.jp/HP/eng/e produ.html, accessed May 7, 2015.

iv Baren is Japanese traditional tool for woodblock printmaking. It is a disk-like device made of paper and bamboo. Upper part of baren is made of many layers of paper, and inner part is made of coil, which is made of bamboo strings. This is all wrapped in a bamboo sheet. The printing process is as follows: Paper is placed on an inked block and the baren is used to burnish (firmly rub) the back of a paper to absorb ink. Bamboo sheet is called takenokawa, and the bamboo coil is called ategawa, while the back or cover, which holds the coil is called takenaka.

v Wabi-sabi is Japanese an ancient aesthetics, centring on the notions of transience and imperfection. Derived from Buddhism, it emphasizes the imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It is closely related to Zen teachings of impermanence, suffering and emptiness – absence of self-nature. Characteristics of the wabi-sabi aesthetic include asymmetry, simplicity, and irregularity of forms, naturalness, intimacy and modesty.

vi Mantra - a sound of word or group of words that according to the Buddhist belief may induce spiritual transformation, originated in the Vedic tradition in India, later adopted by both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Sutra in Sanskrit literally means a thread that holds things together, and signifies a combination of axioms, cannons. In Buddhism sutra texts are recorded oral teachings of the historical Buddha.

vii “Hermit” is a term used for any person who lives in solitude, a monk.

viii In Buddhism, a Buddha-nature means suchness of all things. It is a conception from the Mahayana tradition referring to clear or empty mind able to see things as they are. Mahayana
Buddhism, from where Zen emerged, speaks of **prajana** - the insight into the nature of things, achieved by understanding of impermanence and emptiness. For Mahayana Buddhism progressing on the spiritual path is a matter of learning to recognize destructive attachments, while emptiness teaching helps to recognize such attachments.

If my method was to be multi-coloured block printing and the block was smaller, I would be using the **kento** system. Kento is a Japanese word for **registration mark**. The difference between Western and Eastern registration mark systems is that in European print tradition registration marks are done on the surface that is placed on the bed of press under the plate (i.e etching or linocut plate), and in mokuhanga they are carved directly on the block. Carving registration marks directly on the block ensures precision in printing. One of the Chinese printmaking methods includes a specially designed table that holds the paper in the exact position for printing and in that way works as registration method enabling multicolour printing.

Mandala is a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the Universe.

**Satori** in Japanese means enlightenment.

**Washi** is Japanese handmade paper. Mino Washi type of paper has been used for producing **shoji** - Japanese sliding doors made of paper and wood, for producing craft and decorative paper products and even clothing items, as well as for producing lamps and light objects and for printing Japanese paper bill money. There are three types of plants to produce Japanese paper: **kozo** (makes a good paper for woodblock printing because of its ability to absorb water well), **mitsumata** (usually used in intaglio printmaking and for many other purposes) and **gampi** (used for production of monetary bills).

Besides generating personal artistic ideas and concepts, this study also included learning skills such as making our own tools for printmaking like **baren** and **hakobi**, as well as papermaking. Most common type of washi that I used during my studies in Japan is called **kozo**, second **nishinouchii** and Tosa washi from Kochi prefecture in Japan. **Hakobi** is small brush made out of a spare part of the bamboo sheet, while it’s main part is used for recovering **baren**. This brush is used for applying ink on the plate. Tools maintenance includes sharpening chisels, recovering **baren** and sizing paper.

The type of washi used in etching is made of the **mitsumata** plant, while the type of washi that is most suitable for printmaking is made of the **kozo** plant. Sizing means preparing the paper for printing with water-based inks so as the ink does not swim in the water and spread as in the watercolour painting, but absorbs into the paper while preserving the shape that is carved out of the block. Since all printing is done by water-based inks, paper needs to be prepared in order to avoid bleeding of ink in the paper. Paper is sized by mixture of animal glue and alum dissolved in water. A certain amount of animal glue is soaked into a certain amount of water until dissolved. Than it is cooked with alum to boiling point (but not boiled) and then applied with **dosabake** on each paper. After the paper is dried, it is rewetted with water by **mizubake**. **Dosabake** is the specially designed brush for applying **dosa** solution made of melted animal glue, which is than applied on the washi, and **mizubake** is a brush designed for applying water on the paper, and it is also used during the process of printing to wet the plate. These brushes are usualy made of horse and boar hair.
Shibumi is a Japanese word that mostly refers to the notion of balancing simplicity with complexity, constantly finds new meanings and definitions of beauty due to which its aesthetic value grows over the years.

Fukinsei is a Japanese word for the Zen notion of asymmetry.