

**Play, Chaos and Other Concerns – Reflection on my Studio Practice**

**by**

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When deciding where to take my work this year, I had one significant goal; how can I produce work without meaning other than marks or medium. My concept began in one colour but

managed to build into a broader range to explore ideas of line and form. The relevance of bringing colour into the work built towards the introduction of lines and how they work with one another. Relationships between colour and form led to experimentation into paper types, line size and layering ink. Working with these rules opened my production of work and allowed for my creative flow to take charge, giving me a sense of freedom. The ability to move forward from forms to line also allowed me to explore these ideas of development and how ideas can change; all without having a meaning.

Being able to have a more complex relationship with negative space has contributed to different aspects of developing my ideas. It has allowed for more emphasis to be placed onto the form and the spaces around them, creating abstraction and allowing the imagination to take hold. These ideas led me to artists like Bridget Riley, Josef Albers and Alan Charlton. Each holding a different relationship to colour and form, these artists have continued to help me develop my ideas of how to change my own boundaries in development and positions of colour with form. All of these ideas are reflected in my practice log.

**1. *Formal concerns and putting the possibilities of the material before the meaning of the activity taking place.***

In my recent work, it might be argued that the carrying out of the task has become more important to the concept behind it. By choosing to mainly focus on the line and the density of the colour, I can step back from the need for work having to have a meaning. I would argue, based on my practical research, that visual art does not always have to come from a place of profound thought separate from its making. Instead, the artist is at liberty to produce their work in the moment, giving the power to the page or the paint.

My largest area of research has been experimenting with ways of making work without need of a meaning beyond the page or the paint. I produce the lines in the colours I wish at the time, that is it, without a strong, deeper, more emotional tale. I suggest that, for me, by demanding a need for a meaning the naturally creative process are put in jeopardy, taking away from the making and forcing unnecessary revisions. The process should not be hindered by anything; except of the artist's ability to apply to the paper. The line is my focus, whether continuous or having a clear start and end. I have found that by choosing to work in a repetitive way all ideas surrounding what the outcome may be disappear. This process has led to the discovery of new ideas and the possibilities of how this can change and grow with the introduction of rules and colour.

By privileging process over meaning, I allow myself to broaden my own discipline and refocus my ideas of what is most important. Every time I place myself in front of the page, I solely focus on the rules of my practice; I grant myself the ability to not create with meaning. I have been able to give myself the freedom of creating without a limit, changing direction and the rules in which I loosely follow. Working this way allows me to achieve a different outcome every time. I allow myself to forget the previous works from that day or week or month and completely immerse myself in the new discoveries of colour and lines.

If focussing on the meaning of the work can hinder the creative flow of ideas, producing for the sake of producing can also have this result. My particular focus has been on the development of colour and line. Truly focussing on the impact of one line and the next has allowed me to experiment on a much larger scale to anything I have made previously, letting me achieve a new goal in the process of what I call 'producing without meaning'. Working in this way has caused me to question deeper the aesthetics of my work. Aesthetics play a more significant role in my work now than before, as they allow meaning to step back, favouring the subject itself over why it is there. Positioning is everything. It pushes a relationship with negative space. Throughout the year, I have

kept a practice log, noting research ideas and artists for future reference. Having the log has allowed me to go back to old ideas and reflect on where my work started and how it has built and changed.

I use 'dead' or 'negative' space in my work as I feel that the relationship between colour and the starkness of the page behind it evoke the feeling of exploration and depth. Is the form being engulfed by its surroundings or is it emerging as if from nowhere to fill the empty space? Negative space punches the colour out of what would be overfilled chaos and allows me to toy with relationships between colours and the forms in which they are taking with one another. Rounded and straight have become my most intriguing concern through this process.

Meaning itself is not completely absent from my work. I believe that would be impossible. Instead, what I am trying to reduce in the work is the wider narrative or analogical systems that may intrude or impose on its readings which do not interest me or which I am hesitant about. One particular artist's work came to the forefront in the 1960s, who dealt with similar ideas, in that she made strenuous efforts to confine the force of her paint to their surfaces.

## **2. *Artist Influences***

Bridget Riley's so-called 'op-art' work is clearly an influence now in the production of my own work. Her ability to create pieces which play with the viewer's visual perception really resonates with my own ideas. For example, my pieces using ink and masking tape may appear simple in structure, however when you keep looking at them, the lines somehow seem to start moving, vibrating with each other on the page. This visual effect works in a similar way to Riley's early work. It also begins to throw into question whether the lines taper in or stretch slightly out, changing the dead spaces between them, and this differs from Riley's use of the straight, defined line, but compare the way the lines co-operate with each other and the impact colour has on the appearance. It builds on the idea of optical illusions, and I see this as carrying a strong resemblance to Riley's work.

Riley's work also relates to nature, in the sense that she is exploring natural phenomena and how they affect the human eye but does not have to take on a specific meaning or suggested position. This is her attempt at presenting an objective truth, however partial. Her work can take on multiple meanings, much as I explore my own desire to create the pieces I do.

My proposal that privileging process above a programmatic or preconceived idea of meaning is in a way made evident in Riley's work and I suggest that this is what Riley also tries to achieve in

her own work and processes, pushing that boundary even further by having studio assistants create the final work under her supervision and so eliminating the suggestion of the importance of the sacred artists hand.

Like Riley, in continuing to produce work and look at the ideas of shape and colour working together, the quicker I have

moved away from working in monotonous. Her works such as

*'Composition with Circles 2'*

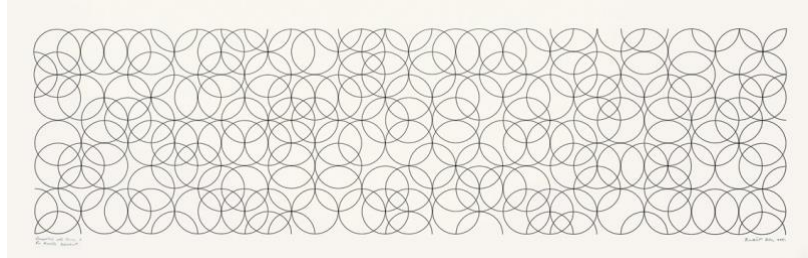
mirror my own ideas of

layering one single colour to

explore aspects of layering and monotone

explorations. Black on white was my main focus but

the ability to bring colour into the process has changed the way my work has developed. However, I sense that my work takes on a different meaning to Riley's. Riley's ambition and the coherence with which she approaches the work, using what seem simple ideas, take it to an extremely high level and pushes her on a world stage. Her use of scale to create an immersive experience pulls the audience into the depth of the colour and line. Her large-scale pieces operate as optical illusions, fully covering the canvas, while my own work takes on a more minimalist approach, using commercially available drawing paper, taking on small areas of the page and leaving large areas of negative space. Riley's subjects of colour and form overlap with my own exploration of what they do to space. She works on filling spaces with colour, whilst I look at the impact the white space has on colour. Her ability to fill space with continued form, however, differs from my ideas of minimalism and idea of 'less is more'.



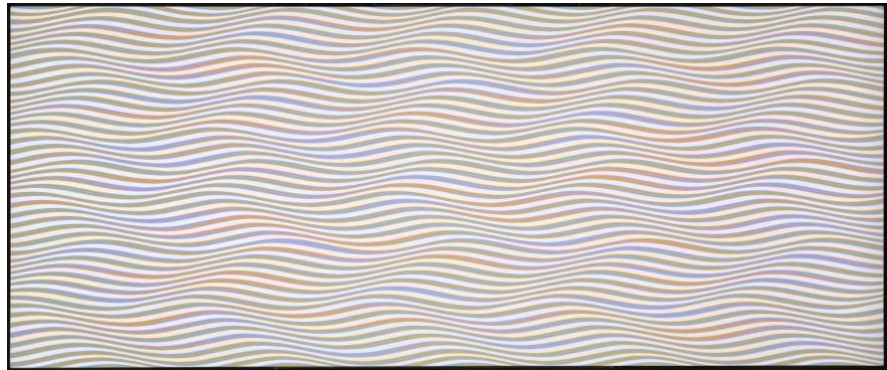
'Composition with Circles 2', Riley. 2001

The intensity of her colour and the composition of the work led me to question the ability that a curve can have on the imagination. During my examination of her work, my focus on each line began to change and I saw the shapes in front of me differently. Was the line straight or did it have a movement to it? Did I create this movement myself in my mind? When observing the work for long periods of time, I began to compare my own ideas with Riley's. Like Riley, I would originally draw on nature as my starting point, letting these ideas fill my mind before putting them down on paper. However, I now let the formal quality be my starting point, focussing on my composition and colour before exploring further.

Riley's *'To a Summers Day'* is a key example of the power of her use of composition and colour. The positioning

of the lines evokes the sense of movement and rhythm of formation.

The colours merge together, disturbing the viewer's ability to dissect what is in front



*'To a Summers Day'*, Riley. 1980

of them. The scale and position of each line, meticulously planned out beforehand in the studio, reflect her capacity of

being able to hold the work at a distance. This allows the viewer to almost literally see movement in the work, just by standing at a distance. Along with this, scale contributes to multiple interpretation.

The scale of the canvas brings forward the ideas of layering of colour, and its effect on the surface.

Does the colour emerge from the line or does it appear parallel to it?

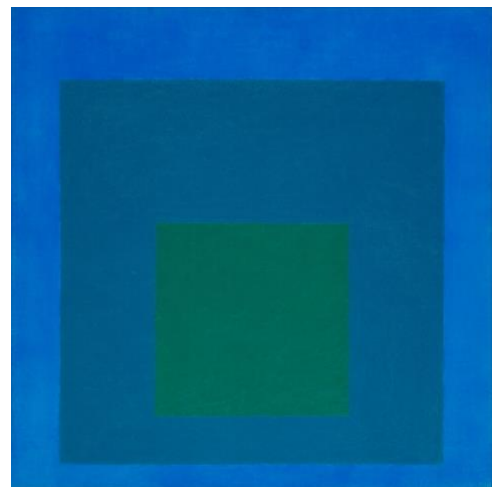
In my own work I try to explore these ideas by my use of inconsistent line size to create different sensations. Riley uses this in her work by using the 'line as [her] agent'. The line becomes the purpose of the work, the process itself becomes the work.

During the process of making, my eyes look toward colour and how each will work in different formations, choosing whether to work in straight or curved lines depending on different elements; paper and size being my most common starting points. Working at a larger scale has allowed me to really use space and colour effectively. Moving away from monotone to work in colour, much like Riley, has allowed me to explore its relationship to the page. However, Riley's work takes a step back from the personal, choosing instead to foreground impersonal, formal qualities, like composition and colour relationships. While I believe my own work employs these qualities, I am unwilling to relinquish the improvisational and the personal, in developing the few rules I keep to, to make my lines. The line I create has personal aspects that are undeniable and are part of what meaning the process does have for me: the way I draw it onto the page, the amount of colour I have in each design. I keep the curves in each form as unique as possible, drawing reference from previous work to the next. While Riley's work does consist of un-matching patterns, there is more of a sense of formal repetition than in my improvisations.

This tension between process and sense of human touch is present in the consideration of many artists exploring similar ideas. This led me to examine Josef Albers' work for clues as to how I should proceed, in his portrayal of squares and forms in the compositions, exploring the density of the colour and form, passing over the need for the work to have an allegorical, literal or other meaning or theme.

Composition is an aspect which I have developed in my own work. Instead of using the three-dimensional shape as an idea of form and nature, I have begun to explore the idea of the shape on the page; how the line and colour operate in themselves, rather than the concept behind it. Albers chooses colours which will interact with each other, sometimes almost glowing against each other.

His key focus is the relationship colours have with one another and he reduces his means to simple, overlapping squares and rectangles to explore this. *'Study for Homage to the Square: Beaming'* brings forward this premise for working. By adjusting the saturation of the hues within a simple composition, he explores the interaction of colour, Texture created by the use of a palette knife to apply the paint adds a dimension and increases the impact of the pure colour on the retina.



*'Study for Homage to the Square: Beaming'* Albers. 1963

This ability to produce work that is geometric and minimal whilst also not having a subject matter has a personal effect on my ideas about what is possible in art, 'He sought to show that colour alone could carry the full weight of meaning, emotion and aesthetics.' (Albers and Craig-Martin, 2004)

Albers chooses a simple, repetitive composition for his paintings. By avoiding compositional difference, colour can conjure up a number of ideas and deflect from any individual narrative or other literary reading. 'Colour, which is a quality of perception, rather than of objects themselves, may be specified according to hue, value and intensity. To Albers, measurable qualities could be termed 'factual facts', since they do not change. By contrast, colour interaction, which is relative to circumstance and environment, he referred to as 'actual (or active) fact'.' (Dantzig, 2003).

However, Albers practical exploration of colour explores an extraordinary range of possibilities and demonstrates a deep knowledge of its capacity. Even within the relatively simple idea of tones being able to change in natural light he is able to make an astonishing array of visual effects.

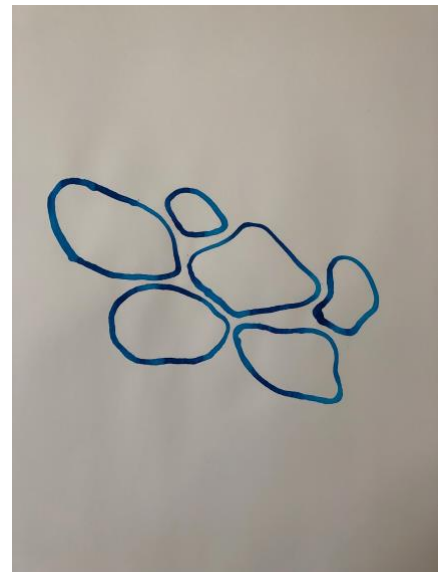


In my own visual research, I try to explore the phenomenology of colour. When looking at my own work, I often compare lines and forms to the shadows they make on the page. I look at how the line I have made using masking tape compares to its counterpart. Frayed edges become wavy lines and taped ends become thick lines. I also begin to notice differences in colours when placing them next to each other. While Albers would place squares of different tones together in one painting as well as different shades together entirely, I have also worked hues together such as cooler hues with one another whilst also exploring ideas of opposite ends of the spectrum together.

Exploring the relationship of colours together has played a key part in my development and research, with Albers' theories providing evidence on the ability of colour to take centre stage in the creative process. Working this way has allowed me to create a visual experience and learn to push the idea of personal expression into the background.

Albers' use of colour also relates to Riley's use of it. Both artists use intense amounts of colour and perception resulting in a uniquely individual experience. Their ability to use colour on both a small and large scale has allowed my own exploration to develop in similar ways. For example, when starting, I largely worked in black ink on white paper. These techniques worked and allowed for a starting point of experimentation. Once my research developed into both Riley and Albers, though, I found myself exploring further with different colour along with different paper colours and types. I started this process with Cerulean blue hue, allowing development with both line and density. This is something I reflected on in my practice log, noting ideas of colour and reflecting on methods and materials. Having the log keeps ideas together and grows development. Making notes of this allows reflection on what I have made and continues the

development of the work over the course of the year, like the beginning of ideas into singular or untouching forms. The work progressed from joint and overlapping forms to the use of negative line and space. I allowed myself to linger over particular areas with the ink longer than others, embracing this idea of reducing my control of colour. This work began to develop into a much bigger idea; less form and more experimentation with line and space. The allowance of white space to work with the form was an important point in the development and continuation of work throughout the duration of the year.



Rounded form continued to be my first choice of subject. I worked across multiple scales and sizes, choosing each shape to be the subject of the page. Michael Fried describes it as, ‘...a conflict has gradually emerged between shape as a fundamental property of objects and shape as a medium of painting.’ (Fried, 1998) which I have adopted in my own work, as having both the shape become the object and the medium encourages exploration, with composition becoming the forefront. Limiting the number of shapes to a page explored Albers theory of colour in form and the visual effect this can have. The contrast of the cerulean blue against the white of the page allows to eye to move freely, deciphering the space between them as well as the relationship they have with one another. White negative space acknowledges the colour placed beside it whilst allowing the colour to take control, darkening in some areas, spreading along the grain in others.

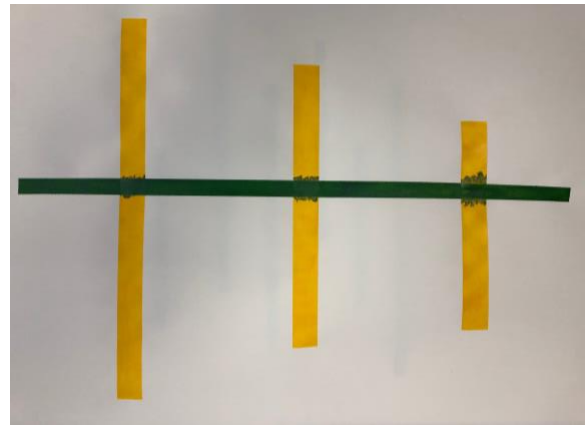
### ***3. The exploration and choice of colour and paper***

In order to make a systematic examination of the effect of colour, I decided to explore blue as my first experiment and chose Cerulean blue hue and Prussian blue, both in acrylic ink. I felt that blue might bridge the gap between the white page and the black pen. I found that it tonally changes through each stroke, deepening where each line joins to create the shape. When this deeper tone sits next to the brighter stroke, the eye is somehow pulled into the depth of the colour. I have then explored these ideas further with different colours. Deep violet has been a key example of this, and I found that the joins of the lines became much heavier than the first strokes in the rounded forms as well as deepening in multiple places in my line drawings. I have attempted to embrace this lack of consistency and explored the contrast of this between the heaviness of the white background. This deepening may be the result of the specific ink-type or the pigments themselves.

The starkness of the white allows the colour to take centre stage and highlights the importance of its positioning and relationship with its other elements and forms. I have used cooler tones as I felt they enable this sense of density in the line and application. My experimentation has strongly focussed so far on Cerulean blue hue. I can achieve both consistent and multi-dimensional lines and forms with this shade. I have also used Sap green and found similar results.

I have developed this apparently simple process in various ways, as well, including the use of ripped tape to create a jagged edge, which allows me to elaborate different aspects of the design. I was originally unsure on whether to work with an uneven line as all my previous work had followed a specific rhythm. However, I was interested to see how a small change in the process might alter the whole. I discovered that working this way also changed my colour design. The ability to see the colour change as it spread out of the line allowed my rules to change.

The use of masking tape continued to develop the idea of change in lines. Working jagged edges with smooth lead me away from tape, drawing lines freely. I kept one simple rule with lines; to draw them with a flat headed brush. Organic lines began to grow, some ends slightly larger than it began, some leaning more to one side than they had planned. But these lines opened a door into a new way of working, stripping away the need for consistency and



structure and the freedom to work within limited means, in a manner similar to that of Sean Scully.

Scully's method of painting abstract freehand is clearly relevant to my own work. Architectural structures appear to influence the form and lines with panels pushed up against each other, almost suggesting that of fencing panels.

My own work has investigated a similar idea in that of layering lines together. The inconsistency and lack of lines varies from Scully's intense covering of the space, but both effectively explore the idea of unstructured line. Compositional structure allows for some rules in production but inconsistency in the ink created a new dimension in the system. The spreading of the ink presented a lack of personal control and imposed a new idea in the relationship between the colour and the form. Irregularity in spreading initially caused me panic but I continued with thoughts of minimal rules and emphasis of discipline and process over meaning. Like Albers, Scully's intensive use of layering paint to create texture manipulates the relationship the colours have against each other, tasking the viewer in exploring their own interpretation of tone.

These tones evoke a sense of attachment, the viewer assuming there is a sense of meaning behind the choice. Scully's work is often non-representational, choosing to draw instead from memories of either place or object, not having a rooted concept. The artist and writer David Batchelor produces in a similar way, using colour from everyday environments as the base point. His ability to use colour is calculated to alter the audience view of the piece, 'I often use colour to attack

form, to break it down a little or begin to dissolve it... I also use forms to prevent colour becoming entirely detached from their everyday existence.' (Batchelor, 2019).

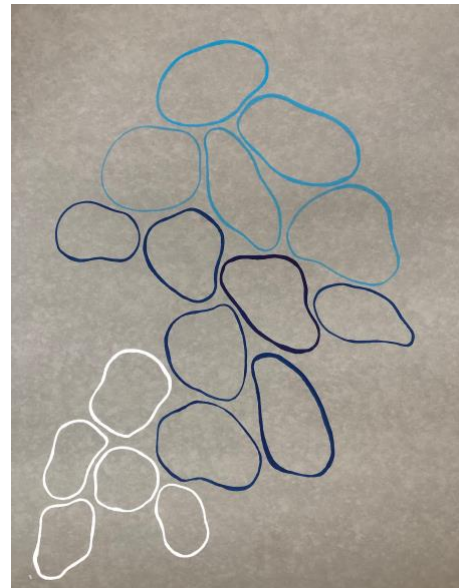
Though working with different subjects, Scully and Batchelor both consider the relationship colour has to one another. The use of bold colours in basic forms gives precedence to form. My work takes on aspects of Batchelor's sculptures with his purposely erratic use of colour. He takes his inspiration from bright everyday objects, not choosing the colour specifically for the piece. I work in the same way, using whatever colour is in front of me at the time. I do however work with more basic colours than Batchelor, placing primaries against each other and exploring the relationships they have to the form.

His work '*Chromophobia*' has really led me to explore colour on a much deeper level. Batchelor delves into ideas of colour across different cultures and its relative lack of significance in western culture. According to Batchelor, '*Chromophobia* manifests itself in the many and varied attempts to purge colour from culture, to devalue colour, to diminish its significance, to deny its complexity.' (Batchelor, 2000). This idea of the use and importance of colour occurred frequently in my work. Is there a consequence in using the Cerulean blue shade? What relevance does the use colour have?

The question of colour and tone and its significance throughout this project has led me in different directions. Starting out with just black ink, I have been able to move through the spectrum, exploring how colour changes and how they change the dynamics of the form and the paper. Batchelor's theories of the devalued aspects of colour are thoughts I have also had. I began to believe that colour choice was not significant, the line and form were the most important aspect. However, whilst the project has grown, the decision of which ink to use has become more prominent. Particular shades of yellow seem to just work better than others, and I often found myself unconsciously choosing these to achieve a better outcome. However, it would be impossible to choose a colour without some kind of conscious choice, so I see this as being part of the small group of rules I have set. The complexity of colour and its aesthetics in the design when viewed together as a collective emphasises the importance of the drawn shape and line.

I have discovered that the density of the line in comparison to the colour makes each element seem to vibrate across the page. The boldness and brightness of the colour affects the influence of the work on the eye, whilst mixing colours together changes the impression the viewer has. However, the paper colour will also have an impact on the density of the inks. Yellow Orange

Azo works much better on brighter white paper along with Sap green. Deep violet compliments the tone of the creamy paper, as the paper's colour acts as a complementary. Multiple tones of blue work well on both shades. Undeniably, I work with tones which I prefer on an unconsciously aesthetic level over others, however the exploration of paper shades has resulted in me questioning which works best. Throughout the duration of this project, I have chosen to predominately work on white cartridge paper. White creates a starkness around the ink, allowing the colour to create depth and be confined against its background. By using this type of paper, I have allowed myself to not become precious with the outcome, allowing the colour to take control of the page. Working on the slightly different shades of white has developed the concepts of the relationships between the colour and the paper. The way the ink is able to sit on the paper without bleeding or spreading broadens its possibilities for pooling and changing tone.



Exploration of paper has been a new idea this year. Not working on canvas was a decision made early into the project. Explorations of multiple types of paper along with canvas were made, resulting in the exclusive use of white cartridge paper. The line made on canvas tended to foreground texture, whilst I was trying to achieve as smooth of a surface as possible. I was not emotionally attached to the type of paper but found a sense of content in using mass produced cartridge. It fit the task I was taking out. I was able to get a full sense of the colours in front of me, not being influenced by their surroundings.

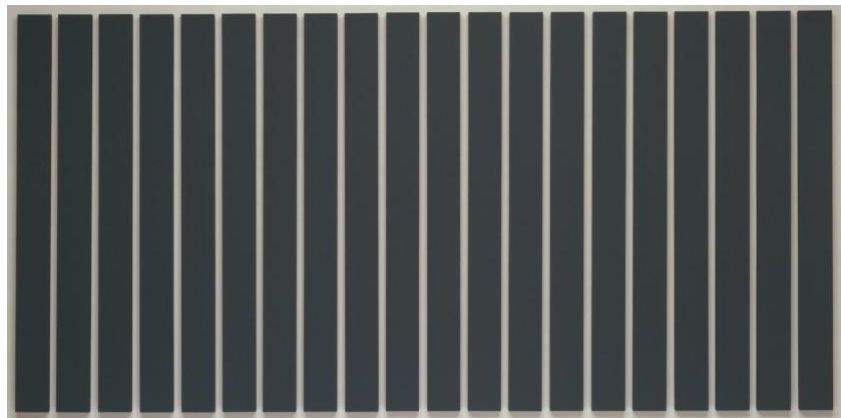
#### ***4. Meanings and measurements***

The work I produce has no literary or narrative significance. It's the process which has become the subject. Which colour I choose and which paper I think will work better often become the biggest choice of the studio day. The natural flow of the shape takes centre stage with the boldness of the ink protruding outwards, as if separate to the paper at times. Through having the main emphasis being form or colour, I am able to think logistically of placement, forcing a shift in the structure of the design. Alan Charlton's concepts of working to a limited number of rules mirrors my own ideas about creativity. Keeping to a ridged colour palette along with specific dimensions and

shapes, Charlton is able to embark on a range of ideas on a limited basis. Constructing largely conceptual, grey works, Alan Charlton ‘explores the formal permutations of abstract painting - especially concerning notions of repetition – within the context of two specific restrictions he places on his work.’ (Martin, 2015). Working in this way allows Charlton to explore minimalist ideas by using one constant element whilst observing the paintings as objects. Giving meaning in this way creates a sculpture like existence. The grouping and cascading elements of my own drawings react in similar ways, asking the viewer to question whether the forms are building upon one another or if they are dropping away. An example from my own work would be the paring of yellow and green forms positioned next to each other whilst moving down the page. They draw closer and closer to the edge suggesting they could be falling, dropping from one to the next.

The series ‘20 Part Line Painting’ is a good example of Charlton’s minimalistic work, although

its production on 20 large, thin canvases differs from his normal practice through its use of multiple canvas for one piece. The idea that each canvas falls to specific measurements and dimensions highlights the



consistency in production. My own work has developed in a similar way, yet to my own small set of rules, to do with

*20 Part Line Painting*, Charlton. 1991

the arrangement of the lines on the page along with thickness and consistency and intensity of ink, and the lack of emotional attachment and need for fast production, and my choice of flat headed brushes against round. Each of these choices collect into the specific guidelines of creating the series.

His canvas engulfs the viewer with its opaqueness characteristic of practical production. The level of detail in the measurements and consistency throughout his career compare with that of Bridget Riley. Collectively, they achieve both structure and form whilst also creating an extra dimension. Likening this to my own explorations with line, I am able to see each one singularly as well as grouped together on the paper. Each time I paint a line, I am able to begin the process of positioning the next, without exact measurements or a programmatic system. Like Charlton, the piece begins in one colour, later broadening out into others or the addition of a new colour to the piece. I continue to add to the piece until I am satisfied that it is complete or ‘full’. However, my own work differs in that my interests lie in colour relationships, and rather than using the almost graphic

forms of individual painted panels, I use colour as the motive force in the work; instead of the addition of extra panels, the addition of the extra colours moves the eye across the page to explore the full surface. This came about by accident. I had planned for the colours to be layered together without interfering with one another. However, when removing the masking tape, the ink had bled through. The merging of the colours opened a whole new idea on the associations between them. The yellow took on a new depth whilst the green and purple developed into new shades.

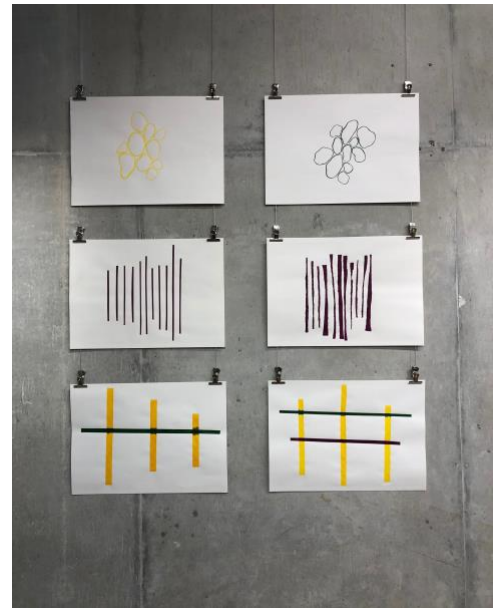
Each of these developments has led to a freeing of the restraints and pressures I have when starting a new piece. The lack of rules I have created for myself has enabled a wide range of issues to be presented and then worked out over time.

## **5. *Exhibition***

The final part of the year came with exhibiting. Having an exhibition would require myself to refine my work. I would need to refine my collection of work into a small group of pieces to represent my ideas throughout the year. Due to the subject of my work this year, I decide to only hang six pieces. As my work has taken on a minimalistic aspect this year, I felt that it would be the best way to show. Only having six pieces really gave me a sense of structure and allowed for the work to show the idea.

The process of choosing work to exhibit gave me the opportunity to reflect on what I had completed over the past year. The work would need to reflect my original ideas but also show how these had developed and grown. Having a variety would allow the natural growth of the pieces to be explored, without oversaturation from multiple pieces together. Each piece was chosen to show a new idea in the project. The first two pieces show where my idea began. Using forms of different colour emphasised the direction in which I was about to undertake for the project. The decision not to include black and white works defined the direction for the rest. Choosing lines pieces next displayed the development of my work through the year. Starting with the jagged, tapered lines and continuing with exploring the straight, ridged lines from the masking tape. Being able to explore both ideas really broadened the growth of my work, allowing myself to delve into colour and form exploration. Having these pieces as the next stage of the exhibition was natural; they showed the deeper use of colour and what the use of line would bring to my work. Using the jagged edge piece would also demonstrate the lack of control I was beginning to embrace in my work.

The final two pieces would reflect the most recent ideas that I was working on. I chose to include two multiple line works, both in similar colours. These were some of the later works I was producing, finding a rhythm with blurring colours and lines together. It was important for me to include these against the other pieces as it was able to show the development of initial ideas. I was able to bring together all the ideas I had had throughout the year and put them into this simple process, layering coloured lines together and letting them take their own course. These fully embodied the direction I was taking and completed the six-piece process of my work through the year. The inclusion of these pieces came later than the first four. Excluding these from exhibiting would have created a sense of cutting off, not being able to show how the work has changed over a small period.



Deciding to hang the work using bulldog clips kept with my original ideas of minimalism. Not framing the work meant no intrusion from shadowing of glass or the 'boxing in' of a frame, meaning the pieces could work as a collective, along with being seen individually. Having the paper touch the wall behind created a sense of flow between the six pieces. Each one is meant to be seen as one, as well as the concept of development between them all. I believe a frame would limit the idea of the negative space around the form and line. Clipping the corners opens the paper, working with ideas of minimalism and the allowance of the form to be the main subject. The clips are not intrusive of the work. By having a 2x3 hanging system, having just two pieces of each stage of the development allows the viewer to consider the work behind the exhibition and how it came to this stage of 6 works. The process of getting to the exhibition has come from the continued production throughout the year; the changing of ideas and the experimentation of colour and line.

The decision to hang six pieces came quite easily. The theme of the project ultimately came to minimalism and form, and I wanted to keep this idea through the exhibition. Potential to hang eight pieces were discussed but, eventually, I chose six to have control of the ideas throughout the year. Hanging eight pieces would have included four of the same series of pieces. By doing this, I would have changed the dynamic of the first four, separating them into different projects almost. Keeping to two of each stage gave consistency in showing the process of the year.



## **6. Concluding Thoughts**

The studio practice covers the period from October 2018 to September 2019, where I have made the significant advances in my practical outcomes. Moving from monotone forms into brightly coloured mixtures of form and line, singularly as well as combined. This process has advanced my ability to produce on a larger scale, including looking at producing small series of works.

Drawing from the main ideas of the work this year, I have been able to explore concepts of meaning and meaningless art and what impact it has on my work. I believe it to be impossible for there to be no motive during the creative process. However, I have found that work can be produced with minimal meaning, instead allowing the creative process to take over, drawing freely in which colour is preferred at the moment. Through different stages of art history, art without meaning comes and goes. Its focus on the method behind the production is something which is always considered, however for this to be the point of the work is still far from common. Bridget Riley's ability to work this methodically in her studio has led to the development of her colours and ability to create form and line. My work from this year has taken on similar aspects to Riley's concepts and methods, colour being the most predominant one. Privileging these ideas above anything else has opened the floor for free creativity and production. The importance of carrying out the task has extending into my decision making in shape and colour.

Having the ability to take the idea of no meaning and produce a series of works in this premise has led to the exploration of several artists and theories. These artists have developed the range of work I have produced over the course of the year with the introduction of new colour and form. Form is the most important part of my work as it is what gives it its bones. 'Dead space' builds a relationship with the form, questioning its position on the page and how it works with other elements. Each of the artists that I have researched have looked at these ideas in their own way; Riley's large-scale shape formations along with Albers' intense use of colour for example. Each of these artists has influenced my own work in some way.

Being able to explore these ideas has also developed my ability to write along with my work. This year I have kept a practice log, noting down ideas and processes I have used and trialled. Keeping a log has allowed me to watch my ideas changing and growing into the idea of meaningless production and what this concept means. Noting down the changes has encouraged my work to explore the introduction of multiple colours and the experimentation

of mixing them together. Working like this has stepped up my ideas producing work in a systematic way, getting out multiple pieces at once. This is reflected in the style of my work and the minimalism which I behold.

Colour emphasised the capacity of work produced this year. If I had not introduced the idea of changing from monotone to colour, I do not believe I would have been able to achieve the outcomes that I have. Concepts would have become stagnant, with production slowing and works becoming repetitive in colour and capacity.

Looking at the relationships Riley and Albers have with colour has really increased my ability to use it without conscious thought. As part of the small number of rules I follow for my work, allowing the introduction of colour has progressed ideas of form into line, and what relationship they have towards one another. Change in colour can influence whether it should become a form or a line. I was able to explore all these ideas in the studio in multiple ways. Having this capacity enabled my writing to develop alongside my practical. Artist influence pushed my ideas further, considering their ideas and how they could work in my own practice, like Riley's methodology behind her shapes or Albers' intense uses of colour. All these aspects have shaped the direction that my work has taken over the course of the year.

The concept of working without meaning appears from time to time. Giving privilege to the materials have can broaden the ability to truly produce from yourself. The need for meaning has been something I have struggled with throughout my practice, the feeling of forcing ideas through practice always prominent. However, the production of work this year has begun a new idea of shape and form being the meaning, taking in the negative space just as importantly as everything else. This confirms my ideas of working without meaning, instead privileging material and creative flow.

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Practice Log –

12.10.2018 –

Exploration of Eva Hesse. I started to link the idea between art and physical health, her idea of joining the disjointed. The idea of the repeated pattern and why this keeps having a relevance in my own work.

15.10.2018 –

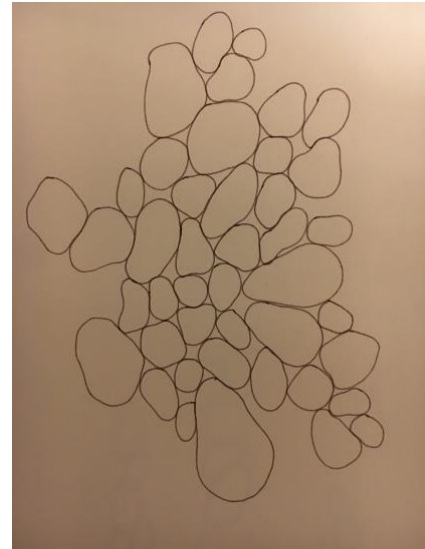
Began to work in different colours (browns and greys) to compare against the work I previously do. I like the idea of the pattern becoming layered in different colours. Possibly try layering different colours over each other and explore these ideas on a larger scale?

16.10.2018 –

De Saumarez, M, 2002, Basic Design: The Dynamics of Visual Form, A & C Publications, London

‘Debased attenuations of traditional academic teaching placed too little value on looking in order to see and experience, and too much looking merely to verify the ‘facts’ of intellectual preconceptions – anatomical, perspectival, botanical; technical method became more important than the power of invention...’

Saumarez pg. 13



19.10.2018 -

When thinking about the ideas of cellular form, am I actually thinking about the self? Myself...Self and the Cell

26.10.2018 –

The disjointed form. What is my ability to spread myself and the idea of the form across the page? The disproportioned and dispersion of the cell forms the basis of my ideas and developments. The spreading of the cell truly reflects my inner self

30.10.2018 –

Do the cells need to be connecting? What is some connected and some dispersed from the central form

But what is the central form? Is there one and why does it have to begin at one point. Each significant part spreads across the page as if multiplying, corroding the previous and the next in its path – sticking together like glue

5.11.2018 –

The brushstroke of the pen is now becoming an important aspect in the depth of the shape

7.11.2018 –

The tentative nature of overlapping the shapes to create a connection is important. It shows the relationship between the form and its development between each individual one. Does the development of one of the shapes influence the other or does each element have its own path to develop? Each form has been purposely placed over one another but the unconscious positioning in each piece reflects the idea of the same

14.11.2018 –

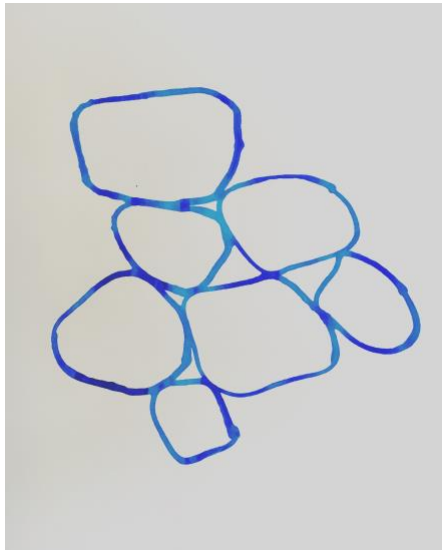
Beginning to explore the ideas of Phillip Guston and Brice Marden. Also exploring the ideas of Buddhists and their methods and disciplines. Why do they work in the way they do? How is their method of working reflected in the artistic world?

Also exploring surface and texture with the wax/oil paint method. By mixing wax and oil paint together, I can scratch away the surface to create a layer of design. The intensity of the scratch can be altered and the density of the wax

4.12.2018 –

‘The work is open to interpretation. The importance is the shape and the negative spaces between them. The colour does not have a relevance but instead is open to interpretation. Shape, ground and colour become to subject over the deeper meaning. There is no means but your own.’

Blue is the natural step between black and white. It’s the middle ground



Colour has become the focus now; the shape has been forgotten over time and the process is key. Begin to explore Josef Albers. Research Bridget Riley.

30.1.2019 –

The density of the line in comparison to the colour makes each element seem to vibrate across the page. The boldness and the brightness of the colour affects the impact of the work, confirming its importance to the piece.

5.2.2019 –

Paper colour also impacts on the density of the ink.

Yellow Medium Azo is brighter on white

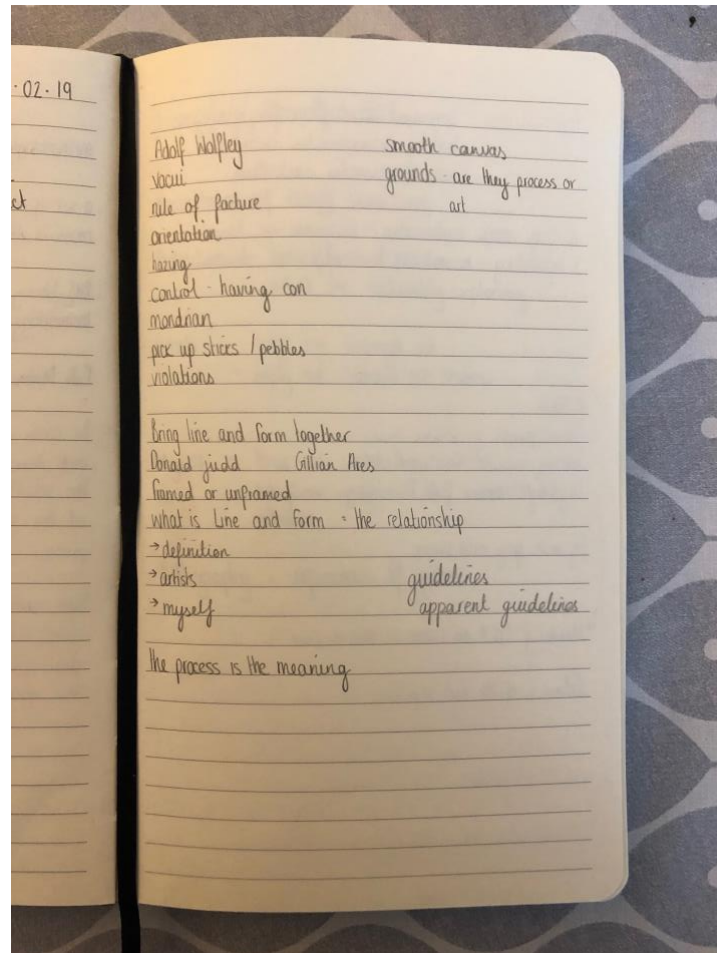
Deep Violet compliments the creamy tone

Blue shades work on both (almost a go between for the shades)

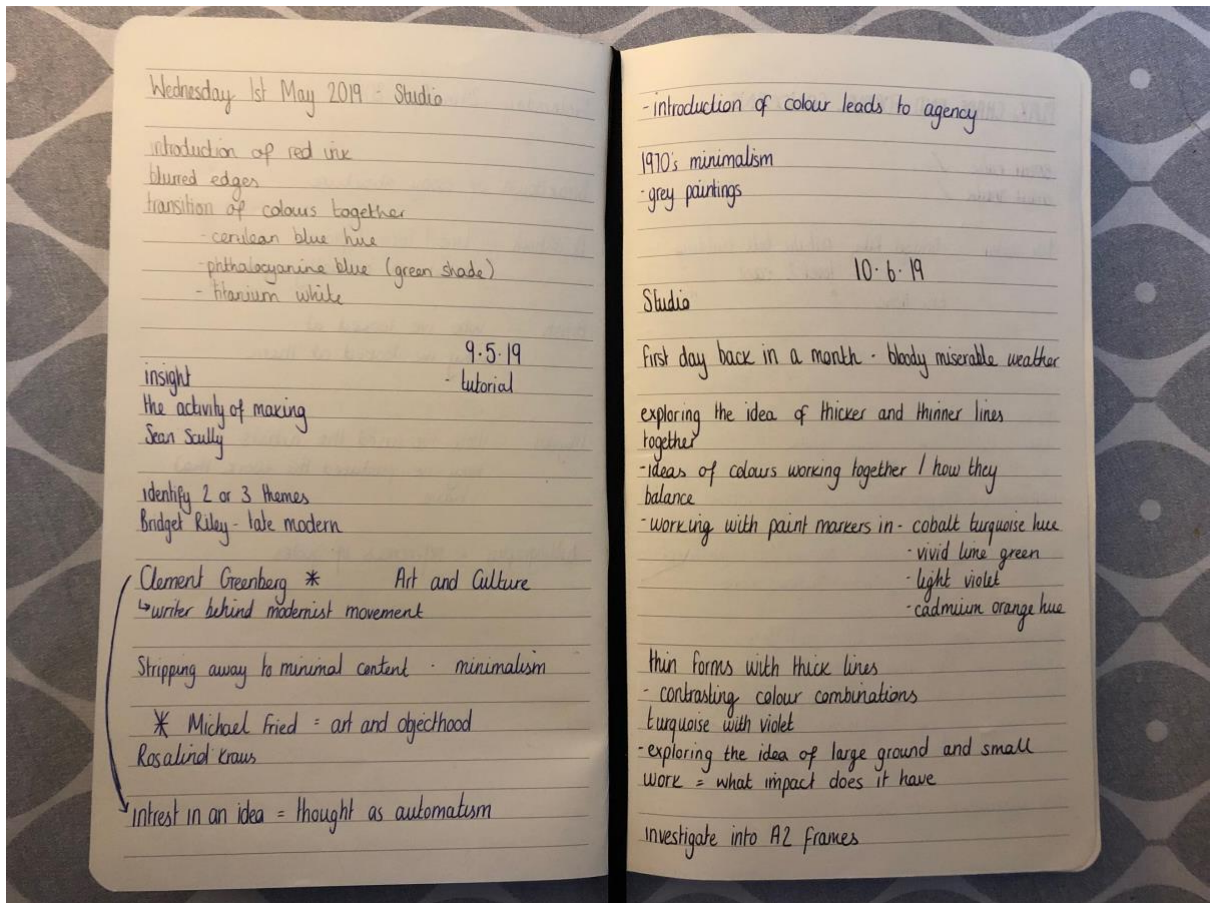
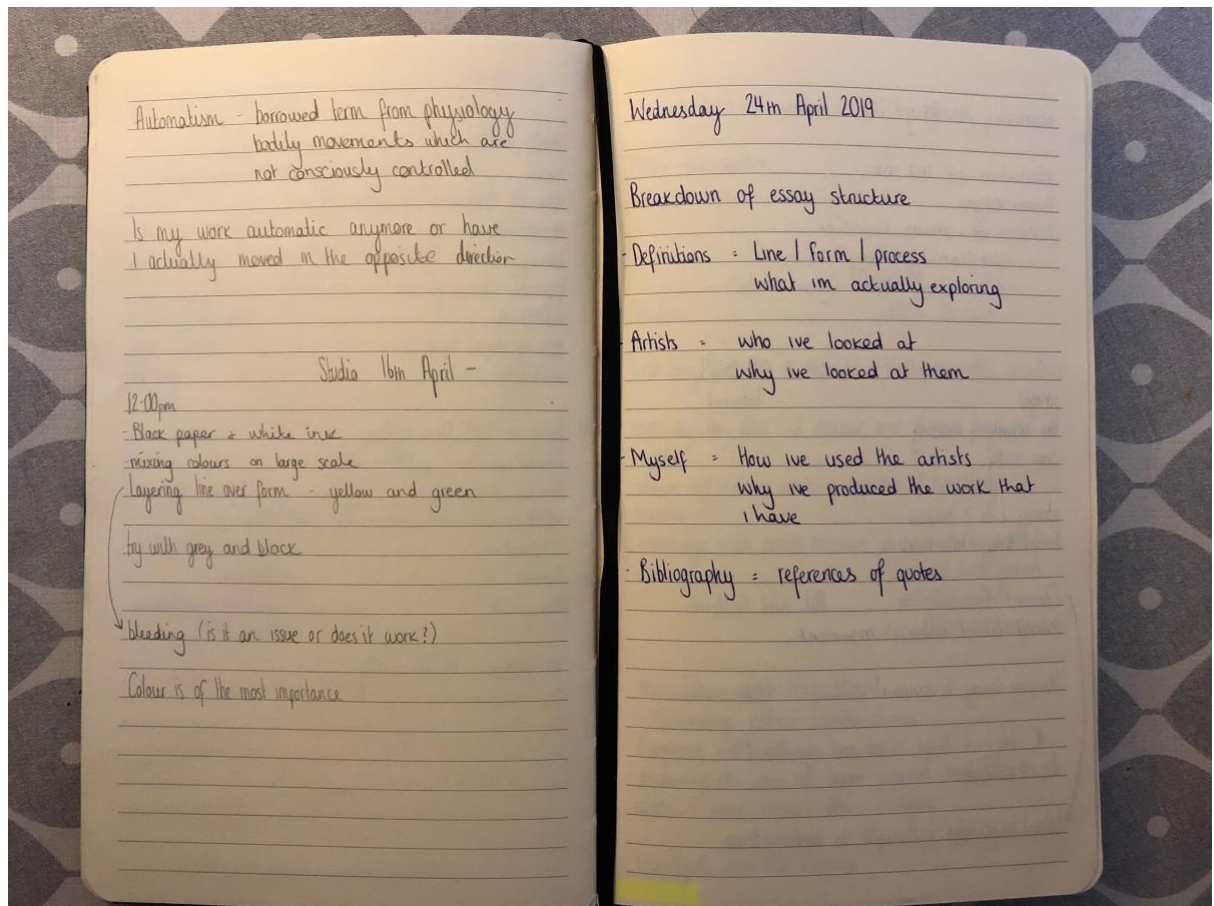
10.4.2019 –

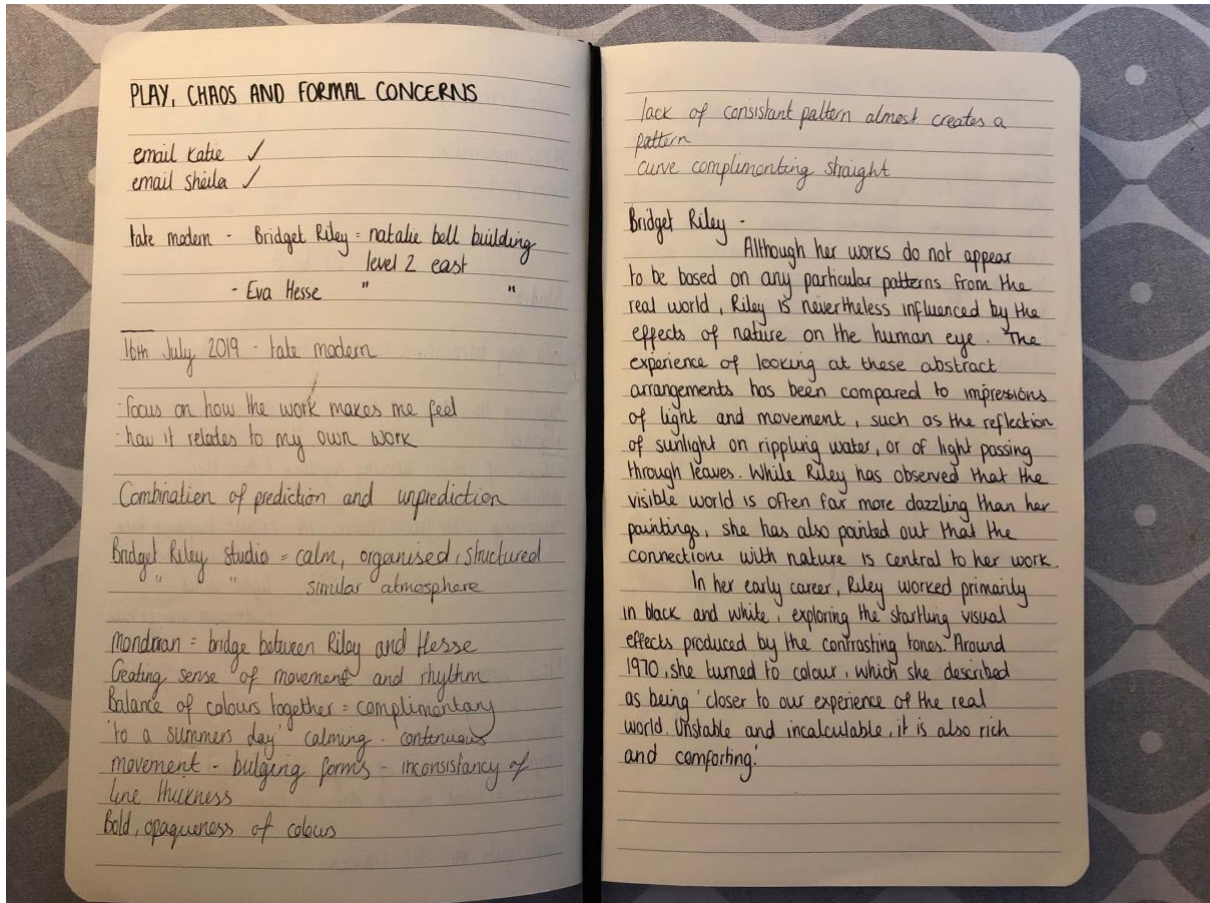
Whilst reading up the definition of automatism on the Tate website, I began to question whether my style of work would really fall under this category anymore? My process began with producing shape or line on a page. However, I find myself focussing more and more on the position of the line in relation to the previous...the warped form to the density of the ground I’m working on. Is it possible

for me to consider this automatic drawing anymore or do I have to begin to consider the idea that I in fact follow a process driven idea? My work follows a set of rules which I follow unknowingly.









## PLAY, CHAOS AND FORMAL CONCERNS

email katie ✓  
email Sheila ✓

late modern - Bridget Riley = natalie bell building  
level 2 east  
- Eva Hesse " "

16th July 2019 - late modern

- focus on how the work makes me feel
- how it relates to my own work

Combination of prediction and unpredictation

Bridget Riley studio = calm, organised, structured  
" " similar atmosphere

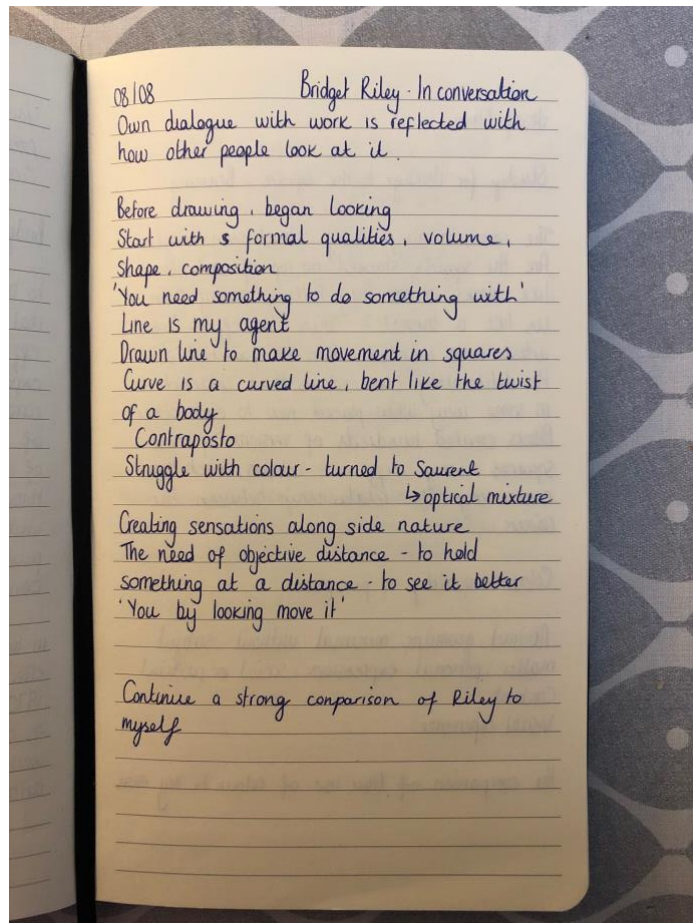
Mondrian = bridge between Riley and Hesse  
Creating sense of movement and rhythm  
Balance of colours together = complimentary  
'to a summers day' calming - continuous  
movement - bulging forms - inconsistency of  
line thickness  
bold, opaqueness of colours

lack of consistent pattern almost creates a  
pattern  
curve complementing straight

Bridget Riley -

Although her works do not appear to be based on any particular patterns from the real world, Riley is nevertheless influenced by the effects of nature on the human eye. The experience of looking at these abstract arrangements has been compared to impressions of light and movement, such as the reflection of sunlight on rippling water, or of light passing through leaves. While Riley has observed that the visible world is often far more dazzling than her paintings, she has also pointed out that the connections with nature is central to her work.

In her early career, Riley worked primarily in black and white, exploring the startling visual effects produced by the contrasting tones. Around 1970, she turned to colour, which she described as being 'closer to our experience of the real world. Unstable and incalculable, it is also rich and comforting.'



08/08

Bridget Riley - In conversation

Own dialogue with work is reflected with how other people look at it.

Before drawing, began looking

Start with 5 formal qualities, volume, shape, composition

'You need something to do something with'

Line is my agent

Drawn line to make movement in squares

Curve is a curved line, bent like the twist of a body

Contraposto

Struggle with colour - turned to Saurent

↳ optical mixture

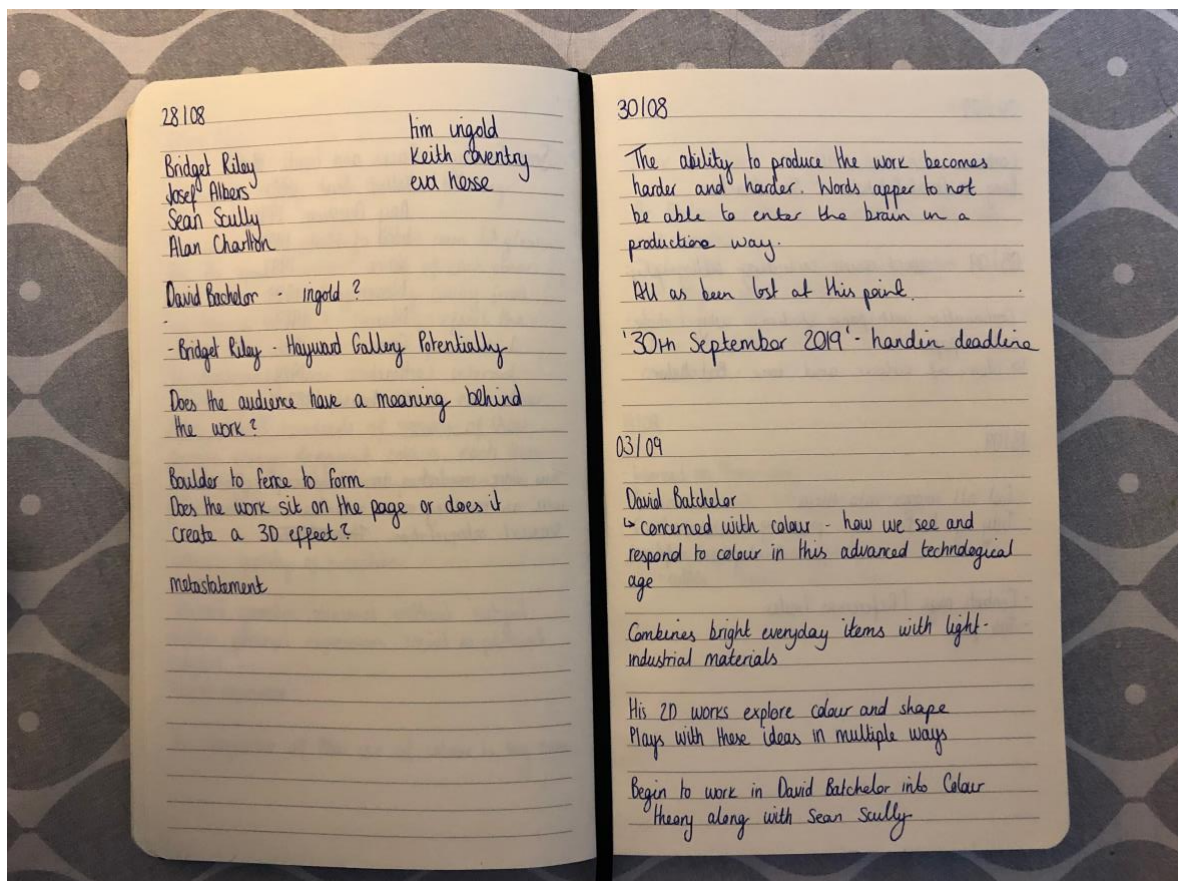
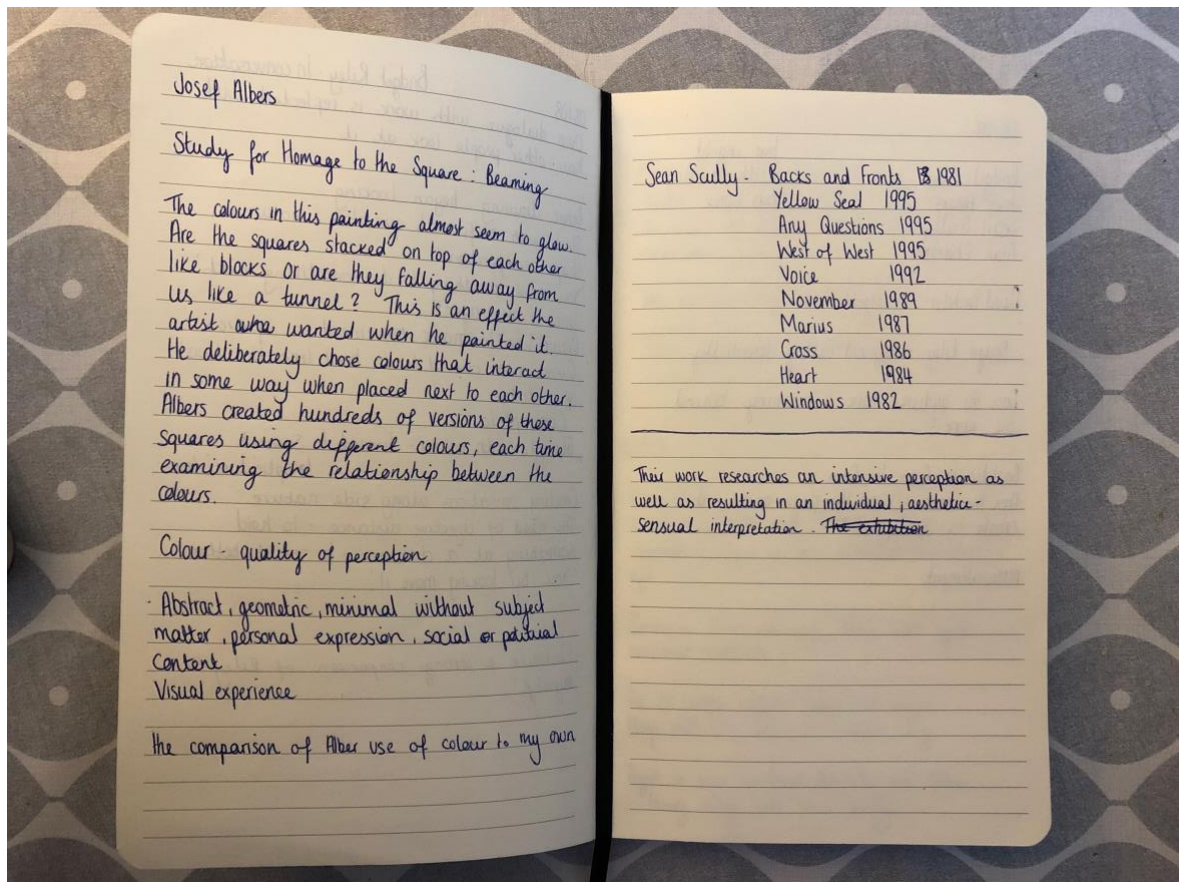
Creating sensations along side nature

The need of objective distance - to hold something at a distance - to see it better

'You by looking move it'

Continue a strong comparison of Riley to myself





04/09

Continue with sean scully  
Bring in David Batchelor + Alan Charlton

05/09 = word count excluding bibliography

- Continuation with paper studies... why I chose certain paper
- ↳ Ideas of colour and tone - Batchelor

13/09

- Get all images into thesis
- Tidy up Practice Log = photos of notebook  
= photo development of work
- Contents page / References / index
- Title page

16/09

5374

- Work on Tim's notes / editing
- An Abstract at the top - summarises the topic and content
- Section on own work - with images
- Title page, page numbers
- Structure - with subheadings
- Check endnotes citing = check everything over

18/09

- Worked on Tim's notes ✓
- Continue / finish exhibition writing ✓
- Conclusion
- ↳ bring together all ideas from the year  
= artists - theories - own ideas