

The Intensive Journal Method: advancing insights in creative practice

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University for the Creative Arts

September 2024

University for the Creative Arts
School of Research and Innovation

Abstract

This research is concerned with understanding the creative process and how, using the structure of The Intensive Journal (Progoff,1980), a self-supporting and sustainable mode of learning can be engaged to develop creative practice. A gap in knowledge was identified between superficial, short-term approaches, often presented as ways to develop the creative process, and the findings of academic research incorporating a theoretical framework. A systematic review of the literature and a contextual review of artists' reflective practice established this knowledge gap and informed the design of this process. The contribution to knowledge lies in developing an autoethnographic methodological framework to address this lacuna. Using the biopsychosocial theoretical framework (Engel,1972) and practice-based research, contemporary basketry was used to develop guidelines and strategies, which were then generalised to include other disciplines.

The first case study details how the author identified behaviour patterns and devised personalised strategies to sustain and enhance her practice. This methodology was tested with other practitioners through interviews and comparative case studies. The findings from these case studies underscore the value of a sustained, systematic, reflective process in advancing creative practices. They also demonstrate how individuals can adapt the strategies to their specific needs. The studies suggest that having access to a facilitator during the initial stages could be beneficial and a potential area for future research.

The author's practice is self-referencing and evolves as additional information is processed. Artefacts were regarded as manifestations of moments in time, indicating a future potential waiting to be uncovered rather than completed outcomes. Regular exhibitions were an essential part of this process. They provided iterative testing and an opening to peer review and critique. The pieces displayed contain within them a record of the process, the maker's personal language, and the intangible nature of the craft of basketry. As such, they can be regarded as a form of journaling in their own right.

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Acknowledgements

I want to express my gratitude and thanks to my PhD supervisors, Professor Emerita Lesley Millar MBE and Professor Birgitta Hosea, for their consistent encouragement and support. I would like to remember the late Professor Simon Holding for his wise advice and kindness when I discussed my work during its initial stages. My thanks also go to the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) Research Office staff and the UCA Gallery staff at Farnham and Folkestone for their support with group exhibitions and my final show.

An enormous thank you is owed to the artists who agreed to participate in this research. The time they devoted to this enterprise and their conscientious efforts were much appreciated.

I would also like to thank Robert Peebles, whose encouragement started me on this journey, and Tim Johnson, who generously shared his skills and introduced me to the world of basketry.

None of this would have been possible without the continued support of Barry Mills, Jonathan Mills and Grace Thomas-Mills; you have my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. Finally, thanks go to colleagues who have become friends, Lizzie, LouLou, Jenny, Tara and Delia, and long-standing friends Jan and Jane for their insights, discussions, patience and understanding throughout this journey.

Declaration

The work presented in this exegesis is the author's original work under the direction of Professor Emerita Lesley Millar MBE and Professor Birgitta Hosea. Due reference has been made, where necessary, to the work of others.

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19/09/2024

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19/09/2024

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19/09/2024

1. Introduction

This research is concerned with understanding art practice and the creative process. It explores how, through observing and understanding the patterns evident in the working practice of contemporary basket makers, strategies can be developed to advance an individual's creative practice that is generalisable to other disciplines. It investigates how the structure of the Intensive Journal (Progoff, 2024,1992:402-410,1980:404-410,1980:318- 343) can be used to gain insight into the arc of creative processes (Wallas,1926). Using a biopsychosocial framework (Engel,1972), this research is situated between the superficial, short-term approaches often presented as ways to develop creativity (Cameron, J.1992; Kleon, A, (2022) and theoretical academic research (Rhodes,1961; Glaveneau, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Kahneman, 2012).

It aims to provide a framework for practitioners to:

- Analyse their creative process.
- Develop personalised strategies to overcome blocks to creativity.
- Develop a sustainable, ongoing, self-directed, heuristic form of learning.

The following methodology and research objectives were used to achieve this:

- Conduct a systematic review of books that are easily accessible and relate to creativity and artists.
- Undertake an autoethnographic case study to show how The Intensive Journal (Progoff,1980) can be used to advance insight into an individual's creative practice.
- Develop and implement a new biopsychosocial methodology built upon the Intensive Journal.
- Conduct semi-structured interviews, provide tasks and guidance to provide data for comparative case studies and test the initial research findings.

Based on personal experience and anecdotal conversations with other creatives concerning their anxieties about maintaining and developing their artistic practice, the author formed a hypothesis about limitations and absences within existing knowledge. She then systematically reviewed the literature to confirm this.

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi referred to this issue in the foreword to the *Handbook of Creativity* (Kaufman and Sternberg (eds.), 2019). He writes that “...some are able to make choices that by the end of life add up to a harmonious whole.... How to achieve [this] is still a largely unexplored topic in our understanding of creativity.” (Csikszentmihalyi 2019:xviii). This research will examine how reflection can be used to develop greater self-awareness of the creative process.

This thesis proposes that understanding an individual’s creative processes can enhance awareness of creative thinking as, engaging with the process, the maker travels through a transitional space, linking the inner personal experience to an external reality shared with others. The term transitional space acknowledges the space and time essential for growth and an individual’s need to learn and progress. In this way, a heuristic mode of learning can be developed and sustained to realise new pathways and possibilities within a creative practice.

The author’s autoethnographic and ethnographic qualitative approach to determine how the Intensive Journal Method can advance insights into creative practice included practice-based research, semi-structured interviews, a programme of tasks, and thematic analysis, which explored the connection between the physicality of making and making sense of that experience within a given social context. It considered the micro-processes involved in preparing and processing materials and the choices made when making until a ‘finished’ article emerges.

As such, the methodology is integrated into the process, and the process throughout can be seen as reflecting the methodology. For example, the qualitative methods (i.e., open-ended questions) allowed the respondents to contribute to and guide the process. Consequently, it is not presented as a separate chapter but integrated within the thesis.

Basketry techniques and constructed textiles provide the language of the author's creative practice. Working within a contemporary basketry context, her work is concerned with process. This ongoing process is punctuated with regular exhibitions, which provide a place to mark time, receive feedback, evaluate, and consider the next step. Traditionally, the creative approaches of basket makers have been developed through the craft of traditional basketry, e.g., City and Guilds programmes in the UK, rather than through a formal art and design education. The American artist Ed Rossbach introduced an alternative strand of contemporary basketry focusing on conceptual thinking and materiality in the 1940s and 50s. Although the creative approaches of basket makers are of interest, this is not the subject of this thesis.

The practice of contemporary basketry is seen as a metaphor for the complexity of change experienced by an individual. This is comparable to the Intensive Journal as it reveals layers of interwoven elements and complex connections between materials and people across place and time. The Intensive Journal Method allows such connections to be recorded and complexities clarified through its system of analysis and cross-referencing. Being open to using alternative forms of recording to document how an individual senses and feels complex experiences in addition to cognitive thought would extend the Intensive journal's exercises to enhance embodied thinking, i.e., the mind, body and lived experience working together. Contemporary basketry is a tangible example of embodied thinking. The physical positioning of the basket maker's body to gather and hold materials in place, the repetitive swinging actions of the arm reaching through the willow rods to make hoops, and the use of the body to measure and sort. All contribute to an awareness of existing in the now and the effect of the seasons on the body in place and time. These processes are captured in experimental studies and artefacts. Learning how to re-read these pieces provides a more immediate and alternative form of recording, which written accounts can complement. This research regards works in progress, experimental studies and artefacts as ways to advance insights into creative practice rather than as finished products.

Similarly, both the Intensive Journal and contemporary basketry promote transparency in communications and lead to independent yet engaged and

problem-based thinking by combining different kinds of logical precision with felt situational experience.

Owing to the subjective nature of this research, a practice-based methodology was used. This incorporated an autoethnographic approach (Manning & Massumi, 2014; Ellis & Bochner, 2000) and the triangulation of various methods, including a systematic review of books and making and testing the hypotheses on others. Such an approach acknowledges that the researcher is both an observer and participant and cannot be separated from what is experienced within their specific social context (Muncey, 2014:10-25).

The author was the subject of the principal case study (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981). This allowed engagement as a participant-observer to understand better the processes involved. Observing the resulting behaviours directly from an insider's perspective highlighted unintended bias, e.g., using factual logs to record times and activities compared to perceptions of time spent, allowing for more accuracy when reviewing the data collected. Different forms of recording within artistic practice were considered. The purpose and differences between sketchbooks, notebooks, and journals were clarified, and their limitations acknowledged, e.g., the confines of a bound book, the uniform size of pages, and the space between pages, and how these limitations could impinge on the possibilities of working from a tactile and 3D perspective when exploring materiality. Working outside the page, adding, removing, folding, and stacking unbound pages were explored. Working this way and rereading the material encouraged a more embodied and interactive approach.

The Intensive Journal (Progoff, 1980) provided a cohesive system of written exercises to gather data and a structured method of reflection. This allowed attention to be given to the techne and to make explicit the tacit knowledge which can enable greater self-awareness, giving '... back to time its materiality [and] the sense of temporal process....becoming oneself in a particular place.' (Carter, 2004: xii). The traditional use of sketchbooks was extended to include this broader perspective; written journals and daily logs were used to demonstrate how the physicality of working with materials enabled an embodied mode of thinking and affected established creative practice. These insights revealed how this

methodology could benefit the broader community of artists. They demonstrated how these methods could be used to identify patterns of behaviour and develop strategies to progress creative practice.

A second stage of this research, using the structure of The Intensive Journal, involved three comparative case studies to verify the initial findings. The autoethnographic methodology was always intended to show that this process was transferable to makers within the basketry community and other disciplines. A ceramicist (Participant A) provided data from outside the basketry community and demonstrated this.

Semi-structured interviews and comparative case studies confirmed this transfer of methods was possible. Careful negotiation allowed practitioners to work in various ways to examine different aspects of their creative practices. They were encouraged to be attentive and record their processes in the most appropriate form. It highlighted how accessible this form of journaling was to practitioners who had not worked this way before. And how effective it was for individuals who wanted further development of their practice independent of formal, taught programmes.

Understanding how individuals perceive their creativity and how they can learn from a self-awareness of their creative processes was central to this research. An autoethnographic methodology and biopsychosocial framework allowed journaling and sketchbooks to record and analyse data to develop personalised strategies to overcome blocks, take risks, and confidently pursue opportunities as they arose. This data provided a rich resource from which personalised strategies could be developed and incorporated into individual creative practices.

2. Preparing the Ground - Laying the Foundation for Understanding Creativity and Self-Reflection

The source of every new idea is the same. The brain has a net, and then the network shifts. All of a sudden, electricity flows in an unfamiliar pattern, a shiver of current across a circuit board of cells.

(Lehrer, 2012:139).

2.1 Creativity

The experience of creativity is diverse. The models and systems of creativity referred to in the literature are not inclusive but culturally specific. This study acknowledges that models should always be considered within the social and historical context of their development and that new models and adaptations will be continually proposed as new paradigms emerge.

Ideas discussed in psychology, neuroscience and practice-based art research have informed this research. It will consider the primary theories and models of creativity developed in the West since the last half of the 20th century and focus specifically on the creative practitioner and an individual's creative process.

Any research into creativity must acknowledge the complexity and challenges presented by the ephemeral nature of the phenomenon. Creativity was linked to the gods in ancient civilizations, e.g., Egyptians and Greeks. With the rise of humanism in the Renaissance, a sense of personal responsibility and inherited characteristics took precedence. By the 18th and 19th centuries, creativity was seen as a combination of inherited characteristics and environmental influences. (Runco *et al.*, 2011:612). Sigmund Freud regarded creativity as a personality trait resulting from overcoming childhood trauma (Freud, 1966:467-8). Gestalt psychologists thought creative solutions were arrived at by seeing the problem from a different perspective (Amendt-Lyon, 2001:226). Today's research considers that creative acts result from

a biopsychosocial model, an interdisciplinary approach considering the complex interaction of biological, psychological, and social forces (Engle, 1972; Jauk, 2019).

2.2 The Biopsychosocial Model

Originating in psychiatry, the biopsychosocial model looked beyond a patient's symptoms when forming a diagnostic label. A biopsychosocial perspective (Bolton and Gillet, 2019) allows the social and psychological contexts and biological factors to be considered to understand the patient holistically. It begins by assessing what is wrong, tracing the antecedents to the symptoms displayed, and then deciding what needs to be done to resolve the situation. This allows the prognosis and treatment to be continually reassessed and developed as more information becomes available.

This model considers four factors for each area:

- Predisposing factors that already exist, e.g., genetics.
- Precipitating factors: experiences which bring about the symptoms.
- Perpetuating factors: conditions which intensify the problem.
- Protective factors: the individual's areas of strengths and skills.

A formulation table (PsychDB (s.d.)), as seen in Appendix A, allows factors to be systematically identified, as well as areas that overlap. This biopsychosocial model is the theoretical framework which informs this research. The work of Graham Wallas, Carl Rogers, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and Ira Progoff, with whom this research is concerned, can be viewed through this lens.

2.3 A Person-Centred Approach

A person-centred approach, pioneered by psychologist Carl Rogers in the 1940s, involved shared decision-making and enabled choice. The client is regarded as the

expert who possesses the solution to any problems experienced, and the therapist takes a non-directive role. This approach believes that people experience an inherent drive to learn to achieve self-actualisation (Rogers, 1954). The therapist provides a safe, non-judgmental environment through empathy, active listening, and reflective questioning. Over time, the client becomes aware of the source of any difficulty or barriers to their progress. This process clarifies the problem and provides a potential way to resolve the situation.

Roger's definition of creativity contains the idea of growth, action and the drive towards self-actualisation:

... the emergence in action of a novel relational product [which may be intangible], growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other.
(Rogers, 1954:4).

This thesis will use this definition of creativity as it supports the aims of this research, i.e., to provide a self-sufficient method to facilitate and develop the creative thinking of established artists.

This person-centred approach and biopsychosocial model were used to 'ground' what is usually discussed in terms of the intuitive and to provide a methodology for creative practitioners to analyse their creative practice. Through methodically recording and analysing thoughts, feelings, behaviours and environments, 'triggers' could be identified and used as markers to provide insights into individual creative processes. This approach is fundamental to and underpins the exercises provided in the Intensive Journal Method.

2.4 Research into Creativity

What is generally described as creativity today has been recognised for centuries as an individual ability. However, the evidence of research and investigations into the phenomenon in the West only dates back to the 19th century with Francis Galton's

book, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws and Consequences* (1892), which examined natural abilities and genetics. It proposed that intelligence and personality traits were inherited and predisposed by genetics without any reference to environmental influences: ‘...it would be quite practicable to produce a highly gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several consecutive generations.’ (Galton, 1869:1) Creativity as a characteristic was not regarded as an area of psychological research until the 1950s. The turning point came when it became the subject of the Presidential address at the American Psychological and Genetic Society Conference in 1950, where J.P. Guilford asserted that the study of creativity had been neglected during the nineteenth century and limited in the twentieth. Living during the Cold War in the 1950s, Guilford realised the ‘enormous economic value of new ideas’ (Guilford, 1950:446) by recognising the practical need for innovation in industry and the value of creativity in leadership. Guilford introduced the concept of ‘divergent thinking’, which the standard IQ tests did not recognise. He associated this form of thinking with creative people, characterised by fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. These ideas were developed to include cultural and social influences which shape the everyday interaction of the creator (Glaveneau, 2013:69-81); however, as Chetan Walia (2019:237-247) points out, a focus on the creative act itself is a factor which has been overlooked in earlier definitions. He proposes a dynamic definition without a specific realised outcome. It is the creative process which:

... is flexible enough within the context of creativity to identify even emotional or mental constructs as outcomes that will allow it to move forward without essentially creating a physical product. Pursuit of this creativity...may or may not lead to a creation that is tangible,...

(Walia, 2019:244)

The concept of creativity can be expanded to include the creative process becoming a ‘medium of change’ and a form of creativity in its own right.

2.5 Creativity and the Brain

The interest and growth in research into creativity since the 1980s corresponded to the rapid advancements in and use of technology. Electroencephalogram (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) provided scientific answers to the long-term questions and myths surrounding the creation of new ideas, e.g., the 'eureka' moment and the isolated, troubled artistic genius. The work of cognitive neuroscientist Mark Beeman in the 1990s demonstrated how disparate connections are made between obscure associations and separate pieces of knowledge and memories. Beeman then looked for the neural cause of insight with Professor of Psychology John Kounios (2016). They discovered that gamma wave rhythms and increased brain activity are believed to indicate the combining of neurons to create new insight to burst into consciousness (Lehrer, 2012:17-18; Kounios and Beeman, 2016:84). Such research led to the development of the field of cognitive neuroscience. Over the last twenty-five years, electrical impulses in the brain have been recorded (EEG) and changes in the blood flow to the brain evaluated (fMRI), which together demonstrate which parts of the brain are activated when specific tasks are carried out, such as language, memory and movement. This allowed the brain's functions to be observed in real time. Researchers could now observe the brain's activity simultaneously as it worked.

2.6 Flow

At the same time as research was taking place into the workings of the brain during the mid-20th century, Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi was developing theories in line with the humanistic psychology and hierarchy of needs of Abraham Maslow (1943) and Rogers in contrast to the clinical and behaviourist school of thought (Skinner, 1971). Csikszentmihalyi questioned and wanted to resolve the separation of a person's inherent potential from the modification of behaviour resulting from the external influences and environment in which individuals find themselves. He identified the phenomenon of 'flow' as a

critical element to the experience of a sense of fulfilment. Csikszentmihalyi described flow as 'the psychology of optimal experience' (Csikszentmihalyi 2008):

... the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it ...for the sheer sake of doing it.

(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:4).

Csikszentmihalyi interviewed thousands of people from around the world from different backgrounds, cultures and ages to see which elements improved the quality of an individual's life. Like Martin Seligman, American psychologist and pioneer of positive psychology, Csikszentmihalyi found that the experience of being involved in an activity which is so enjoyable that other aspects of life become irrelevant (e.g. losing sense of the amount of time passing), this desire to continue with the activity becomes autotelic, and shared regardless of age, gender or culture. This intrinsic motivation is supported by the componential theory of creativity, which sees it as the essential driving force for the individual (Amabile,1982: 997–1013). These experiences, no matter how insignificant or relatively difficult to achieve, once our basic needs are met (Mazlow,1943), form perceptions about the quality of life.

The philosopher Roger Callois (1984:16-32) argues that meeting our basic needs takes relatively little time and results in excess energy. Callois relates this to a human need to imitate and play. Play is often devalued as an activity, but it can be regarded as the basis of social organisation, the structures of which can be derived from games and play demonstrated in cultural theorist Johan Huizinga's theory of play, which identifies the human instinct for play as a critical element of human culture. (Huizinga,1944:9-20).

For the creative, the intrinsically self-motivating experience described as flow is familiar. Most people can relate to the experience through everyday activities, e.g., playing sports or video games. However, external influences and negative self-perception diminish this state of mind. Both Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi recognised this. Seligman wrote about the need for positive institutions (Seligman, 2013:248-249), including the family, education, and business, which

Csikszentmihalyi referred to in his systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014:163).

Csikszentmihalyi's analysis of the individual creative process follows writer and scholar Graham Wallas' four-stage model of creativity: preparation, Incubation, illumination and verification (Wallas, 1926: 80-81). Wallas' description of the natural thought processes involved in developing new ideas allowed the process to be divided into clear sections, each with a consistent beginning, middle and end. It was the first formal model of the creative process. It originated in Henri Poincaré's (Poincaré, 1908) observations of his own scientific and mathematical processes and a speech by German physicist Hermann von Helmholtz. Wallas analyses von Helmholtz's description of his creative process when developing new ideas (Wallas, 1926:79-81). Numerous refinements and additional stages have been identified with the swell of interest in the phenomenon of creativity in the 1980s. The stages can range from 3 – 8 depending on descriptions and definitions, e.g., Iain Kerr and Jason Frasca (Kerr and Frasca, 2021) advocate disrupting the linear framework by going backwards to establish the context in which the creative exists before beginning the four-stage process of prepare, ideate, plan, make. However, most simply expand or refine the experiences described within the original stages of Wallas' model, e.g., adding 'execution' as an extra element at the end of the process or the 7 stage Universal Creative Process including a 3rd stage 'Clarifying the Challenge(s)' 'Prototype and Strengthen' and "Plan for Action as 5th and 6th stages from the training programme of www.newandimproved.com (see fig.1.).



Fig. 1. The 7 Stages of the Universal Creative Process (UCP) (2024)

These refinements would not have been available to Csikszentmihalyi when he was developing his System Model or theories of flow. Therefore, I will focus on Wallas' work when considering Csikszentmihalyi's thesis. Interestingly, Csikszentmihalyi omits a fifth stage inferred by Wallas: 'intimation' (Sadler-Smith, 2015:346). This is a stage immediately before illumination when the individual senses they are close to a breakthrough, which anticipates the findings of Lehrer, Kourious and Beeman (Lehrer, 2012:17-18; Kourious and Beeman, 2016:84).

Wallas' stages have also been supported by the results of research into creativity and insightful problem-solving in the first decades of the 21st century. In his book, *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*, author Steve Johnson describes 'Slow hunches' (Johnson, 2010:67). Ideas that float around and gradually develop over time without any distinct form or purpose until they combine with disparate notions and connections are made, in the same way as Steve Johnson describes random thoughts colliding to form innovative ideas. Joydeep Bhattacharya, Professor of Psychology at Goldsmith's University (Bhattacharya,

Wiggins and Geraint. 2014:120-261). Authors and researchers in brain sciences, John Kounios and Beeman (Kounios & Beeman 2016), also identified a specific type of brain activity. They found it was possible to predict when an individual would gain an insight immediately before the subject experienced it (Kounios & Beeman, 2016:84). This feeling of intuition, included by Wallas in his description of the creative process (Sadler-Smith, 2015:346) of knowing when you are close to the solution. They identified an 'alpha brain blink', an intense burst of alpha waves immediately before an insight occurs. This brain blink allows the brain to reduce '...visual distractions so that it is easier to lock onto an insight.' Kounios & Beeman 2015:87). As well as identifying the areas of the brain which are active at the specific stages of creativity, the research on the importance of the dopaminergic pathway as being critical to experiencing insight is also central (Daniel and Pollmann, 2014:90-100) (Lewis, 2021:57-69). This research provides neural evidence that explains how abstract concepts can produce similar activation in the brain's reward system. It also suggests that the dopaminergic system plays a fundamental role in learning and motivation by processing the reinforcement experienced due to this hormone.

It explains why a positive attitude and relaxed mood can facilitate the experience of 'flow' and promote insights. As such, it underpins the new developments in the field of psychology. Scientific research describes the innate physiological activity inherent in what has always been described as intuition, the intangible or simply just 'knowing'.

When Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow is overlayed onto his four-stage linear creative process model, it is possible to understand the intrinsic nature of the motivational force behind it. The stress-free excitement and positive physiological effects experienced during flow sustain the motivation to pursue an unresolved outcome regardless of time concerns or mundane exterior factors.

2.7 The System Model of Creativity

Csikszentmihalyi refined the two aspects of the individual and the circumstances of their life in the *Systems Model of Creativity* of the late 1980s (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). This dynamic model places the individual's experience of creativity within societal and cultural systems and provides the context in which creatives work. Csikszentmihalyi divides the creative's professional life into three distinct areas, asserting that Interaction with all three areas is needed for successful outcomes. These areas consisted of:

1. Domain: the cultural system in which individuals live - it provides knowledge, tools, practices, values
2. The person: the individual practitioner - genetic make-up, psychology, talents
3. The field is the social system, which is the social structure of the community of practitioners, which includes the gatekeepers.

The interaction between these three areas provides the biopsychosocial framework that facilitates creativity, learning, innovation and change. Csikszentmihalyi places the individual at the centre of this system. There have been many different structural models presented since the 1960s, the most notable being the Four Ps (Rhodes (196:249–260), Four Cs (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007:13-79.), and Five As (Glăveanu (2013:69–81).

The Four Ps (Person, Product, Press (environment), and Process) is an inclusive model that refers to an individual's creativity in any form. Each element is vital to creativity and is evident simultaneously throughout the process. This framework examines how creativity can be assessed in each area, stimulated, and applied in different forms in multiple domains (see fig.2.).

The four P's of creativity		The five A's of creativity	
<i>Focus on:</i>		<i>Focus on:</i>	
Internal attributes of the person	Person → Actor	Personal attributes in relation to a societal context	
Primarily cognitive mechanisms	Process → Action	Coordinated psychological and behavioral manifestation	
Features of products or consensus around them	Product → Artifact	Cultural context of artifact production and evaluation	
The social as an external set of variables conditioning creativity	Press ↘ Audience Affordances	The interdependence between creators and a social and material world	

Fig. 2. Glaveneau, V. Comparing the four P's and the five A's frameworks (2013)

The Five A's attempts to provide a more coherent and dynamic sense of agency, as shown in the language used, are identified as the Five As actor, action, artefact, audience, and affordance. The first four can be seen to match the Four Ps but with the individual viewed within the social context. The addition of affordance reinforces this emphasis by adding an explicit social and cultural focus. It recognises the interactive nature of creativity and how essential feedback is to resolve issues.

The Four Cs provide a developmental framework for creative experiences and outcomes. They range from 'mini-c' recognition of a creative act meaningful to the creator to the 'Big-C' level of creativity, where society recognises and values the individual's creativity. Its products become part of a canon and retain historical importance (see fig.3.).

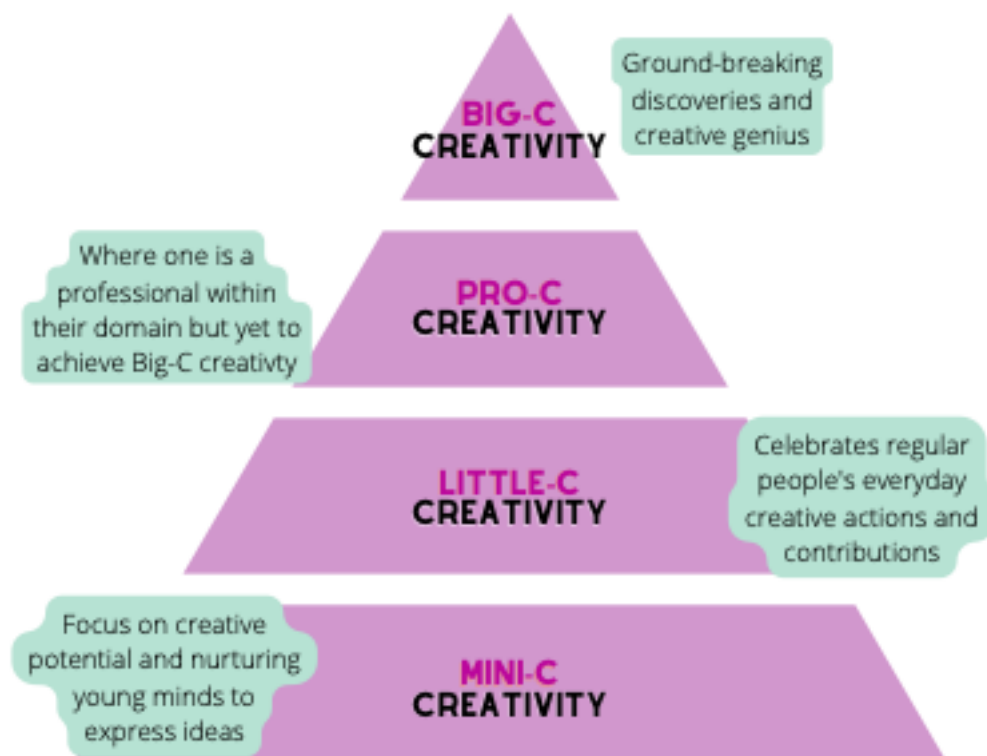


Fig. 3. Kaufman, J.C., and Beghetto, R.A. *The Four C Model* (2009)

Creativity research is now interdisciplinary, and different areas (e.g., design, marketing, education) prioritise various aspects of creativity. For example, they may value process over product, whether the product exemplifies the individual's creativity through learnt expertise or whether the process affects creativity through modes of thinking and the development of skills that can be transferred across disciplines. An overall, encompassing definition of creativity can only be generalised if the context in which it is being discussed is central to how it is defined.

2.8 Authentic Happiness

A new paradigm in psychology was also created in the 1950s. Psychology moved away from a deficit model and the treatment of psychological disorders to one that considered what it meant to have a 'good life'. What made life worthwhile? What psychology enabled people to flourish and enjoy life? Working on happiness and

motivation, psychologist Martin Seligman developed his theory of 'authentic happiness' and 'the good life' (Seligman, 2013:161).

He began to explore what people who described themselves as content and happy with their lives had in common: what positive experiences, emotions, attitudes and traits they shared. He also looked at positive institutions and the supportive environment they provided for the individual.

Seligman changed his approach to psychology when he transferred his original research concerning learned helplessness (Seligman, 1972:407) to the treatment and psychological health of soldiers who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He transferred the theory of learnt acceptance, a willingness to endure unpleasant stimuli and unwillingness to avoid them, even when avoidable, to positive interventions to improve an individual's sense of well-being through a learned optimism (Seligman, 1998). Seligman increased the profile of this new approach in psychology when he became the President of the American Psychological Association in 1998. Inverting the findings of his research into learned helplessness led to his theory of authentic happiness, which demonstrated and prioritised the importance of the choices made by the individual. By nurturing an individual's key strengths and using them daily in all realms of life, lasting, authentic happiness could be experienced (Seligman, 2013:248). Seligman emphasised that individual well-being depends upon accessing the environment of positive institutions, whether families, universities, studios or galleries, which promote a 'growth' mindset (Dweck, 2012). When reviewing her research, American psychologist Carol Dweck (Dweck, 2015: 20-24) affirmed that focusing on the process and metacognition of learning, e.g., developing new strategies when stuck, can lead to the ability to identify fixed mindset triggers. Recognising that there are always choices to be made allows challenges to be seen as positive ways to move forward. Based on the theory of neuroplasticity (Berlucchi, Buchtel, 2009:307), the ability of the brain to form new synaptic connections into adulthood), Dweck's growth mindset theory can be adopted at any point in life.

The brain's reward system provides the surge of dopamine experienced when learning something new or solving a problem. (Lewis, 2021:57-69). This provides a physiological explanation of why the flow experience is so effective for our productivity. Like Proff, Rogers, and Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi recognised the relationship between the uniqueness of the individual and the context in which they live as fundamental to well-being. The biopsychosocial model provides a framework through which to view their theories. Csikszentmihalyi, Rogers and Seligman regarded creativity's purpose as fulfilling the need to learn and move as an inherent prerequisite to self-actualisation and well-being.

2.9 Self-Help Books

The work on positive psychology and creativity was written by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi in language easily accessible to the general population. Their books were successful and appealing. The phenomenon they described was intuitive and relatable, and the everyday examples provided made their texts accessible and easy to identify with. A myriad of self-help books became available to explain and communicate aspects of this new research (Scott,1978; Jeffers,1987; Cameron,1992). However, the purpose and effectiveness of such generalised ad hoc strategies suggested by self-help books must be questioned.

They have little substance and provide generalised ideas and tips to help overcome the day-to-day anxieties experienced by many creatives as part of their creative process. They supply only superficial quick fixes for arbitrary negative feelings and temporary concerns rather than sustainable solutions to recurrent problems, which allow the individual to gain insight into their creativity. They lack the necessary explanation for selecting and adapting strategies to make them relevant to an individual's life. Therefore, the person is left at the end of the process, back where they started with a new set of problems without understanding the underlying issues. Tick sheet strategies deal with the symptoms or partial solutions, which can differ each time. 'Like cookbooks, they tell you how to accomplish a specific, limited goal on which few people follow through.' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:5) For example,

the practice of free writing described as ‘Morning Pages’ in *The Artists Way* by Julia Cameron (1992:9-18) is a straightforward practice of non-directional and non-judgemental writing as a means of ‘dumping’ worries, concerns and intrusive thoughts to allow a relaxed and focussed start to the day. There is no denying that such a practice can be beneficial, as seen by the numerous reviews about this particular activity. (e.g., Hunt, 2022) However, it does not provide the next step. There is no specific guidance about what to do with all this writing or how or why it should be sustained over time. (See p. 38 below). Consequently, the subject does not know how to proceed except to try to apply the same formula, which may not work in another context.

Csikszentmihalyi, Seligman and Progoff provide a framework, a theory, and examples from other people’s experiences. They make it clear that the individual must develop an understanding of such a framework and learn how to apply it to their life through self-reflection and refinement. Examples and instructional interventions can only be used to clarify and develop an understanding of the process. They are not transferable from one situation to another because they will not be relevant to that new situation except as an illustration.

...optimal experience depends on the ability to control what happens in consciousness moment by moment, each person has to achieve it on the basis of his own individual efforts and creativity.
(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:5).

The Johari’s Awareness Model (Luft, 1969:13). (see fig. 4.), provides a valuable framework for working through Progoff, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi’s ideas. The core of any work in self-development must be related to self-reflection and the ability to discover what is in the ‘blind’ or ‘unknown’ quadrants of the Johari Window. The Johari’s Awareness Model is a psychological tool developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingram, which uses four quadrants to develop self-awareness and interpersonal skills. It allows individuals to become aware of how others perceive them. The blind quadrant is the area known to others about the

person but not to the person. The hidden quadrant is known to the individual but not to others. The unknown quadrant is unknown about the person to both the person and others (see fig. 4.). With a focus on an individual's creative practice qualities. Vulnerabilities can be discussed more objectively using explanation and a sense of curiosity to move what has been identified into the open quadrant. This allows a different perspective on challenges to be developed.

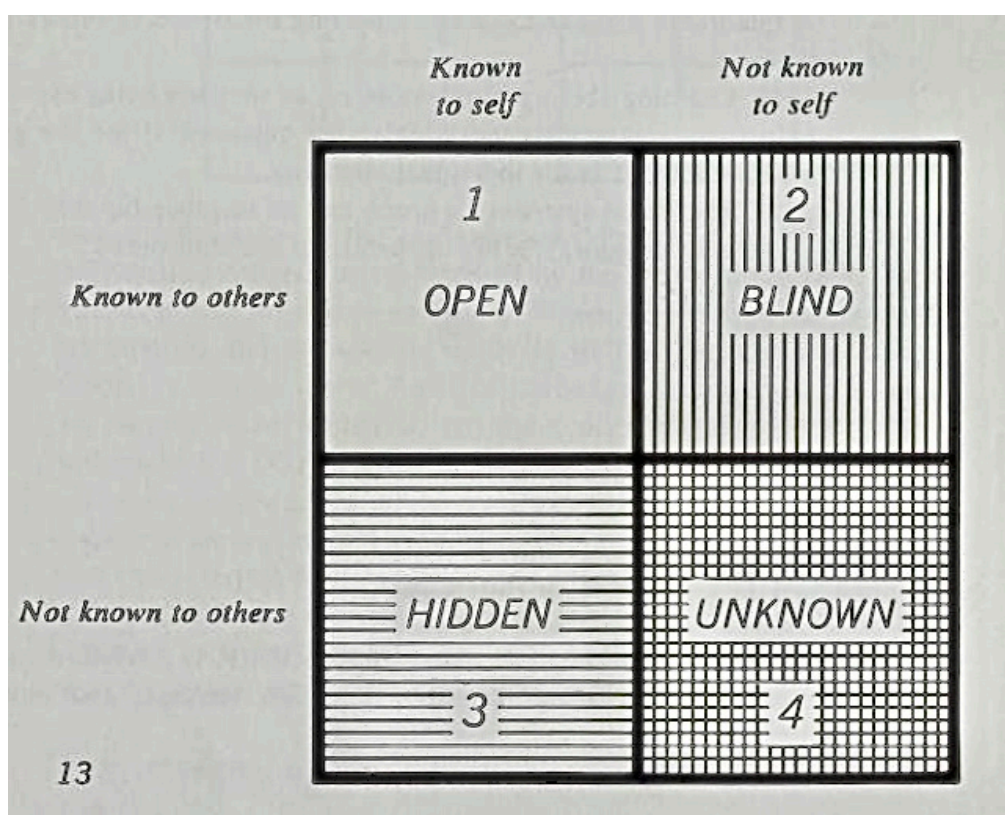


Fig. 4. Luft, J. Johari Awareness Model (1969)

Reflection also needs to consider our perceptual set or bias: the tendency to notice and prioritise one set of stimuli over another. Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman's research (Kahneman, 2012) explained that we have two systems of thinking: fast and slow. The first system he describes is 'thinking fast' (Kahneman, 2012:20-24). This is our default position. Our immediate, unconscious response to stimuli is

essential for our survival. Thinking slow is system two, when we stop and put conscious effort into what we are thinking about. As this takes more time and effort, we often ignore it when making decisions, which means we rely on past knowledge, experience and assumptions, which will have an inherent bias. With this speed of thinking, we are unaware of this bias and assume we arrive at the only obvious and correct conclusion regardless of how we interpret it or if there is insufficient information. Only when we stop and slow down our thinking to check facts, ask questions and consider alternatives can we become aware of our bias and evaluate the situation more objectively. This slowing down and critical self-reflection is essential to understanding the creative process, which is individual to everyone and the area overlooked or initially actively advised against by popular writers on the subject, as can be seen in the author's criticism of Cameron's "Morning Pages" (see p.40 below):

...you shouldn't even read them yourself ...Just write three pages and stick them in an envelope. Or write three pages in a spiral notebook and don't leaf back through them.
(Cameron, 1994:10).

Recording ideas, experiences, and feelings can allow time to engage in system two thinking. This, in turn, will enhance self-reflection and reveal ways to identify our assumptions, biases, and resulting patterns of behaviour. Imposing a structure for this recording process allows a framework for analysis, providing a means to achieve greater self-awareness.

2.10 Positive Psychology

The work of American philosopher and psychologist William James and Maslow can be seen as the foundation from which positive psychology evolved. James focused on the subjective experiences of people as he questioned why some people seemed to thrive in the face of adversity while others developed mental health

issues. Maslow was concerned with people's motivation and aspirations. The collaboration of the critical thinkers in this field, Csikszentmihalyi and Seligman, with their research on flow and human happiness and fulfilment, respectively, meant positive psychology evolved over the last 30 years to examine the value of all emotional experiences. Christopher Peterson co-authored *Character Strengths and Virtues* ((Peterson & Seligman, 2004) with Seligman, which began an ongoing reappraisal of positive psychology leading to a second wave (Lambert et al., 2020) which reassessed the potential use of all emotions, e.g., the use of anger as a motivating force and sadness to prompt reflection are shared experiences. Focusing on purely positive emotions can lead to unrealistic expectations, such as overemphasising forgiveness, which can sustain harmful relationships.

A further wave indicates greater complexity extending beyond the individual and the field of psychology. This includes an increasing interest in non-western experiences and questions the validity of transferring models and constructs from one cultural setting to another, e.g., meditation and mindfulness. The experience of creativity is diverse. However, the underlying principles of self-reflection and being attentive to the present can be found across cultures, e.g. shamatha meditation in Buddhism, contemplative prayer in Christianity and contemplative science.

Positive psychology and a person-centred approach using a biopsychosocial model supported by Csikszentmihalyi's creativity framework form the foundations of this research. A combined autoethnographic, ethnographic and practice-based methodology allowed the focus on the self as the subject of analysis. The individual's biological, psychological and social background was incorporated into the structured self-reflective tasks, allowing additional information to be processed as their creative practice was reflected upon.

3. Literature Review

The research is driven by an autoethnographic methodology, placing the artist at a wheel's central hub. A search at an academic level did not reveal any studies that put the artist at the centre of an investigation to understand individual creative processes. An online qualitative database search using www.amazon.com was conducted to discover easily accessible texts of a more general nature. The focus was on individuals seeking a flexible and self-reliant approach to develop their creative abilities. It was not concerned with digital creativity support systems (Wang and Nickerson, 2017), the pedagogy of educational institutions (Seechaliao, 2017) or industry and design production models (Muller et al., 2017). Although the literature reviewed has a narrow focus, it demonstrates that examples of the different creative theories developed between 1926 and today try to explain creativity (Kaufman and Glaveanu, 2021).

The contention is that there is a gap in knowledge in this field. Books promoted as ways to “Discover inspirational secrets and productive techniques ... “ (Collins, 2018) provide only a superficial understanding of the potential blocks to the creative process. Such works do not provide an effective structure to achieve the self-awareness needed to make substantial progress in this area.

3.1 Online Survey – Artists and Creativity

A systematic review of ‘artists and creativity’ on the Amazon website identified 10,000 books. When considering customer five-star reviews, it produced a result of 2,000. These texts were categorised as follows:

- The teaching of skills, e.g., Blonde, M. (2021), *How to Draw Birds: A Step-by-Step Guide for Realistic Drawing Projects*.
- Introductions to various activities as potential hobbies, e.g. Hughes, H. (2015) *The Textile Artist: Felt & Fibre Art: A Practical Guide to Making Beautiful Felted Artworks*.

- Autobiographic with anecdotal strategies, e.g. Catmull, E. (2014) *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration*.
- Self-help/self-development/spiritual growth providing guidelines, templates, and rules, e.g. Cameron, J. (2020) *The Artists Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*.
- Academics writing for the general public, e.g., Kahneman, D. (2012) *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.

These popular texts claim to answer how to ‘unleash the creative potential within [each] of us’ (Kelley 2015). However, they do not provide in-depth guidance on how individuals can learn to apply this knowledge to their own lives without considerable trial and error.

This analysis showed how creative colouring books, self-help, and autobiographical texts far outweighed those of academics working in this field. An analysis of the contents of a sample of the books most recommended showed a watered-down version of theories of creativity and research over the last seventy years.

Using the same search criteria, I continued to review blogs and specialist art and design sites that recommended books and resources to enhance creativity (See Appendix B). These sites provided a more specialist perspective on business, design, and established creatives.

The following books were amongst the most recommended across these sites:

- Pressfield S. (2015) *The War of Art*
- Kleon, A. (2012) *Steal Like an Artist*
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008) *Flow*
- Kelley, T., and D. (2015) *Creative Confidence*
- Tharp, T. (2003) *The Creative Habit*

Although my search was for 'artists and creativity', the algorithm prioritised visual artists and designers. However, more general books on creativity, like *Flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and *The Creative Habit* (Tharp, 2003), were also included.

They all identified self-awareness, open-mindedness, resilience, sustaining a positive attitude, and physical engagement as the foundation of all work on creativity. They provided examples and evidence to support the critical theories about creativity, e.g., the Four P framework (Rhodes, 1961) and the Five A framework (Glaveneau, 2013).

Twyla Tharp revolutionised dance as a choreographer and dancer in the 1970s and 1980s. Her work enabled dancers to be more creative and less constricted by the status of previously established work.

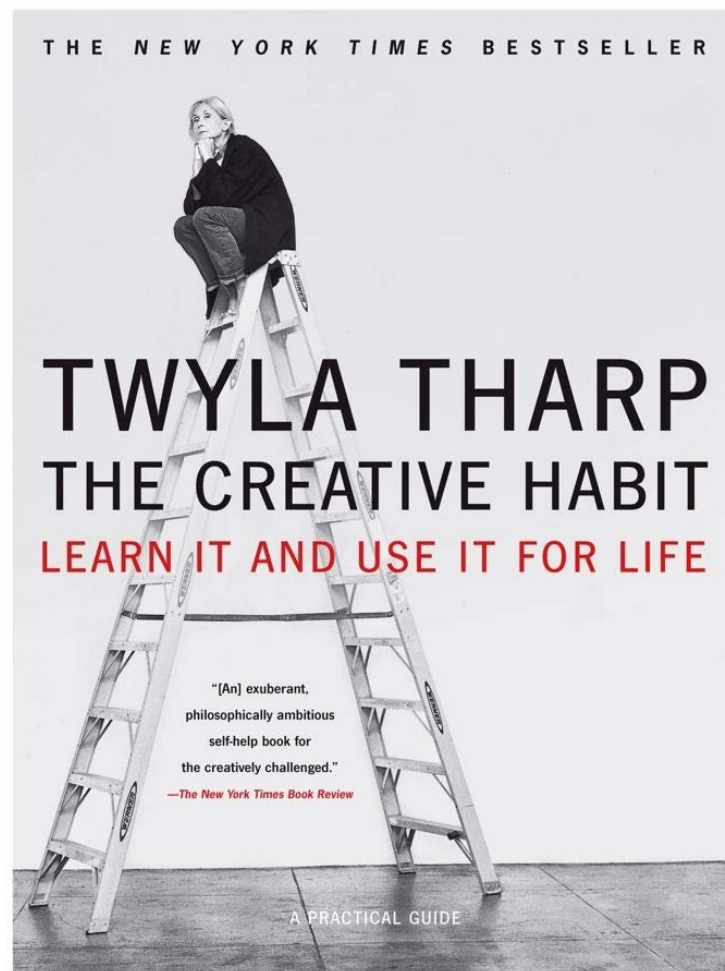


Fig. 5. Tharp, T. *The Creative Habit: learn it and use it for life a practical guide*—front cover (2003)

In *The Creative Habit* (see fig.5.), Tharp's experiences reflect Rhodes' Four P's framework, which examines how individuals create. It considers the environment as well as personality. Tharp's observations are based upon her personal experience, supported by anecdotal stories concerning other artists. She shares '... exercises that will challenge your creative assumptions...' (Tharp, 2003:6). On a 'Person' level, she talks about habits to build resilience, break through ingrained fears, and avoid distractions that prevent people from even beginning a creative enterprise. Her process is central to her practice. Everything is transitional and a source of stimulus. She sees preparation and organisation as fundamental to her creativity. She identifies the skills needed to make difficult decisions, but there is no indication of how to develop these skills except assertions that they need to be achieved.

Tharp provides exercises at the end of each chapter. This structure implies a developmental process, but without any cross-referencing, the exercises stand alone. Tharp's only suggestion of cross-referencing is through the random collection of items stored in box files.

Tharp identifies ways to strengthen the readers' resolve and encourages them to take action to transfer and generalise the fundamental exercises. However, this assumes a high level of experience in self-reflection to be successful and considerable analytical ability to identify the next step or to see what is missing.

Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 (see fig.6.) recognises the inadequacies of 'how to' books and compares them to cookbooks:

...they tell you how to accomplish a specific, limited goal on which few people actually follow through... Usually what happens is that the person finds himself back at square one, with a new list of wishes just as dissatisfied as before.
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:5).

Whilst Csikszentmihalyi writes for the general public, he emphasises *Flow* is not a book of 'insider tips' (1990:xi). He aims to provide '...enough information to make

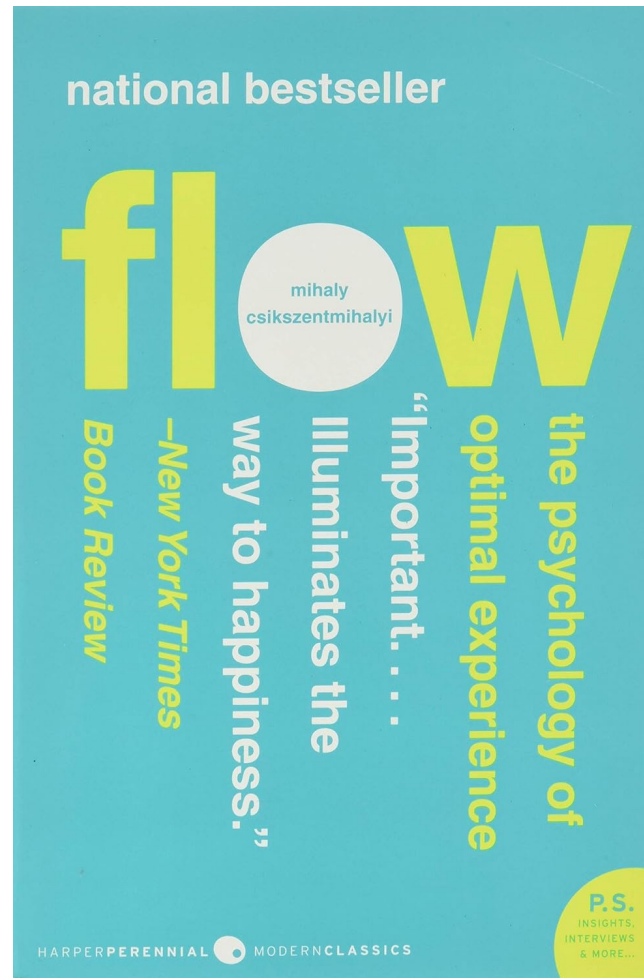


Fig. 6. Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Flow The Psychology of Optimal Experience* - Front cover (2008)

possible the transition from theory into practice.’ (1990:xi). His approach builds upon the work of Wallas’ staged model of the creative process. The creative process's key stages are preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. (Wallas,1926:79-81). Preparation is the initial stage where the problem or question is identified and widely investigated. The second stage is incubation. This stage can last for a considerable time and is where the problem sits in the individual’s head. It is not actively examined but floats around unresolved. With Illumination comes the answer to the problem: Finally, there is a period of verification immediately following the ‘happy idea’... (Wallas,1926:80) when the resulting work verifies the results and identifies the consequences of the actions that resolve the issues (Wallas,1926: 79-81). These stages can exist simultaneously and overlap as different problems are explored. A fifth stage, that of ‘intimation’ identified by Eugene Sadler-Smith in

‘Wallas’ four-stage model of the creative process: More than meets the eye?’ (Sadler-Smith 2015:346) describes a stage immediately before illumination when the individual senses they are close to a breakthrough.

Csikszentmihalyi model doesn’t include the intimation stage and describes the four stages as the process through which individuals can manage ‘Flow—the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it’ (Csikszentmihalyi,1990:14).

Again, this text is accessible, engaging, and informative but assumes the individual can transfer the information to their context and make it a tangible part of their lives.

In the same way as Tharp and Csikszentmihalyi, Tom and David Kelley of IDEO and the d. school at Stanford provides a proactive approach to developing individual creativity. They promote divergent thinking (Guildford, 1950) as a source of creativity. *Creative Confidence Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All* (2015) contains ideas to help build ‘creative muscles’ working on the principle that practice will develop new ways of thinking to strengthen resolve and prepare the reader to recognise and grasp opportunities as they arise.

However, they also recognise that ‘You have to work out what strategy will work for you... How you might better understand the things that hold you back? How you might experiment with different approaches?’ (Kelley, 2015:247). Again, there is no information about how to build an effective and sustainable personalised framework.

Like Tharp, Steven Pressfield, in *The War of Art - Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* (2012) (see fig.7.), provides anecdotes from his own experience and those of other creatives. He lists the doubts and fears that most creative people experience. He identifies the inner voices that lead to inaction or resistance’ and provides a clear solution. This can be summarised as accepting the situation for what it is and just doing the work. He reassures the reader that

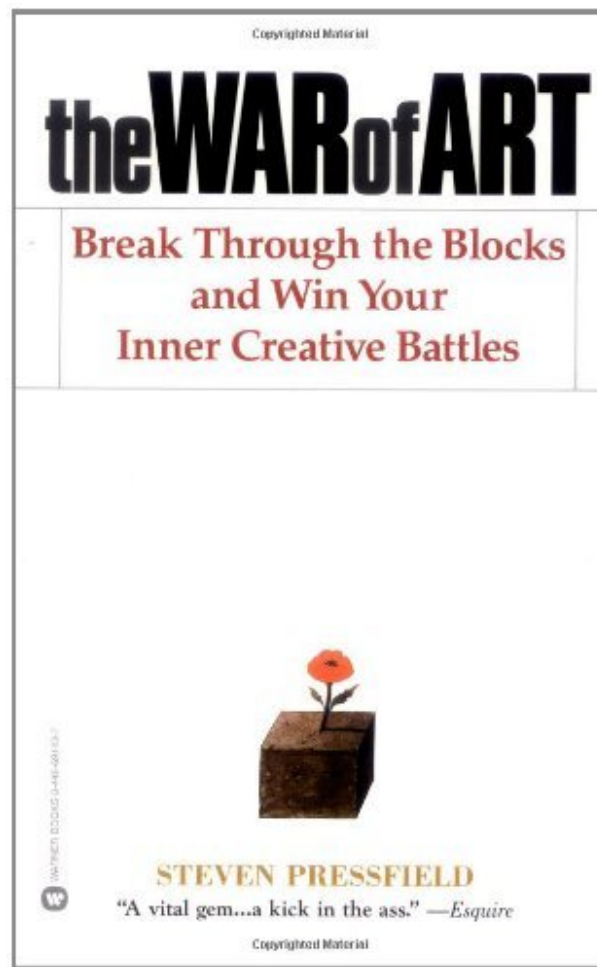


Fig. 7. Pressfield, S. *The Art of War Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* – Front Cover (2012)

everyone experiences the same thing. It is hard work, but only by continuing to engage with the work, regardless of feelings of success and failure, that success will be achieved: a hard lesson with no real direction for learning and self-improvement. He assumes that what works for him will work for others but does not provide any evidence that this is the case.

Steal Like an Artist by Austin Kleon (see fig.8.) has an engaging graphic format full of sound advice, such as ‘enjoy captivity’ (2010:91) by building your own world around you. It is another reassuring read with well-established tips and no real

surprises. There is a clear emphasis on making and doing, but there is no substantial way to develop creative practice.

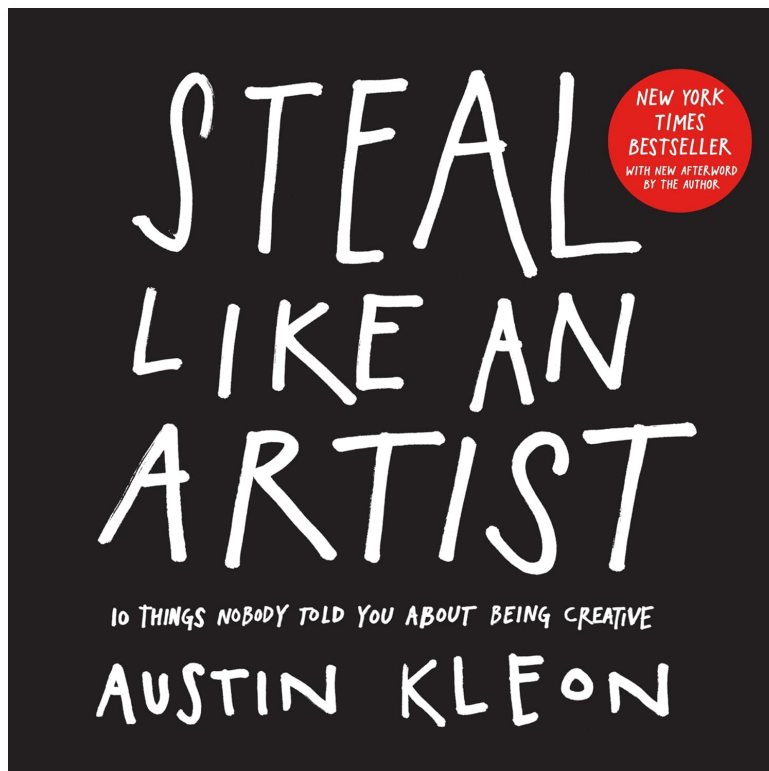


Fig. 8. Kleon, A. *Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative* – Front Cover (2012)

These books are full of generalisations. Examples and instructional interventions can only be used to clarify and develop ideas from a position of being removed from the situation. These texts assume that the reader thinks the same way as the author and will experience the same problems. They lack any foundation based upon an individual's experience, which would provide some security to rebuild confidence and motivation when difficulties are inevitably encountered. They do not provide the '...optimal experience [which] depends on the ability to control what happens in consciousness moment by moment, each person has to achieve it on the basis of his own individual efforts and creativity.' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:5).

This thesis contends that for an individual to make progress, strategies must be personalised and relevant to how they perceive the world and make sense of what they experience. An effective way to record and reflect upon the outcomes of such occurrences must be established to achieve this. To develop strategies to improve their practice, the subject must become aware of the connections between

recurring patterns of emotions, thoughts and behaviour. This literature review has revealed that books promoted as methods to enhance creativity need to cover that crucial part of the process. They do not provide the necessary steps for the individual to develop their creative thinking independently. Neither do they provide ways to analyse the results or make connections between the interventions recommended. At best, it is implied, but usually, it is assumed the reader already possesses these higher-level skills of reflection.

3.2 *The Artist's Way*

Perhaps the most popular of these texts that exemplify the above is *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron (see fig.9.).

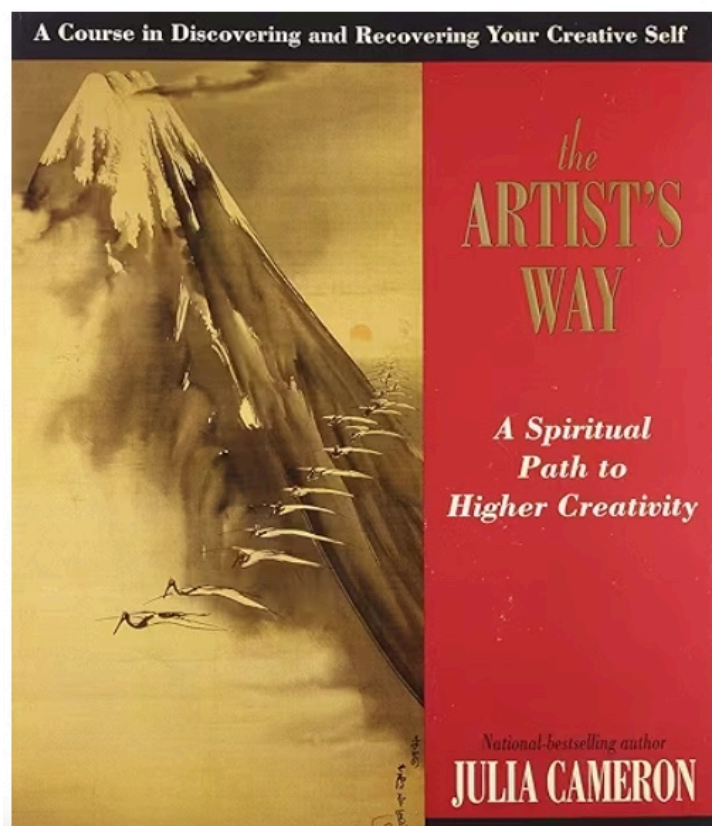


Fig.9. Cameron, J. *The Artist's Way: A Course in Discovering and Recovering Your Creative Self* – Front Cover (1994)

Well-known among the creative community, it was initially published in 1992. It has sold over five million copies and has been translated into 40 languages. Based on the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step programme, the book consists of 12 chapters, each corresponding to a weekly programme lasting 12 weeks to nurture the creative process. Each chapter concludes with tasks and exercises to be completed that week before moving on to the next chapter in the book.

In addition to these exercises, there are two ongoing requirements: A daily free writing task called 'morning pages' (Cameron,1995:12). The idea is to write three pages about whatever you are thinking or feeling at the time before beginning your day to clear your mind and 'dump' any mental baggage you may be carrying and to quieten the internal censor or critic which blocks creativity. The second 'nonnegotiable' task is the 'artist's date' ((Cameron,1995:18). This involves setting aside a pre-planned specific time to spend alone and focus on your 'creative consciousness'. It may be going to a gallery or theatre or doing a creative activity you enjoy, e.g., dancing or making, or whatever you perceive as being creative.

Cameron describes creativity as a spiritual path. This is signified by the book's title, which references the *Tao Te Ching*, the book of the 'Way of Virtue.' Written in the 4th century BC by Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism, the principles that would lead to living an ethical and meaningful life were also mirrored in Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings*(1645:49) included in his '*The Way of the Warrior*' series.

Cameron believes everyone is creative, and it is our choice whether we pursue our potential in that area or not:

When we open ourselves to our creativity, we open ourselves to the creator's creativity within us and our lives.
(Cameron,1995:3).

Cameron's language throughout conveys the mystical and spiritual aspects of her philosophy as she tries to convey creativity's underlying 'force'
(Cameron,1995:163).

Again, it is a text full of generalisations. Still, it touches on key ideas and exercises found in Taoism and positive psychology, such as the concept of Chi, a universal life force, affirmations, and self-compassion.

It is possible to trace a straightforward method in the process Cameron prescribes, and some of her exercises are similar to those advanced in the Intensive Journal, e.g., her morning pages can be compared to Progoff's daily log. But the comparison is only on a superficial level. Cameron requires everyone to have faith in her approach as she assures the reader that simply engaging with the activities on the most basic level will make something happen, '...we begin to hear solutions (Cameron,1995:20). She warns against re-reading the pages, and definitely not before week 8, whereas Progoff's research shows continuously writing each day in an unstructured way, 'is not sufficient in itself to bring about changes in a person's life.' (Progoff, (1992:65). This can only be achieved by using succinct daily recordings focusing on the psychological and emotional inner states experienced to gather data for feedback. The data collected can then be analysed and cross-referenced with additional content collected via focused tasks and exercises. Progoff also recognises the creative aspect and flow, which can sometimes be experienced when writing the daily log. He does not advocate that this should be halted, but this material should be transferred to another section of the Intensive Journal for future feedback sessions. The re-reading, including annotations and reflections on what is being read and cross-referencing to other parts of the journal, methodically builds and refines the skills of remembering and self-reflection. Progoff presents a structured and clear method for building a personalised framework to become self-aware and identify patterns of behaviour and key elements of change as they occur. Cameron's approach is left to chance and the hope that the individual will be 'moved' to 'constructive action' (Cameron,1995:15).

However, it's difficult to deny this book's continuing influence and the fact that many successful creatives (Elizabeth Gilbert, Pete Townsend, Alicia Keys, Patricia Cornwall) describe it as 'life-changing' can't be ignored. Cameron focuses on creative recovery and finding ways around the things that prevent you from making progress (Parker, 2014). Published reviews of this book give balanced accounts of

the pros and cons. Still, the overriding recommendations are concerned with re-awakening your creativity or building confidence in your ability to succeed in this area if you are at the point of giving up. Many have adapted her format to include drawings and mindmaps to be used as prompts and sparking ideas. *The Artist's Way* is repetitive, vague and full of ambiguities. Many reviewers admit to not staying the course. None of them takes the next (perhaps less self-indulgent and more straightforward) step, that of regularly reviewing the entries over time and finding the recurring themes. These feelings produce patterns of behaviour that promote avoidance and inaction. It takes a more significant commitment to examine how and why these feelings and behaviours occur. Still, the sustained effort in learning how to develop strategies to address them effectively provides a long-lasting insight that can be further built upon in the future.

There is no doubt that the popularity of such books provides practical suggestions for developing and enhancing creativity. However, their long-term and sustained efficacy has to be questioned. Although studies explore ways to promote creativity and divergent thinking, there needs to be more research that considers the artist to be at the centre of processes involved in thinking creatively. An online qualitative database search revealed a myriad of books which professed to foster creativity across different fields and disciplines. However, their content is based upon the assumptions that the reader thinks in the same way as the author and that they possess an existing ability in self-analysis and self-reflection. This study has shown that these self-help books need a consistent progressive framework to develop an effective personalised support system.

4. Contextual Review

4.1 Journaling

Keeping a journal in one form or another is a practice that is consistently recommended in the literature concerned with developing creativity.

(Cameron,1994; Progoff,1992). Leonardo Da Vinci, Eugene Delacroix and Paul Klee are celebrated examples of artists keeping diaries and sketchbooks. The diaries of Anais Nin and May Sarton are examples of the workings of an individual's inner life, and Frida Kahlo's illustrated diaries (1944-54) show the intensity of her thoughts and feelings. Keith Haring's journals (1971-89) describe his early artistic insecurities and later success as an artist. Jack Whitten also records his struggles and breakthroughs in his "studio notes" (1962-2014), citing his many insecurities as he explored new directions. These journals show artists' inner lives as they navigate the complexities of their lives.

Janice Lowry (1946 – 2009), the American painter and assemblage artist, is also known for her visual journals and diaries, which she kept for over 40 years. These 126 volumes became public when they became part of the Smithsonian Archive (see fig.10.).



Fig.10. Lowry, J. Artist's Journal Page July 5, 2003, (2003) [Diary: handwritten. Paper, ink, collage, stones 29x22cm]

Lowry says, ‘My life is a whole collage...emotionally, spiritually and as an artist too....All those things [different aspects of life] get overlaid at different times.’ (Edwards,2009). Although she identified themes :

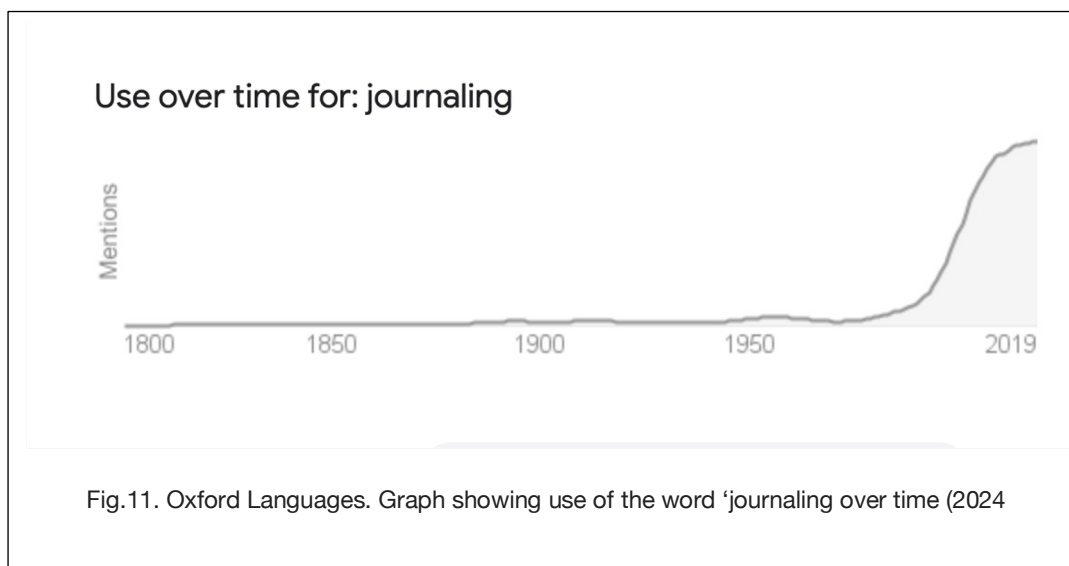
...health, motherhood, political things, being an artist, and even fashion and television. Originally, I saw them as books for my sons, so they could see my progress through life.’

Like the other examples, although Lowry’s journals provide records of experience, thoughts, and observations, they lack any self-analysis of patterns of behaviour.

4.2 Journals and Sketchbooks

This research began by engaging with the texts of Ira Progoff: *The Intensive Journal Method: At a Journal Workshop* (1980) and *The Practice of Process Meditation Intensive Journal Way to Spiritual Experience* (1980). Progoff uses the concept of a journal to extend the idea and practice of keeping a daily diary that records chronological events and experiences. The use of journals and writing provided a means of recording memories, events, experiences, feelings, and thoughts. They also offered a way of having an interactive conversation with the self over time.

The growth in popularity and awareness of journaling since the 1950s can be seen in the graphs presented in the Oxford Languages Dictionary (see fig.11.).



The graph showing mentions of the word 'journal' over time demonstrates a steady increase between 1800 and 1950. There is a marked increase from 1950 to the present day. However, the rise in the present tense of the word 'journaling' shows a steep rise in mentions since 2000. This reflects the increase in awareness and the use of journals since that time as the myriad of self-help books promoting this as a strategy for self-improvement hit the market. The global self-improvement industry is estimated to rise by 5.1% from 2020 to \$56.66 billion by 2027 (Grand View Research, 2020)

The interface between journals and sketchbooks has always been a rich area of exploration for creatives to gain insights and develop ideas, as well as a way of recording concepts to work on at a later date. As this research's focus is on established artists, the use of a form which creatives are already familiar with had considerable advantages, e.g. they already understand how sketchbooks/journals can be adapted for individual purposes, finding their own ways and methods of recording whether through drawing, photography, digital devices or through the use of 'sketch boxes' as a mean to store samples or labelled artefacts. It also extends the written form into other languages, e.g., the visual, sensory or haptic.

It was helpful to define the difference between journals and sketchbooks and clarify their purpose as other artists became involved in this research. Artists use sketchbooks, notebooks and journals, including digital elements or alternative modes of recording in various ways. Sketchbooks may include writing and lengthy texts. Notebooks and journals could include drawings, diagrams and other graphic notation. They all may be used to record or communicate feelings, thoughts and ideas. All can be a means to clarify thoughts and experiment with different outcomes (Alaluusua, 2016:43).

In her thesis, *Sketchbooks -A Comparative Analysis of the Use of Sketchbooks by Contemporary Artists*, Elisa Alaluusua defines sketchbooks as serving:

... different personal uses for artists and other creative people. They have been used to collect and store material, as a practical tool, as a rehearsal and learning space to consider representation and well as application. In sketchbooks, artist have recorded their

observations, worked from memory and visualised their ideas – with a view towards future referral.

(Alaluusua, 2016:43).

In the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2024), sketchbooks are defined as books containing leaves of drawing paper intended for drawings and a sketch as a rough drawing of something outlining the main features without the detail. A sketch represents a design idea. A sketch helps artists capture their ideas, observations, and thoughts into a design. Journals are described as containing written texts, and their purpose is to record and reflect on events in a person's life over time. These may take the form of daily personal diaries or be subject-based, e.g., scientific journals or travel journals.

What is evident in this kind of writing is that interpretation takes place. This sometimes happens through conscious self-reflection, but it is always in the subconscious choices made about the words used or the subjects that are highlighted as an attempt to make sense of the world. We also bring our own worldview to that interpretation. When interpreting ourselves, the object and subject are the same. Awareness and analysis of such choices allow patterns of thinking to be discerned. Ways of thinking based upon assumptions built up over time come into view, accompanied by the repetition of behaviours that occur as a result. ‘...it is the information that we allow into consciousness that determines the content and quality of life.’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:80).

The overall difference is in purpose and intention. Sketchbooks' definitions coalesce around a more substantial visual and graphic element, while personal journals are records that trace events, thoughts, and feelings regularly over time.

4.3 Dream Journals

Another form of journaling familiar to artists is dream journals. This is a way to record what has been dreamt about upon waking. They include feelings experienced during the dream and times of sleeping. Dream journals were particularly popular with surrealist artists (e.g., Man Ray and Salvador Dali) who took inspiration from the unconscious and Freud's theory of dreams. This can be seen in their *Manifesto of Surrealism*:

Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought.

(Breton, 1992:88).

Freud believed the content of dreams needed to be analysed to discover what they symbolised as a way to understand the person's unconscious desires or conflicts. Jung rejected Freud's theory that dreams represented unconscious or repressed desires and motivations. He thought the function of dreams was to integrate an individual's conscious and unconscious lives regardless of interpretation.

Journaling provided an effective method to collect data for this research as it allowed a straightforward way of recording and analysing the mind's metacognitive self-regulatory capacity (MSRC) (Dorjee, 2016:1788). MSRC is the mind's natural tendency, which supports reflection and creates a metacognitive awareness of the links between thought and behaviour. Journaling provides an easily accessible means to record feelings, events and experiences, allowing flexibility and creativity when developing a means to cross-reference and reflect upon the content. Today, this activity is seen as empowering and a way to set and achieve goals. It is promoted as a practice to develop self-awareness, understand complex emotions and sustain wellbeing. Psychotherapists recommend this as a means to support recovery from mental illness and addiction. Overall, the experiences of self-reflective journal writers fall into three categories: therapeutic, meditative and transformative experiences (Epple, 2007:288-304). The transformative aspect, which results from the process of journaling, is the focus of this thesis.

Journaling is a tool that can be used to develop and enhance self-reflection and advance creative practice. This contextual review refers to how the work of painter and sculptor Cy Twombly and ceramicist and writer Edmund de Waal enabled the author to understand her own process and realise that self-reflection was central to developing her creative practice. Listening to both artists talk about their work and studying their outcomes enabled her to see how she might integrate greater self-reflection into her practice. They provided a key which clarified the connection between process and product. Their work demonstrates how an increased focus on material thinking and process consistently shifted their perspectives and attitudes towards their work, which allowed them to discover their next step.

The author realised that journaling could help her focus on process and self-reflection simultaneously, renewing her motivation and changing the direction of her practice.

4.4 Self-Reflective Practice

In conversation with Matilda Bathurst, de Waal said:

‘The de-acceleration of quarantine has taken me back to parts of my practice that I thought I’d left behind years ago’ (Bathurst, 2020), agreeing that the ‘... process can only start from where we are – in place, and in time’.

The purpose of journaling within the context of this research is to provide a means to promote self-reflective practice as a way to innovate and further develop creative practice. The process involved in Twombly and de Waal’s extensive body of work can be seen as a form of journaling. Through their engagement with reflective practices, material thinking, and methods of preparation, they interrogate their process of repetition and rhythm, building layer upon layer and analysing and developing a clear intellectual direction. Both were driven to delve into history to discover the connection between objects, symbols and the places individuals have arrived at, resulting from a specific shared history.

Examining the work of artists who engage with texts as part of their creative practice provides an additional perspective when exploring the impact of the purpose of journaling in self-reflection. Twombly and de Waal incorporated written text into their completed work (see figs.12 and 13, respectively). They manipulate language to reflect upon, refine, and communicate their underlying ideas in complex, finished pieces.

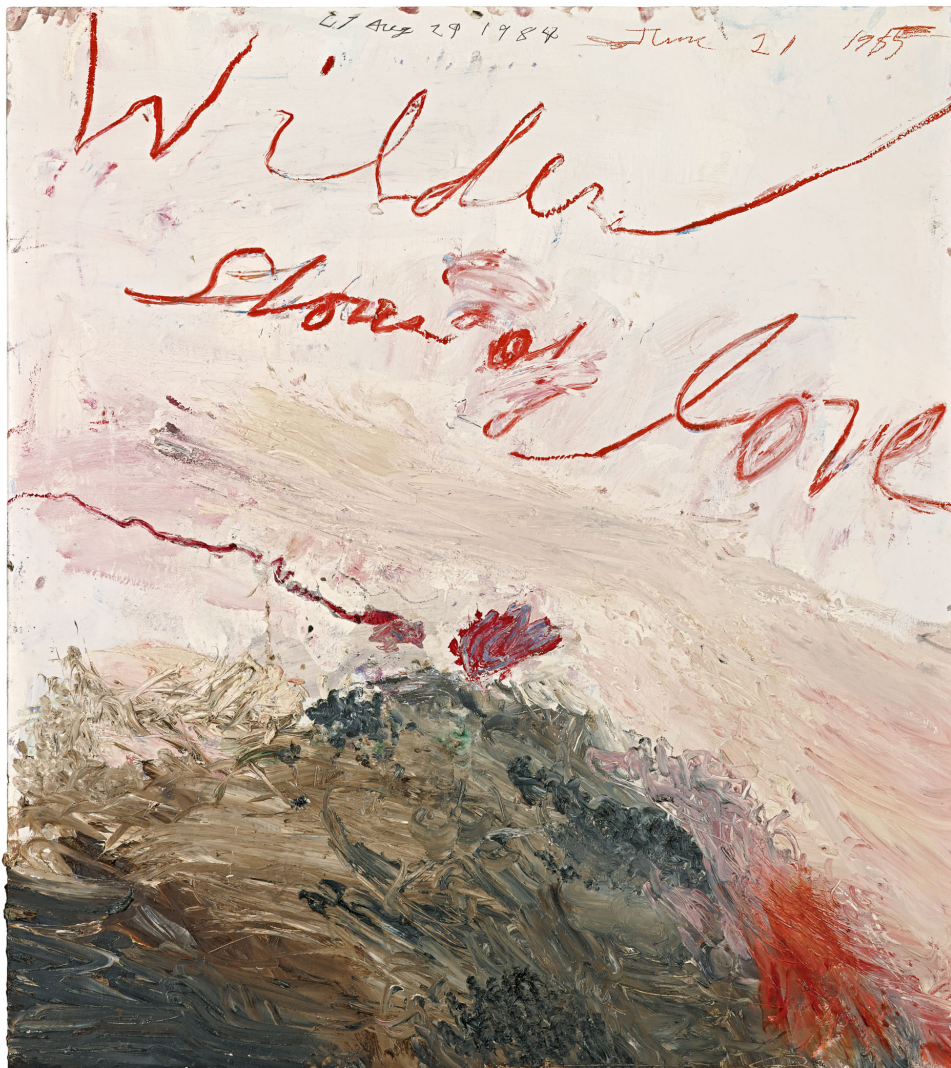


Fig. 12. Twombly, C. *Wilder Shores of Love* (1985) [oil-based house paint, oil (oil paint stick), coloured pencil, lead pencil on wooden panel 140x120cm Private Collection]

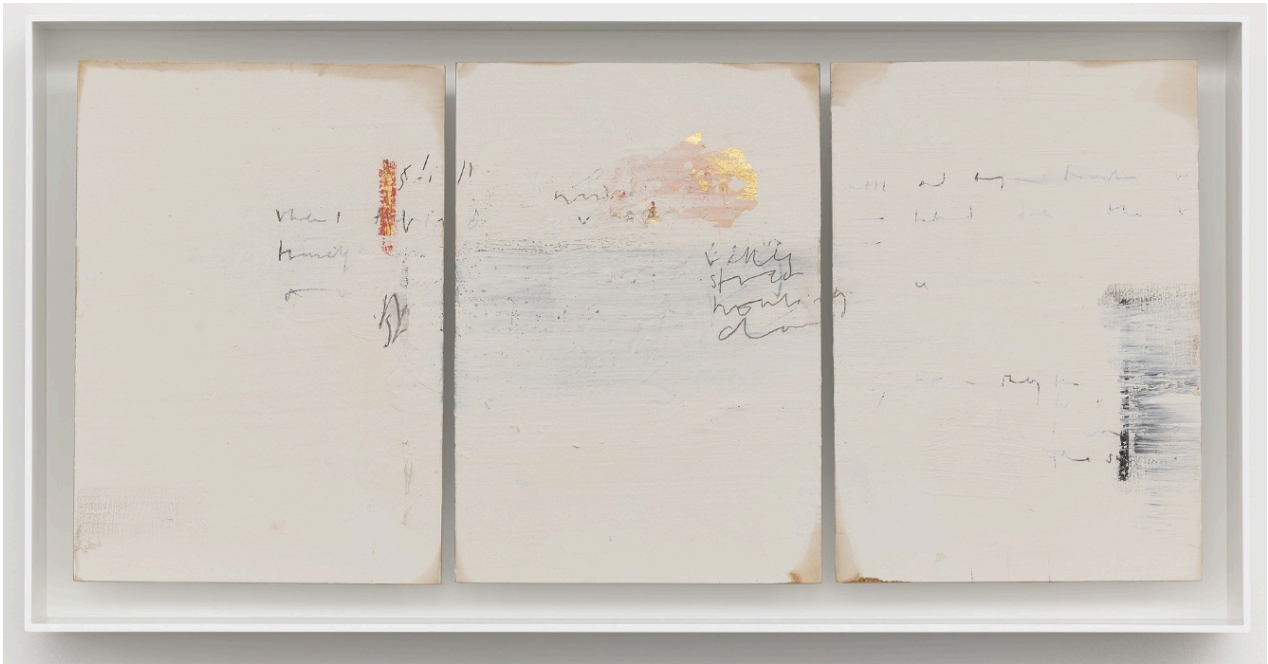


Fig.13. De Waal, E. *Cold Mountain1* (2020) [Kaolin, compressed charcoal and oil stick on oak and ash. 25x49x5cm]

Their work embodies the complexities of their process, which has moved beyond the need for any external support structure. De Waal says it lies within the ‘materiality of a thing’:

... the endlessness of the making process itself – it’s iterative, it takes you back – you know you’re not going to run out of clay, you know that the next vessel has to happen, and the vessel after that, and the vessel after that. Making takes you to a space which is not about good conclusions, it’s about positive being.
(Bathurst, 2019).

4.5 Edmund de Waal

Edmund de Waal, master potter and writer, was born in Nottingham in 1964. His works include delicate porcelain vessels in vitrines and large installations that explore materiality and concepts related to memory and diaspora. His current work has shifted both in scale and material.



Fig. 14. De Waal, E. (2024) . Installation Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin 2024



Fig. 15. De Waal, E. Installation View Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin (2024)

Stoneware vessels, including 'elegies, VIII', with a height of 144cm and diameters of 72.5cm (see figs. 14 and 15), sit alongside the familiar refined white and black porcelain pots that can be held in the hand (see figs. 16 and 17). De Waal says, 'I've always loved the idea of the mutability of things. . . . Nothing is forever. . . . There's an inherent instability about how objects work in space.' (De Waal, 2024).



Fig. 16, De Waal, E. *Untitled (Let no air now be sung) (detail)* (2024) [porcelain, silver, aluminium, wood and glass 122x95x19cm]



Fig.17, De Waal, E. *Landfall (detail)* (2024) [porcelain, silver, wood, steel and glass 94x61x13cm]

‘Here I am trying to understand the space inside a vessel, inside the hands that hold the bowl, the space between breaths.’ (de Waal, 2024). He explains that this ability to shift perspectives and seek new directions motivated the author to understand this process.

De Waal describes himself as ‘an artist who writes’ (de Waal, 2019:15). *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* (de Waal, 2010) traced the journey of generations of his family from Paris and occupied Vienna to Tokyo as a result of inheriting a collection of Japanese netsuke from his uncle. This theme is continued with *Letters to Camondo* (De Waal, 2022) as de Waal discovers more information about his family history through the objects in the art collection of Moïse de Camondo.

His exhibition Psalm (2019) concerned memories and the diaspora of languages that record and keep them alive. Situated in the Schola Canton in the Jewish Ghetto in Venice, he created a new *Library in Exile* (see fig.18.).



Fig. 18. De Waal, E. *Library of Exile* (2020) [Installation, oak and birch ply structure with kaolin, gold leaf and hand-written text on the façade holding a quarter of vitrines – psalm,i-iv (2019)- including a collection of over 2000 books. Overall:304x702x397cm]

It contained copies of books in dozens of languages written by people in exile. These books were displayed on shelves contained within an installation of walls created by de Waal. The external walls extend de Waal’s technique, referencing the effect of a palimpsest. A palimpsest is created when text has been removed from an existing manuscript, allowing the expensive parchment to be used again. Traces of

previous texts are left behind and can be seen through the erasure, creating a layering and overwriting of ideas and communications.

In the same way, pentimenti reveals lines of previous drafts or works when old canvases were renewed by overpainting previous work. The differences and similarities lie in this erasure and the practical reuse of the original materials. The unwanted texts were washed off manuscripts or scraped away with pumice stones. Painters merely painted over previous drafts or completed works, concealing them beneath new layers of paint. Working directly onto the walls of the installation physically shows the layering inherent in this technique and the remnants of the text recorded.

The meaning contained within this installation can be seen as a reflection of the journaling process and concept, demonstrating how cross-referencing and the layering of ideas, thoughts, and feelings can be reinterpreted and changed over time.

An insight into de Waal's process can be gleaned when he describes one space in his studio where he has written onto the walls for five years, which he said was the beginning of a new body of work. (Gibson, 2019) and Sam Anderson, in his article 'Edmund de Waal and the Strange Alchemy of Porcelain', describes his visit to de Waal's studio:

The white walls are covered with his [de Waal's] handwriting — possible exhibition titles, mysterious numbers, inscrutable notes. (One note simply said "Rhythm, etc." (Anderson 2015). (see fig.19.).

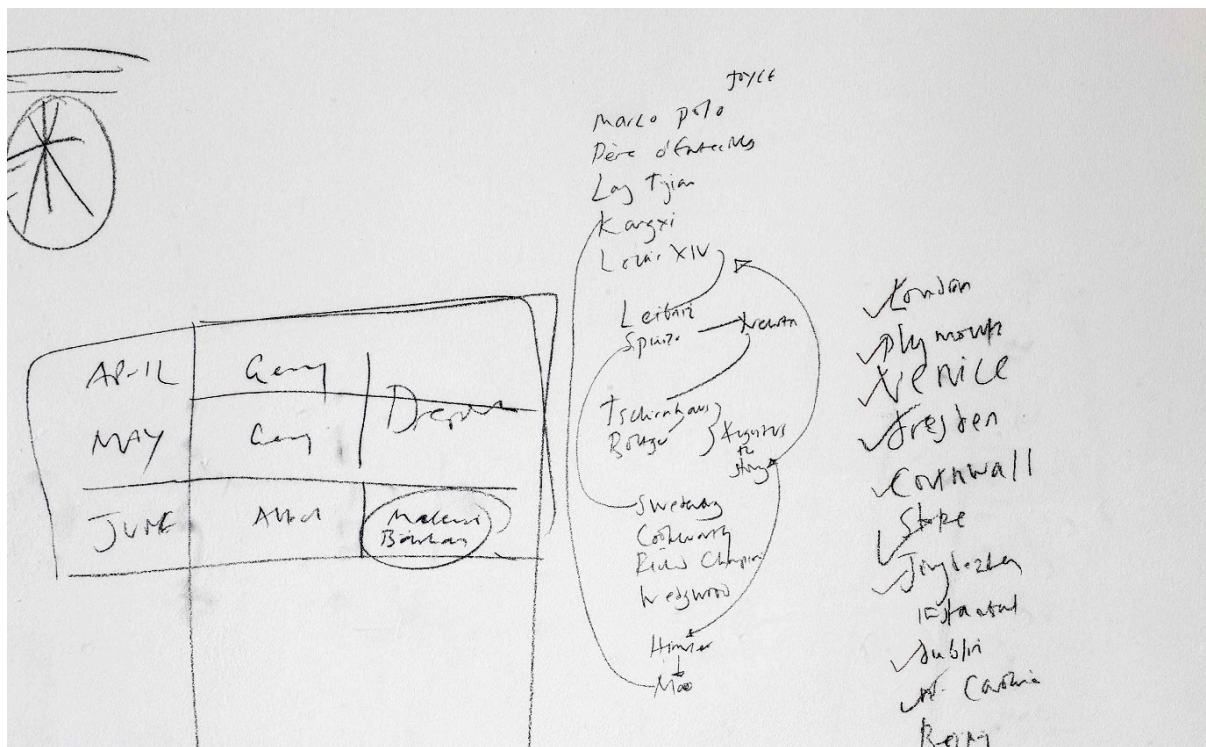


Fig.19. De Waal, E. Wall of de Waal's studio (2024)

Similarly, the external walls of the installation Library in Exile are covered in porcelain slip and sheets of gold, then carefully inscribed with the names of the lost libraries of civilizations from 6th century Nineveh to 21st century Mosul, where over 100,000 books and rare manuscripts were burned (Fadhil, 2015). In the process of painting on this liquid porcelain. Some of the words or fragments of words can be read through the porcelain, which reveals hidden or lost knowledge:

Some words are clear, some effaced by more porcelain slip so that only a shadow is present, some are hazed in gold.

(De Waal 2019:19).

For de Waal, the whole process of the installation becomes one of reflection. The physicality and vertical structure of the building suggest that '...everything is about the journey upwards, about slowing down... it is a call-and-response between materials.' (De Waal 2019:17).

The process de Waal describes mirrors that of journaling. Reflecting on the importance of discovering the 'now' in journaling (Progoff, 1992:46),

In the same way, journaling reveals the iteration of cycles of behaviour; de Waal recognises, 'The great thing about repetition is that it's endlessly renewing. Each return is slightly different.' (Bathurst, 2019) and he concludes: 'And yet, like gilded *kintsugi* which draws a line and transforms an object, the making process is its own answer.' (Bathurst, 2019).

De Waal acknowledges the depth and complexity of the past, including its historical antecedents, various aspects of textual recording, and the ongoing process of cross-referencing and self-reflection. The Intensive Journal Method (Progoff, 1992) focuses on developing these two essential skills and provides the framework for the individual to develop these skills independently.

4.6 Cy Twombly

Like de Waal, Edwin Parker "Cy" Twombly Jr. (1928 – 2011), the esteemed American painter, sculptor and photographer, provides a lasting legacy with an individualist perspective. He moved in a different direction from the period's prevailing abstract expressionism and pop art to explore classical narratives, mythology, poetry and place. His works range from large canvases with scribble marks to romantic abstract images inspired by poetry and classical allegories (see fig. 20.). His sculptures and photographs reflect everyday experience. He uses found materials and unremarkable objects for his assemblages, and his photographs are records of the here and now.

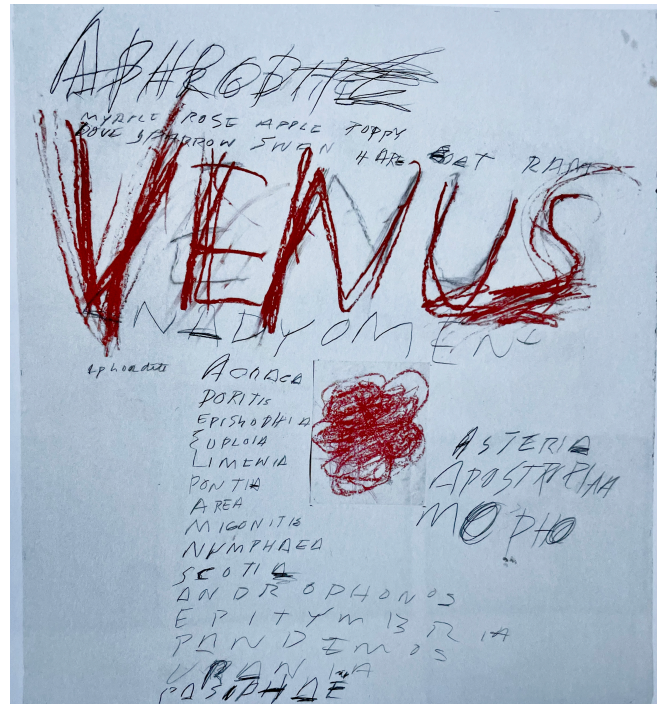
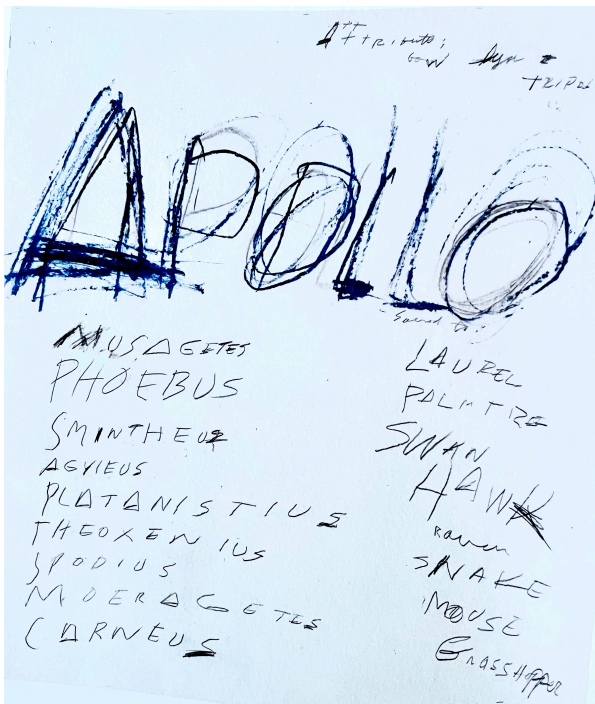


Fig. 20. Twombly, C. Apollo (1975) oil pastel on paper 150x134cm and Venus (1975) oil pastel, graphite and collage on paper 150x137cm Cy Twombly Foundation

Africa as a young man, essayist and philosopher Roland Barthes writes, ‘On certain surfaces of TW’s [Twombly’s] there is nothing written, and yet these surfaces seem to be the repository of all writing. (Barthes, 1985:161). In *Poems to the Sea* (1959), he makes marks on the surface of the paper over and over, which then, as Nicholas Serota, curator of the Twombly Retrospective at the Tate, says, ‘[He builds] up an image which is coming from within rather than a representation of something.’ (Serota 2007).

Twombly spends time internalising this process. Words and fragments of sentences communicate precisely what he intends.

During an interview with Serota, he says, ‘When I work, I work very fast, but preparing to work can take any length of time. It can even be a year.’ (Serota, 2007).

...because I work very fast. I sit for two or three hours and then in fifteen minutes I can do a painting, but that’s part of it. You have to get ready and decide to jump and do it; you build yourself up psychologically, (Serota, 2007).

Like de Waal's ceramics, his simplicity is deceptive and viewing the works requires patience and effort. His paintings and drawings, which include text, figures and symbols, contain within them the complexities and influences of unfamiliar and foreign aesthetics; in his monograph on Twombly, Richard Leeman recalls the significance of numbers, symbols and words in Twombly's drawings and paintings carry within them meanings beyond the day-to-day use and understanding: 'and move into the realm of metaphor and connotation, a synthesis of affective and cultural significances, an indistinct mass of imagery.' (Leeman 2005:96). Mary Jacobus agrees and says, '...Twombly draws writing, but he also draws the rhythms of pre-verbal thought... signifying systems from which verbal thought emerges.' (Jacobus, 2016:78-102) echoing Twombly's emphasis on the physical movement of the body in space, as:

'Each line now is the actual experience with its own innate history. It does not illustrate – it is the sensation of its own realization. ...it is an involvement in essence (no matter how private) into a synthesis of feeling, intellect, etc., occurring without separation in the impulse of action.'

(Cy Twombly, 1957: 32).

Twombly developed a personal visual language through which he said, 'fragments of poems can in fact determine or influence the direction of a work and strike up a dialogue during its execution.' (Bastian, H., quoted in Leeman 2005:96).

Twombly's paintings show an intense self-awareness and a conscious consolidation and re-framing of meaning. This inner need is at the heart of the process of journaling and, for Twombly, results in the formation of a visual language which evolves from a lifetime of collecting and piecing together an amalgam of reading and thought:

'the numbered notes, the traces of calculations, the correspondences cannot fail to evoke the visual vocabulary of painters' notebooks and sketchbooks...'

(Leeman 2005:98).

‘It is the collective memory moving amid all those shifting focuses of free association that makes up the knowledge of eternal recurrence.’
(Szeemann, 1987:9).

Robert Motherwell recognised this in 1951 when Twombly was a student at Black Mountain College:

His [Twombly] painting process, of which the pictures are tracks that are left, as when [one] walks on a beach... half buried in his violent surface is sufficiently evident (and so not allowed to emerge anymore).
(Motherwell, 2007:103).

De Waal’s *Palimpsests* and Twombly’s paintings (also a form of palimpsest), with their self-conscious notations and erasures, present themselves as drafts and studies. They are reminiscent of personal diaries or dream journals. (Sheffield, 1979). It is as if they were self-consciously presenting pages of their journals for public display.

By transposing words and sentences, Twombly and de Waal have transmuted the essence of their private inner world into the public domain without any explanation or preamble. John Berger has written, ‘He [Twombly] sees it [written language], rather, as a terrain full of eligibilities, hidden paths, impasses, surprises, and obscurities.’ (Berger (2002) cited in Startind, 2011).

Claire Daigle also links the spaces between the vessels in de Waal’s vitrines, writing: ‘Twombly ‘visualises with living colours the silent space that exists between and around words.’ (Daigle, 2008).

The works of both artists blur the line between metaphor, the symbolic and the real; de Waal acknowledges he feels ‘an odd kindred with Cy Twombly, this idea of mark-making and writing within the art,... The idea of the word being an object, that seems to me to make so much sense.’ de Waal describes working alone in the early morning: ‘Solitude is exacting.’ He says:

I read [the verses] out, wrote them, effaced them, worked on them, trying to find the amount of white space around a poem so that the words emerge... These works are my way of writing on a cave wall.
(De Waal, 2020).

Twombly and de Waal were both conscious of the need to create space in which thoughts and images emerge. This developed through their ability to evolve a rigorous form of self-reflective practice. There is little information about their actual self-reflective processes. Still, both Twombly and de Waal's work signifies how a high level of self-reflection in their practice continuously moves the two artists' work in new directions. The work denotes a sustained and sophisticated level of self-reflection, reinforcing their focus on material thinking and process. This shifted Twombly's work from established studio practices to abstractions rich in textures and allusions. In de Waal's case, from functional studio pottery to installations of hundreds of porcelain vessels, which can be read as poetry.

This research focuses on understanding an individual's creative process through self-reflective practices. It is situated in this liminal space between journal pages and works intended for public display. It explores how generalised strategies can be developed to advance an individual's creative practice by observing and understanding the patterns evident in makers' working practices.

The processes involved in journaling promote self-reflective practice as a way to innovate and further develop creative practice. Examining the work of artists renowned for their thoughtful and self-reflective practice provides an additional perspective when exploring the impact of the purpose of journaling in the context of developing creative practice.

Journaling can facilitate this experience by providing a structured method to allow this to happen. Whatever form the mode of recording, it evolves into a vehicle through which metaphor and imagery can be explored and analysed. Through this process, individual visual languages can be extended. By layering visual, tactile and textual materials, original surfaces can be eliminated until a direction and order is realised. In the same way, a single inspirational idea emerges from the multitude of

confused thoughts in a perplexed mind. This knowingness allows radical editing and reduction, as seen in the finished works of de Waal and Twombly.

5. Cultivation: Case Study 1

To distinguish between the analysis of the process of working with the Intensive Journal and the author's personal experience of implementing it within her practice, italics will be used to emphasise the author's voice when communicating her reflections on the process and journal entries.

To address the gap in knowledge in the current literature described previously, the structure of the Intensive Journal Method (Progoff, 1980) was used and adapted to provide the crucial stage of self-reflection and analysis. The Intensive Journal Method exemplifies an autoethnographic and embodied approach when gathering and analysing data. Reflexivity recognises the self as a process whilst conscious of existing within time and space. Autoethnography allows a narrative to be developed which reflects 'the flow of experiences.... [recognising] any present experience includes an implicit awareness of events which have happened before and which may happen in the future.' (Muncey, 2014:5).

A biopsychosocial framework can be applied to the Intensive Journal's structure as it continually reassesses and incorporates new information. The Intensive Journal Method explores all aspects of an individual's experience using a series of sequential exercises to gradually build a picture of that individual's sense of self and how they arrived at the 'now' they currently experience. This research shows that by building upon Progoff's work in a non-therapeutic way, it is possible to develop personalised strategies to advance creative practice. Placing the artist at the centre of this investigation releases the artist from being assessed by methodologies that have been designed from an objective viewpoint. It acknowledges, as Cain says, the need,

...to recognise that my own particular questions demand an alternative way of finding answers; simply rating how much practitioners experience novel ideas cannot tell me anything deeper about the qualities of the experience for myself. Cain (2010:38).

By applying this methodology, artists will be able to understand the processes involved in their choices, how these impact their practice, and how a greater understanding of the origins of such decisions will create a nonjudgmental and resilient mindset. Reflecting upon the work of Twombly and de Waal allowed the author to see how an exhibition of work produced over this time was an integral part of this thesis. Participation in group exhibitions provided regular opportunities for new work to be shown and feedback from colleagues to be shared (see Appendix C). The exhibition *Moments in Time* (Mills, 2024) provided a physical representation of the shifts in perception and the development of the author's creative practice over a five-year period whilst using the Intensive Journal Method (see Appendix D).

5.1 The Intensive Journal

The Intensive Journal Method was initially developed by psychotherapist Ira Progoff in 1957. This method integrates aspects of Carl Jung's depth psychology, of whom he was a student. Primarily, Progoff's approach reflects the Jungian concept of 'individuation' or self-actualisation. This person-centred approach focuses on inner dialogue and stories to promote growth, an understanding of the role of voice and purpose in psychological health and a focus on the person-centred training of developmental psychologists. Jung describes two stages of individuation. The first is "making meaning" and "choosing one's path". In the second, the emphasis shifts to 'finding meaning' and listening for inner guidance regarding which path to take. (Dillon, 2021:796). There must be a dialogue with these inner voices to work in this way as the feelings, thoughts, and outcomes are reflected on and processed. Journaling plays a significant role in this process.

Progoff realised that keeping journals allowed his clients to develop a personal narrative representing their inner world outside of sessions. He understood that this writing had to have a purpose and be forward-looking for the client to achieve greater self-awareness. His intention was:

‘...that the journal become an instrument that would be capable of functioning well by means of the individual’s own use of it and that it not be dependent upon another person...’

(Progoff, 1980:28).

‘...to provide an instrument and techniques by which persons can discover within themselves the resources they did not know they possessed.’

(Progoff, 1980:10).

The Intensive Journal incorporates techniques for self-reflection and ways to cross-reference these reflections as they are recorded and re-read. Interactive feedback reveals unconscious and conscious patterns, motivations and behaviours. *The Journal Workshop* (Progoff, 1980:30-45, 1992:25-32) provides guidelines for developing strategies for the next steps. Successful engagement with the Intensive Journal depends upon an individual’s ability to be self-reflective and self-motivated with the capacity to work alone (Epple, 2007:20). These traits are usually evident in an individual’s creative practice, making this approach sympathetic to the existing strengths of the creative practitioner.

Like Csikszentmihalyi, Progoff identified specific qualities in the lives of creative people. He recounts how he later realised that the format of the Journal focused on the processes creative people experienced and not the content of their lives. He recognised creatives were forward-looking with lives full of change. They were an ideal group on which to base his work. The structure he arrived at ‘had the effect of making each section a place where a mini-process in the unfoldment of a total life was being expressed and was carried forward.’ (Progoff, 1980:34).

The Intensive Journal has been used in various contexts, showing the approach’s versatility. However, I am unaware of it being employed as a methodology for creative practice. Dorothy Epple’s research and work with recovering alcoholics demonstrates the empowering effect The Intensive Journal can have:

Liliana described the journal as giving her a “vocabulary” for her inner life, an experience that resembled “turning on the light” over terrain that had been in semi-

darkness....

(Epplé, 2003:301).

Rev. James Miller describes the mid-career doubts that priests commonly experience. He says the Intensive Journal is a 'Blueprint for Spirituality of Experience'. He writes, 'It is my position that Ira Progoff's Intensive Journal method is a link between inner renewal and the outer life and ministry of the priest.' (Miller, 1979).

When evaluating the effectiveness of Jon Progoff's initiative, The Intensive Journal Target Prison (IJTP) Program in New York, Superintendent Lord said, 'The program has created a ripple effect as these inmates have become empowered to help improve the behaviour of their fellow inmates.' (Progoff, J. 1999).

Progoff's work with The Intensive Journal has been summarised as 'epitomising' learning journals. It provides '... a format that could support ongoing learning as well as the integration of learning from past experiences' (Moon, 2004:180) rather than relying on experiences of the present.

Today, the Intensive Journal Organisation in Ohio continues its work with the Intensive Journal and promotes writing as the most efficient way of recording thoughts and events. They reassure participants:

You do not have to like to write nor be a good writer. We have people who are barely literate who attend our program and gain a great deal out of the experience. (Progoff, J. 2024).

However, this reveals a potential accessibility issue for creatives who find it challenging to use written language as their principal form of communication. On a continuum from mild to severe, according to the British Dyslexia Association (BDA, 2023), 10% of the British population presents with dyslexic tendencies. In 2013, the Royal College of Art (RCA) recorded that 29% of its students self-identified as dyslexic. This also follows that the teachers of the Arts have dyslexic tendencies. Dyslexia, a specific learning difficulty (SpLD), affects written language processing. It can also affect information processing and organisational skills. It is estimated that

5-10% of people think this way as their brain activity tends to be more holistic rather than focusing on isolated details because of how the different neural pathways function. They are perceived as having a greater affinity for visual-spatial awareness and skills. Considering people who experience dyslexia as a generalised example, this research used the structure of The Intensive Journal Method. Still, it encouraged alternative means of recording to be incorporated to encourage individual non-written languages and notation to be developed to promote different modes of thinking.

5.2 Creative Practice and The Intensive Journal Method

To distinguish between the analysis of the process of working with the Intensive Journal, italics show the author's reflections and entries as the journals were cross-referenced.

The concept of embodiment and the examination of the self guided this autoethnographic research. This methodology invites '...an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural.' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000:740). In the same way, The Intensive Journal is a form of reflective autoethnography in which the researcher's experience is studied (Ellis and Bochner, 2000:740). It works dialectically, like weaving a basket from the inside to the outside and vice versa. This research regards the artist's body as an essential means of making sense of the world. The Intensive Journal provides a critical reflective framework to analyse the self through what is sensed within the context of the spaces and interactions experienced. What is physically sensed provides the essential element of critical reflection, e.g., using parts of the body to measure materials focuses the attention on the body in space and making in relation to the maker's body. As researcher and cultural critic Aisha Durham explains:

...autoethnography centers the self and the body is seen as more than just an instrument to report or gather information. It sees a body as instrumental in sensing the gaps, the holes, the fissures, that bleed and blur and fold onto one another.

(An Introduction to the Autoethnographic Method, 2017).

A practice-based enquiry research design was used, which allowed the work to be exploratory and validated the voice or voices of the researcher. Set periods were planned with clear start and finish times to conduct specific exercises and establish ways to record the creative process. It promoted the concept of 'The living body/subjective self of the researcher [to be] ... recognized as a salient part of the research process, ...' (Spry, 2001:711). It facilitated the development of a personal narrative as the environment and individuals interacting with the subject became included in the reflective practice. (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) This approach guided this study's systematic design, making it imperative that the researcher and subject, initially, were the same. Giving access to the inside and outside; the concealed, protected, and contained within the surrounding displaced space - making it 'other'. This approach is reflected in the concerns explored in the author's basketry practice (see fig. 21.).



Fig. 21.. Mills,A. Beckons to be Known (Tansa) . (2021) Willow bast willow bark and nettle. Bark 7x12x12cm

The looped open structure simultaneously reveals and conceals the inner construction of a basket that can be contemplated while held in the hand (see fig. 22).



Fig. 22. Mills, A. *Beckons to be Know (Tansa)* - held in the hand (2021) Willow bast willow bark and nettle 7x12x12cm

These looped structures, covered by segments of bark, allow air to flow through the bark, creating a shadowed interior. They emphasise the materiality of the plant material used and 'beckon' the viewer to come closer and peer into the shadowed interior to see what is inside.

(Author's Research Journal, January 2021).

This form of journaling allowed the immediacy in the subject's thinking, feelings and experiences to be recorded contemporaneously. It encouraged '...distinctions of personal and social, self and 'other' to be blurred (Spry, 2001:711). The intention was also to document the moment-to-moment, concrete details of life. That is also essential to knowing (Ellis and Bochner, 2000:373). It is a method accessible to

anyone intuitively drawn to this way of working. Autoethnography recognises this multifaceted and often ambiguous nature of an individual's perceived experiences. The active, non-judgemental approach to recording thoughts allowed for negative and positive thoughts to be recorded in the same neutral way.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997:343-351) affirmed it is possible to reframe negative thoughts to develop resilience and determination to achieve goals that might appear outside the individual's reach. Kahneman (Kahneman, 2012:381-3) also refers to this as 'framing' and explains this by dividing the self into two: the experiencing self and the remembering self. The experiencing self exists in the present and is influenced by memories of previous but similar situations. His research showed that the last experience remembered significantly influences our perception of an experience. The decision about how the experience is perceived is made by the remembering self, not the experiencing self. Professor of Psychology and author Mark Freeman explains, 'We are thus interpreting precisely that which, in some sense, we ourselves have fashioned through our own reflective imagination.' (Freeman, 2015:5). Freeman continues by making the point:

that interpretation involves an inescapably subjective dimension as well as a dimension of essential contestability ... interpretations are neither true nor false, but...more or less valid.
(Freeman, 2015:5-6).

Through this approach, the scholarship can record the process of different modes of thinking and how perceptions can change when viewed through a different lens, e.g., the experience of inaction when approaching a deadline can be interpreted as procrastination. However, on reflection, it can be perceived as an essential part of processing information. An example of the 'incubation' stage in Graham Wallas' (1926:79) description of the creative process. Wallas identifies four stages in *The Art of Thought* (1926:80-81), allowing the individual to understand the process. The initial stage, in which the problem or the area to investigate is identified, is called 'Preparation'. 'Incubation' is the second, usually lengthy stage, where the problem is not consciously thought about, but there is a continual awareness of its existence. 'Illumination' happens when the solution is found. This usually presents

as a spontaneous idea ‘out of the blue’, e.g., the eureka moment. ‘Verification’ is the final stage, when the solution is made public and is tested. At this stage, the overall process of thinking is clarified. Wallas emphasised these stages may overlap or occur simultaneously. In practice, this process is evident in resolving the constantly present problems.

Journaling allows the recording of different ways of thinking and their contexts. Adapting the Intensive Journal Method to focus on creativity provided the means to identify the arc of an individual's creative process and develop strategies to reframe negative thoughts by understanding how this process leads to more productive outcomes.

5.3 Embodied thinking

The design of my research methodology was also influenced by the writings of philosopher and neuroscientist Francisco Varela and writer and professor of psychology Evan Thompson (1991). Thompson summed up my position when, during an online lecture about his book *Waking Dreaming Being* (2015), he stated: ‘Everything is process and everything is under constant construction.’ (Thompson, 2016). This can also be seen as a perspective rooted in the process philosophy of mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (Whitehead, 1938), who argued that the reality we experience is one of a variety of processes, and it is their relationship to each other which provides meaning synthesising objective content with individual experience and subjective feelings.

Whilst this research focuses on inner life and self-reflection to gain meaning, the physical environment is fundamental to everything experienced. Francisco Varela introduced the concept of autopoiesis to biology and, through his theory of enactive cognition, explored the interactive nature of the connection between mind, body and environment. The actions of the organism shape the environment, and the organism, in turn, adapts (Varela, 2016:9). Mutual interactions are permanently intertwined. This perfectly aligns with my physical-making process. It

also reinforces the appropriateness of basketry as a metaphor to communicate the inner experience. Just as the artist's creative practice cannot be separated from the rest of their life, their mental processes cannot be separated from their bodily experience and the environment in which they find themselves.

In the same way, the researcher and subject are the same, so '... autoethnography is both process and product.' (Ellis et al., 2010:1). The autoethnographic process focuses on every step taken by the subject to arrive at a conclusion or product. However, in autoethnographic research, 'The goal is to produce analytical, accessible texts that change us and the world we live in for the better' (Holman Jones, 2005, cited in Ellis, 2010:1). In this research, the 'product' can be seen as an interruption in the process providing the opportunity to review and evaluate. It considers what new possibilities can be opened up during the process and what alternative modes of thinking can be explored (e.g., proprioception, the body's ability to sense its position in space through movement and action). Incorporating regular group exhibitions (see figs. 23 and 24.) as part of the methodology allowed for an evaluation of existing work to be evaluated in relation to new pieces (see Appendix C). Feedback from professional colleagues provided a critical perspective upon which to reflect.



Fig. 23. Mills, A. (2022) Echoes of Iceland – Bergmal frá Íslandsí (2022) [Exhibition] Allen Gallery Alton.



Fig. 24. Mills, A. *Basketry: Rhythm, Renewal and Reinvention* (2021) [Exhibition] Ruthin Craft Centre, Ruthin

Through autoethnography, the embodied cognition that takes place in those liminal spaces between tacit and explicit knowledge can be articulated:

...you come to know yourself in deeper ways. And with understanding yourself comes understanding others. Autoethnography provides an avenue for doing something meaningful for yourself and the world.

(Ellis 2000:738).

The structure of Progoff's Intensive Journal Method was the starting point of this process. The journal and alternative forms of recording were integrated into the author's creative practice, allowing qualitative data to be recorded initially over three months.

5.4 Applying the Intensive Journal: The Period Log

The intensive Journal is divided into 25 sections (Progoff, 1992:404-410) consisting of written logs, visualisations and exercises covering all aspects of an individual's life. This research was only concerned with the preparatory work (Progoff, 1992:1-33), the first stages of journaling (Progoff, 1992:45-65), and the 'Life /Time Dimension work (Progoff, 1992:73-182).

The format described in Progoff's book *At a Journal Workshop* (1980:404-410) was followed. For each exercise, time was allocated to understand what was required and record the data. The process began with the 'Period Log' (Progoff 1980:64-6). (See Appendix E, 15.3). This activity allowed the individual to determine how they perceive themselves currently, situated between the past and the future. It determined which past experiences still played an active part in their thoughts, feelings, and actions of the present.

The emphasis is on the inner life of emotions and perceptions. As this research was concerned with creative practice, the focus was on life as an artist. It consciously encouraged the use of 3D materials, drawings, and visual annotations to complement and extend written reflections. Italics show the author's reflections and journal entries.

Working with familiar materials, I realised as I began to physically manipulate them that they mirrored the connectedness of The Intensive Journal Method as one element was intuitively interlinked with another and another to allow a 3D structure to emerge. (See fig. 25.).

(Author's Research Journal, June 2020).



Fig. 25. Mills, A. *Experimental Work* (2020) [willow and daffodil leaf 26x19x20].

As I reviewed my Period Log, the detail and relevance of my timeline now extended farther back than I had expected to a residency at Textilmidstod in Blönduós, Iceland, in May 2019:

As I wrote down events and times, I immediately visualised the studio in Iceland and the view over the river. It was a time before COVID-19 and a time when my practice was searching for a new direction.

I am disappointed that I have not been able to make explicit use of the experience as the others at the residency have been able to. It is only now, nearly three years later, that I can trace its underlying influence in my current work.

(Author's Research Journal, October 2021).

The Period Log reminded me and focused my attention on parts of my practice that had gradually seemed irrelevant, e.g. my use of sketchbooks. It allowed me to

consider why the experimental work I was pursuing was so compelling. It provided a clear perspective through which to view my creative practice within the context of my life. As I regularly re-read, added to, and reviewed this Period Log over 20 months, it clarified areas I felt impinged on the time I wanted to give to my creative practice, e.g., family commitments. I thought I could now assess and prioritise more objectively and become more proactive and assertive in challenging the way things were.

New elements are added in when making cordage as the raw material tapers and ends. To maintain a consistent thickness in the cord, some of the existing material is 'left behind' to be trimmed later (see fig. 26.).



Fig.26. Mills, A. 'Adding in' and 'leaving behind' when making cordage. (2020) [daffodil and iris leaf]

In the same way, my practice was increasingly being 'added in' to my 'now'. I could see my life had to be edited in some way to allow time for my making. Recording the events and experiences which had the most meaning for me over the last three years allowed me to see what could be 'left behind' and put to one side for the moment. This allowed me to have clear discussions with my family to find practical solutions to problems. Any negative emotions, e.g., guilt, anxiety, and frustration, were eliminated when I had to allocate extensive periods of time to my work.

5.5 The Daily Log

The next step was to begin a Daily Log (Progoff, 1980:86-97) (see Appendix E, 15.2). This consisted of a daily record of events, thoughts, feelings and ideas. These brief notes were re-read and analysed to discover patterns in behaviour, perceptions and attitudes.

I uncovered these patterns by regularly re-reading, highlighting and annotating my original entries. I adapted Progoff's format and recommendation to use a ring binder and used A5 notebooks instead, which were easier to carry and write in during the day. I only used the right-hand page, leaving the page on the left blank so that comments and reflections could be added later when re-reading the original text. These additional comments were colour-coded, e.g., reflections were written in green, and further comments made links and connections to other areas in blue. Repeated themes, behaviour and attitudes were highlighted. These annotations created an internal dialogue. This process created an interactive and dynamic form of recording. Additional space was made, as needed, by inserting extra pages, flaps or Post-its. In this way, attitudes and patterns of behaviour concerning working practices gradually changed.

From the entries over the past two years, I have become more relaxed and less concerned about controlling the process, e.g., allocating specific time to complete particular tasks. Fixed outcomes have become more fluid and less relevant, reflected

in finished pieces, which have become increasingly dependent upon the natural changes in colour and the final twisting and tightening of the materials as they dry.

Over time, this Daily Log showed reduced comments relating to worries about meeting deadlines and a more relaxed attitude to my use of time and goal setting. It showed a change in perceptions and behaviour similar to the findings of other researchers using The Intensive Journal to bring about change in an individual's inner life, e.g., Sylvia Ross McMillan's research project working with ex-offenders found that the use of The Intensive Journal encouraged self-reliance and appeared 'to shorten the process of growth that so often is long and arduous'.

(McMillan, 1978:6-7) She states the structure of the journal generates a change in attitudes and perceptions (McMillan, 1978:111). Charles Dickson used intensive journaling with a group of adolescents to enhance their self-identity (Dickson 1976:117). He found a significant difference when the total score of nine sub-scales of the Smith Self-concept Profile was analysed. The self-concept profile is an assessment tool based on Carl Rogers' theory that the individual's drive towards self-actualisation depends on a positive perception of the self and the congruence of self-esteem, self-worth and self-image.

Dickson also writes about the value of the Intensive Journal as a tool:

'...the entire journal was an invaluable reference source that could be consulted to see how feelings changed over a period of time and to what extent attitudinal and behavioural changes had been effected; ...'

(Dickson, 1976:12).

I also found that the richness and depth of the data gathered provided a source of reference that could be accessed over time to recognise patterns as the same concerns recurred almost cyclically, whilst others had been resolved and became less or no longer relevant.

My perception of time and space changed as the detailed daily recording revealed what I actually did during my studio time compared to what I thought I did. I discovered clearly defined work periods lasting between 50 and 60 minutes. At the

end of this time, I moved on to do something else, e.g., make coffee or put the washing on. I thought I worked continuously for a whole morning or afternoon or most of the day. I could also determine the time frame for the arc of my creative process. I discovered from an initial idea that the time needed to resolve a problem took approximately four weeks. This was the time I needed to process the information I gathered (incubation). It confirmed what I intuitively knew about working towards deadlines and what I thought possible to deliver within a timeframe. What I regarded as just luck in successfully hitting deadlines, I now realised, was a clear and consistent pattern of working. This meant I could relax and have confidence in my ability to estimate the time I needed to develop a new series of work.

I also realised the spaces I created in my mind to be attentive to the moment when I am making were transitional spaces, which could facilitate perceptual change, both physical and psychological, e.g., I began to see the physical spaces as a physical representation of the mental spaces which occur during the making process. The places where I chose to make took on greater importance as I became aware of the right place for different activities. The seasonal nature of my practice determines certain activities. The harvesting and drying of plants can only happen at specific times of the year. Willow bark can only be stripped from the rods when the sap rises in the late spring, and once that provides the only material you have to use until the following year. The time available for working out of doors becomes crucial as more space is available to build larger structures, and soaking materials and clearing waste material is more manageable. Moving through the spaces outside increased my awareness of the materiality of the plant material gathered. The freedom of walking across the grass carrying iris leaves from the pond to the drying area and the decision where to create an outside studio under the shade of the trees made me conscious of how embodiment enhances and informs the experience of making.

Just as air continually travels through the gaps between the fibres, so thoughts tumble and free-fall into any space created in my head.

(Author's Research Journal July 2020) (see fig. 27.).



Fig. 27. Mills, A. Random weave study (2019) [buff willow 49x30x26cm]

5.6 The Twilight Imagery Log

Like his teacher, Carl Jung, Progoff regarded dreams and daydreams as a way for the unconscious mind to communicate with the conscious mind. He believed daydreams and dreams are expressions of our imagination and provide imagery and symbols that help integrate our conscious and unconscious lives.

The following section in *The Intensive Journal* uses imagery to find a solution to a problem. The Twilight Imagery Log (see Appendix E, 15.5) provides the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of creative practices' impact on an individual's life, why creatives find their practice so compelling, and how it relates to other aspects of their lives. This visualisation technique demonstrates how creative practices are more integrated into an artist's life and should not be perceived as something separate and added on.

I began to think about my use of sketchbooks, and I visualised my life as a page in one of them. I saw my life as a composite, layers built upon layers and everything existing at once, even if concealed or fragmented. Just as I build my sketchbooks, destroying the original surface, tearing the paper, or masking areas to reveal their content later. Seeing their content through additional surfaces, adding in paint, gesso, physical remnants, and plant material, I could see how I perceived my life to be constantly in a state of flux. Once I perceived this, my concerns about prioritising my practice over other commitments became irrelevant. It was no longer, for me, about prioritising one thing above another. It was just a case of accepting the movement and change as one area came to the surface and other parts moved into the background. This 'page' would always contain all the elements, but they would change as the focus shifted from one area to another. Just as in my sketchbooks, the details take on different meanings when viewed at other times. The importance I give to various aspects of my life at different times must be simply accepted.
(Author's Research Journal Dec 2021).

Progoff's Intensive Journal was designed around a ring folder, which allowed additional pages to be added to different sections as needed. This provided space for a form of internal feedback. The re-reading, reflection, and ongoing additional comments in the various sections provided a way to find connections between the different aspects of the journal and track inner dialogues over time. These could reveal and bring into focus different layers within my thinking. To develop in these interstices, ways to allow one 'self' to observe another self, and another, simultaneously. Methods to capture the thoughts whilst always recognising, as Donna Haraway in *Staying with the Trouble* (2016) points out:

It matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions
(Haraway 2016:57).

The author's autoethnographic experience working with the Intensive Journal showed that it provided an open-ended, research-based critical method to record and analyse her creative process. The following account shows how this process allowed her to observe her feelings and practical making in real time, providing

insights upon which personalised strategies could be developed. This initiated a move towards a change in the style and materials used.

As part of this process, I interrogated the structure of the Intensive Journal Method. The journal and alternative forms of recording were integrated into my creative practice, initially through collage, then adding more 3D material to the 2D 'page', which finally developed into 3D 'sketches' (see fig.28.). These pieces engage spatially and directly with the materials used and defy the 2D logic and restrictions of the flat page. It became clear that the emphasis on writing as the preferred means of recording was inappropriate and almost a hindrance to the



Fig. 28. Mills, A. *Sketch Pages* (2022) [Paper, cardboard, chalk, PVA, Acrylic paint gesso 59x42x4cm]

intuitive flow of ideas. There was spontaneity and flow to the movement of the body as materials were reached for and attached to each other. However, some form of contemporaneous recording was needed if the shifts in awareness and choices were to be remembered. I used scraps of paper and Post-it notes to jot down critical thoughts and notes of how I worked physically in the space and with the materials (see fig. 29.).

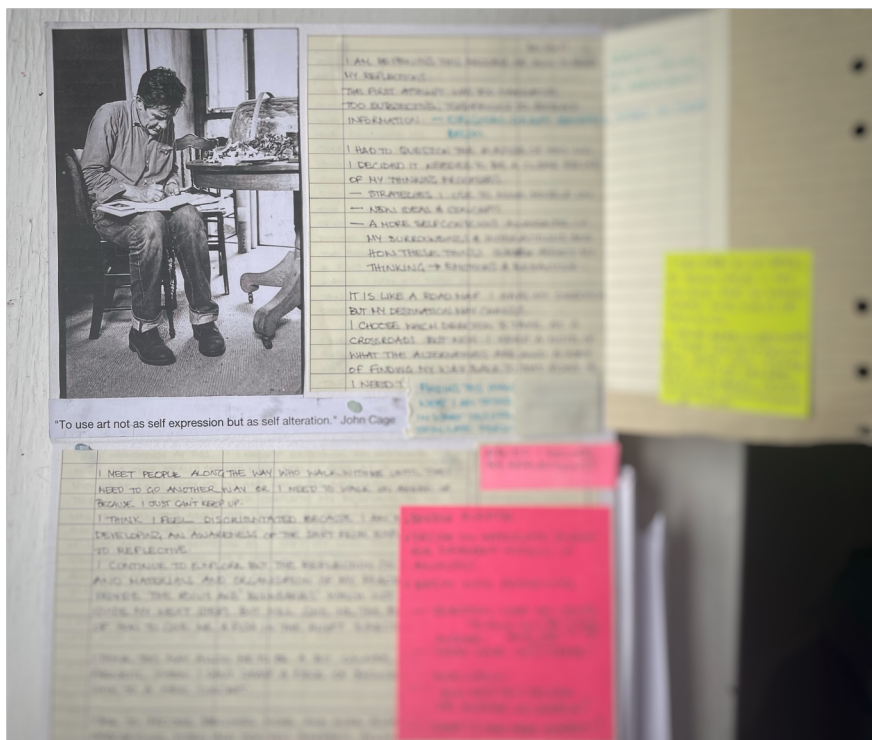


Fig. 29. Mills, A. *Pages from Concertina Sketchbook* (2019) [Collage, paper, watercolour, ink, newspaper 22x16x3cm]

I added these to the journals immediately after stopping the physical making. This began to establish a new way of working for me, one in which I incorporated conscious, mindful attentiveness for short periods as I worked.

*I realised I intuitively create spaces to be attentive to the moment as I am making, and by consciously extending these, I could develop greater self-awareness of the physical processes and materials I was using. I began to consciously observe the information and stimuli my body was experiencing. How my body moved in the studio space and, more specifically, how my hands manipulated the materials I was using. The precise twists to the plant material and the way selections were made to ensure continuity in the thickness of the cordage being plied or the rush being braided. This led to my including the preparation of materials – selecting and discarding them through their tactile qualities and strengths as part of this process. Recognising the value of this metacognition, I incorporated the exercises from the *Intensive Journal* at the beginning of my studio sessions rather than at separate times away from the studio. These studio sessions finished with the notes being transferred into the journal and additional comments and observations added.*

The Intensive Journal provided a structure and framework for revealing and analysing thoughts, emotions, and behaviours within a specific context (creative practice) from one viewpoint (the creative practitioner).

This process challenged my thinking and pushed me to experiment with different materials (see fig. 30.).



Fig. 30. Mills, A. Cob baskets. (2020). [Willow and cob 38x28x30]

I am looking beyond the plant material traditionally used in basketry. I am considering how to engage with the elements that are part of the plant's life, e.g., the raw clay beneath the topsoil in which my plants grow. Recording things this way makes me look more closely at how seasons change. How the plants naturally entwine and engulf the space available to them and then release it as they die back,

decay, and, in some cases, become invisible. I have become aware of how I take up the spaces I need at different times for my making. In the same way the wild clematis grasps and takes what it needs to grow fully, I take the shared spaces within the house to achieve my ends. When the work is completed, like the nettles and vines reveal the hidden paths beneath their abundant summer growth, I return the spaces within the home to their intended use. Cooking and dining take precedence once again.

(Author's Research Journal, July 2021).

Organising the recorded observations into sections with shared references that are interlinked and connected builds layers upon layers of thoughts and ideas. Re-reading sections encouraged additional comments and reflections, and cross-referencing increased a sense of fluidity and the weaving together different aspects of my life. Sketchbooks became a form of journaling, a way to deepen my self-awareness by employing an alternative mode of thinking. Journaling enabled the experimental nature of my practice to evolve slowly into a method of structured self-reflection, a way of making sense of my world. A Greater self-awareness was developed through observing the physical processes.

The Intensive Journal revealed my affinity for specific techniques, and I realised that looping is a form of mark-making that recurs in my drawings and collages (see figs.31 and 32.). I could clearly see the direct influence of Twombly large graphic paintings (see fig.34.) and my enjoyment of making large swinging circular marks which reminded me of handwriting exercises.

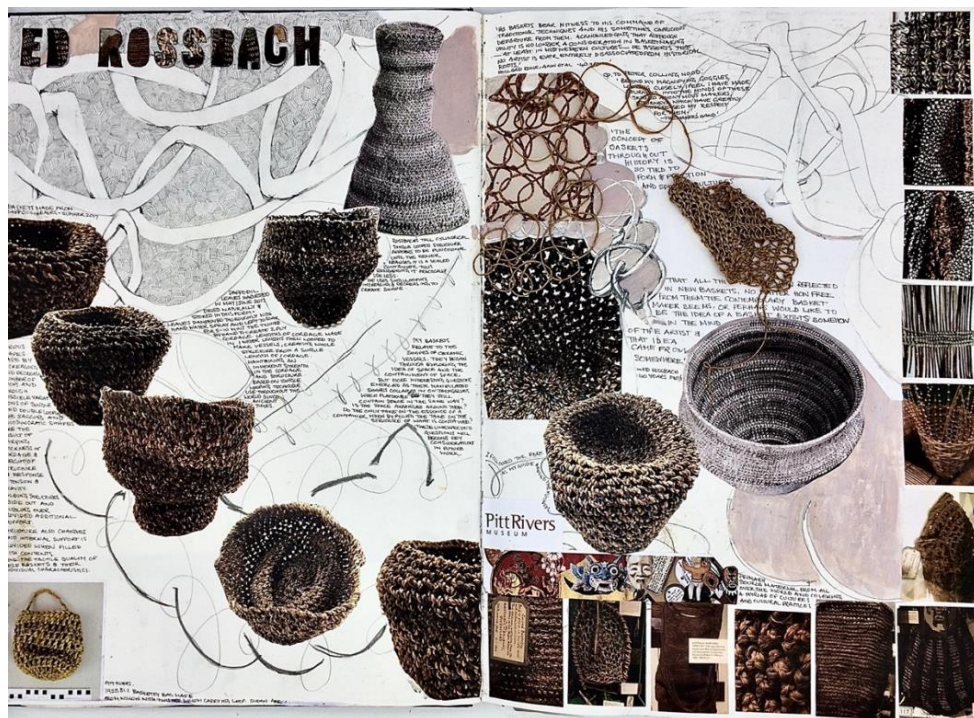


Fig. 31. Mills, A. Sketchbook page. (2018) [Paper, photographs, ink, 59x42x4cm]



Fig. 32. Mill, A. Sketchbook pages (2019) [Sketchbook page. [Paper, ink, gesso. Acrylic paint and pastel 59x42x4cm]

Threading and pulling through the end of the single length of cordage into the loop made immediately before creates a physical line that can be traced and 'read'. The trace of the line implies the time involved, records the process and clearly shows how the structure came into being (see fig. 33.).



Fig. 33. Mills, A. Examples of looping (2017 & 2022) [cotton twine, corn husks 10x10x1cm]



Fig. 34. Twombly, C. (2005) 'Untitled (Bacchus)' [Acrylic on canvas 317.5 x 417.8cm Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection]

I turned to my creative practice to ‘generate personally situated knowledge and [find] new ways of modelling and externalising such knowledge’ (Barrett & Bolt 2010:2).

My sketchbooks had become artefacts in their own right and, in some ways, were separated from what I perceived to be my practice. There was always a tension (see fig. 35.). At the beginning of this research, my sketchbooks had become redundant.

They had been produced retrospectively according to academic criteria, recording ideas already incorporated and developed in my 3D work. My ideas came from manipulating materials, making things by exploring ideas and visualising different outcomes while experimenting and juxtaposing a variety of materials and techniques.



Fig. 35. Mills, A. Sketchbook Pages (2018) [paper, ink, watercolour, photographs, acrylic paint, gesso, pastel 59x42x4cm]

This research demanded to know what the purpose of the sketchbook was for me, so I placed myself at the centre of this process.

My 3D samples were like pages in my sketchbooks; they provided an immediate record of the material thinking. I realised I had to explore the visual language I was intuitively using to use it as a reflective medium rather than just a utilitarian one.

I needed to convey the visceral quality of my response to the materiality of the plants and the environments in which they grow. I couldn't do this in sentences and words, but I could visually through collage and paint, creating dense layers of found and discarded material (see fig.36.) ideas which transferred to a series of Eldritch baskets working with previous discarded pieces and incorporating layers of a variety of fibre and materials (see fig.37.).



Fig. 36. Mills, A. *Sketch Pages* (2020) [paper, ink, acrylic, gesso. Cardboard, Eldritch porcelain chalk, iris leaf. 59x42x4cm]

Fig. 37. Mills, A. (2022) *Eldritch Basket* [grass, linen, daffodil leaf 49x17x17cm]

I began to understand my strong emotional response to the work of Cy Twombly, Anselm Kiefer, Robert Rauschenberg and Antoni Tàpies in a more physical way. As I build up the layers – concealing elements that were essential for the physical foundation through which connections were revealed – I’m creating a kind of remnant, a likeness or resemblance which triggered similar emotions to those experienced when responding to the original stimulus.

(Author’s Research Journal Dec. 2021).

As my audience shifted from others to myself, my purpose also changed and became a way to internalise, edit and remember. My experimental work was an essential part of this process. I began to understand how both fit into and support my practice and how integral they are to my thinking processes and subsequent outcomes.

My sketch ‘pages’ now explore the tacit nuances of my experiences. They have provided a means to capture the essence of ideas and themes that can be accessed immediately. They have also allowed new thoughts and connections to develop as different areas on the page gain more relevance over time.

5.7 Findings

The Intensive Journal's structure and exercises can guide the development of a self-reflective creative practice that fills the omissions evident in the popular literature on the subject. The Intensive Journal’s dynamic, experiential process can be seen as part of the nonverbal language through which the artist communicates with herself and others. It was evident that working through this first part of the journal was sufficient to change perceptions and resolve current issues through the non-judgmental attitude of the subject.

The exhibition *Moments in Time* (Mills, 2024) artefacts provided a physical representation of the shifts in perception and the development of the author’s creative practice over five years whilst using the Intensive Journal Method (see Appendix D). The use of italics indicates the author’s reflections on this process.

The detailed cross-referencing implemented in my practice developed my ability to think about structures and the organisation of time and materials. Ideas were tracked across notebooks and sketchbooks using Post-its, tabs, and labels. This enabled recurring themes and patterns to be seen, which, when reviewed, allowed previous ideas to be recalled, indicating how they could be incorporated into new work. This became an essential part of my process and creative practice.

The structure of the Intensive Journal was created to find connections between different aspects of an individual's life and experiences. In the same way, contemporary basketry is about making connections. The concept and nature of basketry are pushed beyond the functional whilst maintaining the essence of what defines a basket. These processes mirror this form of journaling: the demonstration of innovation, knowledge of materials and commitment.

The linear elements of the baskets become simultaneously a physical model and a metaphor reflecting Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'The Interweaving - The Chiasm' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:130) and Varela's autopoiesis. Like other forms of weaving, baskets demonstrate the reaching out and connecting across space, individual elements touching others, affecting how they exist whilst not being subsumed, and, as a result, creating a new form or sense of being. These strands, which underlie the making, showed me how my baskets can become part of journaling.

The artefacts hold memories and information within them: where and when the materials were gathered, what was happening around me when they were being processed, and what I was feeling when they were put away. By combining and cross-referencing them with other forms of recording in a more cohesive way, I can examine them at a deeper level of analysis to illuminate my thinking.

(Author's Research Journal, August 2021).

The experience of developing my sketchbooks inspired me to build upon Progovoff's written methods of recording. I began to transpose the image in my head into a physical visual form. As I visualised the rope, I intuitively knew I had to make it rather than write about it (see fig.38.).

I experienced feelings of being pulled in different directions, which I related to how I organise my work (working on one thing and then putting it away to get on with another as that becomes more prescient). This feeling led to an image of the game



Fig. 38. Mills, A. (2021) *Rope [iris leaves 60x4x4]*

I regularly struggle to define what I am trying to find out when developing new work. The physical processes of making allow solutions to emerge. I realised that the physicality and performative nature of making mirror the mental processes. The act of making provides a transitional space for an integration to occur. My thoughts continually change and shift. As I grasp one idea, it effortlessly slips away, like a rope being slowly pulled through a loose hand, but the place of the marker remains constant.

(Author's Research Journal, Nov 2021).

Using the Intensive Journal Method to structure my thinking, I did not have to think about which words expressed my feelings; I just felt them. The physical act of

making focused my thinking on what I was doing and allowed me to connect disparate thoughts in a way I hadn't experienced before. By interacting with the world, I began to understand it differently. Through this initial physical experience, I began to perceive the significance of meaning as a process and reflected on that experience.

Only when I soaked the iris leaves and divided them into strands to ply did I realise I was not just making a rope; I was a rope maker. Any confusion about how I perceived my role within the basketmaking community evaporated. This making quickly transformed my thinking in a way writing couldn't do. It shifted my perception from a position of anxiety, uncertainty and frustration to one of strength, relaxation and patience. It revealed one self-observing another.

I realised that in the same way that woven structures can be unravelled (to discover the process or to correct a mistake), the strands of The Intensive Journal can be deconstructed, and critical choices analysed and, if necessary, resolved. Surprisingly, the initial problem area was resolved in a pretty straightforward way. It was as if by turning my head and refocusing my vision, the problem dissolved, and the cause of that difficulty no longer had any relevance or power to distract from the making.

The autoethnographic approach in this research demonstrates how material thinking enables artists to understand their own creative processes. The process of structured self-reflection has examined how a personalised creative language can be identified and developed. Placing the artist at the centre of this investigation of the creative process and acknowledging, as Cain says,

...I could not have foreseen how my search for an answer to my initial question would reveal so much about the symbiotic relationship between what I know (my subject matter) and how I know it (my methodology, i.e., the principles and ideas which govern how I go about my practice).
(Cain 2010:20).

...to recognise that my own particular questions demand an alternative way of finding answers; simply rating how much practitioners experience novel ideas cannot

tell me anything deeper about the qualities of the experience for myself.

Cain (2010:38).

This research is in the liminal space between journal pages and works intended for public exhibitions. Integrating the Intensive Journal into creative practice explored the concept and use of sketchbooks and journals. This self-reflective and self-conscious autoethnographic process extended the methodology of The Intensive Journal, making it more apposite and accessible.

Whatever form of recording evolved into a vehicle through which metaphor and imagery were explored and analysed. The process allowed individual visual languages to be extended. By layering visual, tactile and textual materials, original surfaces were eliminated until a realisation of a direction and ordering to take place, waiting for an image to emerge out of the scribble and over-layering of lines to be recognised and understood in the same way the single inspirational idea emerges from the multitude of confused thoughts in a muddled mind. This knowingness allows a radical editing and reduction to take place.

Using basketry as a metaphor gave me a new insight into my practice. This enabled my intuitive interaction with materials to provide the direction and support needed to advance my work.

Just as my baskets continue to move and settle into a position of their own choosing, my thoughts also settle as the plant material dries and shrinks. As a final twist is exerted to strengthen the structure, an internalised discourse is resolved, and the forces which resist each other find their own point of balance and stillness.
(Author's research journal, Folkestone Sept 2020) (see fig.39.).



Figure 39. Mills, A. *Beckons to be Known* (2021) [Daffodil leaves and willow bark 28x31x26]

Realising the importance of one specific way to hold and feel the material in your hands reveals hidden material knowledge. Why does one way work so much more efficiently than another? For example, when making netting, holding the sheet bend knot at its base between the forefinger and thumb allows the fibre to be felt as it tightens.

By centring the fibre as it tightens the point when the knot locks can be felt. The locking of the fibre means the spaces in the netting become secure and consistent in size. The net can still be made without this knowledge, but some of the knots will not be secure, and they will slide, and the spaces will be inconsistent, making some larger than others. It is only by being shown how to do this or by practising over and over and becoming more and more aware of the hand's actions that you will discover this crucial element in what appears to be the making of a straightforward knot.

(Author's Research Journal September 2021) (see fig.40.).



Fig. 40. Mills, A. Netting around random weave basket (2021) [Daffodil leaf & white willow 33x22x21]

The Intensive Journal encouraged this level of reflection and development of metacognitive skills by examining an inner process of growth and its external point of focus:

We go from one opposite to the other. Thus, we gradually bring our lives into balance, filling in the empty spaces of potentiality.

(Progoff.1980:178)

This awareness of a new way of making emerged after 18 months of intermittently working with the Intensive Journal.

Working directly onto my 'sketch pages' adding layers of paint, gesso and plant material. I have begun a new body of work without realising it. Working intuitively

with materials and wondering what this was all about, Iceland suddenly emerged. No specific images were created, just raw materials combined and the colour white, but this first piece had the feel and encapsulated the essence of my experience in Iceland. Something I had not been able to convey since returning home.

(Author's Research Journal Dec 2021).

As a result of working with the Intensive Journal, when I am making, I now physically slow down and work through any physical problems without any hurry to find a solution. Focusing on the materials in my hand, my racing thoughts settle as all I have to consciously think about are decisions that relate to the pliability of the materials being used and the consistency in the quality of the making. It has become a conscious choice for a certain period to be attentive to my making. This tacit knowledge, the integration of material, hand and mind, and the material thinking described by Paul Carter (Carter, 2004), enables an immediacy and focus for the awareness of doing, which provides the opportunity for meaning and understanding to be gained.

I am allowing myself to be guided by these feelings and 'watching' myself as I skip from one activity to another. It has overturned my attitude towards my creative practice. I came to see my unfinished 'samples' as manifestations of my thinking process – my enactive cognition. I no longer focused on completing a preconceived basket but on the materials I engaged with during the making.

(Author's Research Journal Jan 2022).

Working with the materials opened up a different mode of thinking, as Bolt identifies, '...the intelligence of materials and processes in practice. Material thinking is the logic of practice.' (Bolt, 2010:30). "Handling [reveals] the limits of conceptual thinking.... It [takes] the work elsewhere.' (Bolt, 2010:32-33)

This autoethnographic approach and biopsychosocial framework allowed spaces to be created and different aspects of the making process to be observed and considered. This personalised and holistic approach enabled a greater focus on elements easily overlooked, e.g. the physicality of and the role of the body when manipulating materials or creating space to store them. Examining creative practice

through different lenses brought to the fore energising emotions of surprise, curiosity and excitement as areas taken-for-granted or forgotten ways of working were rediscovered.

This case study demonstrates how the Intensive Journal can advance creative practice. It shows how, working within a biopsychosocial framework, Progoff's methodology can be extended and adapted to guide creatives in making sense of their creative processes and developing strategies to increase confidence and self-motivation.

6. Harvesting: Background to Three Case Studies

The first stage of this research was developed with the intention of involving practitioners from the field of basketry or related disciplines in the second stage. Interviews with three other practitioners over six months led to three comparative case studies. These tested the hypothesis that the Intensive Journal Method could be adapted to provide an effective means for established artists to shift their perspectives and develop their creative practice.

An ethnographic, practice-based approach placed the artist at the centre of this investigation. It explored how material thinking enabled artists to understand their creative processes and develop a self-conscious creative language.

The guidelines produced for others were adapted from Progoff's revised edition (Progoff, 1992). This included the meditative practices and additional pages in the Intensive Journal (Progoff, 1992:409-410). This process encourages self-reflection and analysis of feelings and behaviour.

Participants were encouraged to work with whatever they found most accessible. This research will use the term Journals to indicate the underlying purpose and outcome of recording and reflecting upon experiences, feelings and changes in perception to explore and extend creative practice and new directions. The form these journals take solely depends on the choices the participants make.

As a Depth psychologist, Progoff supported this Jungian approach. Progoff includes a Dream Log (Progoff, 1992:198) and Twilight Dreaming (Progoff, 1992:209) in the Intensive Journal. as part of the 'Depth Dimension' work (Progoff, 1992:196). However, this research only deals with twilight imagery ((Progoff, 1992:57), which is part of the first stages of the Intensive Journal. This encourages the individual to notice the thoughts, feelings and imagery that present themselves in that intermediate state between waking and sleeping, e.g., daydreaming or before falling asleep. These exercises encourage this state of mind. Thoughts must be observed and not consciously directed in any way. Being aware of and recording these intuitive perceptions is a way of facilitating the 'slow hunches' described by

Steve Johnson (Johnson 2010) and the anecdotal experiences of many creatives as they describe ideas coming from nowhere and just presenting themselves when thinking of something else or when involved in a different and ‘mindless’ activity, e.g. bathing or taking a walk.

6.1 Being Attentive

Focusing attention and avoiding any distractions is an essential part of this process. The guidelines for participants begin with instructions and a procedure to calm and settle the mind at the beginning of each activity and before recording anything in the journal. The autoethnographic approach used in the first case study allowed the author to examine the effect and value of these ‘transitional’ activities, which focused on stopping and paying attention to the present moment.

The work of Francisco Varela and the Mind and Life Institute, which he co-founded in 1987, explores the interface between science and contemplative scholarship. The purpose and context of the meditative practice bring about changes in the metacognitive processes and the ability to understand and manage feelings and behaviour that enable the shifts necessary to determine our sense of self and reality. (Williams and Kabat-Zinn, 2013; Dorjee, 2016) Secular mindfulness, or ‘...paying attention to what is happening in the present moment in the mind, body and external environment, with an attitude of curiosity and kindness’ (MAPPG, 2015:13), has become increasingly popular in the West. This can be seen by the inclusion of mindfulness exercises for schoolchildren as part of the UK Department of Education’s most prominent trial to support mental health and well-being in 2019. The report of the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (2015) led to Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) being commissioned by the NHS and the Department of Education to support mindfulness teaching in 2018.

Using mindfulness to begin each journaling session encouraged awareness of the layers of thoughts, feelings, and choices experienced. This revealed the influence these aspects of ourselves have on the physical making process. This was evident

in the original autoethnographic methodology, which espouses that everyone is both a participant and observer and that no one can be separated from their actions and experiences (Muncey, 2014). Self-awareness of the effect of experiences and feelings through journaling provided a creative means to capture their impact and origins through choices made.

6.2 The Process

Recognising anything that might cause a problem or present a barrier to engaging with the work became essential to understanding the process, particularly when assessing and developing the methodology for others. Participants were encouraged to use any form of recording that was meaningful to them, e.g., mind maps, photography, and gathering artefacts from walks. It was also made clear that during the research, the content of their journals would remain private, and only their perceptions of the process and what they wished to communicate would be included in the study.

Guidelines were used to introduce this work to the participants. They were provided in a specific order and at intervals between interviews. The structure and principles inherent in the Intensive Journal were adhered to. These included a calming and settling period before beginning any work, followed by specific instructions of tasks to be completed and reflected upon. Incorporated into these tasks were the foundations of developing a way to cross-reference the material recorded and ways to review and reflect upon the material gathered.

Participants understood that developing an awareness of the process and observing any changes or choices made was the key to recognising any shifts in their perceptions that could be applied to their creative practice. The next chapter will present the three case studies and findings.

7. The Making: Three Case Studies

7.1 The Participants

The following chapter presents three case studies that tested the hypothesis that the Intensive Journal Method could be adapted to help established artists independently shift their perspectives and develop their creative practice. Appropriate ethical clearance was given (see Appendix F). Like the researcher, the artists interviewed all shared a white European middle-class background. All were established female artists interested in further developing their creative practice. The homogeneity of the group was considered beneficial as it was vital that they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts with the researcher, who could have similar frames of reference. Zoom was chosen as a means of communication as each participant was confident in using Zoom due to the COVID-19 epidemic. E-mailed Tasks provided before semi-structured interviews were designed to provide a pre-determined but flexible framework to gather data. This method allowed information about personal experiences and perspectives to be collected in a conversational atmosphere. Each interview began with a relaxed conversation (Hannan and McKenzie (2007:8) before addressing the specifics of the research to enhance the perception that the interview was a safe space for sharing feelings, thoughts and ideas.

For this reason, although the interviews were conducted over Zoom, only the audio was recorded with the interviewees' permission. Rapport with the interviewer was crucial in developing a positive relationship with the participant. To achieve this, the researcher consciously approached any interaction with the interviewee to optimise equality between both parties. The case studies aimed to understand the individual's perceptions, how they made sense of their experiences, and how this affected their practice. The findings would contribute to generalised strategies which other disciplines could access.

The interview questions aligned with the research question and the conversation content was reviewed at the end of each session to ensure the interviews remained aligned with the research question. This considered any unforeseen points made by the interviewee, which were then included in later sessions. By integrating this earlier material, the significant meanings gained by the interviewee could be included (Bihi, 2020:713-721).

The content of the interviews was individually listened to, cross-referenced and thematically analysed. Editing them into shorter sequences was possible by transcribing the original audio recordings and analysing the shared experiences. Initially, the researcher contextualised the relevance of the interviewee's experience to the research. The interviews focused on the details of the interviewee's experience on the topic to encourage a co-constructive approach to how she practically participated in that experience. Finally, the interviewee was asked to reflect on the meaning of her experiences, specifically on the connections they made, intellectually and emotionally, relating to the research topic (Bihi, 2020:713-721). This was briefly followed up by email eight months later to discover if there had been any longer-term effects on their practice. (see Appendices G.6:232, H.4:274 and I:306).

The participants were selected through personal informal networks (e.g., Instagram and the Basketmakers' Association). They were not known to the author personally. A further search was made using practitioners to recommend individuals they thought might be interested. The final selection was made to provide a range of experience and practice. The participants selected did not have any information about each other and had no contact with each other as part of this research.

Participant A is an academic, practitioner, and educator. She lives in Ireland and combines her work with raw clay and fibre with research and lecturing. She had a formal art/design education and had the most experience with self-reflective practices. She had kept diaries and journals in the past and saw self-reflection as an essential and integrated part of her practice.

Participant B lives in the south of England. With a background in anthropology and working on nature conservation projects, she learnt the traditional craft of willow basketmaking from basketmakers in England, Ireland and Scotland twenty years ago. Her work now involves using materials in an innovative way within contemporary basketry. She has an online shop, delivers workshops and works through commissions. She incorporates self-reflective practices as part of her lifestyle through yoga and meditation.

Participant C lives in the north of England. She is a willow and greenwood artist who works primarily on sculptures and community projects. She has a science background, having studied botany and then horticulture. Her basketmaking skills were learnt from courses and basket-making groups in England. She was used to reflecting and recording events and assessing progress in her practice to provide an overview of her current situation.

From this point in the text, I will refer to each participant as 'A', 'B', or 'C'.

The interviews begin with preliminary greetings and enquiries about their well-being. This is to set them at ease and ensure they are comfortable with the place the research has in their busy lives. This was always followed by asking them to talk about the process. The interviews were generally 40 minutes and an hour at maximum.

A thematic analysis allowed me to identify shared experiences and revealed clusters of similarities on a continuum of creative development, i.e., preparation, Incubation, and illumination (Wallas, 1926:80-81; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014.:78-84). The following themes emerged:

- Tidying and clearing spaces
- Concerns about time
- Self-doubt
- Remembering practices used before

- Desire to move forward.

These potential themes and issues fed into the questions and discussions of later interviews and showed the impact of the individual's previous experience with reflective practices on how they articulated their feelings and changed awareness.

7.2 Getting Started

In the first Zoom call, each participant was introduced to the research project's aims. The process, timings, and explanation of the initial task were discussed and agreed upon (see Appendices G, 17.1 p.186, H,18.1 p.234, and I,19.1 p.277).

All participants were keen to start and to get it 'right'. This indicated a difference compared to Case Study 1 and highlighted the novelty of this research for the participants and the author's previous experience in journaling and person-centred psychology.

'C' 'I'm not like most creatives, I don't make products, I react to things....I'm not a fine artist or anything like that so I don't know if that matters.'
(Appendix I 19.1, 5.12 p.278).

'B' 'I haven't been doing much making to be honest, I don't know if that matters.'
(Appendix H,18.2,1:37 p.239).

'A' reflected on this process during the research period and realised that this level of concern prevented her from actually making a start.

'...I was kind of stressed out about what this journal was going to look like and, where should the sections go, and how much room should I leave for the sections. Even the fact that I was kind of getting hung up on all that at the very beginning.' (Appendix G,17.3, 27:44 p.210).

‘That’s just a way of saying you can create barriers for yourself’ (Appendix G 17.2, 3:29 p.195).

7.3 The Daily Log

As the participants were keen to begin, the order of the Intensive Journal activities was adapted. I asked them to start with the Daily Log (Progoff, 1992:65-72), a daily record of events, thoughts, feelings and ideas (see Appendix E,15.2). This proved to be the exercises' most familiar and easily recognised. All understood what was expected of them and the difference from the usual practice of keeping a diary. The Daily Log emphasises recording feelings, re-reading and analysing these brief notes to discover patterns in behaviour, perceptions and attitudes.

Each participant found their own way into this process:

‘B’ ‘So I’ll start from now.’ (Appendix H18.1,12:10 p.237).

‘C’ ‘... I didn’t do the Daily Log for a while, so first, I caught up with my own stuff, and then I ...looked at your stuff.’ (Appendix I,19.2,1.32 p.284).

‘A’ ‘...the Daily Log is very hit-and-miss. I ...haven’t quite got into a routine of kind of hitting it every day. And I think that would be really ...useful to have that regularity.’ (Appendix G, 17.2, 0:00 p.194).

While it took time to get started, each of the participants found it an interesting and valuable thing to do:

‘C’ ‘I found it useful. sort of reflecting back on things... the diary, in its simplest form, is a lot. It's just a record of what I've done sort of thing, though. It gives me an overview of what I've been doing....’ (Appendix I, 19.4, 7:10 p.303).

‘A’ ‘I found it a useful way to get started... issues and concerns seemed to present themselves as questions.’ (Appendix G 2, 6:20-30 p.196).

They all recognised it involved quite a time commitment, and they all realised the need to structure it into their day, e.g. 'B' wrote in the evening, combining it with her yoga and meditation. The initial framework of the Intensive journal, the requirement to reflect upon their feelings and experiences every day, provided each of them with the opportunity to analyse their creative practice and consider their understanding of creativity. The framework of the Intensive journal provided each with the opportunity to analyse their creative practice.

7.4 The Period Log

The following exercise was the Period Log (Progoff 1992:46-56), which explored how the 'Now' is experienced and situated within the context of the past by choosing eight to ten events in their creative lives which they identified as having significance allowed a clear focus to be developed. (see Appendix E,15.3). The results can indicate a future direction for work. This exercise enabled each participant to realise the importance of an underlying aspect of their practice:

'C' 'And it's surprisingly interesting for me because when I first read it, I think, well, I'm going to write these eight to ten things, you know, and how on earth is that going to help, but when you do, you know like it is a process ... because you sort of go through them and then you kind of think about how you felt to about what it what was going on each of those times and then and then yes, it kind of builds up into more of a picture doesn't it? How I've developed or not developed or being hindered or whatever.'
(Appendix I, 19. 2,1:32 p.284).

Each participant described these realisations as things they already knew and accepted but didn't pay attention to. By bringing these ideas to the fore, they realised their relevance to their creative practice. It showed the potential of how these could be regarded as triggers and, if managed, could indicate a change in direction for their creative process.

For 'C', it was a realisation of how important collaboration with others was. She felt dependent on other people. When she reflected on her contribution, her confidence in her skills increased as she considered her role within such groups. It highlighted possible roles she could take on in the future:

'C' 'I tend sometimes to have an inner voice that tells me ...it's not very good...I tend to live in other people's shadow... ' (Appendix I 19.2, 9:53 p.286).

'I was quite surprised...it made me realise how much I rely on other people. You know, I tend to work in a team. I get the jobs, and I organise the jobs. I'm working with other people usually who help me to bring them to practice quite often because there's certain things I'm not so good at and the other way around...' (Appendix I, 19.4, 7:10 p.303).

For 'B', it was important to clear spaces, initially physical spaces, clearing and tidying. She then realised this gave her mental and emotional space, which she needed to be creative. Other people might also call these actions procrastination, but she sees the value of these activities for preparing the way and part of Wallas' incubation process. (Wallas, (1926: 86), (Cziksentmihaly, (2014:81)

'B' 'The first exercise sort of inspired me to have a clear-out because I realised the times when I'm creative is when ...I've got nothing else on my mind. ' (Appendix H,18.2,1:50 p.239).

'Trying to get ...my admin, paperwork done, because... all this stuff is always... just in your mind. That's something I realised was sort of stopping me getting on with things.' (Appendix H,18.2, 2:43 p.240).

For 'A', it was a realisation that what she called procrastination was part of her process. It was a long and slow process to begin new work. With this came the

ability to relax and become less anxious about self-doubts. The realisation was that just getting on would be alright.

‘A’ ‘It [the Period Log] was actually very cathartic.... It was a really positive experience. ...There’s always things you want to ignore... just the act of writing [about them] ...was releasing or empowering ... it kind of helped me stop worrying about particular things and just say ‘ okay, just get on with it now....’ I can address them and do whatever needs to be done. So, I found that really useful.’ (Appendix G 17.2, 7:16 p.196).

The first exercise, the Period Log, triggered these realisations, reinforced with the Stepping Stones exercise regarding their relevance to the participant’s creative practice. The Twilight Log (Progoff 1992:59-61) was included to encourage a more intuitive and sensory approach rather than a focus on memory (See Appendix E,15.5). This was a more intensive form of reflection. The participants did not feel it had relevance to their practice, so it was overlooked or forgotten as they engaged with the more meaningful tasks.

7.5 Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones (Progoff 1992:76-89) examines one of the events identified in the Period Log in more detail. It explores the key event in more depth to question why it was crucial to the development of an individual’s creative practice (see Appendix E,15.6). It focuses on the underlying themes and interests that have guided the choices made regarding this development.

Each participant was surprised at the outcomes they experienced:

‘C’ ‘I didn't realise that I am very, very dependent on other people... that was slightly surprising. I suppose I wouldn't if I hadn't reflected on that.... It's a good process to go through, and I'm slightly surprised ...it was more that I

think I've got to a place where I can stand up for what I do.' (Appendix I 19.2, 3:03 pp.285-9).

'B' 'I see sort of patterns. Times when I think, particularly creative times... I sort of had a period when I'm sort of floundering about not knowing what I'm doing... but space and time mentally and physically, I think to actually experiment.' (Appendix H,18.3,20:55 p.257).

'...first basket making course that's what I put a stepping stone, but the actual creative urge was after that, I suppose to have time to experiment and just play and living on my own for the first time - space you know. (Appendix H,18.3,23:48 p.257).

As a result of engaging with these exercises, the participants reflected in more depth about how their creative practices had developed and began to notice patterns of behaviour or situations which hindered or enabled their creative practice. 'A' started to record things using her phone as a sketch pad and gathering small items on her walks. She recognised this gathering as something she used to do but had stopped.

'A' 'Photography became important to me in terms of a mode of exploring and trying to think. That was really successful. (Appendix G, 17.5, 21:52 p.227).

'A' 'Most of my thinking time was when I was out walking the dogs...there's things happening there that could be recorded in a different way. ...there are things ending up in my pocket. Again, something I used to do and for some reason over the years I've stopped...' (Appendix G,17.2,13:00 p.198).

‘So, it’s sensory as well... I think it’s a way to shortcut...it could be there’s one thing that takes you back to that point...that sort of crystallises it...(Appendix G,17.2,18:43 p.200).

‘C’ ‘it’s almost like telling your story in a different way.... I realised that because I’ve done the same sort of thing for so long ... it’s nice to have something with a bit of meaning behind it. I seem to be getting more into the idea of seeing my work as therapeutic. ...And so that’s an area that I’m exploring working in, which is quite energising’ (Appendix I,19.3,13:47 p.295).

These realisations remained the central focus for each of the participants and were referred back to throughout the research period.

‘C’ ‘I found it useful. Sort of reflecting back on things kind of means the diary, in its simplest form, is a lot. It’s just a record of what I’ve done sort of thing, though. It gives me an overview of what I’ve been doing....’ (Appendix I 19.4, 7:10 p.303).

These first two exercises encouraged each participant to be more self-reflective about their creative practices and to analyse these reflections.

‘A’ ‘...it definitely triggers a more observant tendency.’ (Appendix G 17.2, 13:00 p.199).

‘It does increase your awareness, I think definitely.’ (Appendix G, 17.2,1:20 p.194).

7.6 Dialogue with Works

The final exercise was part of Progoff’s ‘Dialogue Dimension’ (Progoff 1992:124-6). This aims to build upon reflective skills to encourage intuitive, focused listening to an individual’s inner voices and becoming conscious of dialogue in a nonjudgmental

way. The task involved choosing a piece of work and imagining what it would say in a conversation, what it felt and thought, and what answers it would give to questions (see Appendix E, 15.7).

The Dialogue with Works had a surprising impact on each participant. None were familiar with this form of working, and it was the most challenging exercise to predict an outcome. It surprised each of them in a positive way. Analysing this experience could have provided them with a possible future direction. Still, some form of personalised external intervention would have been needed to identify the longer-term possibilities and to develop options and strategies to move their thinking in an alternative direction. 'C' described the joy of her animal sculpture being free of the restrictions of the stone statue which had inspired her work:

'C' ' ...this sculpture was of a rabbit it had been [a] heraldic symbol of this ... college that was started ...hundreds of years ago. I thought the rabbit was glad to be off its stone carvings on the various places on the building. Its joy at being a more wild and free version of the rather chubby rabbit on the crest.' (Appendix I, 19.4, 3:46 p.302).

'C' went on to describe:

' I'm believing more that I can be that person who supplies that sort of role [empathising and teaching people how to work with their hands as a therapeutic approach]. Rather than just being seen as a basket maker. ...I must have grown in confidence...I wouldn't have believed I could do these things. I think it's the stepping stones thing ...being able to look back and sort of see patterns or just have more of an overview of how I work rather than just getting on with everything all the time.' (Appendix I, 19.4, 17.35:304).

'C' was able to analyse and see the connection between her past experience and how she could continue to grow in confidence and change the direction of her work

using the Stepping Stones exercise. Still, she did not engage with the more abstract concepts brought forth by the Dialogue with Works beyond finding it an enjoyable and surprising activity. She had also expressed:

‘C’ ‘It's nice to have you [the researcher] help me through this process. And it's nice to be able to have the opportunity to talk.’ (Appendix I, 19.3, 36:43 p.301).

Working with a facilitator may have enabled her to consider how she could incorporate her own feelings of joy and release in exploring her new direction of working with older people or community groups to promote well-being.

‘B’ dialogued with a piece of work she had made on a residency:

‘it’s a piece I haven’t really shown. ...It's very different from anything else I’ve done.... [It said] it wanted to be shown off. (Appendix H, 18.3, 8.29 p.263).

‘B’ interpreted this literally:

‘I don’t even know how to sell it or anything. (Appendix H, 18.3, 9.28 p.263).

‘B’ recognised this was a meaningful piece of work. Still, there was always a tension between ‘wasting time’ producing experimental work with no immediate outlet for sales and the need to keep her practice financially viable:

‘I’d like to follow up. I just don’t know where. I’d actually think I could spend all my time doing it and then not have any way to sell that sort of thing.’
(Appendix H, 18.2, 3:12 p.251).

A facilitator may have been able to guide her through an alternative way of working, which allowed both ways of working to run in parallel.

‘A’ saw the potential of this exercise:

‘I found that I actually really got into the meat of it in terms of creativity. I felt in terms of the skills required, the way of thinking required and the work that was done to come up with that piece—the potential of pieces that might lead to something. So, for me, that was a pause, actually, even as a standalone exercise. I thought that that that'd be a really nice one to do every so often, either with my own work or with kind of influential pieces. of work or other people's pieces of work.’ (Appendix G, 17.4, 1:54 p.214).

‘[It] took the focus off me and back onto the [work].’ (Appendix G, 17.4, 3:15 p.215).

With her academic background in education, ‘A’ could distance herself and analyse the process.

‘A’ ‘So I think it's really difficult to see another way. (Appendix G, 17.3, 27:58 pp.210-11).

When prompted to employ the technique in her research on a specific place, she said:

‘A’ ‘I haven't, but that's a really good point. Yeah. Yeah, that's a really good point. (Appendix G, 17.5, 8:36 p.225).

‘So that ... would bring in another facet? Really, you know, and could open up other avenues then as well? Yeah, absolutely.’ (Appendix G, 17.5, 9:14 p.225).

As a result of her personal experience and skill set, ‘A’ took a much more proactive approach to this process. She was aware of subliminal changes in her perception from the beginning:

‘But, you know, even before I started, I did find just thinking about it did kind of make me more aware of things and, you know, kind of really kind of focuses your attention.’ (Appendix G, 17.2, 0:20 p.194).

And could see links to previous ways of working:

‘I would always have kept a notebook or kept a journal, and I've kind of got out of the habit of it in the last few years. So, it kind of reminded me of how useful why I used to do it and how useful that practice was.’ (Appendix G, 17.2, 0:20 p.194).

And recurrent themes in her work.

‘...there definitely are recurring themes and recurring interests, I suppose recurring concerns. So, there are definitely things that continuously crop up.’ (Appendix G, 17.3, 19:56 p.207).

‘... I think there were certain key concerns and key interests that I kind of went, oh, well, yeah, that's obvious.... but then there were other things associated with it, or maybe like minor concerns [questioning if] that was something I need to address? Or something I wasn't aware of. That was kind of bugging me, and I'd better deal with that.... I think, and there are themes that go beyond what you would have...expected’ (Appendix G 17.3, 20:24 p.207).

A significant difference from the other participants was shown when she independently decided to begin the whole process again from the beginning, as she felt she couldn't easily start it again after the winter break:

‘A’ ‘I'm not kind of engaged with it ...I actually feel like I almost need to start at the beginning again, to get going rather than try to pick up where I left off.’ (Appendix G, 17.3, 9:56 p.204).

This meant she could reflect upon the process at another level as she now had an overview of the structure and understanding of how the exercises worked:

‘A’ ‘It really helped to go at it a second time. ...I couldn’t get back into it after the break at Christmas. ...I found the whole process much more beneficial the second time around....it was a little bit quicker.... And I think you kind of knew the bits you wanted, kind of mainly to delve into more...So, the whole dream thing and stuff I didn’t go near. So, you kind of knew the bits that ...might suit me or not suit me.’ (Appendix G,17.4, 0:01 p.214).

This demonstrated how useful repeating the process was from a practical perspective, i.e., understanding the process and knowing what was coming next rather than being provided with what appeared to be an ‘arbitrary’ set of exercises. It gave the individual the locus of control regarding which exercises to engage with and the speed at which to progress through them. It also demonstrated how this process could be incorporated into a creative practice when it was needed to become a heuristic form of learning.

‘A’ ‘And there's been a real bit of a joy, to be honest,... also really makes me think about why am I making? and am I making to get work in this exhibition and to, you know, do this thing and do that thing and do the other thing or am I making because that creativity, the act of making is a fundamental part of my process. So, I think that's been really interesting to kind of I think the process has allowed me to settle with making without worrying about what that making has to be.’ (Appendix G,17.3 22:46 p.208).

‘Haven't made very much, but I've done lots of little compositions that you know, like, it's, it's not, there's nothing that I would be prepared to put out in the world yet. But it feels like it feels like a beginning.’ (Appendix G, 17.3, 23.42 p.208).

7.7 Reflections on the Process

All of the participants fully engaged in the process. They all attempted each of the exercises and asked for additional guidance if they didn't understand what was required:

- 'C' 'I can't relate to it at all. I don't really understand what you're talking about. Obviously, I am a creative person, and my work is developing over time, but in your guidance notes (see Appendix E,15.4), I don't find anything to latch onto.
I tend to be very focused and could answer specific questions if you have any for me?' (Appendix I,19.5 p.308).

As shown previously, the process and structure of *The Intensive Journal* provided the data needed to identify blocks and make connections between different aspects of each individual's creative practice. It identified recurrent themes and behaviours and allowed a shift in perception from each participant.

- 'B' [The Period Log exercise] 'inspired me to get everything out of the way so it could be more creative. ...I've been having a huge clear out in the house. And I want to do my workshop as well.' (Appendix H,18.2,1:50 p.239).
- '...just clearing, clearing, making space ...whether its physically in my mind, or emotionally even, just really helps me relax and be more creative.'
(Appendix H,18.4, 2:50 p.261).

It became apparent that previous experience with self-reflective practices greatly impacted how the guidelines were received and interpreted.

- 'A' '...in terms of the guidelines.... I think you've hit the balance really nicely in terms of presenting a task but leaving it open enough that it can be

interpreted in multiple ways....you want to keep it open you want people to find their own way. It's giving them as few excuses as possible for not entering the process.' (Appendix G,17.3,15:05 p.220).

Self-reflective techniques were only a natural process for some of the participants.

'B' 'I haven't really got into that, looking back at other things. ... I haven't got into reading it all back. I think that's just a huge job to go back and read.'
(Appendix H,18.3,7:27 p.252).

A greater personal experience of self-reflective practices enabled participants to engage with the process more independently. When encouraged to read back over the Daily Log to find connections and identify recurring themes and behaviour, 'B' referred to her experience of the free writing exercise in *The Artists Way* (Cameron, J. 1992) and found free writing a valuable way to 'offload' negative thoughts and concerns.

'B' 'I like the process of sitting down and just writing'.
(Appendix H,18.4, 2:34 p.260).
'It just made me realise that I had started doing a lot of different activities in the morning...which helped me get going. So, it helps me get up and go outside.
(Appendix H,18.4, 6:36 p.262).

'A' reflected that moving from a written form of recording to using materials is a complex process.

'A' I think the exercises were making you think about things in a different way. So that required a different way of recording. It does encourage you to shift that side of your creativity. That's always a good thing (see Appendix G,17.4, 8:34 p.216).

'A' It becomes really interesting when you allow it to get messy. But actually, the temptation is to leave it in the book because, for me, in some ways, that's

kind of easier. Making that step, shifting from the journal to materials for me, was the tricky bit, and seeing how one might relate to journaling through materials. Rather than through words. (See Appendix G, 17.5, 24.10 p.228).

As the research continued, one-to-one Zoom interviews became an important part of the process, and the researcher became aware that a facilitator would be beneficial to encourage the participants and suggest alternative techniques to help develop their self-reflection and clarify their analysis and interpretation of the recorded data.

7.8 Findings

This research demonstrated how the author's initial personalised framework worked for others and confirmed the initial hypothesis that the Intensive Journal Method could be used to develop an individual's creative practice. It also showed the potential of how it could be further modified and extended to include other ways of working. Additional exercises or tasks could be provided to allow alternative forms of recording to be explored and encourage the transition away from the traditional notebook or sketchbook. The generalised framework adapted from Progoff's Intensive Journal provided the crucial stage missing from the current books promoting strategies for developing creativity, i.e., guidance on analysing and employing the results of recommended interventions. This research provided step-by-step guidance, enabling the individual to reflect, analyse and develop a structured approach to move their practice in a new direction. It goes beyond the isolated activities recommended to stimulate creative thinking. It provides a methodology that begins with establishing a foundation of self-knowledge and continues by addressing areas outside of an individual's familiar and settled method of working. Within such a supportive framework, this research shows artists can develop strategies to combat feelings of anxiety and self-doubt, which can result and often lead to blocks in the creative process, procrastination and inaction.

The semi-structured interviews provided substantial, rich data and new insights. It allowed flexibility in the data generation process, which responded to the needs of the individual participants. The ability to return to topics already discussed minimised misinterpretation of what was said previously. Whilst recognising this method is predisposed to potential unintentional biases of the interviewer, the study's objectivity was constantly at the forefront, rationalising thematic credibility, eliciting information, and critically examining the reliability and validity of the data during analysis. Overall, this method ‘...poses strengths and advantages which make it the best option for first-hand data generation in educational and social science research practices.’ (Bihi, 2020:8) and ‘...it is reasonable to think that, while unstructured interviews are not particularly predictive, they will not hurt accuracy...’ (Dawes 2013:12-520).

This research has shown that the structure of the Intensive Journal Method can be explicitly used to advance insights into creative practice. It provided a framework for practitioners to analyse their creative process. The intensive Journal’s holistic, in-depth approach allowed the participants to engage in the process and incorporate it into their practice and lives. Their experiences mirrored the initial case study of this research. From a position of wanting to move in a different direction, the process enabled the subject to identify blocks, prioritise one aspect of their practice and develop a strategy to move their creative process in a different direction. I was conscious of my role as practitioner-researcher during this process. My experience of using the journal highlighted specific experiences that I recognised as part of a continuum where a positive engagement with issues could open new levels of awareness.

Eight months later, these ideas were briefly followed up by email, to which all participants responded. Participant B said she had ‘tried to follow the Intensive Journaling book for a while, but it was too complicated and time-consuming’. However, she has been journaling a small amount every morning for the last few months. (see Appendix H,18.6). A substantial shift in Participant B’s practice has occurred. She has decided to act upon some of the concerns identified in her case

study, i.e., the tension between making work to sell and developing new ideas. This year, she has allowed herself time to create new designs and art pieces. She is experimenting with different materials, particularly found materials. She has also decided not to accept commissions so that she has the time to focus on unique, one-off pieces of work (see Appendix H,18.6).

Participant C completes monthly reports that include successes, achievements, new ideas, time scales, and issues to address (see Appendix I,19.6). She says it's nice to have the chance to reflect. It provides an overview of her work. She explains, 'By doing this, I feel more confident about my ability to make something even if I haven't done it before, and I am less affected by short-term, local disruptions to my work.'

Just as the author's perceptions shifted and allowed her to see a new direction and way of working, the participants have been able to relax, gain confidence and achieve a productive working environment to advance their practice.

Participant A's experience most closely mirrored that of the author. She described her practice and use of materials as having fundamentally changed. Notetaking and journaling have helped her keep track of ideas and allowed her to slow down.

Her traditional ceramic skills, whilst still informing her approach to materials, have become less overt as she becomes more curious about how other found or organic materials might interact with the ceramic elements. Older pieces of work are being re-evaluated and taking on new forms.

Journaling has allowed her to enjoy 'the process rather than focusing on the outcome'. She says it 'has become quite important ...it helps keep creative ideas moving'. To 'reconnect with the making after a break [providing] a place to 'start' from again'. (See Appendix G,17.6).

Working with the participants has confirmed the initial hypothesis that the Intensive Journal Method can be adapted to advance insights in creative practice. It showed that by focusing this method on developing a self-reflective creative practice, perceptions can be shifted to increase motivation and confidence to move work in a new or different direction.

However, the degree of success achieved and the ability to build upon the initial strategy depended on their previous experience working with reflective practices. Although each participant could engage with the process and interventions, the ability to develop personalised strategies depended upon their experiences with self-reflective techniques and analytical skills. Although it was shown to be possible to repeat the process and find additional benefits, this was not an intuitive response. For this practice to become an ongoing, self-directed, heuristic form of learning, access to a facilitator would be beneficial initially to separate different concerns (e.g. lack of time and the need to maintain a successful business) and to help the individual gain clarity more readily. A facilitator would also have been able to provide additional encouragement and support to ensure sustained motivation and perseverance when external pressures or internal barriers occurred,

These findings show the potential for extending this process in future research projects to include facilitator and group collaborations and incorporating it within a pedagogical context. A further project to examine the impact of alternative modes of documenting self-reflective practices and journaling would also be beneficial.

8. Conclusion

This research was concerned with how established artists could understand their creative process and independently continue to develop their creative practice. A knowledge gap was identified between the often unrelated short-term exercises presented as ways to develop creative thinking in self-help books and theoretical academic research into creativity. This enquiry revealed two sets of findings. The first involved understanding the creative process, and the second related to knowledge gained by the author about basketry and the role basketry techniques played in her practice.

The lack of progressive, practical guidance to facilitate new directions in artists' creative practice in popular literature and self-help books was addressed by adapting the methodology of Progoff's Intensive Journal to specifically develop creative practice rather than as a form of therapy. Incorporating a biopsychosocial approach, the structure of the Intensive Journal Method was used in four case studies to advance insights into creative practice.

A practice-based, autoethnographic methodology was used in the initial case study to develop a framework, which was then adapted and tested in the three case studies, forming the second stage of the research. This framework was practice-based and allowed practitioners to record and cross-reference different aspects of their practice so they could analyse their creative process. As a result, personalised strategies could be developed to address any blocks or behaviours that prevented them from moving their practice in a new direction.

The Intensive Journal Method was incorporated into basketry and art practice. It contributed to the canon of artists' journals, showing how artists' journals could be used for more than developing ideas and recording events and experiences. It provided a resource to identify recurrent themes and a way to examine the source of their attraction in greater depth.

The Intensive Journal's holistic, in-depth approach allowed the participants to engage in the process, adapt, and incorporate journaling into their practice and lives. This research revealed a unique insight into transformative learning emerging from the creative process. There were significant shifts in perception and a change in preconceived ideas and assumptions.

One participant was pleased that it had reminded her of ways she used to work that she had forgotten. She was keen to use these techniques again and was surprised she had let them lapse. Another realised that her sketchbooks could be used over time as a resource for new ideas rather than a way to develop current projects.

Their experiences mirrored the initial case study of this research. From a position of wanting to move in a different direction with their creative practices, the process enabled the subjects to identify blocks, prioritise one aspect of their practice and develop a strategy to move their creative process in a different direction. Through a shift in perception, they could relax, gain confidence and achieve a productive working environment to advance their practice. However, the degree of success achieved and the ability to build upon the initial strategy depended on their experience working with reflective practices.

Although each participant was able to engage with the process and exercises, the ability to translate their analysis of the data they gathered depended on their previous experience with self-reflective techniques. In one case, repeating the process and finding additional benefits was possible. This was not an intuitive response overall. For a practice to become an ongoing, self-directed, heuristic form of learning, a facilitator would be beneficial at the early stages to separate different concerns, e.g., lack of time and the need to maintain a successful business.

The same was true regarding the use of more diverse recording methods when using the Intensive Journal. Although the findings demonstrate how the development of varied recording methods could promote different modes of thinking, the default position tended to be to use writing to record their thoughts and feelings. Moving beyond this again depended on previous experience, and

understanding how to play with different media and forms of notation would have been helpful. Introducing workshops to explore a range of materials and tasks to demonstrate and discuss how they could be used to communicate thoughts, feelings, and experiences would provide more choice and help understand alternative recording forms.

The participants' experiences demonstrated how a personalised methodology could be integrated into their practices. The comparative case studies showed the process enabled reflection and allowed them to consider how their choices impacted their ability to develop their creative practice. It engaged directly with the decision-making processes of change as it presented different possibilities and outcomes.

The findings also included additional knowledge gained by the author about basketry and material thinking. She realised recurrent themes relating to the liminal 'spaces between' and otherness arose consistently. Studying the work of Edmund de Waal, Cy Twombly, and other artists', she constantly returned to led to an understanding and refocusing on process and the importance of the physicality of the making. Learning and working with new techniques across traditions released her from feeling bound by external pressures and expectations.

Regular group exhibitions became an important factor, providing opportunities for her work to be seen together in a neutral context. The curation allowed the work to be seen in conversation with the work of other artists and revealed new aspects which had not been considered before. The presentation of the work became less conventional as small pieces were displayed on the floor, and others were suspended above plinths. Recording the emotional responses to this process allowed long-standing anxieties to be addressed. Feedback was considered objectively and from a position of curiosity and openness.

The author's volte-face in how she perceived the purpose of her practice changed from producing finished artefacts to engaging with it as a process and a means of exploring, experimenting and learning through making. Artefacts were regarded as being in a state of flux and viewed as manifestations not only marking moments in

time but also as a manifestation of this whole methodology and process. This concept became the basis of her exhibition *Moments in Time* (2024), where new work was shown alongside older work, which in some cases had been adapted and re-presented in different forms. This exhibition demonstrated a self-directed, heuristic form of learning, showing the progression and development of a creative practice over time.

The exhibition *Moments in Time* (2024) was planned as an integral part of this thesis. The artefacts attest to the process described in this thesis and provide a visceral connection with the internalised process. They record the changes as the shifts in perception were embraced. The works represented the core of this research: self-reflective practice. It showed how this methodology impacted the author's practice and presented artefacts as materialisations of moments in time within the continuum and engagement of material and creative thinking. The works explored new materials and techniques, juxtaposing and combining traditional techniques and contemporary basketry practices and the continual evolution of new forms from existing work.

This exhibition made the process and development of an individual creative practice explicit from initial questions raised during an MA degree and interrogated through a doctorate programme. Continuous sampling of materials, note-taking, preparatory studies and journals containing the data collected using this methodology were presented as physical representations of the time-intensive recording, cross-referencing and ongoing process. Current pieces were presented as if at rest, paused before a new direction or a future iteration could be identified. Overall, the journey of 6 years could be seen from the original technique of random weave baskets to random weave becoming the foundation or framework to explore working between disciplines of weave, ceramics and collage.

Unforeseen findings emerged from the research relating to the author's new knowledge of basketry and a change in perception about the purpose of contemporary basketry. Ideas based around constructed textiles, basketry art,

concept-led design and finished pieces became superseded by the notion and complete involvement with the process.

This research has shown its significance for practitioners across disciplines as well as in the field of basketry. The Intensive Journal Method provided a means to make sense of the individual's world. It facilitated and sustained 'flow' in creative practice and, through attentiveness to the *techné*, made explicit the tacit knowledge that can move the individual towards greater integration of the self. It placed the individual in the true centre of their world of change. This process recognised the diversity of the creative experience.

This research was disseminated through focused group exhibitions in various locations in the south of England, Wales, Iceland, and Japan, as well as the solo viva exhibition at the Foyer Gallery UCA Farnham. Contributions to conferences, artists' residencies, summer schools and talks to artist groups were engaged with throughout this period. These activities have shown the potential to explore the development of workshops on material and creative thinking, incorporating additional modules on exploring materials as alternative modes of recording to further disseminate this research within the basketry community and for creatives working in other disciplines.

This research revealed a unique insight into transformative learning emerging from the creative process.

For the author, there were significant shifts in perception and a change in preconceived ideas and assumptions. Her future direction has been clarified. She has gained confidence, understanding how a framework enables her to analyse and push her work forward as needed. It has allowed her to see beyond perceived surface intentions to the strong under-current that is constantly moving beneath the surface, and she has learnt how to access that depth to develop a heuristic framework that enhances, sustains, and impels an individual's creative practice by making explicit, tacit knowledge and the untapped resources available.

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Figure 27. Mills, A. (2019) *Random Weave Study* [buff willow 49x30x26cm].

Figure 28. Mills, A. (2022) Sketch Pages. [Paper, cardboard, chalk, PVA, Acrylic paint gesso 59x42x4cm].

Figure 29. Mills, A. (2019) Pages from Concertina Sketchbook. [Collage, paper, watercolour, ink, newspaper 22x16x3cm].

Figure 30. Mills, A. (2020) Cob baskets. [Willow and cob 38x28x30cm].

Figure 31. Mills, A. (2018) Sketchbook page. [Paper, photographs, ink 59x42x4cm].

Figure 32. Mills, A. (2019) Sketchbook page. [Paper, ink, gesso. Acrylic paint and pastel 59x42x4cm].

Figure 33. Mills, A. (2017 & 2022) Examples of looping [cotton twine, corn husks 10x10x1cm].

Figure 34. Twombly, C. (2005) Untitled (Bacchus) [Acrylic on canvas 317.5 x 417.8cm] Udo and Anette Brandhorst Collection At: <https://artblart.com/2017/04/11/exhibition-cy-twombly-at-the-centre-pompidou-paris/>

Figure 35. Mills, A.(2018) Sketchbook pages [paper, ink, watercolour, photographs, Acrylic paint 59x42x4cm].

Figure 36. Mills, A. (2021) 'Sketch Pages' [Paper, ink, gesso, acrylic paint and pastel cardboard, PVA. 59x42x4cm].

Figure 37. Mills, A. (2022) 'Eldritch Basket' [linen, grass, daffodil leaf, iris 49x17x17cm].

Figure 38. Mills, A. (2021) *Rope* [iris psuedacorus leaves 60x44cm].

Figure 39 Mills, A. (2021) *Beckons to be Known* [daffodil leaves and willow bark 28x31x26cm].

Figure 40. Mills, A. (2021) *Netting around random weave basket* [Daffodil leaf and white willow 33x22x21cm].

11. Appendix A Biopsychosocial Formulation Table

Predisposing (What is their “set up?” What were they working with initially?)	
Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was their temperament at birth? • What do we know about their consistent personality characteristics? • Is there a family psychiatric history? • Are there toxic exposures in utero, birth complications, or developmental disorders? • Is there a history of concussions or traumatic brain injuries? • Neurodevelopmental history
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their attachment style? • How did their family act and what is the family structure (i.e. - did the patient model their parent's behaviours, or did they rebel against their parent's behaviours – you either “act like your parents” or “act the opposite of your parents because you don't want to be like them”)? • Do they have problems with affect modulation? • Do they have a rigid or negative cognitive style? • Low self-image/self-esteem?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty, low socioeconomic status, teenage parenthood, or poor access to health care? • Childhood exposure to maternal depression, domestic violence, late adoption, temperament mismatch, or marital conflicts? • Immigration history, marginalization, discrimination, or racism? • Exposure to antisocial personality/traits
Precipitating (What acute event happened and how did it affect them?)	
Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious medical illness or injury? • Increasing use of alcohol or drugs? • Medication non-adherence? • Pregnancy or hormonal changes? • Sleep deprivation?
Psychological	<p>Stressor that activate one or more psychological processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive: core beliefs and cognitive distortions • Dialectical: emotional dysregulation and dysfunction • Interpersonal: grief, loss, disagreement, change/transitions • Psychodynamic: unconscious conflicts/defenses, and unconscious repetition of early relationship patterns (psychic determinism)
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of or separation from close family, partner, or friends • Interpersonal trauma • Work/academic/financial stressors • Recent immigration, loss of home, loss of a supportive service (e.g. - respite services, appropriate school placement) • Is the individual's current experience/symptoms similar to a past situation (i.e. - “history repeating itself”)? For example, they might have had a loss, separation etc. in the past
Perpetuating (What chronic things are going on?)	

Predisposing (What is their “set up?” What were they working with initially?)

Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was their temperament at birth?• What do we know about their consistent personality characteristics?• Is there a family psychiatric history?• Are there toxic exposures in utero, birth complications, or developmental disorders?• Is there a history of concussions or traumatic brain injuries?• Neurodevelopmental history
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is their attachment style?• How did their family act and what is the family structure (i.e. - did the patient model their parent's behaviours, or did they rebel against their parent's behaviours – you either “act like your parents” or “act the opposite of your parents because you don't want to be like them”)?• Do they have problems with affect modulation?• Do they have a rigid or negative cognitive style?• Low self-image/self-esteem?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poverty, low socioeconomic status, teenage parenthood, or poor access to health care?• Childhood exposure to maternal depression, domestic violence, late adoption, temperament mismatch, or marital conflicts?• Immigration history, marginalization, discrimination, or racism?• Exposure to antisocial personality/traits

Precipitating (What acute event happened and how did it affect them?)

Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serious medical illness or injury?• Increasing use of alcohol or drugs?• Medication non-adherence?• Pregnancy or hormonal changes?• Sleep deprivation?
Psychological	Stressor that activate one or more psychological processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive: core beliefs and cognitive distortions• Dialectical: emotional dysregulation and dysfunction• Interpersonal: grief, loss, disagreement, change/transitions• Psychodynamic: unconscious conflicts/defenses, and unconscious repetition of early relationship patterns (psychic determinism)
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of or separation from close family, partner, or friends• Interpersonal trauma• Work/academic/financial stressors• Recent immigration, loss of home, loss of a supportive service (e.g. - respite services, appropriate school placement)• Is the individual's current experience/symptoms similar to a past situation (i.e. - “history repeating itself”)? For example, they might have had a loss, separation etc. in the past

Perpetuating (What chronic things are going on?)

Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they have a chronic illness, functional impairment caused by cognitive deficits, or a learning disorder? • Lack of medication optimization (suboptimal doses) • Lack of treatment or follow up for mental illness • Current substance use? • Chronic medical problems, chronic pain, or disability? • How is patient responding to hospitalization? • What are the degree of the symptoms right now?
Psychological	<p>One or more perpetuating psychological processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive: chronic negative thoughts and reinforcing environment • Dialectical: help-seeking and help-rejecting, chronic emotional dysregulation and poor distress tolerance • Interpersonal: Chronic/unresolved dysfunctional relationships, interpersonal conflicts, or role transitions • Psychodynamic: recurring themes throughout one's life, chronic primitive defenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are their beliefs about self/others/world? What ideas have they internalized? • Are there self-destructive coping mechanisms, or traumatic re-enactments? • Ongoing poor coping skills, limited or lack of insight? • Personality traits (e.g. - unable to maintain consistent interpersonal relationships in borderline personality disorder) • How is their attachment style playing out in this particular situation?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic marital/relationship discord, lack of empathy from family/friends, developmentally inappropriate expectations • Chronically dangerous or hostile neighbourhood, trans-generational problems of immigration, lack of culturally competent services • Ongoing transitions and stressors • Poor finances or working long hours • Isolation, unsafe environment
Protective (What is protecting them and keeping them well?)	
Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good overall health • Absence of family psychiatric history • What is their response to medications (good response/no response, did they achieve remission, are they optimized on current medications)? • Do they have above-average intelligence, easy temperament, resiliency, specific talents or abilities? • No substance use is a protective factor
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they have ability to be reflective or modulate their affect? • Do they have ability to mentalize (see other's perspectives)? • Do they have a positive sense of self, or adaptive coping mechanisms? • Psychologically-minded, reflective, and capacity to change thinking patterns?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have they previously responded well to therapy? • Good coping skills, good insight?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships, supportive community, and/or extended family/friends? • Religious/spiritual beliefs • Good interpersonal supports • Financial/disability support • Has an outpatient healthcare team: GP, psychiatrist, social, or case worker?

Adapted from Barker P. The child and adolescent psychiatry evaluation: basic child psychiatry. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Scientific, Inc. 1995, and from Weerasekera, P. (1993). Formulation: A multiperspective model. The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry.

<https://www.psychdb.com/teaching/biopsychosocial-case-formulation#:~:text=Biopsychosocial%20formulation%20combines%20biological%20C%20psychological,as%20you%20collect%20more%20information.> Accessed 22 11 23

12. Appendix B Secondary Book Survey 2022

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
	Blogs - Creativity and Artists												
1		Flow Creativity, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The War of Art, by Steven Pressfield	Twyla Tharp	Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull	steal like an artist	Creative Confidence by Tom Kelley & David Kelley	It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want To Be. By Paul Arden	Lateral Thinking, By Edward De Bono	. Thinking Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman	Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert	The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron	Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer
2		Recommendations	12	16	12	9	19	15	5	2	4	16	5
3		https://artobserved.com/?s=creative-process											
4		https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/sharing-creativity-luisok/BWENSSWtSN1w											
5		https://becomeawriterpod.com/best-creativity-books/	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					Yes	Yes	
6		https://blog.producthunt.com/these-7-books-are-necessary-reading-for-all-creative-0246880cf8	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	
7		https://bookauthority.org/books/best-creativity-books	Yes		Yes	Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes

Blogs - Creativity and Artists													
	Flow /Creativity, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The War of Art, By Steven Pressfield	Twyla Tharp	Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull	steal like an artist	Creative Confidence by Tom Kelley & David Kelley	It's Not How Good You Are, it's How Good You Want To Be, By Paul Arden	Lateral Thinking, By Edward De Bono	. Thinking Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman	Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert	The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron	Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer	
1													
9	https://careergasm.com/unleash-your-creative-beast/	Yes	Yes		Yes					Yes	Yes		
10	https://careergasm.com/unleash-your-creative-beast/											Yes	
11	https://creativesomething.net/post/tag/books	Yes											
12	https://medium.com/great-new-reads/best-books-on-creativity-and-innovation-327cbe70e78b			Yes									
13	https://mymodernmet.com/best-books-for-artists/		Yes			Yes							
14	https://proactivecreative.com/12-of-the-best-books-on-creativity/	Yes	Yes		Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes	
15	https://shelleywalsh.com/the-10-best-books-on-creativity/	Yes					Yes	Yes					

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
	Blogs - Creativity and Artists												
1		Flow /Creativity, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The War of Art, By Steven Pressfield	Twyla Tharp	Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull	steal like an artist	Creative Confidence by Tom Kelley & David Kelley	It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want To Be, By Paul Arden	Lateral Thinking, By Edward De Bono	. Thinking Fast and Slow – Daniel Kahneman	Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert	The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron	Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer
16	https://teambuilding.com/blog/creativity-books	yes			Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes		
17	https://upjourney.com/best-books-on-creativity	Yes				Yes							
18	https://www.artnews.com/c/art-news/product-recommendations/												
19	https://www.artworkarchiv.com/blog/the-3-books-every-artist-should-have-on-their-shelf	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes
20	https://www.blurb.com/blog/five-books-inspire-creative-life/					Yes						Yes	
21	https://www.bookforum.com/search?search=book%20recommendations&page=3												

Blogs - Creativity and Artists

	Flow /Creativity, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The War of Art, By Steven Pressfield	Twyla Tharp	Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull	steal like an artist	Creative Confidence by Tom Kelley & David Kelley	It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want To Be, By Paul Arden	Lateral Thinking, By Edward De Bono	. Thinking Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman	Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert	The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron	Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer
1	https://www.b00000000m.com/											
22	https://www.camva.com/learn/40-books-unlock-creativity-start-lifes-best-work/	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes			
23												
24	https://www.creativeboom.com/features/10-great-books-for-artists-and-makers-launching-a-creative-business/		Yes		Yes							
25	https://www.creativefounders.com/8-blogging-books-creative-entrepreneur/					Yes						
26	https://www.creativemesh.com/best-books-on-creativity/	Yes	Yes			Yes					Yes	
27	https://www.domestika.org/en/blog/7554-120-books-to-spark-your-creativity	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes					Yes	
28	https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/347633				Yes		Yes					

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
	Blogs - Creativity and Artists												
1		Flow /Creativity, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The War of Art, By Steven Pressfield	Twyla Tharp	Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull	steal like an artist	Creative Confidence by Tom Kelley & David Kelley	It's Not How Good You Are, it's How Good You Want To Be, By Paul Arden	Lateral Thinking, By Edward De Bono	. Thinking Fast and Slow – Daniel Kahneman	Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert	The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron	Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer
29	https://www.format.com/magazine/features/art/creative-reading-list		Yes	Yes		Yes					Yes		
30	https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/top-25-books-unleash-your-creative-potential.html	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
31	https://www.livehappy.com/reading/7-amazing-books-that-will-unlock-your-creativity	Yes					Yes					Yes	
32	https://www.makerandmore.com/blog/creative-books						Yes					Yes	
33	https://www.marieforleo.com/2020/05/books-to-read-on-creativity/	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
34	https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/the-read-down/the-read-down/books-to-inspire-you/						Yes				Yes	Yes	
	https://www.punchedcloc	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		

Blogs - Creativity and Artists

	Flow /Creativity, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The War of Art, By Steven Pressfield	Twyia Tharp	Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull	steal like an artist	Creative Confidence by Tom Kelley & David Kelley	It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want To Be, By Paul Arden	Lateral Thinking, By Edward De Bono	. Thinking Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman	Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert	The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron	Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			
35	https://www.punchedclocks.com/must-read-books-creativity/											
36	https://www.skillsshare.com/blog/10-more-books-every-artist-should-read/										Yes	
37	https://www.theblogmark.et.co/creative-books-roundup/	Yes	Yes		Yes							
38	https://www.theblogmark.et.co/creative-books-roundup/											
39	https://www.timearrows.com/best-books-about-creative-thinking/					Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	
40	https://www.wix.com/wordsmatter/blog/2020/11/				Yes					Yes	Yes	

13. Appendix C Group Exhibitions 2019 -2024

Unravelling Textile Traditions Consuo Textile Group (Sept 2024)
Oxmarket Contemporary, Chichester.

Echoes of Iceland – Bermál frá Islandi II (Apr – May 2024)
Allen Gallery, Alton.

Reflections of South Hill Park Consuo Textile Group (Sept – Nov 2023)
South Hill Arts Centre, Bracknell.

Earth Materials (Feb – June 2023)
Gallery 57, Arundel.

Echoes of Iceland – Bermál frá Islandi (Nov 2023 – Jan2023)
Allen Gallery, Alton.

World Within Worlds I Transition (July 2022)
James Hockey Gallery, UCA Farnham.

Basketry: Rhythm, Renewal and Reinvention (Sept 2021 – Jan 2022)
Ruthin Craft Centre, Wales.

Tansa: Threads of Influence - Miniatures (Apr - May 2022)
Gallery Gallery, Kyoto, Japan.

Materiality (Mar 2022)
GALLERY@OXO, Oxo Tower Wharf, South Bank, London.

Tansa: Threads of Influence Process and Making (Feb – Apr 2022)
South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell.

Tansa: Japanese Threads of Influence (Jan – Mar 2022)
Craft Study Centre, Farnham.

Practice as Research (Oct 2021)
Foyer Gallery, UCA Farnham.

Materiality and Landscape (July 2021)
Brewery Tap, UCA Project Space, Folkestone.

WIP Work in Progress PhD Exhibition (Sept – Oct 2020)
Foyer Gallery, UCA Farnham.

Transition-Chichester (Nov - Dec 2019)
Oxmarket Gallery, Chichester.

Air – UCA Artists in Residence (Oct – Nov 2019)
Foyer Gallery, UCA Farnham.

The Latch String is Always Out (May 2019)
Téxtilmilstöd (Icelandic Textile Centre),
Blönduós, Iceland.

14. Appendix D *Moments in Time Exhibition (2024)*



This practice-based research comprises a written thesis and an exhibition that presents a physical representation of the process involved in following the Intensive Journal Method (Proffoff, 1992). These artefacts demonstrate the outcome of a self-supporting and sustainable mode of learning described in the thesis. The thesis provides an analytical account of the author's creative process and the development of her creative practice over five years.

Moments in Time (2024), a solo exhibition in the Foyer Gallery at UCA Farnham during October and November, included new pieces and work previously exhibited in group exhibitions between 2019 and 2024. The large glass windows overlooking the sculpture garden provided a backdrop of mature trees and shrubs, affording an organic connection, complimenting and echoing the natural plant material of the work displayed.

The exhibition traced the author's journey as she incorporated the Intensive Journal method into her creative practice. It showed how the conventional use of a random weave technique manipulating willow was adapted to include a wide variety of natural fibres, plant materials and techniques. Soft materials and the established methods of twining, braiding, coiling, and weaving were combined and extended to create artefacts that complete themselves as they settle and dry. Journals and sketch pages were included to embody the self-reflection and time-intensive process that underlies the making process. The deconstruction of previous work and recycling materials allowed earlier work to evolve as they were added to or reconstructed to become new pieces. This emphasised the cyclical, reiterative and repetitive nature of reflective practice.



Mills, A. Random weave baskets (2019- 24) extending beyond the traditional vessel form and experimenting with scale [willow (mid-ground) willow, hemp, seagrass, (foreground)].



Mills, A. Random weave baskets (2019) established use of random weave in contemporary willow basketry [willow 36x32x27cm]



Mills, A. Random weave basket (2019) conveying transitional space with an open weave structure (left). [Willow] evolved into a basket covered in pine bark (2024) (right) [Willow, wire, pine bark 90x78x160cm], extending and concealing the openness of the original design. This demonstrates the concept of open-ended process baskets, which are never finished.



Mills, A. Record of Spring (2020) Looped basket made with cordage from spring flower leaves [snowdrop, crocus bluebell, Leucojum, Sisyrinchium, iris, crocosmia, hemp twine 24x24x35cm]. Hemp twine was used to mark each metre of cordage used in the looping.



Mills, A. Looped baskets (2020) [iris, daffodil, snowdrop, crocus bluebell, leucojum, sisyrinchium, iris, crocosmia, hemp twine]. Experimenting with different forms and combining techniques within the same basket, introducing fringed elements to encompass and displace space.



Mills, A. Looped and braided baskets (2020) [sisyrinchium, iris, daffodil leaves] Combining different techniques and variations of the looped form.



*Mills, A. Beckon to be Known (2021). [willow bark, bur reed leaf and iris cordage 30x25x20cm]
Looped baskets with willow bark fringe Baskets move and change shape with gravity during the day. They find their own point of balance and continue to evolve and settle into their space*



*Mills, A. Beckon to be Known (2021) [daffodil leaf, willow bark
29x31x20cm]*



Mills, A. Beckons to be Known – White1 and 2. (2022) [Looped baskets iris leaf and porcelain 17x18x15cm](above)] corn husks and porcelain 20x21x17cm] (below), Using porcelain instead of willow bark. They provided an unexpected and added element of sound as the baskets were moved.





Mills, A. Eldritch Baskets (2023) [iris, linen, jute hemp 20x23x32cm (top) linen, Iris, grass 16x16x44cm(left) willow, linen, iris 13x12x59cm(right) Cutting into previously made baskets, adding to them. Extending the idea of mixing



Mills, A. Tansa Japanese threads of influence – Process and Making (2022) [willow, hemp, ceramic 40x40x64cm]. Distorted willow from a deconstructed random weave basket became a personal response to a textile research group visit to Japan. This was the first piece exhibited as a process-led and what would previously have been regarded as an experimental piece.



Mills, A. Without End (2023) (left) [kelp, wire, raffia and hemp twine 32x24x45cm] and Unravelled (2022) [twined vessel, cotton string and black clay 26x28x43cm]. Themes begin to emerge and become recognised. Containment and displacement of space. Baskets suspended over plinths.



Mills, A. Shadow Dancer (2024) Twined and woven vessel. [Recycled willow from previous work, dyed willow bark, silk, jute, hemp, sisal 48 x 36 x 38cm. Work designed to be presented in different ways, suspended or leaning on a plinth.



Mills, A. Wall hangings (2023) [Woven wall hangings Willow bark, jute, hemp twine 39x 25x5 (left). and wall hanging, willow bark, silk, jute, linen, hemp 48x24x6cm]. Extending the techniques used in woven forms. The emphasis was on simplicity and straightforward technologies.



Mills, A. Nature's Mantle (2023) [Woven hanging. Willow bark, jute, hemp, linen 150x100X15cm]. During a second residency at Textílmíðstöð, I learnt how to spin and how to use the Icelandic rya knot as a way to incorporate the long staples of wool from the fleeces of the Icelandic sheep in weaving. This layering of materials and techniques to form vessels and hangings has extended the range of fibres I now use in my practice. This has allowed movement across the disciplines of basketry and weave.



Mills, A. Length ... (2024) [willow bark, raffia, silk, jute, hemp. 163x24x6cm]



Mills, A. Sketch Pages (2022) [Paper, cardboard, plant material, collage, gesso, PVA, acrylic paint, pastel, chalk 42x60x3cm] Working beyond the confines of sketchbooks to develop a visual and tactile language which complemented and became a form of journaling in its own right.



Mills, A. Sketch Pages (2022) (details) [Paper, cardboard, plant material, collage, gesso, PVA, acrylic paint, pastel, chalk, porcelain]



Mills, A. Journals (2019-2024) [A5 notebooks] Recording the process of implementing the Intensive Journal into a creative practice.

15. Appendix E Guidelines for the Intensive Journal Method

15.1 Preparation

- Remember to keep your individual creativity/creative process/creative practice as the focus when using these exercises.
- Privacy is fundamental to this form of journaling. It is primarily solitary work. Everything recorded is within the control of the individual and is not intended to be shared unless the individual wishes to share part of the content.
- The individual can stop at any time and doesn't have to complete any activity they are uncomfortable with.
- Remember to date and time reference all entries.
- Consider using different forms of recording, e.g. doodles, mark-making sketches, photographs, collages, aural/video recording, movement, sound, tactile materials, found objects
- Use any combination of methods or anything that will allow you to access the essence of what you feel/think later.
- Do not edit or remove anything you record. Keep every entry. It is the cumulative entries which provide opportunities to see patterns and can give suggestions to explore other sections in more detail.
- All entries need to be recorded with a non-judgemental attitude. Avoid interpreting and self-editing during the recording process.
- Develop a digital system to store your entries, e.g., in notebooks, sketchbooks, or sketch boxes. Label and file them in the appropriate section of your journal. Develop a straightforward system to cross-reference entries to different sections. The form of recording and storage is less important than being able to find entries when you need to.

Reference:

Proff, I (1992: 33-44) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

15.2 The Daily Log

Once you have focused on your creative life, you need to be aware of your current situation. This is done through the Daily Log. Brief records of each day's events provide a context for your feelings and inner experience.

The aim is to record events, feelings, and impressions as succinctly as possible in a neutral, nonjudgmental way so they can be referred to later for cross-referencing with other sections of the journal.

This can be done by recalling events at the end of the day. If days are missed, a summary of events and a general movement of the days and feelings overall can be helpful.

An alternative way is to record events as close to them as possible.

Method:

1. Record the date, time and place of entry.
2. Keep all entries brief.
3. Record any thoughts, emotions, or imagery as you move from sleeping to waking.
4. What are the emotions, plans, desires, anxieties, and hopes as you begin the day?
5. Record the sequence of events and emotions of the active part of the day.
6. How did you begin your tasks of the day? What thoughts came unbidden into your mind? Were you aware of any daydreaming? Were you worrying about things? Were you looking forward to things? What kind of relationships occurred during the day? How did they make you feel?
7. Consider how the moods of the day changed from morning to afternoon to evening.
8. What feelings do you have as you reflect on what you have recorded? How did you feel when recording them?
9. Consider the day quietly and without analysis or interpretation. Focus on the movement of the day.

Reference:

Adapted from Progoff, I (1992:65-72) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

15.3 The Period Log (allow approximately 45 mins)

The Period log allows you to identify the 'Now' of your creative practice and how you arrived at this point. It can indicate a future direction for your practice.

All entries/work on the journal begin with pausing the day. Make a conscious decision about which space will work best for you to engage with this work. It might help to have a dedicated space to work through the exercises, e.g., a studio or where you usually work on your practice.

Allow a few minutes of silence and quiet to focus on how you experience your sense of creativity.

Become aware that the present moment is on a continuum that constantly relates to what has gone before. It has the potential to show the next step in developing your creativity. Reflect on your thoughts and feelings and trace back to include as much of the past as is still an active part of your present work.

This time span will be different for everyone. It may cover a short period of 1-6 months or several years. You may intellectually decide upon a point where something significant happened, but allow your feelings to determine if that is the appropriate place to begin. Your feelings may take you further back in time to something unresolved and still there at the back of your mind. Try to be aware of these feelings and allow them time to surface before making a final decision.

Method:

1. Choose your space and enjoy the sounds of the place. Accept the sounds of the environment and allow them to merge with a sense of quietness. Feel the movement of time as you experience your creativity. Reflect upon the quality of your recent experience. Observe what thoughts, images, and feelings come to you. Do not censor or interpret. Think about how you can record these experiences.
2. Record the specific contents of this period. Memories, feelings, events. Record them briefly to avoid too much detail. Create an outline and an overview.
3. When you have a clear overview, begin to add more detail -
 - When did this period begin – was there a specific event/experience/memory?
 - As you record more detail, be open to the start of the period shifting slightly. Accept any changes.

- Continue to add briefly more details – friendships, relationships, projects, work, social activities, illness, successes, failures, and coincidences.
 - Any events which were particularly striking or meaningful to you.
 - Any event that changed the course of your life experience.
 - Keep all entries brief. They will be built upon through later cross-referencing.
4. Consider how you feel about what you have recorded. Are you comfortable with it? Does it feel complete? Describe what you have done aloud or re-read it. Does this change your perceptions of what you have recorded? Record your reaction.

Reference: Adapted from Proff, I (1992:46-56) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

15.4 The Period Log amended as requested by Participant C (see p114)

Allow approximately 45 mins. This records the history of your creative practice to date and can indicate a future direction for your practice.

Think about your creative practice as a continuum.

What can you identify as the beginning of your creative practice? Was there a specific event/experience/memory?

What work did you make at this time?

Where were you?

Who was there with you?

How did it make you feel?

What are the three main things that have changed since then?

Describe your creative practice today.

How do you feel about your practice today?

Review what you have recorded and add more details as you remember them. Keep notes brief.

Did you forget about something you've recorded? It may be a way of working that you don't do anymore, remembering successes, or the introduction of new materials or techniques.

Were you surprised about anything you thought about?

Reference:

Adapted from Progoff, I (1992:46-56) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

15.5 Twilight Imagery Log (Allow approximately 10 mins)

The next stage, after completing the Period Log, is to shift perceptions using a more intuitive approach. Although the title implies a visual experience, it can take any other sensory form e.g. a touch or scent. The focus is to consider what an intuitive approach can add to what is recorded to provide inward perceptions which are not literal or actual but can add a symbolic aspect to the record.

Method:

1. Write / Label the Period Image and date.
2. Sit in quietness with eyes closed, relax and focus awareness on your breathing.
3. Turn attention to the recent period you have recorded in your period log. Avoid thinking about it. Let it present itself to us through images, impressions, emotions, and any awareness of what we inwardly see, hear, smell, touch, taste, intuit or physically feel in our body.
4. Record any sensations or imagery that comes into your mind neutrally without judgement.
5. Consider the Period Log and Twilight Imagery Log side by side and ask:
 - Is there any perceivable relationship between them?
 - Do they seem to be saying the same thing?
 - Does the meaning of the imagery seem different in some way?
 - Does the information in both complement or contradict one another?
6. Add additional information as necessary. Allow both entries to rest.
7. Be aware and record any additional thoughts /feelings about this you become aware of over the next few days as you go about your life.

Reference:

Proffoff, I (1992:57-64) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

15.6 Stepping Stones (allow approximately 40 mins).

Stepping stones refer to the key events that come to mind when thinking about the course and development of your creative practice. They enable you to focus on the underlying themes and interests that have guided your choices to arrive at your present position regarding your creative practice.

Identifying these key past experiences and possibilities that may have been forgotten or set aside can affirm a positive future direction.

Method:

1. Choose your space and enjoy the sounds of the place. Accept the sounds of the environment and allow them to merge with a sense of quietness. Relax and observe what thoughts, images, and feelings come to you as you reflect on your earliest creative experiences. Do not censor or interpret. Try to develop an attitude of passive receptivity. Think about how you can record these experiences/events.
2. Don't worry about recording them in chronological order; record specific experiences and events, how you felt at the time, and how you feel now as you reflect on them. These can be literal, factual statements, metaphors, or symbols.
3. Review your 'list' – these will be your 'stepping stones'. Prioritise the most significant. There should be no more than 8 or 10 stepping stones.
4. Identify each stepping stone with a single word, phrase, image, scent, sound, taste or touch.
5. Consider how you feel as you record and reflect upon your choices. Record these feelings and how they relate to your list.
6. Read aloud the brief descriptions with which you have chosen to identify your stepping stones. Record your voice and listen to the recording. This will allow you to become an observer of yourself.
7. You may be able to identify some threads that run through some or all of these experiences. Record any possible themes or connections you can identify.
8. N.B., This exercise is not intended as a one-off but as something that can be engaged in at different times. The focus can change, and potential themes or connections can be identified.

Reference:

Progoff, I (1992:76-89) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

15.7 Dialogue with Works

Method

1. In a quiet place take time to relax and calm your thoughts.
2. Remember, do not judge these decisions with hindsight.
3. Looking back over your Stepping Stones and Period log, recall different works of art/craft (define in the broadest sense) which were meaningful to you. List these works/events.
4. Read through your list and consider it as a whole. Add in additional works as you remember them. Consider the diversity, themes or connections with the journal entries.
5. Read through a second time and add brief comments, words, a phrase, and feelings. Cross-reference any comments with other sections of the journal.
6. Choose one of the works on your list as the subject of your first dialogue. Choose the one with the most meaning and the potential for further development.
7. Make a brief statement about your relationship with the work It may be work you have made or a piece or photograph of a piece made by someone else. It may be how you made it or found it. It may be what has happened to it since you first acquired it. Include your present relationship with this work.
8. Go back and record the steps of its making and how the work developed. Our purpose is to discover the inner continuity which is contained in the work which is evident in its completeness and to imagine a meeting with the maker.
9. Create Stepping Stones for the work, but do not restrict the number of stepping stones you record. Make a list to show all of the chronological development of the work. Try to write in the first person as if writing on behalf of the work. Mark off various stages and phases of its development. These prompt questions can be used if they help:
 - What led to the idea that brought the work about?
 - Was someone else instrumental?
 - Did it come from a dream or some other interior experience?
 - Once the concept was formed, what events enabled it to continue?
 - What difficulties did it encounter?
 - How did it manage to continue?

- What variations and compromises did it make?
 - Were there long pauses when the work was at a standstill?
 - What was taking place during those silent times?
 - What feelings have you had about the work and your relationship to it?
 - How has it proceeded to the recent period?
 - How do you feel about it now?
10. Relax and sit quietly for a moment to think about what you have just written. Re-read the list and consider the process of it becoming the completed work (it may be uncompleted, but as it is now, consider it completed at this moment in time). Imagine being inside the work rather than just looking at it. Recall its beginnings, sources, possibilities, phases of development, and difficulties.
11. Sit in stillness with your eyes closed. Imagine and feel the presence of the work as if it were a person. Feel the work and our relationship to it. Notice any images that come to mind. Don't direct the images. Record any images, thoughts, or feelings that occur. When thinking about the images, consider any symbolic meaning they may have. Imagine the work as a person you can have a conversation with.
12. End the dialogue when it feels right for you. Note the feelings you had during this process and now at the end. Begin a section in your journal - "Dialogue with Works" and keep these notes in that section. Do not edit or change the original dialogue script, but add comments or notes separately when re-reading it. There may be a course of action which emerges as you re-read what you have written.
13. This exercise can be an ongoing process. The original dialogue can be returned to and continued. It is more effective if a period of time is left between exercises to give some distance and a fresh vantage point. If appropriate, you can do it with any of the other significant works you have listed or with new ones as you remember them.

Reference:

Proff, I (1992:141-153) *At a Journal Workshop: Writing to Access the Power of the Unconscious and Evoke Creative Ability*. New York: Tarcher Putnam

16. Appendix F Ethics Documents

16.1 UCA Research Ethics – Tier 1 Checklist

Research Ethics – Tier 1 Checklist To be completed for all research proposals



The University for the Creative Arts is committed to supporting good practice in research and scholarly activity. Conducting research in accordance with ethical principles is considered to be of fundamental importance. The following Tier 1 Checklist must be completed for all research projects and approved at supervisor/school level.

Please use the UCA Research Ethics Code of Practice as guidance in completing this checklist.

Name of researcher	Annette Mills
Title of proposed project:	The Intensive Journal Method: advancing insights in creative practice
Status (are you a member of staff, a Ph.D student or a student at another level)	PhD student
Email	AMills6@uca.ac.uk
Line Manager/Supervisor/Tutor	Professor Lesley Millar

Brief outline of the project (250 words maximum):

This research is concerned with understanding art practice and process. Using the structure of the Intensive Journal (Progoff 1975), I aim to provide established practitioners with a means of developing a self-supporting mode of learning to advance their practice.

The first stage of my research identified patterns of behaviour; developed strategies to sustain motivation and advanced practice. This second stage of my research will test this methodology with other practitioners through interviews and comparative case studies. From these findings, a generalised framework will be developed to enable practitioners to evaluate and advance their creative practices.

I intend to gather data from established practitioners working in the field of basketry, who want to develop their practice in innovative ways. I will be gathering information on changes in their understanding of their individual creative processes over time by incorporating the Intensive Journal Method into their art practice.

I will gather this information through interviews and journal extracts the participants wish to share. These will form part of my case studies.

I will provide a consent form for each participant to complete prior to the start of this body of work. Please see consent form attached.

This research will involve the collection of personal data such as your personal experiences where you could be identified. This will be stored on an external hard drive for the duration of the research. In compliance with GDPR regulations I will only retain personal data from you for the length of my research. If I desire to use the material again after the completion of my PhD I will acquire new consent. I will also not share any of this data with outside sources. I ensure that this data will be securely disposed of when no longer needed.

There may be possible emotional distress when working with the Intensive Journal Method. Sensitive topics could arise. In order to minimize any negative impact, I will send the questions to the participants before any interview and make it clear that they can create the boundaries of any discussion.

In addition, I will also make it clear that the information gathered in the interview will remain confidential. I will make it clear that all research will only be used for my PhD thesis and will not be distributed to any external organisations.

I will make it clear that the participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

No feedback will be offered to participants.

Does the study involve human participants?

If **Yes** please continue to Question 1. If **No** please continue to question 12

	Issues that may indicate that mitigation measures and/or ethical approval by Research Committee are necessary		
1	Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? (see 17.2a below)		No


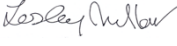
2	Does the research involve sensitive topics? (see 17.2b)		No
3	Does the research involve groups where the permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access? (see 17.2c)		No
4	Is the research to be conducted without the full and informed consent of the participant? (17.2d)		No
5	Does the research involve access to records of personal or confidential information concerning identifiable individuals? (17.2e)		No
6	Does the research induce, or have the potential to induce, psychological stress, anxiety, or humiliation or to cause more than minimal pain? (17.2f)		No
7	Does the research involve, or have the potential to involve, intrusive interventions that participants would not normally encounter, or which may cause them to reveal information that could cause concern in the course of their everyday life? (17.2g, 17.2h)		No
8	Will the research take place outside the UK?		No
9	Will the research involve respondents to the internet or other visual/vocal methods where respondents may be identified?		No
10	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		No
11	Will the study involve NHS patients or staff? (18.4)		No

If you have answered **Yes** to any of these questions, you should submit further details of measures to mitigate ethical risks and a formal application for ethics approval using the UCA **Research Ethics Tier 2 Application for Approval** form. The form should be submitted to the Research Committee via the Research Office.

If you answered **No** to all the above questions, then you need not submit your project for formal ethics approval. You will need to complete the questions below and file a signed copy of this Tier 1 Ethics Checklist with your School (for staff) and your supervisors (PGT and PGR students), and submit it to the Research Office via the my UCA research ethics pages. The form must be signed by yourself, and your line manager or supervisor.

It is incumbent on you to observe the University's Research Ethics Code of Practice, and to ensure that your research complies with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), by which you are legally bound.

	Further issues that require consideration in research good practice		
12	Have the topic and any ethical implications been addressed with your supervisor/line manager?	Yes	
13	Does the topic merit further research of the kind being proposed and is it appropriate to the level of study?	Yes	
14	Do you, as the researcher, have the skills to carry out this research?	Yes	
15	Are the participant information sheet or leaflet and consent forms appropriate?		NA
16	Are the procedures for recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent appropriate?		NA
17	Are the procedures for ensuring confidentiality/anonymity of respondent data appropriate?		NA
18	Has a risk assessment been carried out and the form completed, where necessary?		NA

I have read the UCA Research Ethics Code of Practice Signature Applicant: 	This project complies with the UCA Research Ethics Code of Practice Signature Line Manager/Supervisor/Tutor: 
Date: 08 08 22	Date: 8th August 2022

Below are extracts from the key areas of the UCA Research Ethics Code of Practice:

3.1 As a matter of principle, all research is subject to ethical considerations and risk assessment taking into account professional codes of practice / standards where these exist, and subject specificity.

3.2 All research involving human participants, whether conducted in a direct or virtual or any other way, must consider the following issues from the inception of the research project. Researchers should be in a position to justify their research methods should it be required:

- i. the value of the research
- ii. informed consent
- iii. openness and honesty
- iv. right to withdraw without penalty
- v. confidentiality and anonymity
- vi. protection from harm
- vii. briefing and debriefing
- viii. reimbursements, payments and rewards
- ix. experience of researcher and suitability of methods employed
- x. ethics standards of external bodies and institutions
- xi. research for clients/consultants
- xii. research data management

3.3 These issues require careful consideration and the principles laid out below provide the basis for good practice in research management.

17. Consideration of Ethical Issues

17. Consideration of Ethical Issues

17.1 As outlined under 3.1, all research is subject to ethical consideration and requires an assessment of ethical risk, taking into account professional codes of practice where these exist, as well as subject specificity.

17.2 The following research would normally be considered as involving more than minimal risk and therefore **requires documented measures to mitigate potential risks, and consideration by the University Research Committee:**

- Research involving vulnerable groups or individuals, for example children and young people under 18, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship.
- Research involving sensitive topics such as:
 - Sexual behaviour
 - Illegal, political or religious behaviour
 - Experience of violence, abuse, exploitation and/or other racist or sexist behaviour
 - Mental health
 - Physical health and treatment.
- Research involving groups where the permission of a gatekeeper is normally required for initial access to members e.g. ethnic or cultural groups, native peoples or indigenous communities.
- Research involving deception or which is conducted without participants' full and informed consent at the time the study is carried out.
- Research involving access to records of personal or confidential information concerning identifiable individuals.
- Research that would induce psychological stress, anxiety or humiliation or cause more than minimal pain.
- Research involving intrusive interventions such as vigorous physical exercise, where participants would not normally encounter such interventions, which may cause them to reveal information that causes concern in the course of their everyday life.

17.3 Vulnerable groups include any person(s) who may be precluded from giving informed consent. Note that this does not necessarily include all groups whose consent is given by parents or by those *in loco parentis*. It should additionally be noted that even in those circumstances the 'real' consent of those individuals under study should also be sought wherever possible (sample consent forms are available from the Research Office).

17.4 Deceptive research is that which is undertaken when the investigator deliberately conceals or significantly misrepresents his or herself, the true nature of the research or any other significant aspect of the research: examples may include covert observation, the stating of a misleading research purpose or providing a misleading professional identity or institutional affiliation on part of the researcher(s).

17.5 No specific approval is needed for research not covered within the categories detailed in Section 17.2, although all projects must adhere to the principles laid out in this Code and the University requires all staff or students undertaking research to ensure that at each stage of the process, research is undertaken in a professional and ethical manner.

17.6 In particular all researchers will ensure that:

- Respect for Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright law is maintained in compliance with University guidelines.
- Researchers will be open and transparent regarding the purpose, methods and possible uses of research.

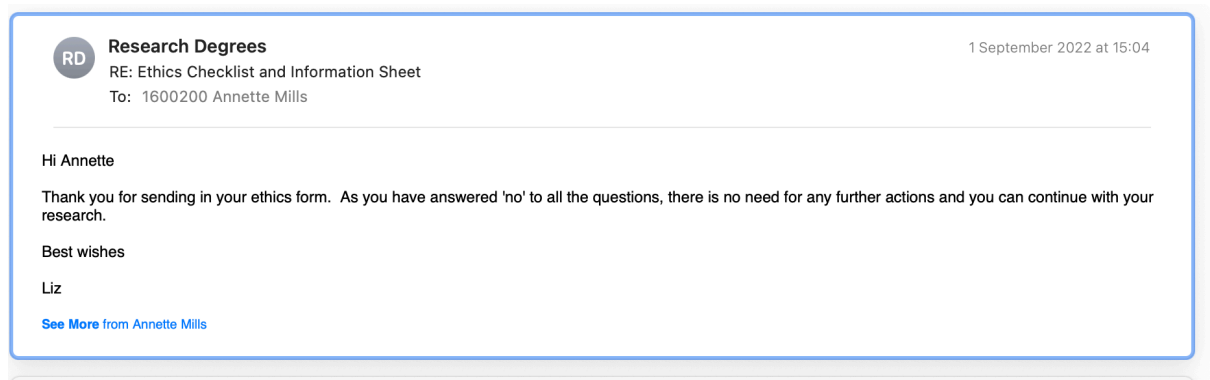
- Researchers will maintain the right to anonymity of any research respondents/subjects, and highlight any possible risks to staff or subjects arising from the research.
- Researchers will act within the law regarding the sourcing and use of research information and respect the obligation to acknowledge support and collaboration.
- Researchers will at all times act within the law of the UK and the law of any other country within the research being undertaken.

17.7 Research involving animals/animal tissue requires a license under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Research involving human tissue including its display requires a license under the Human Tissue Act (2004). Experimentation / anatomical examination in human morbid anatomy requires a license under the 1984 Anatomy Act.

17.8 Research involving NHS patients or staff must be approved by NRES; see the NRES website for further information (www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk). Research involving patients or staff of other medical providers must be ethically approved by these institutions.

17.9 If there is any doubt as to whether a particular research project needs approval, advice should be sought, for staff, from the Research Manager or Head of School, and for PGR students, from the Research Degrees Leader or supervisors.

16.2 Email from Research Office confirming ethics acceptance



16.3 Participant A Consent Form



Research Ethics Committee

Consent Form

Project title: The Intensive Journal Method: advancing insights in creative practice - Case studies

Data Controller: Annette Mills, PhD Researcher, University for the Creative Arts

Supervisors: Professor Lesley Millar, Professor Birgitta Hosea

Participant Name: Mandy Parslow

Participant Location: Co. Tipperary, Ireland


I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

	Taking Part	Tick Box
	<p>I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.</p> <p><i>[and would like to take part in (please tick one or more of the following)]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a group discussion- an individual interview X- a joint interview- an art project	X
	<p>I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigators of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the</p>	X

	opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.	
	I voluntarily agree to take part in the study on (Title of the Research), a practice-based research project.	X
	I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice and all records of my participation will be destroyed.	X
	I acknowledge that in consideration for completing the study I shall not receive any reimbursement, payment or rewards.	X
Use of the information I provide for this project only		
	<p>I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my anonymity is preserved.</p> <p>I understand that my data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely. It will not be possible to identify me in any publications.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options:</p> <p>(a) I agree for my real name and role/affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on.</p> <p>(b) I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my role/affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position).</p> <p>I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my role/affiliation.</p>	X
	I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	X
	I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	X
	<p>I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded and understand that the recordings will be:</p> <p>EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - destroyed within <i>[insert text defining the time e.g. x weeks/months after the data has been collected or following transcription.]</i> or destroyed immediately following transcription. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stored anonymously, using password-protected software and will be used for training, quality control, audit and specific research purposes. <p>To note: If you do not want your participation recorded you can still take part in the study.</p>	X
Use of the information I provide beyond this project		

	I agree to be interviewed and my contributed information can be used in research outputs and publications by the researcher, whereby I may be quoted by name.	X
	I agree for the [Transcript, art, pictures, interview, recording] to be archived at UCA Research Online, the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) research repository and disseminated for reuse https://research.uca.ac.uk/	
	I agree to be interviewed and the information I contribute can be used in research outputs and publications by the researcher, whereby I may be quoted by name.	
	I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.	X

Name of volunteer A (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed ...  Date 26th September 2022

Name of witness R M.....(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed  Date 26th September 2022

Name of researcher/person taking consent. ANNETTE MILLS (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed  Date 26 09 22

16.4 Participant B Consent Form

University for the Creative Arts

Research Ethics Committee

Consent Form

Project title: The Intensive Journal Method: advancing insights in creative practice - Case studies

Data Controller: Amnette Mills, PhD Researcher, University for the Creative Arts

Supervisors: Professor Lesley Millar, Professor Birgitta Hosea

Participant Name: Julie Gurr

Participant Location: East Sussex, UK

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

Taking Part	Tick Box
I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I would like to take part in (please tick one or more of the following) - individual interviews	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I have read and understood the information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigators of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I voluntarily agree to take part in the study on (Title of the Research), a practice-based research project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice and all records of my participation will be destroyed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I acknowledge that in consideration for completing the study I shall not receive any reimbursement, payment or rewards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use of the information I provide for this project only	
I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my anonymity is preserved.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely. It will not be possible to identify me in any publications.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OR	
Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options: (a) I agree for my real name and role/affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on.	

(b) I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my role/affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position). I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my role/affiliation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded and understand that the recordings will be: - Stored anonymously, using password-protected software and will be used for training, quality control, audit and specific research purposes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Use of the information I provide beyond this project	
I agree to be interviewed and my contributed information can be used in research outputs and publications by the researcher, whereby I may be quoted by name.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I agree for the [Transcript, art, pictures, interview, recording] to be archived at UCA Research Online, the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) research repository and disseminated for reuse https://research.uca.ac.uk/	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be interviewed and the information I contribute can be used in research outputs and publications by the researcher, whereby I may be quoted by name.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>


Name of volunteer: Julie Gurr (BLOCK CAPITALS)
 Signed: Julie Gurr Date: 19/12/22
 Name of witness: J.E. Mares (BLOCK CAPITALS)
 Signed: J.E. Mares Date: 19/12/22
 Name of researcher/person taking consent: _____
 (BLOCK CAPITALS)
 Signed: _____
 Date: _____


16.5 Participant C Consent Form

HfC University for the Creative Arts		Research Ethics Committee
Consent Form		
Project title: The Intensive Journal Method: advancing insights in creative practice - Case studies		
Data Controller: Annette Mills, PhD Researcher, University for the Creative Arts		
Supervisors: Professor Lesley Mills, Professor Brigitte Hosea		
Participant Name: Ruth Thompson		
Participant Location: Northumberland, UK		
<p>I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initiating each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialed boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.</p>		
Taking Part	Tick Box	
I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.	*	
(and would like to take part in (please tick one or more of the following))		
- individual interviews		
I have read and understood the information sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigators of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.	*	
I voluntarily agree to take part in the study on (Title of the Research), a practice-based research project.	*	
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice and all records of my participation will be destroyed.	*	
I acknowledge that in consideration for completing the study I shall not receive any reimbursement, payment or rewards.	*	
Use of the information I provide for this project only		
I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my anonymity is preserved.	*	
I understand that my data gathered in this study will be stored anonymously and securely. It will not be possible to identify me in any publications.	*	
OR		
Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options: (a) I agree for my real name and affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on.	*	

(b) I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my realisation with my comments (but not the title of my position). I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my affiliation.	*
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	*
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	*
I consent to my interview being audio/recorded and understand that the recordings will be	*
- Stored anonymously, using password-protected software and will be used for training, quality control, audit and specific research purposes.	*
Use of the information I provide beyond this project	
I agree to be interviewed and my contributed information can be used in research outputs and publications by the researcher, whereby I may be quoted by name.	*
I agree for the Transcript, art, pictures, interview recording to be archived at UCA Research Online, the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) research repository and disseminated for reuse https://research.uca.ac.uk/	*
I agree to be interviewed and the information I contribute can be used in research outputs and publications by the researcher, whereby I may be quoted by name.	*
I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.	*

Name of volunteer RUTH THOMPSON
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed  Date 26/10/22

Name of witness  (BLOCK CAPITALS) 29/10/22

Name of researcher/person taking consent
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed _____ Date _____

17. Appendix G Participant A Interview Transcripts

17.1. Participant A Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 1 26 09 22

Annette MILLS 0:11 This all started because I realised that people, including me, ended up going on different courses to try and move their practice on or when they got stuck. And when I did the MA, virtually every lecture and every practitioner we had said that doing the MA was a turning point for them, and it moved them on considerably.

Annette MILLS 0:22 At the end of the MA course, there was lots of anxiety about how we could keep in contact with people. How do we keep all this going? Because we enjoyed it so much. And I had just started looking at journaling. I thought there must be a way you could do this for yourself without having to go through everything. So I found Progoff, a psychotherapist who devised this Intensive Journal. It is a holistic approach. And it covers all aspects of life, and dreams and everything. It's based on the lives of creatives, you must be able to do this with a focus more specifically on creativity. And so I've kind of been working with it and changing the language slightly, instead of being like your whole life, to actually your creative life, or your creative journey or your practice. So that's where it started. I'm happy to get you a copy of that. Because it could be useful to have that overview. And then you'll be able to also pick out anything that you're uncomfortable with. I'm respectful of different sorts of structures and systems because they're, I always think they're there for a reason. And it's easy to sort of look at something, I think and shortcut it. So, like I say, it's not really about me trying to shortcut. It's about me trying to focus specifically on creative practice. Does that sound okay?

A 1:49 That sounds great. That sounds really interesting. Yeah, right. Yeah. Yeah.

Annette MILLS 1.50 I've been working through it three different times, and there comes a natural, I think there comes a point at which you don't have to do

anymore. That took me really by surprise the first time. And then I kind of expected it a little bit. And it's happened each time, like, oh, no, this is fine. I've actually resolved that bit, or I can carry on or it's opened up a new direction for me. And that's really exciting.

A 2:05 At a certain point. I suppose the journaling maybe helps to get started and bring you to a particular point. But then the practice kind of takes over and builds its own momentum?

Annette MILLS 2:48 Yes. I discovered that because there's a whole format of the intensive journal is writing, so it's all about writing and not being worried about grammar because it's only you who's going to read it back, but it was sort of always that niggling feeling that, well, you know, if you don't like writing or that's difficult, then that's not too good, really. And so I began to look at using sketchbooks - but more than just sketchbooks. I began to work on what I'm calling sketch pages and do really abstract work just putting ideas together. I think that has opened up a different way of thinking.

A 2:50 Okay,

Annette MILLS 2:51 So it's looking at any way you might want to adapt the journaling. I mean, in terms of how Progoff structures it, it's like a huge A4 folder with all different segments, and I can't work like that, so I work with notebooks. But it has to be a form that you can cross-reference really easily. It might be that if you like working on a computer or something, then that would be fine. Or recording an audio recording, or visually, I think there's a lot more potential with it if you take just that restriction of having to write everything down off because a lot of the work is sort of is, you know, imagery and ideas and thoughts and everything.

A 3:05 Okay, sounds really good.

Annette MILLS 3:10 So I thought it would be sensible to run it for a three-month period. The first thing is called a Period Log, placing you in the now. So, where are you actually now in your creative practice. You kind of go back in time and just begin to think about things that have happened and whatever thoughts come into mind, just begin to record different aspects or different things that are still in your head, about where you came from, with your creativity, how it changed, if it changed, and you just record those down and just note them. You're trying to do it very neutrally, without any sort of emotional light. 'Oh, no, don't think about that.' 'Oh, no, that was really good. I write lots and lots about this bit.' So it's trying to be really neutral. When I started the process, I thought, oh, yeah, it's gonna do this. And I'll go to such and such an idea. It didn't work like that for me. You just go with the instructions and just being quiet and everything. And that's just a starting point. So that identifies your 'now' and it also could indicate where your future goes. Because you're in the middle. It talks about how being in the now is flexible. So it kind of moves you backwards and forwards in time. It's just making you aware of what is around you. And what might be influencing you, like in the past, that's a recurring thing; you might just begin to think, oh, that's interesting.

So that sort of puts you in that position as your starting point. And then the next part is looking at imagery, and just relaxing into that, and maybe thinking about one thing or another and what images come to mind, just in your imagination. And that is perhaps the potential of using photographs or colour; I use a lot of collages with light and just odd words and labels, rather than just a straight description. But again, it would be entirely on how it would work for you.

The next part is a daily log. And then this is to record events, but it's really your feelings about them. Or how your feelings and emotions and thoughts drift through the day, like from the first time it is noticing. You can do it retrospectively. So you can do it at any time during the day and just notice what happens. It's all about inner feelings, people you might come across and how you respond to them or how that makes you feel. I've found it that's really useful for just looking at what is

stopping me doing something. It's classic like, 'Oh, I just tidy up over there or something'.

A 4:05 Yes, yes, I'm the queen of the Queen of that.

Annette MILLS 4:13 It pulls out to the fore, and you think, 'Oh, yeah'. The other thing that I'm interested in is looking at your own personal, creative arc. So, like, when you start, when you have an idea, think, oh, yeah, I want to start something, or you've got a project you're working on. And then you go through this sort of arc that is that like is about processing, and then all of a sudden you can actually you've got it, and you can get on with it, and then how you actually keep that energy going and things like that. And the daily log, for me, allowed me to see the difference between what I thought was procrastination and just putting things off into being. There's, it was quite interesting that there were very set periods in that, and there was actual physical behaviour that could I could track that, oh, I'm at this point in my processing, oh, that's, and now it's all about, it's about feeling about, I just need to do this or that or the other. And it's just being attentive to those sorts of like, intuitive sort of drives. So that's, that's kind of the first three sections, which kind of gets it going. And, it's constant reading back and referencing and fine. And that's when you begin to look for the patterns that come through.

A 4:25 Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So find links between all those different areas? Yes,

Annette MILLS 4:29 It is very much about what has meaning for you. And then lots of other little bits come to the surface that are really, I think, really useful and just interesting. So my thing is about making this available for people who would be interested in working in this way, because it wouldn't suit everybody, obviously. And now, it's seeing if it works for anybody else.

A 4:58 No, on the face of it sounds really useful. And like a really nice way of getting into a body of work. And I suppose. I mean, from my own perspective, I think I said to you in the email, since I finished the PhD there last year, I've kind of

been stuck with the practice; I kind of, I don't quite know where to go with it. Next, or well, it's not even that I don't quite know what to do what to where to go with it next. I needed a break first. And then I suppose you know, you know yourself, when you get back when you're kind of feel now that I'm ready to get back at a practice. Kickstarting it is always the hardest. Yeah, definitely. You know, putting on the apron opening a bag of clay, you know, whatever it has to do, it has to be to kind of get you started. It is kind of really hard to so I think this could be actually coming as a really nice time, to be honest.

Annette MILLS 5:16 Yeah. So I've begun to look at this daily log. And I've begun to do that as part of my daily studio practice.

Annette MILLS 5:29 So for me, I made the decision. Okay, after I've done whatever I need to do. I'm going upstairs, and I start with that. So what sort of device but that gets me into the studio every day?

A 5:02 Yeah. Do you need that kind of routine? It's kind of it almost becomes like your drive to work or your walk to work? Yes. You know, where it kind of it's that transition between? Is your studio at home? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And so is mine, you know, and otherwise, I think it can be, the two can just merge a little bit too much. And you know, it's too easy to pop into the kitchen and say, well, I'll just do this, or, you know, I'll just do that, or whatever. So if you do need that, kind of, like that routine that separates one practice from another practice.

Annette MILLS 5:39 Yeah. And is that transitional time as well, like you say, if you're actually travelling, then, you know, I mean, it was either even it was listening to the radio in the car, or I'd be doing something during that travel. And that was a sort of like, a real transition from one to the next to the other. Yes, yeah. Yeah.

A 5:57 Then you're just prepared. You've made that mental shift from, you know, the domestic chores to the creative studio?

Annette MILLS Yes. And it also I think, it just, there's always, for me, there's always that sort of pull a little bit back. And I'm watching the clock at a certain time of day and thinking, oh, gosh, I need to finish this now. Because I need to go down and do such and such. And again, it's working to almost at this external structure. It almost it's a bit like permission giving you know, no, I will do this until that point, and then that's fine. So I don't have to think about it, until then. It's all bits like that. That works for me, which is quite, quite intriguing.

A 14:43 Yeah, and I suppose it is just allocating time isn't it just to a large extent.

Annette MILLS 14:47 Yeah. And let's say with the Daily Log, it really picks out how I use my time during the day, and it isn't it what your perceptions are, you know, my perception is I am always up here, and I'm always doing this work and everything else. And when I actually timed it all, it was like, oh, okay, then I can work for about an hour. And then I need a cup of coffee, or I need to stand up and do something else. And then they come back to it for another hour. And I had no concept of that at all until I did this. So and that, and then you can work with it. So either the decision for me would be it's a habit. So I need to, which I don't want. So I will break that habit in some form. Or actually, that's really helpful, because now I know I will, I can do this amount in this time. So bits like that you can just, you know, you can manage it.

A 15:48 Yeah. And in terms of like, saying, you know, when I start doing this type of thing of what we do, do you want the feedback or the information back to you, or have you any sense of that yet?

Annette MILLS 16:04 Well, I thought it would be like this, really informal. Semi-structured interviews and things. Like I said, I think, you know, you're in complete control, it's really how you perceive the work is going and how you think it might have changed, or has helped, or it hasn't helped. It's just those sorts of perceptions really. And, then, I'm really happy to negotiate however you want to play that. So, if you want a bit more contact then that's fine. We can do emails or something, or we

can have more frequent zooms just to sort of, oh, you know, just need to talk through this or something. Because it is very solitary work.

A 16:59 Yeah.

Annette MILLS 17:00 So I'm more than happy to negotiate any way you'd like to work really.

A 17:22 Perfect. Yeah, perfect. And you're talking about a kind of a three months, kind of timescale? You see that starting kind of now?

Annette MILLS 17:35 Yeah, if that's OK. Again, it depends on if you've got something else on, but I think three months sort of it gets you into it. And it allows you to sort of move beyond what I've just said; there's three initial bits because there are other exercises, which are really useful to do. And you'll you can just get into the rhythm of that. And I think that's long enough to be able to sort of look back and reflect from when you started to this point now. I think that's a reasonable amount of time.

A 17:40 Yeah, yeah. No, I agree. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

A 18:13 I just, I'm just kind of a bit scared of how quickly the months seem to be going by at the minute.

Annette MILLS 19:09 Okay. So, I'll organise the book for you. It should arrive hopefully in the next couple of days.

A 19:59 Thank you very much. Yeah, and I, I have a read and I get started. And we keep in touch.

Annette MILLS 20:32 The other thing I would say if there's anything, any of the exercises or anywhere you'd rather not go, the perspective is on the creative journey,

A 20:59 No, I know, I know. To stop it becoming therapy.

A 22:29 Yeah, no, that sounds really okay. Yeah, yeah. I'm really looking forward to getting stuck into this actually.

Annette Mills Lovely to meet you. Okay, then. Bye.

17.2 Participant A Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 2 04 11 22

A 0:00 I have to admit the daily log is very hit-and-miss. I'm not. I haven't quite got into the routine of kind of hitting it every day. And I think that would really be really useful to kind of have that regularity. But I suppose there's just been a lot of stuff on the last few weeks, and I found that kind of difficult to get that consistency going with it.

A 0:20 But, you know, even before I started, I did find just thinking about it did kind of make me more aware of things and you know, kind of really kind of focuses your attention. I suppose I would often I would always have kept a notebook or kept a journal, and I've kind of got out of the habit of it in the last few years. So it kind of it's kind of reminded me of how useful why I used to do it and how useful that practice was. I didn't do it in a formal way like this. You know, it was just like, I'd have a notebook with me and if something kind of caught my attention, I jot something down.

Annette MILLS 1:16 Yeah.

A 1:20 But it does increase your awareness, I think definitely.

Annette MILLS 1:25 Yeah, and the guidelines I sent, they were useful? The Getting Started guidelines.

A 1:43 Yeah, they were really useful because the book is great as an addition to that, but it's a bit I kept kind of going, would you just get to the point, you know, once you actually want me to do here?

A 2:14 yeah, it is actually it is. I mean, at the beginning, I was referring to it quite a bit not so much now. But definitely, it just kind of, I suppose added another layer of understanding to the to the instructions that you had given or the guidelines that you had given, you know, but definitely like, I mean, I suppose I had the book before I had your guidelines. And I was I was struggling a little bit I was kind of going I'm not really sure what anyone wants me to do here or what way I should be approaching this. So the guidelines really kind of went okay, I have some something concrete now that I can really kind of get because actually getting started is the hardest bit isn't it? Really? Yeah. So the guidelines were really useful that way in just giving you a very definite kind of focus, you know, so haven't quite got haven't quite got the hang or I'm not really sure where the referencing across it kind of comes. Maybe that doesn't come in yet.

Annette MILLS 3:25 No, no. That's a bit later on.

A 3:29 That's one thing I did find, and I think it was possibly for reading the book. I kind of I couldn't get going for a while because I was all worried about what this journal or notebook should look like, you know, you know what kind of sections should be in should I divide it up and how much space should I give to section a second, but I don't know what the sections are so. So, you know, when you can kind of just create, I suppose. That's just a way of kind of saying you can create barriers for yourself.

Annette MILLS 4:03 Yes, exactly. What made you put it off or if it was difficult to actually get going. I was just wondering what those sorts of things were. It's like you were almost overthinking it.

A 4:20 Absolutely overthinking it, I'm the queen of procrastination. Anyway, so if I can find a reason to put something off, you know, particular tasks, there's other tasks that I'll fly into, but and generally kind of around starting a new body of work or something new or kind of that space in between completing something and you know, starting something new I'm just I it takes me ages. The house will be

spotless. They'll be painting done, though, you know, all the avoidance tactics are brought into play. So I think that I kind of saw the journal became another or worrying about the sections in the journal or trying to understand it fully before I started. Just became another way of procrastinating basically, you know, but actually once I got started and sat down and did that kind of period log that was really because I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do here or what I'm supposed to be getting from this or you know, all the rest of it. All the stuff that I'd be kind of saying to my students, don't worry about that. Just do it and see what happens, you know, so I need to take some of my own advice, but then once you get that, once you start writing, it all starts, you know, things start to flow. And connections start to be made. I was just writing lists of questions, really. I was probably not what I was supposed to be doing. But I kind of found it a useful way to get started, you know.

A 6:22 I found once I started writing, it seemed to be coming out as just a series of questions,

Annette MILLS 6:29 Right Okay, that's fine,

A 6:30 So it wasn't that I wasn't consciously asking myself questions. It's just that's what it seemed to be. That's how issues or concerns seem to be presenting themselves as questions.

Annette MILLS 6:58 But in terms of like that exercise during the period after you engaged with it, what did you think of having completed that?

A 7:16 It was actually very cathartic. You know, it's really kind of there's been a number of things. There's been a number of things kind of going on in the last while and stuff kind of creatively and questioning practice and all the rest of it that we constantly kind of do. And it really it felt like okay, I can put that to bed now and I can I can get on with things.

A 7:44 So it was it was actually a really positive experience. You know, and I think there was maybe a few things there that I just, you know, there's always things that you just want to ignore, you know, so maybe it just kind of helps us to get them and just the act of writing was I found very what's the word? Kind of releasing or empowering? Maybe you know, so yeah, it just helped me stop worrying about particular things and just kind of say, okay, get on with it now and just, you know, do that and stuff, so I kind of got them down on paper. Now that said, I can address them I can do whatever needs to be done. So I found that really, really useful.

Annette MILLS 8:46 That's great, isn't it? So it seems like you're saying that some of the stuff that was in your head, you actually realised when you looked at it reflected on it. It was already resolved.

A 9:02 Yeah. Or it was such a big issue, as it had kind of built up in my head. You know, as is often the case, you know, you can overthink things at times you know? Reading back on it. It's a little bit of a rant, you know, it's a little bit it's very disjointed.

A 9:27 It's a little bit negative, you know, what actually kind of reading back are actually that reading back was really interesting as well. That's not something I would normally have done when I write, you know, so that kind of reading back and kind of going, Am I happy with that? Am I not happy with it? As I go? No. No, that kind of reflects where I'm at you know?

Annette MILLS 9:58 Okay.

A 10:03 But it was really useful. I have to say, a long time to get to that point of sitting down and doing it but you know, I did find it very useful.

Annette MILLS 10:13 I think just jotting down as part of the daily log, those bits like you say - the house will be cleaned, or I need to go and do something else. Or just

jot down those things that you think are coming into your head that it's that sort of oh I'm just I'll just put off I'll just do such and such, I just need to do an email. Just jotting those things might be quite interesting as well.

A 10:45 Yeah, yeah, that'd be really good actually.

Annette MILLS 10:47 So how are you thinking about carrying on the daily log, then are you are you going to try and sort of schedule it so you've got a bit of a system there?

A 10:58 Yeah, I think that's kind of what I really need to do is kind of you know, set up a bit more of a structure within my own day, you know, so that I know that either, you know, first thing in the morning or maybe last thing in the evening that I just spend a few minutes doing that and jotting down things from the day. And I'm actually thinking I might get a smaller size book. So it's kind of a long, A5 which is kind of the size that I wouldn't normally use, but I'm actually thinking I might get a smaller one that I can carry with me.

Annette MILLS 11:38 I think it takes quite a bit of time to find the right format for recording the different parts. And once you kind of got that, then that's a sort of a bit of a breakthrough.

Annette MILLS 12:That sounds very positive. Even if it's just like you say during the day, jotting down the odd thing or maybe a bit on a post-it or something that gets stuck on or added in that sort of gets things down. I think that that sounds really interesting how you're developing it. Do you think that you've used any other form rather than just writing?

A 13:00 Not at the minute? No, but I kind of feel that that would be really useful as well. You know. I think, you know, if I can get a structure on the daily log, I kind of feel that will enable other things to come in. I find most of my thinking time was when I'm out walking the dogs. Definitely, there are things happening there that

could be recorded in a different way. That's why I'm kind of like I need something that I can bring with me. I don't want to bring a little rucksack of tools because then the thing it becomes not a dog walk and something else. I'm kind of I'm wondering do I need to start collecting things or, or Yeah, I've a few ideas around how I might how might do it and stuff you know, but there are things kind of ending up in my pocket and things like that you know, or something as I'm walking along. Again, something I used to do and for some reason over the years I've stopped you know so that you know it definitely triggers a more observant tendency.

A 14:29 I'm not really consistent enough with it yet to see it kind of maybe seeping into the creative work.

Annette MILLS 14:48 it probably sounds like it is already from what you've said.

A 14:51 I certainly think it is.

Annette MILLS 15:08 So, did you have a go at the Twilight Log?

A 15:19 I found that one a bit tricky because at first, I wasn't sure if I should do that immediately after doing the period log or if I should leave a gap. So I actually left a gap because I kind of asked during the period log, I was kind of going, you know, I need a bit of a break after that kind of thing, because

Annette MILLS 15:45 it's quite intense, isn't it when you get into it,

A 15:50 Yeah.

Annette MILLS 16:51 I think it is the period log. It can be really quite intense because you have to really think about it, don't you? Really concentrate? You know, it's fine, leaving a gap. The whole Twilight thing is about working with concepts and symbols. And it's the idea of just focusing on something in a different way, it becomes a different mode of thinking. It works more like an intuitive sort of

thinking. Like a kind of daydreaming, thinking about something else, and then something just might pop into your head and you think oh, where's that come from? What's that about? And it just again, just recording that down or, or something that would sum up how you're feeling at the time at the unit or when you look at something in the period log how that makes you feel? And if there's just something that's visual that will come into the fore, is it possible to work with that?

A 18:02 That's the bit I really I struggled because it talked about it being a more intuitive approach and I actually felt working with the period log, I felt even though you're thinking about a lot, it's actually quite intuitive as well, you know, but it's, I suppose, from what you're saying they're really the period log is kind of thinking about it very much from a written perspective. And then the twilight log is more thinking about it from, you know, kind of if we think about it, you know, could be drawn or symbol or colour or whatever, you know, so it's much more kind of from a visual perspective.

A 18:43 So it's sensory as well, I suppose because you could actually record smells or something like that. Yeah, and I think it's, I think it's a way to shortcut things. So rather than, as you say, there's writing in, you write it in the descriptions or wherever you're writing there, but then it could be that there's one thing that just takes you back to that point. Yeah. And that's it sort of crystallises it if you can, if that's appropriate if something comes through. Again, it's about, I think it's about just being aware of that possibility that these sorts of thoughts or doodles or whatever, that just kind of recur sometimes, and they're there. You just don't just make a little note of that. I'll just sort of what does it Oh, it's that colour. Let's that colour coming through again or something? And I think it I think it's, this is personal. I think there is a way that if people aren't used to thinking in a conceptual way. I think that's it's a way to lead into it. Maybe that just breaks through that sort of quite literal translation of one thing to create another. Yeah. So yeah, okay, what sounds that sounds great. sounds brilliant.

A 20:04 Yeah, I might have another feedback there. I might have another go at twilight log. I presume there's no issue with kind of to-ing and fro-ing like that.

Annette MILLS 20:15 No, and you'll find that you're just going to think, Oh, well, I'll give that a go now. And then, all of a sudden, something will happen. And that might remind you of, you know, oh, yeah, that may be appropriate for that and linking it to another section. So it might be daydreaming, and it will just be the thought that comes into your mind, and then I know where to write that or record that, which is always under that log section. So it's just separating the different things out so you can then find them easily as opposed to all being on one. You know, like one list.

A 21:12 Yeah, I'll give that a shot again.

Annette MILLS 21:14 Okay. That sounds great. Would you like me to send you the next piece? Are you ready for the next bit?

A 21:21 Well, absolutely. Yeah. I presume I just keep going with the daily log. So Send me the next piece. So I have a look.

Annette MILLS 21:33 And then it will then begin to relate back to the period log. This is from memory now where you go back into that and find maybe one thing that you're looking at, and then you'll just focus on that one thing and then go into that in a little bit more depth, or it might be something from the Daily Log. That you can make a connection with. So maybe that goes back to the period log. If it's part of that you gradually build on the period log in more detail.

A Okay. Okay. Yeah. All right. Sounds good.

Annette MILLS 23:30 So there's no pressure and stuff on doing it. It's just like you said questioning is just a curiosity really, acknowledging that's quite interesting and making just a quick note in your log.

A 23:52 okay. Yeah. Yeah, no, that sounds really interesting. Yeah.

Annette MILLS 25:02 And again, it just reinforces if there's anything you feel uncomfortable about, then, obviously, you don't have to do it so I'm assuming you feel quite happy about doing whatever the exercises were.

Annette MILLS 26:03 So I'll send the next set to you, and then another meet in three weeks or so.

A 26:18 Yeah, that's ideal.

Annette MILLS 26: Thank you very much. It was really nice chatting about it.

A 26:33 And you too. Okay, look, I'll wait to hear from you.

Annette MILLS 26:40 Bye

A 26:48 Okay, lovely to talk

17.3 Participant A Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 3 26 01 23

A 0:16 Since I took a break over Christmas, I kind of haven't got back into it,

Annette MILLS 0:35 Okay, that's fine.

A 0:38 So I'm just finding it hard to allocate that time, really. Well, it's not even allocating time. Yeah, it's just, it's been, it's been busy and it kind of was before Christmas. It kind of felt like you know, part of the part of the day, yeah. Now at the moment, try and get back into it feels like another job that has to be done. Yes. If that makes any sense. Yes. I think that's only a matter of kind of getting started. Really?

Annette MILLS 1:15 Yeah. So back to what you were doing before Christmas. How far did you get with it? Did you do the stepping stones?

A 1:29 So I had done the stepping stones. And that was kind of interesting. But again, I kind of struggled, I suppose, all along. I've been kind of struggling with how the elements link interlink with one another,

A 1:58, I keep thinking, when is this going to start making sense?

Annette MILLS 2:04 Did you do the next exercise, which was like the crossroads where you make choices and look back to choices that were made?

A 2:17 I think I might have missed that one.

Annette MILLS 2:19 Because I think that's the bit that begins toward those links that are missing.

A 3:06 Yeah. I think I might have missed that one.

Annette MILLS 3:12 There was the one called the intersections about roads taken and not taken. So after, after the stepping stones ones, which is all about like your period log, you kind of think back to specific periods and thinking about them in more detail and just building more detail on that. And then the next exercise, called the Roads Taken and Roads Not Taken, takes you back to decisions that you made or were made that affected your creative practice or your creativity. And it's beginning to observe what the road would have been if you'd chosen another path

A 4:14 of ways. I definitely missed that one.

Annette MILLS 8:17 So, how do you feel about the process of this form of journaling in relation to your creative process or your practice? So you can't find how it links up in itself at the moment, but have you ever had any effect just working through it in terms of reflection or something in terms of your creative practice?

A 9:13 I think it's definitely I think it's definitely kind of honed the reflection and honed the attention when it's working well, and when it's working. Well, I think it's down to me. I think when I say it's working well or I it's not working well, that's my kind of take on it rather than that's how to explain it. That's how it's helping me or or how I'm interacting with the process at the time rather than the process in and of itself. If that makes any sense.

A 9:56 So when I'm engaged with it. I do find it really helpful in terms of actual clarity. I think it gives clarity to things. But as I said, at the moment, I'm kind of not engaged with it. And it's a bit like when I started at the very beginning, I kind of feel like I actually kind of feel like I almost need to start at the beginning again, to get going rather than trying to pick up where I had left off.

Annette MILLS 10:39 No, that's a good idea. Because you'll obviously do it much quicker now because you know what's what.

A 10:46 You're kind of used to doing it and stuff and used to kind of allocate the time. I think that might be a way just to get back into it and get the process kind of working a little bit better.

Annette MILLS 11:00 When I did it a second time, it became much shorter and more focused. I think that would be quite an interesting thing to do. If fancy doing that.

A 12:14 When I did the period log , it was kind of going back back, back, back, back, you know, and you kind of go, where I'm watching this or where am I going to go with this and stuff, you know, so can see that making sense.

Annette MILLS 12:37 If you can work that process through again. It'll be interesting as to what you think about it. I was also interested in how you adapted the process to fit in with your practice. Like you're saying, now, it's really difficult to get back into it because it's another job and what have you. Also how did you adapt it? You talked about not being able to do it on your dog walk because you couldn't write things down, but you were beginning to pick things up again. Yeah. And you used to do that, and that had drifted. So I'm wondering if there was anything else around that that you might want to talk about?

A 13:21 Yeah, like definitely, that kind of selecting has continued. And then there's the associated kind of processes around that in terms of kind of grouping and arranging and all that type of thing. We've collected materials. And then I suppose probably associated with that again, another thing that I used to do quite a bit of was photography. So I find now on the dog walks and that I bring my I bring my phone so I have my camera, you know, so I've been kind of doing some of that and and it used to be that you know, I might take the odd photo and it would sit on the phone. Whereas now I'm I suppose I'm kind of looking for the links between the gathered materials and the photographs, maybe. So it might be it's not when I you know, so it's not kind of taking landscape photos of stuff. It's much more kind of honing in and looking at detail and that type of thing. So it's been that's been quite

interesting, you know, no, I can't say that it has you know, directly impacted them, the making at this point, but it is definitely impacting how I'm thinking about things.

Annette MILLS 14:40 Using your phone as part of your recording again, I think that's really interesting.

A 14:59 I mean, again, it's an activity that I used to do. And you know, you kind of do these things and for whatever reason, life gets busy, whatever, you just stop. So actually, it's, that has been one of the really lovely things. About during the whole process it has brought back in these things and I suppose reminded me of them, you know, just reminded me of them and reminded me of the possibilities of them

Annette MILLS 15:32 And almost like the purpose maybe there's a little bit with the reflection that it's not just, it's not just something I do. It's something I do and I enjoy, but actually I can see there is a link here as well. And like you're saying now, you're finding the links between your collectables and the photographs.

A 15:54 I think now as well it's this time of year. I've got quite a big garden. So I'm clearing beds. I find I'm taking out particular things and saying oh, well, that could be interesting later on and stuff like that, but, I think even just that action of noticing is a real strength of it.

Annette MILLS 16:40 Has there been anything that surprised you about working with the journaling techniques, because you've done journaling before, haven't you? So as you're kind of used to that form of thinking I'm just interested in the fact of the structure of this and, and everything whether, you know, anything surprised you about that?

A 17:14 Well, I think I think the structure of the way this is structured definitely has an ability to maybe bring up more things from the past than just kind of general structure so I think that that kind of surprised me. Maybe that's an age thing as well. Maybe you're more inclined to reflect back. Or maybe you have more past to reflect

back on or, you know, so there could be an element of that. I was younger when I was doing journaling before so, I'm curious about that as well. You know, how does that impact you? I suppose it definitely, I think the past crops up more. Certainly, this time,

Annette MILLS 18:19 Were you able to read it back? Are you finding that you've been reading it back at all?

A 18:45 Yeah, I do. I definitely find that it's a bit random. I am finding it really interesting, because it's almost like someone else wrote it. Yet, it might not have been written that long ago. Yeah. Yeah. So I find that really curious.

Annette MILLS 19:05 The focus is all about being non-judgmental. You can write about feelings and everything, but the instructions are very careful to say just record everything and don't think about it. You're kind of distancing yourself during the process as well.

Annette MILLS 19:35 It allows you to be analytical with that distance, that kind of distance which allows you to think, 'Oh, that's interesting. I'll just highlight that a bit' as opposed to, 'Oh, I don't want to think about that is too horrible'.

A 19:56 I know. There are definitely recurring themes. And recurring interests, I suppose recurring concerns, you know, that type of thing. So there are definitely things that continuously crop up.

Annette MILLS 20:13 Did that surprise you?

A 20:24 Yeah, I think there were certain like key concerns and key interests and stuff that I kind of went oh, well, yeah, that's obvious. That's going to keep coming up, you know, but then there were other things associated with it, or maybe like, like minor concerns, you kind of go okay, well, is that something that I need to address them? Or, you know, because at what rate like you know, you're kind of going okay,

well, I actually kind of wasn't aware of that. That was kind of, you know, in certain cases, something that was kind of bugging me. Yeah, you know, and I'm kind of going okay better deal with that. There are kind of associations there. I think and there are kind of themes that beyond what you would have expected or obviously have said, was part of your creative process.

Annette MILLS 21:23 You said the last time that it is taking quite a bit of time to get back into the studio and do some work. How is that going now?

A 21:40 Honestly, it's still a struggle. You know, it really is I find it I find it quite difficult but I'm but what I find actually this is this process has really helped with is to stop me worrying about it.

A 21:58 I've been kind of going I have to get back in the studio. I have to start making I have to do this. My husband has been kind of going, but what do you enjoy spending your time doing? And I'm kind of going well, at the moment, I'm enjoying spending my time, you know, in the garden and walking the dog and all that type of thing, you know? And he says, Well, maybe it's a chance just to do stuff that you enjoy doing. So what this has given is a way of bringing in an element of creativity with without worrying about an end product.

A 22:46 And there's been a real joy, to be honest, you know, so that's been and also really make me think about, well, why am I making and, you know, like, Am I making to get work in this exhibition and to, you know, do this thing and do that thing and do the other thing and, or am I making because that creativity is the act of making is a fundamental part of my personality. So I think that's been really really interesting to kind of I think the the process has allowed me settle with making without worrying about what that making has to be.

A 23:42 It's been lovely. I haven't made very much but I've done lots of little compositions, nothing that I would be prepared to put out in the world yet. But it feels like it feels like a beginning.

Annette MILLS 24:06 I think we spoke last time about whether you could track your creative process from the beginning to an outcome. I don't think you can underestimate the amount of time that processing takes, you know, that gradual build-up, which is almost what I think you're describing to me. You know, some people think it's procrastination and stuff. But I think it's sort of like there's a very, very gradual build up. I think that different forms of creativity have different creative arcs.

A 25:36 I think that's a really good point. Yeah.

Annette MILLS 25:38 And I think what you've just described there is that length of time needed for processing and then something happens. Not immediately. but there is just a feeling of transition.

A 26:00 when the work is going well. You know when you're working well. Each thing you're doing leads naturally to the next leads naturally to the next there's a real iterative way of working where one is informing the next and, you know, okay, well, there are exhibition deadlines and all the rest in the middle, you know, plunked in the middle of that. But if we just take the kind of my sense of a creative process, when you're in the studio, and you're I suppose you're motivated by the studio and you want to be getting in there. You're, curious, and constantly thinking about the pieces that are in there, and you're working away towards them and you're thinking, Well, what if I do this and what if I do that and then you get into the studio and you try things and it doesn't work the way you thought it was going to work and you try something else, and then you go away and you do the rest of your world and your rest of your life when you come back in and you try different things that have been mulling away. So it's a real for me when it's really I suppose at its peak, if we think about that arc, it is a really natural process. Yes. In that in that it feeds itself. But I think to get going for me certainly to get it going is a long, slow slog, you know, it's really takes a long, a long time. I don't think it's just me, I think a lot of creatives kind of suffer with kind of self-doubt So I think yeah, it's just it's slow. It's slow

starting a new body of work starting a new getting going with the process is is take takes up for me takes an awful long time.

Annette MILLS 27:01 The structure is something that's coming to the fore. So you have your different elements. And then you've also got time structures within those elements like, you know, you've got an exercise that might take about 40 minutes or so to record. Have you ever sort of thought about a place to go and do that?

A 27:44 I thrive on structure. I need structure to my day and stuff. Because otherwise, I just drift. So I suppose this this has made me realise kind of how much I need that structure. So I think that's been quite, I mean, I kind of I kind of always knew it, but this has made me really realise that yeah, you need that structure. And even things like how I was kind of stressed out about what this journal was going to look like and where should sections go, and how much room I left for the sections. Even the fact that I was kind of getting hung up on all that at the very beginning. So I suppose that the way I was stressed out about the structure initially, made me realise that as well. Actually, I do like that structure, and I do like to know a little bit about what's going to happen. So I suppose it's different for everyone as well. But I think for me, a little bit more structure at the very start would have been really useful. Maybe the second time around. It's great because you know, that's been really positive. And I kind of have a sense of how I want to do it. It would help to kind of maybe give a rough structure, maybe divide your journal into four or just divide your journals, and maybe colour code them or something like that. Well, it's not being too prescriptive. For my way of working I wondered, would something like that help? Yeah. Or even you know, even the suggestion, for example, one way you could approach it is this because I think, suggestions in the guidelines for let me think like, you know, doodling or collage, or whatever it might be, I think having them written there really makes you consciously consider them as options.

A 27:58 So you know, in terms of the set of guidelines or terms of a process that you want people to go through. It's hitting I actually think you've hit the balance really nicely in terms of presenting a task, but leaving it open enough that it can be

interpreted in multiple ways. How prescriptive can you be? But you want to keep it open. You want people to kind of find their own way. But I suppose it's like. It's trying to get them it's trying to get them into the process. It's giving them as few excuses as possible for not entering the process,

Annette MILLS 28:02 right. Yes, yes. But it's it I understand how really difficult it is to just to see another way. And it's which is probably where the dream stuff comes in. It's like the images or the visualisations lead into thinking in symbolism. And I think, you know, that that's quite a useful way to get into concepts and sort of pursue those, it's a different language, isn't it?

A 28:42 I suppose then, you know, as creative people and as makers, we use a different language anyway. So, you know, it's, I suppose, it's then trying to open yourself up to other different languages or different possibilities, you know, and that that way of looking because

Annette MILLS 29:05 I think it encourages different modes of thinking.

A 29:24 Some unspoken language that happens between your head in your hands when you're doing?

A 29:35 And associations come up that you could never come across with a pen and a paper.

Annette MILLS 29:43 That's what I would call accessing a different modes of thinking.

A 31:01 You know, so we've kind of put aside that ability to remember that tacit knowledge that we have yes, you know, and that generational knowledge that kind of gets passed down and stuff.

A 31:15 your guidelines are so good. They're really nicely written. And they're not too long and you know, they're kind of easy to kind of just slot into. So I have to admit, since you've been sending those, I haven't kind of got back to the book. Really.

MP 32:21 It's just that jumping in. When I used to open up a bag of clay. I would always say it's just that opening a new bag of clay just take the tag off the new bag of clay. It's way can be I don't know why it's a really simple thing to do. But it just mentally is a major step.

A 32:49 You know, it just feels like a big leap. But I think once you make that leap, and once you just get stuck in and exactly like you see it always floats, you're never sorry. You know, it's usually just, it just takes its own rhythm. And one thing leads on to the next and leads on to the next.

A 36:07 It's not static. It's exactly like the materials we use are not static and shifting and changing all the time. And I think our relationship between how we live and how we work is like that. I mean, they're so intertwined. Interlacing and intertwining shifting all the time, sometimes they're very tightly knotted together and other times it's loose. So I think accepting that, for me has been a huge part of my practice. You know, just accepting the change and it's not static. And it does shift and each should shift.

Annette MILLS 37:07 If you have the tension there, which inevitably comes up, I would imagine, then doing a bit of journaling would actually allow you to reflect or see what's actually happening as opposed to what you think is happening to me.

A 37:29 I think so. I think so. Definitely. Yeah. Because you can make assumptions all the time. And I'd also actually, you know, one thing I've been quite guilty of this kind of, because for years, I didn't have time for years. I was like I was very time-poor. But actually I've shifted things in the last year or two to so that I'm not just trying, but I don't think I don't think my practice or my way of thinking has quite

caught up with that extra space that I have. And in my head, I think of oh, I don't have time. Because actually I do have time I just need to organise it.

Annette MILLS 38:20 It's making that time, setting the time aside. Journaling can highlight actually you don't need very much time.

Annette MILLS 39:19 And so it sort of evolves, and it needs space to evolve into whatever. So it's again, it's a different process, a different way of working.

A 39:32 Yeah, I think so. I think my practice is quite similar now as well, you know, I wouldn't have a very definite outcome. But now it is very much it's responding to materials to found objects. It's it's much more evolving, and there is no definite outcome to it. And there's certainly no definite outlet if you like for whatever that is. Yeah. So I think that's a huge mental shift as well. Yeah. You know, coming from, you know, I suppose, a more commercial practice, perhaps to a more explorative or contemplative practice. Is a huge shift, I think?

Annette MILLS 41:17 Deadlines provide that shift in thinking as well. So, you have to shift to a different mode of working with a bit more precision and a bit more continuity or something, or, again, I still work very much that my baskets then they finished themselves off because as they dry, they settle. So there's a sort of settling time, so I'm not controlling their final shape. They just become.

A 41:59 The final shape evolves from the process.

A 46:38 OK We'll talk again in a few week's time

Annette MILLS 46:45 Yes. That's great. Thank you very much. Bye Transcribed by

17.4 Participant A Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview Transcript 4 27 02 23

A 1:01 I suppose two main things, it really helped to do it a second time. The last time I spoke to you, I was a bit stuck, I just couldn't get back into it after the break at Christmas. And you suggested kind of starting from scratch again. And I found that really useful. I found the whole process actually much more beneficial the second time around. It was a little bit quicker, not because I was kind of rushing through it, but just because you were kind of dredging stuff up for the first time. There seemed to be much more of a flow to it. I wasn't fighting against it or questioning it as much as just kind of going with the flow. So that was really nice. So I was actually really glad that I had a chance to repeat the process. The break at Christmas actually turned out to be quite a good thing. I think you kind of knew the bits that you wanted to delve into a little bit more depth. So the whole dream thing and stuff I didn't go near, so you knew the bits that might suit. So that's one thing. And then the other thing was I only actually got to it last week. The end of last week was the extra bit that you said on the last one, which asks you to look at a piece of work.

A 1:54 So I really liked that. I found that was really that actually really got into the meat of us in terms of creativity, I felt, in terms of the skills required, the way of thinking required and the work that was done to come up to that piece. The potential of pieces that led to that piece. So even as a standalone exercise. I thought that'd be a really nice one to do every so often, either with my own work or with kind of influential pieces of work or other people's work. I really liked that. The intersections the roads taken not taken I hadn't done that the last time we spoke. I found that really, really challenging. It's brilliant, but it's possibly bringing up too much stuff. It was just slightly unsettling.

A 2:48 Especially looking at the works. I was kind of, oh, okay, actually, that's a way of looking at a similar path. But actually, by benchmarking with the works. I felt much more comfortable,

A 3:15 Yeah. It totally took the focus off me and back onto the work.

A 4:12 All the other exercises have been done twice now. I could pace it now with questions. What if I go back to that, again, that I'm kind of going back, in a different frame of mind or, you know, with a different focus or whatever it might be? So it might not have the same effect.

Annette MILLS 4:38 Your expectations are different. Aren't they? You've got one model, and you know what that is, and so it might be different next time, but you've got a kind of expectation, a curiosity about what could happen. It's a bit of that maybe?

A 4:57 Yes, I even think things like doing it a second time. Before, I might have said to you at the very beginning, one of the first meetings we had, I was kind of panicking a little bit of what this journal should look like you know, how am I going to do the sections and you know, all that kind of stuff. So I think, you know, the second time, you kind of let all that go it doesn't have to look any particular, it's there to do a task. If you have to add pages in or tear pages out, or, you know, stick in posters and stuff, it doesn't matter, and I suppose that's just kind of like a mind shift. As well, you know, because you're supposed to, you're used to working in a very linear way through a notebook or sketchbook or whatever this is. I think is just a slight kind of shift in how we generally approach a book or journal, you know, so even things like I thought maybe even like, I kind of wish I'd left an extra page there actually doesn't matter. You can just add it back in.

A 5:28 It's a start to kind of become a different focus asking how is this thing going? I suppose because we're used to working visually. You kind of well think , how is this thing going to look? You know, or how, how might it be read?

Annette MILLS 5:50 It's like going beyond the edge of the page and just finding loads of different ways of storing things in a way that can be read back.

A 6:15 Again, I think moving from section to section and from one thing to another, I was able to do the various things I was doing, but in general, it felt quite removed. I felt quite it was almost like a third person had written it in some ways, because, in lots of ways, when you're doing those exercises, it's quite intuitive the way your writing and working and doodling and all the rest of it.

A 6:55 it varies from section to section. I do find towards the end, especially the stepping stones I really wanted to get out of the notebook

A 7:13 And onto a big sheet of paper, right? Yeah, you know, kind of, to map those things. Yes. So again, that's just kind of, I suppose it's like slightly say, or it could be, you know, thinking, well, actually, you could kind of think about it in terms of concertina, or you know, that kind of way

A 7:39 as I went through it, I was more inclined to move out of the note book.

A 7:47 Whereas initially, I was very kind of, you know, no, this this stays here and this is the journal for this test. You know, I suppose as you ease into it, then you allow yourself more freedom. Or what you're looking at maybe requires you to do something else.

Annette MILLS 8:11 Do you think it has something to do with like, a shifting in your way of thinking? Like when you say you felt like you needed a bigger sheet of paper to kind of let go of it. Do you think that affected the way you think?

A 8:34 I think the exercises were making you think about things in a different way than you would normally think about them. So that then required a different way of recording than you would normally do? You know, so it does kind of encourage you I think to kind of shift that side your normal bounce and creatively that's always good.

Annette MILLS 8:04 So, can I ask you where you are with your work now? You were saying you're a bit of a hiatus. Is this leading you into anything?

A 8:23 Yeah, I mean, when was the last time we met and is there is definitely things beginning, and I'm definitely in the studio or more, I'm rearranging and looking and sorting and all that kind of things. I'm not making. I don't have a goal that I'm working towards. I'm not kind of stuck into a body of work. But I do feel that definitely. That's getting close. I work really slowly. My making cycle is ridiculously long, for years, I worked with a big woodfired kiln that I have here. And it used to take me years to make enough to finish. So, you know, that was my that was the main cycle that that I was into. So obviously, and then you have the huge prep for the firing. Firing itself would take me three or four days to pack the kiln. You know, 36 hours to fire another 36 hours to cool the kiln. And then maybe another two weeks to sort through the work clean it off and decide what was good. Where stuff was going. And then after that, it would be time to recharge the batteries now for a little while, and then I get going again, and we get back into the cycle again. So I'm used to a really long cycle. I suppose that's my way of saying that even though I'm not being very productive at the moment, I'm not as concerned now as I was when we started. When we started this process, I was kind of going Oh my god, my creativity. Is there nothing there? Actually, it kind of made me realise that it is there.

A 8:06 I think the PhD was an even longer cycle. So it's going to take me just a little bit longer. It's going to take a little bit longer to figure out it's like one of those intersections, I feel like it's one of it's like there are lots of possibilities of things that I could do. But I don't really know which path I want to take. So I can't I won't really get stuck into the studio work, I think until I decide on the path.

Annette MILLS 8:47 So do you think working through this process, the journaling has sort of relaxed you a little bit in terms of expectations or a realisation, a bit more in-depth realisation rather than it just an intuitive realisation of that cycle?

A 9:08 Yeah, it's definitely relaxing because just the way I work and stuff, you know, because I kind of intuitively, I would have had an inkling of the length of time needed. Other people have said to me, it takes a while, and it takes longer than you expect. But I was concerned that I shouldn't be still feeling like this. I shouldn't be kind of back and motivated to be into the studio and all that kind of thing. So this has definitely helped.

A 9:02 I'm not trying to force it. I think that's the main thing. I know that is happening. It's just happening slowly.

Annette MILLS 9:22 I suppose whatever you're recording you'd be just doing those things and maybe noticing them or not noticing them, but actually doing the recording is sort of bringing those things to the fore. So you can actually put your markers in and say - now that's happened and if I look back, then I can see that things are moving and shifting rather than getting anxious about it.

A 9:58 There are definite markers. Kind of gives you a sense that things are moving forward. Just very slowly. And there are clarifications there and decisions being made. But they're still more decisions.

Annette MILLS 9:21 And they're not well the end product or an outcome or because you're in the process.

A 9:30 Yes. I have started assembling and you know, kind of joining and looking and taking apart and reassembling. So that is happening. And I know that's a really fundamental part of my process. Yeah, you know. So it has definitely progressed.

Annette MILLS 10:26 When you've been recording or collecting things or doing the exercises. Have you been able to integrate that into your creative practice? And we're like, so you go into the studio more, or is it separate?

A 11:44 It's integrated. I'm recording in my studio. So I'm looking at the studio as I'm recording. And then I'm thinking about recording when I'm making. I think the very act of recording has got me into the studio more.

A 12:23 There's been some procrastination, but a certain amount of that is necessary to start a new body of work, that whole kind of clearing out? Reshuffling and reorganisation, all that kind of stuff. So, there's been a massive amount of that. Like the room was transformed to what it was at the beginning of this process, you know. So, I suppose I've kind of realised as well that the cleanout and sorting and having the desk appear, being physically clear helps me have my head mentally clear. To start that new body of work. So, I've got past that stage. I've done all the sorting. I've done all the clearing. I've done all the reorganising the desk has been cleared. And it is now starting to fill back up. So, you know, it is in the process.

A 12:42 It's been really helpful because it's given us a focus, I think, and also, it's given us kind of a little bit of a deadline because we have a meeting coming up.

A 13:03 In a way stressful enough to give me a little push to get me in there and keep me going. But not it's not so much of a push that it helps without too much stress to increase anxiety.

Annette MILLS 13:24 It's like the motivation to start the whole thing again, the whole process again, you know, the prompt is something that was probably in your mind, and that prompt was enough for you to have a go at it. And then finding it's much easier. I understand this and know what I'm looking for.

A 13:47 Exactly, exactly. You know, because I think, you know, we can put it off and put you off, and it's very easy to close the door. To go out, walk the dog, close the door, whatever else it might be. But I think just that little prompt to kind of push you in there and get going. It's been it's been really, for me anyway, it's been really beneficial for that.

Annette MILLS 14:01 I'm finding it interesting to look at the way the journal is structured. So you have your different elements. And then you've also got time structures within those elements like, you know, you've got an exercise that might take about 40 minutes or so, or the fact you can leave or even come back to the daily log recording. Have you a place to go and do that? So has that structure come to the fore for you at all, are you aware of that?

A 14:44 I thrive on structure. I need structure because otherwise, I just drift. So I suppose this this has made me realise kind of how much I need that structure. So I think that's been quite, I mean, I kind of always knew it, but this has made me really realise how much I need that structure. And even things like how I was kind of stressed out about what this journal was going to look like where should sections go, and how much room should I leave for the sections? Even the fact that I was getting hung up on all that at the beginning. I was stressed out about structure initially, but it made me realise that I do like structure. I think for me a little bit more structure at the very start would have been really useful.

The second time around is great because, you know, what's been really positive. And, you know, I kind of have a sense of what way I want to do it. And I was thinking a rough structure might help people. Maybe divide your journal into four or just divide your journals, and maybe colour code them or something like that. Well, it's not being too prescriptive but, I was just wondering, I wondered, would something like that help? Or even the suggestion of one way you could approach it. You have suggestions in the guidelines like doodling, collage, but I think having them written there really makes you consciously consider them as options.

Annette MILLS 15:01 I think moving beyond what you're used to is really tricky.

A 15:05 The set of guidelines or terms of a process that you want people to go through. I think you've hit the balance really nicely in terms of presenting a task, but leaving it open enough that it can be interpreted in multiple ways. You want to keep it open. You want people to kind of find their own way. I suppose it's trying to get

them engaged. It's giving them as few excuses as possible for not entering the process.

A 15:19 Yes. How physically involved you are in working with materials. It's a conversation between your hands and your head, you know, and all the knowledge that's there from over the years and all the all the associations that we're recording and we're trying to get down.

Annette MILLS 01:12:48 The whole thing is about remembering and it's also that thing about jumping right in there. As you say, Just do it, just get on and do it and when you do that, everything's always fine.

A 15:22 It's just that jumping in. When I used to open up a bag of clay I would always say it's just that opening a new bag of clay just taking the tag off the new bag of clay. it's a really simple thing to do. But it just mentally is a major step.

A 15:49 You know, it just feels like a big leap. But once you make that leap, you always float, you're never sorry. It just takes its own rhythm. And one thing leads on to the next and leads on to the next.

Annette MILLS 16:12 There's a commitment, once you open that bag, then there is actually a commitment, you have that material that you need to use. If it's Willow, for example, then once I soak it, there's a commitment once it goes into the bath, then in 8- 10 day's time have got to do something with it otherwise, that's the three-day period or else it's just wrecked.

A 16:32 Yeah, I think so. Now it is very much it's responding to materials to found objects. It's much more evolving and there is no definite outcome to it. So I think that's a huge mental shift as well. You know, coming from a more commercial practice, perhaps to a more explorative or contemplative practice. Is a huge shift i think.

Annette MILLS 16:52 We'll have one more meeting, and then that will be about what we thought of the process and where we would go with it next, anything that might be helpful, with a bit of focus on analysing the process.

A 17:38 We'll talk again in a few weeks time

Annette MILLS 17:45 Yes. That's great. Thank you very much. Bye

17.5 Participant A Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 5 23 03 23

Annette MILLS 1:27 We said this would be our last Zoom meeting. And this will conclude it, so I think it will probably sound a bit repetitive because I keep asking you the same sort of questions. So, how is it all going?

A 1:53 It's all going pretty well. I'm a bit up and down with stuff. You know, as in I go great one week and then I'm a disaster the next week, but it's not just this. It's kind of everything at the minute, so I'm kind of. It's not the fault of the process. It's just the way I am at the minute, I'm definitely finding it's helping kind of points of clarity and things are progressing painfully slowly, but things are progressing.

Annette MILLS 2:41 Yes. Do you find it's like, there's like a thread that you can hang on to so when things go up and all over the place, and you've got so much to do, and you can't think it, it's something you could naturally go back to and just think I can just do five minutes or something.

A 2:50 I think it gives you a point to come back to. You know, rather than everything being kind of up in the air all the time. It does give you that point that you can kind of return to and somewhere that I can pick it back up from and move, if not forward, move sideways or move somewhere from that point. So I suppose you have something to bring you back to the desk.

Annette MILLS 3:37 And, and you've also, you're confident now about going back to the beginning of the process.

A 3:45 Yes. We spoke about that the last time. That was that was really beneficial. And it's in some ways, it was kind of the best thing that happened because I was kind of struggling with it, and kind of I won't say it was a chore, but I just couldn't quite see where it was going or how it was fitting into things and just going back at it and starting from scratch again. Just help me relax about the whole thing. I

suppose maybe pick the bits that that worked or that helped. And maybe kind of ignore other bits. So the exercise that was looking a piece of work. I keep going back to that one I find that really useful. And even just as a way of analysing a little trial, you might do or a little test or something like that. I find that really nice as an exercise.

Annette MILLS 5:08 So when you say it's really helpful or is really useful? Can you just explain that a little bit more? What is it that you find attracts you? To that, in that exercise in particular?

A 5:29 I think I'm trying to think in relation to the other exercises, I think the fact that you're focused on the work as the central point, rather than you being the central point. And I think I'm much more comfortable with that.

A 5:51 Now I know you can ground the other exercises through the work as well. I found they tended to be coming from my perspective, rather than the work's perspective, does that make any sense?

Annette MILLS 6:04 Definitely.

A 6:07 Be kind of, it tended to be more encompassing. found it very hard to separate what was going on in my life at a particular time and what was going on in the work at particular time? So I suppose looking at the work specifically helped me concentrate on what my concerns specifically to the work were, rather than the other shift that might be going on around.

Annette MILLS 6:37 Yes. And also I suppose that that dialoguing with it. That's quite an unusual sort of exercise, I think, and it does. It shifts your perceptions like you say it shifted away. And it's that dialogue with reversing and taking up that position, which really does shift.

A 7:05 I think it's that shift that I found really useful. I found applying it to found objects, rather than made objects was really quite interesting. So just as a way of kind of shifting perspectives. I found that really, really useful, and it brought in a more natural way for me, it seemed to bring in other ways of expression, besides writing. So it seemed to bring in kind of more drawing or doodling or, you know, just general mark making, thinking about random compositions that you know, it seemed to kind of link into that way of thinking in a more for me in a more kind of natural way.

Annette MILLS 8:04 Last time we spoke about, different modes of thinking. I think you know, that doing different activities, enables you to surprise yourself by thinking in a completely different way. I'm just wondering because place is so important to you. I'm just wondering if you would use it in terms of the place.

A 8:36 I haven't, but that's actually a really good point. I mean, I can't see why not. I mean, it's working for other ways of or other objects or other scenarios, so I can't see why or why it wouldn't, you know because that would be that could be really interesting.

Annette MILLS 8:59 Because it would just give you that a different feedback.

A 9:14 I think so because I suppose my interactions with the place are kind of multifaceted anyway. And I suppose that's what I'm trying to bring into the work arc is that multifaceted way of approaching a particular place and things like that, so. So that just brings that would bring in another facet? Really, you know, and could open up other avenues then as well? Yeah, Absolutely.

A 9:45 I was walking a trail that I actually haven't walked in a while. And I started putting some pieces that kind I'm not that particularly happy with that and I've got to hold on to. But rather than get rid of them. I've kind of just been repositioning them. I've been putting them out in the garden and things like that and seeing how plants grow over them and seeing how you know if birds kind of start interacting

with them and things like that. But I was thinking actually just when I was out walking, I might start putting stuff out like out on the trails again and just photographing it or maybe just not maybe just observing it and you know, maybe writing about it or that type of thing. Just trying to find another connection between the made work and the place.

Annette MILLS 11:04 I'm just wondering, because you've done quite a lot of reflective practice and work, if you actually need to have quite an understanding of reflective practice, to be actually be able to engage with some of these activities?

A 11:40 I don't think so necessarily, I don't think so. Everyone is going to come at it from a different perspective. I've approached it is, is probably, influenced by what I've done in the past and my own concerns, but even if you just take it from a practice perspective. Everyone is going to approach it differently because everyone's practice is different. So I suppose I think actually, by the nature of practice, it's reflective, you know, if you're making I don't know if you can make and not reflect.

A 12:49 My main understanding of that comes from my own years of practice, rather than any kind of formal education or formal understanding of reflective practice.

A 14:29 I'm quite comfortable with writing and journaling and that type of thing as well. I'm used to keeping a notebook. So I suppose yeah. I think other people might come at it from a different perspective. And they might journal in a different way. So it might be more a visual journal than a written journal. People who are allergic to the idea that writing can be a creative endeavour that supports your studio practice could use scenarios like photography uses photography, like kind of more historical photographic processes, pinholing, that type of thing. And that would be their way of journaling, right? They might not call it journaling but that's what it is effectively. I was explaining to a colleague who is adverse to writing, her initially, she was like, oh, no, no, no, no, no, I couldn't do that. I don't get anything creative from writing.

And she had kind of a mental block towards it. But when I kind of explained to her I said, well, it doesn't have to be written. It could be, you know, drawing or collage or photography. And then she actually was getting quite excited about it. And she was like, Alright, okay, that's, that's really interesting then. So I think it might be the way it's framed

A 17:40 I'm just thinking that written element would be a real block for her.

A 17:59 But I think the process could be really useful. In terms of clarification, and on lots of levels. I think the process could be really useful. Its a bit like me initially almost being afraid to start because of what should this look like. What way should I be, you know, what way should I be setting it out? That was a real block for me initially. So it's almost like maybe some kind of really quick mini exercise to speed you through the fundamentals of the process within kind of, I mean, it's kind of not really possible, but, you know, within even a day or something like that. I'm just trying to think, is there a way? If there was a way to kind of speed people through the process really quickly, to show just the principles of it. Then let's see where we might push it a bit further and make it individual to you.

A 20:02 I think if I hadn't had the meetings with you, I think quite early on. It would have been left to one side. Because I knew I had a meeting with Annette, I have to give this a go. I have to do my homework. I suppose kind of holding to account. You know, and being able to talk through stuff and then suggestions you would make in terms of, Well, have you tried this or have you tried that? I found those really useful in terms of maintaining the momentum. I do think I do think that that momentum would probably, you know, I don't think I would have got very far with it without those meetings, to be honest.

A 21:52 Photography became important to me, in terms of a mode of exploring and trying to think. That was really successful. But I don't think I would have always taken photos without it being suggested.

Maybe I need a big sheet of paper to kind of just loosen it up a bit. Or maybe I need to go for a walk. I seeing other people doing the activity can be enough of a prompt.

A 24:10 It becomes really interesting when you allow it to get messy. Yeah. But actually, the temptation is to leave it in the book. Yes. Yeah. You know , because that's kind of in some ways that's I mean, for me in some ways, that's kind of easier. You know, a make that step from shifting from the journal to materials is that was for me the tricky bit and seeing how one might relate how, how you might journal through materials. Rather than through words. Yeah.

Annette MILLS 24:46 Which is, it's quite a leap, isn't it?

Annette MILLS 25:05 How do you feel about that now? In terms of finding ways to cross-referencing?

A 25:14 It's still not the one that makes the most sense to me? I find reading back over stuff in the main quite cringy, to be quite honest. I find recurrent phrases or recurrent kind of words or areas of interest or areas of concern in some of them. You wouldn't be aware of and others you're kind of going, Oh, that's kind of interesting.

A 25:53 I kind of knew that that might be somewhere in the background, but I didn't think it'd be so upfront as such. So, I probably haven't done as much of that as I have of just kind of daily journaling and then kind of the reflective bits. I've found it better as I've gone along. I struggled with it in terms of finding connections but highlighters. And coloured Post-its worked well.

A 26:53 What I find kind of tricky is how bring those, I almost want to kind of have threads around the room or something.

A 27:16 There's also it's like turning a page, you know, this, it's kind of like a blank page again, and suddenly, what's gone on the page before is almost forgotten as

soon as you turn that page. I suppose that's what I kind of struggled with a little bit how do you bring that to the fore without repeating yourself again, with exactly the same stuff? To make those connections? I struggled with that a little bit in terms of a traditional notebook. And, you know, if that's what I'm kind of saying, I wanted to put strings all over the room, because in some ways, kind of, you know, post it's kind of help. But then what do you do with how do you gather them afterwards? How would you kind of bring that all together?

A 27:45 I suppose it's maybe putting an order on them. You know, as we said, when it gets messy, and when it gets a little bit chaotic, it's when it's kind of it's when it's making sense. But then you have how do you put the order back on that chaos in some kind of way that allows you to allows you to catalogue or hold on to the chaos ...to allow you that particular element of chaos to allow you to move on to the next bit of chaos.

Annette MILLS 27:59 It's the fact that you have the original material. You need to have the facility to re-sort it. So you sort it one way, but then when you come back, I don't know, a year or six months later, you'll actually look at it again and think it needs to be sorted. differently. I like my cross reference with my arrows and reference to notebooks and page numbers. I do it because I can see a note that then reminds me where it's up to and then I can just go and pick it up and have a look at what that was. And then I also do a lot of photocopying, thinking about, you know, not repeating, but I might photocopy pages or something and then stick those in somewhere else.

A 28:27 I really struggled with that element of it. Mostly from a logistical perspective. when I've journaled before, I've rarely read back or for them. You know, it's a way of kind of maybe in the past, it's been a way of just getting that point in time down to allow me to move on to the next point in time

A 28:31 I couldn't really see the benefit of going back.

Annette MILLS 29:04 My perspective about the reading back is almost like an opportunity to rediscover things.

A 29:24 What I found really interesting about reading back was that it's amazing how it could be as short as 24 hours later, you read back, and you're kind of gone. Who wrote this a week or a month later, you know, that's kind of really shocked me, to be honest, you know, I was really surprised by that. You know, how your perspectives can change so quickly.

A 29:58 Your take on something can change so quickly.

A 30:07 I mean, I think we know it intuitively maybe, but our actions are so our thoughts are so wedded to that particular moment in time and that particular set of circumstances. This in lots of ways, just, you know, can't be repeated. It is you know, everything you do, I think it's probably amplified as makers but everything we do is absolutely specific to a point in time. And I think that that it really kind of brought that home to me like I've kind of, I've kind of worked with these ideas for a while, but, it really kind of surprised me. Going reading back, how quickly it shifts. That was really surprising.

A 30:49 I suppose you intuitively know these things. But when you see it there in black and white on a page. It really kind of brings it home.

A 30:58 And you ask how much of it do I want to bring forward? How much of it is of concern, and how much of it is just stuff that was going on that day that I really don't need to worry about?

Annette MILLS 31:23 Well, it sounds as if the whole process has actually been really useful for you, and you found it beneficial.

A 31:57 Yeah. It's been really interesting. And it's just this slight shift in focus often, in terms of how you might look at things or how you might address things. I think

the exercises were really interesting in terms of enabling that, and kind of forcing you in some ways to kind of look at things from a different perspective. I found the whole thing really interesting.

A 32:17 I've really enjoyed the process.

Annette MILLS 32:21 I really appreciate how much work you've done with it. And your reflections have been really useful.

Annette MILLS 33:15 Yeah, thank you so much. Bye bye.

17.6 Participant A Email response to follow-up questions 20 08 24

Hi Annette,

It's lovely to hear from you and I'm so sorry for my very slow reply. I hope it's not too late.

I'll do my best to answer your queries below:

- From your unique perspective, have you noticed any changes or gained new insights into how you perceive your practice or discipline? Have your methods of working or outcomes changed in any way?

A My practice has been very stop/start for quite a while now. This is a fundamental change, as in the past, I would have been in the studio every day. I think the journaling (scribbling / making lists / note taking etc.) helps on two fronts here. Firstly, the process of writing things down has helped me keep track of ideas when there is a time-lag getting into the studio, but it also has given me permission to slow down and play with materials and ideas a little more. Enjoying the process rather than focusing on the outcome.

- Given your expertise, I'm particularly interested in any changes in how you perceive your discipline or practical skills, e.g., considering different materials or handling materials in a different way.

A This has been quite fundamental. My 'traditional' ceramic skills (throwing/ firing / glazing etc.) have to a large extent been left to one side. They're still there, and that material knowledge obviously informs everything I do, but I'm curious about how other materials (organic / found) might interact with the ceramic elements. Older pieces are being reevaluated and taking on new forms. I've no idea where it is going, but I'm enjoying the play!

- Have you repeated, adapted or used any of the things you experienced during the research period?

A Not really, but your email has prompted me to relook at some of the elements, so it might be timely.

Have you done any form of journaling since? Can you say why?

Yes, I think this has become quite important - note taking, doodling, thoughts, ideas, reminders etc. It's very loose, but it helps to keep creative ideas moving and to reconnect me with making after a break - provides a place to 'start' from again.

18. Appendix H Participant B Interview Transcripts.

An initial meeting with Participant B in person occurred before the Zoom interviews where the research project was discussed.

18.1 Participant B Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 1 01 11 22

Annette Mills 2:16 Are you okay if I record this on my phone? Thank you. I've written some guidelines to shortcut everything. I've just called it 'Getting Started'. The first thing is a daily log. That's logging how you feel during the day in the studio. The whole focus is on creative practice. So it's how you're feeling, events that happen, timings maybe? Anything you want to record in your day. In terms of your work. It can be as long and as short as you want.

B 3:05 Just the days that I'm in the studio

Annette MILLS 3:12 That's kind of up to you really. It's just keeping the focus on creative practice and creativity. But if something else impinges on that, then you might want to record that. I'm really interested in people being able adapt the structure of the intensive journal to what works for them. The object is when you re-read it. When you reflect back on it, you might begin to pick up different patterns or different behaviours, or different feelings. For example, I know I feel so much better and want to get up when it's sunny outside. And I kind of knew that about myself, but actually just recording it, just recording the weather, it has revealed a huge amount, like you know, just getting out there and being ready to go when the weather isn't nice. So the aim is to reveal things that you might intuitively know but have not really focused on or not thought about, and to ask if it impacts my creative practice. What can I and then you can begin to build strategies. I know that now, so what can I do about it? That's the purpose of it. The period log traces how you've got to the now where you are now with your creative practice. So it asked you to

reflect back to the point at which you think the work you're doing now started so that again, it might be a few years ago, or it might ...

B 5:18 I know that will be lockdown.

Annette MILLS 5:20 So you might take that as your starting point. Then just work through it. It takes about takes about 40 minutes to complete and to be able to think about it. You just block in all the little steps to where you are now. And then again later on in the process. You begin to relate your daily log to that longer it gives you more of an overview. At the end there is Twilight log, which begins to get you to think about concepts and symbols. And so from those two from the period log actually, you begin just to reflect or just to allow any image or anything you might visualise or any feeling that comes through that you can just recognise, which helps you to move towards a conceptual level of thinking later as the process carries on.

B 6:33 It will be written down I suppose.

Annette MILLS 6:34 Yes, I'll email you the guidelines. I've gone through the book, which is referenced and I've picked out the key things I just a quick kind of order about how to get going with it.

B 6:50 What is the Intensive Journal who developed by?

Annette MILLS 6:54 By an American called Ira Progoff, he started working on it in about the 1950s. He was a psychotherapist, and he was looking at journaling. He gave his patients some homework to do. He asked them to write down stuff. And then he realised that actually that had a real impact, but not in the form of how people usually write diaries. Because if it's diaries, then you can just go round and around, and there's no solutions. So he saw the potential of actually using it as a way to sort of way to develop or change, and in their cases, then it was actually how they could improve their lives. And so but when he did, when he did his research, he looked at creatives because he said that creatives' lives are just full of

change. And there's a positivity about it is like looking forward and trying new things out and being very open. So he modelled it on creatives. So I thought well if that's the case, then there's probably something there that we could use as creatives without a trauma. That's what I'm trying to do. Taking the therapy out of it and looking at it as a structure to work on independently. I didn't want to keep going on courses to get somebody else to move my work on. I wanted to be able to do it for myself.

Annette MILLS 9:13 The other thing was in terms of the original intensive journal, it was all in writing. So the emphasis was actually writing everything down and not worrying about your language or because you're the only person who's going to see it. I was interested in using other forms of recording, particularly with different technologies. So if you're using computers, use a computer, if you want to use film to record anything or collage. it's expanding out as well as to how you want to record things as well as writing or you know, if that makes sense.

B 10:26 Okay, I'll probably just write,

Annette MILLS 10:30 that's fine. But again, it might also be like doodling and things. So I don't know if you doodle. It might just be saving scrappy bits of drawing. I use a lot of Post-its as well when I'm writing stuff down, so they just get all slammed into a notebook or, you know, usually an A3 thing I'm working with. It has to be dated. That's the big thing. It's actually day to day timed, because then you can begin to track it back

B 11:01 to how long is it going to last this?

Annette MILLS 11:06 if it's if it's possible to do it for three months. I thought we could have just one-to-one interviews, like once every three weeks or so. I can do the more exactly. It's entirely up to you. If you want to do a bit more than that, then that's fine. I'm totally flexible. Then you can begin to adapt it as to how you want it

to work. How it will work best for you. It's very much integrating it as part of your as part of your practice or your studio work.

B 12:10 Do you want me to start on a certain date. So I'll just start from now.

Annette MILLS 12:14 Start as soon as you want it's entirely up to you. Just follow the structure and see how it works best for you. And also, if it doesn't work, that will also be really important for me. So if, like, oh no, I don't want to do this, or this takes too long, too much of a faff to do this, then just record that in a bit of detail about what it is that isn't going to work, and that will be fine.

B 12:49 Okay. All right. So you'll send me all the stuff to get me started.

Annette MILLS 13:02 Yes, and again, it's finding what works for you for that notebook thing. Like I work with these A5 but then I've got I've got like I called sketch pages that I'm working with because I put a lot of fibre and everything into the collages that I work with, so they won't go into a sketchbook anymore and I've got a pile of these sketch pages, which inform the writing. Because I find that's brought out a bit more of an intuitive sort of way forward for me. So again, it's little bits like that. It's just noting little changes and, and anything, anything that you do that oh, that's quite interesting. Like, I didn't realise I did that. It's just little bits like that, that I think, just can shift perceptions a little bit.

B 14:30 Yeah. Okay. All right. Sounds interesting.

Annette MILLS 14:35 Okay, that's good, I'll send these off to you and then I'll contact you in a couple of weeks or so. And then make another Zoom meeting the following week.

B 17:15 Yeah, yeah. Well, when you've done it all you'll have to write an article in the BA [Basketmakers'] magazine.

Annette MILLS 17:29 All right, then. So, see how you go. I'll contact you in a couple of weeks or so. And thank you so much for taking part. Bye then.

18.2 Participant B Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 2 05 12 22

Annette MILLS 0:16 It's very much about doing it [journaling] whichever way you want to do it. Some people might use an audio recorder on their phone, or if they go for a walk, they might just take some photographs or collect things or anything that kind of makes it easy for you and has meaning for you. But if writing is your way, then that's totally fine. It's just the idea was just opening it up so that if somebody didn't enjoy writing or found it really difficult, then there will be an alternative mode that they could try and explore and use.

Annette MILLS 1:20 So, you've been able to record something daily?

B 1:37 Most days I think I missed the odd day. Sometimes I do it twice a day. Yeah, but I haven't actually been doing much making to be honest. I don't know if that matters.

Annette MILLS 1:49 I don't think it does.

B 1:50 Actually. That first exercise just sort of inspired me to have a clear out because I realised that the times when I'm creative are when I've got nothing else on my mind. And nothing else much going on. It's just sort of like, I've just got the space to actually do it. Whereas it inspired me to get everything else out of the way so I could be more creative.

Annette MILLS 2:19 That's really interesting.

B 2:22 I've been having a huge clearout in the house, and I want to do my workshop as well. Because I sort of moved here in April. So there's just been piles of stuff about since then. I haven't cleared it out.

B 2:43 I'm trying to get my admin paperwork and everything you know done, because it's just all this stuff is always on your mind, just in your mind. Yeah, that's something I realised that is sort of stopping me from getting on with things.

Annette MILLS 2:57 Doing the period log triggered that did it?

B 3:03 It made me realise that times in my past when I've been creative have been either when I've been away. I do this sort of artist residence with a friend once a year. That's when I've got just away from everything or when I haven't had much else on like when I first moved to Scotland.

B 3:28 Yeah, not many times. It was only a few times.

Annette MILLS 3:32 And have you noticed anything else? Have you re-read your daily log?

B 3:35 Not completely, no its been more about the clearing than being creative.

Annette MILLS 3:57 I do think that's part of the whole creative thing. Whether it's part of processing, you know, allowing that process, as you say, creating space and allowing ideas to form. But physically you're actually doing something as well. You know, you're slowly making when you are physically moving around.

B 4:19 I'm making my surroundings nice. I suppose that's quite creative.

Annette MILLS 4:23 I think that, definitely. So when you're doing your log you say sometimes you might do it twice a day or you make your notes throughout the day. So do you just recap on what you've just written before? Or do you just write and continue to make notes?

B 4:49 No, no, I just write what I've been doing recently.

B 4:55 Am I supposed to be reading what I've done before,

Annette MILLS 4:57 No, not necessarily, but it might be useful to read it back and just begin to see if there are any patterns, either about feelings or what you're doing and how you're doing those things, how that affects your feelings, whether it's relaxing or is frustrating or a need to get on or something. You might sort of see if there are any patterns in either time of day or over periods of time, weeks, that you know, oh, that's quite interesting that's happened again, or, I've got back into that. There might be something quite repetitive that you're not aware of. That might be revealed.

Annette MILLS 5:54 How do you find writing? Do you quite enjoy it?

B 6:02 Yeah, I don't mind writing it's a bit difficult. I've done like *The Artist's Way* [Cameron, J] do you know that?

Annette MILLS 6:11 Yes.

B 6:13 It's done that way. It's just sort of stream of consciousness, isn't it?

Annette MILLS 6:17 Yes.

B 6:18 It's a bit different. It's more just writing what you've done. And what your emotions are.

B 6:26 Is that it or have I lost my way?

Annette MILLS 6:29 No. You can include whatever you want in it. It's just a record of how you use the time in your day. That was one of the things that surprised me. I've used that in my head. I thought I was spending a load of time actually making and I was that was constantly in my head. But actually when I looked at going through my day, I did it in a really detailed way just for a few days. I was just

amazed at how little time I actually spent in the studio. And that was because it was just in my head like you say when you're washing up or when you're doing something else. It's constantly in my head about the making side. And yet physically, it was a very short time that I spent in the studio each day and that was quite revealing.

B 7:24 Is your studio next to your house

Annette MILLS 7:26 Yes.

B 7:30 Its a bit different for me because your either there or not. Now I haven't really been there much. At this time. It's not very inviting because it's freezing.

B 7:45 I really want to make that, my workshop, a nice space as well, because that's the only thing that's just like completely cluttered. So that's my sort of aim after the house, to do the workshop.

Annette MILLS 7:58 And do you usually have this feeling at this sort of time of year?

B 8:05 Yeah, it's not a nice place to go to. It's cold.

Annette MILLS 8:09 Is there a bit you that wants to kind of sort things out ready?

B 8:16 Yeah, I mean, at the moment, it's just because I did have a bit of work to do. But there's all this other stuff that's on your mind all the time. This old work that's not really very relevant to what I'm doing now as well. It's difficult to throw out that.

B 8:35 It just clutters up the space

Annette MILLS 8:47 Well, my studio area. Is that a complete tip? I mean, it's just like that, as you just as you've said when I can actually feel I need to clear that space I

know something's going on. I'm either going to start to think about something differently, or I need to clear a space to make. So there's an opening there of some kind.

B 9:14 And part of me just wants to get rid of all that really. I've got these sort of quite traditional baskets that I used to do, and I just want to get rid of all of that. But the other part of me thinks, you know, that's part of my history. The sentimental value just takes up space, and it's not doing anything really apart from probably, getting woodworm eventually.

B 9:44 plus materials are always material. Anyway, so that's all on my mind.

B 9:52 And then, of course, I'm feeling guilty or not actually making like everyone else you see on Instagram, everyone's doing all this Christmas stuff.

Annette MILLS 10:06 Would you usually have done Christmas things then

B 10:14 I have done in the past, but I don't really I'm not really into it that much. You never make much money just selling stars. The course I went on sort of changed my way of thinking, that sort of thing. Just focusing on what actually is really going to bring some money in.

Annette MILLS 10:50 Yeah, I wondered if that put a bit more pressure on you to produce the next thing?

B 11:04 Yeah, I mean part of it. I haven't done this stuff that you're supposed to do. I haven't done any of it. There is this thing about planning your year, but it just never works out. You have to think about Christmas in July really?

Annette MILLS 11:31 So the writing. Do you think it's making you reflect more on the day? Are you thinking more about and becoming more aware of what you've done during the day or any other like reflection that's going on?

B 11:49 Yeah, I mean, I suppose I've just got no routine. I've always known that. No routine in my day. It's all just different.

Annette MILLS 12:01 And how does that feel?

B 12:02 From morning? Getting up and having breakfast and doing my Duolingo

Annette MILLS 12:13 How does that feel? Is that about an expectation that there should be a routine or are you really happy with it all being different and you just go with the flow?

B 12:28 I don't know. It's always I think it'd be easier to have a routine, some sort of structure but I never sort of manage it. So if I went to the workshop every day for two hours or something. A little even a routine in the week, let alone the day.

Annette MILLS 12:48 Okay, well, that might be interesting to look back at your daily log and see if they are actually the same. Is there something else in the day or few days or over a week or something that there are things that that occur there might be an intuitive hidden routine within it.

B 13:12 Maybe Yeah,

B 13:24 I mean, I, I suppose in the evenings I tend to sit down

B 14:10 All these different things are on my mind. Yeah. Yeah. I think they get in the way of just getting on and making.

Annette MILLS 14:59 I found the Daily Log quite interesting, because when I looked back over that and found patterns and things, that I didn't realise that was happening. And then I was able to restructure things and realise that again, for me, a routine is actually quite, important. Whereas I was always kind of thinking, I'm

kind of quite happy floating from one thing to another in doing this and being relaxed, and my time is really fluid and it's great. And then I just suddenly kind of realised actually, I do need a bit of a routine to give me a push or a prompt. Yeah. So and that that that kind of was revealed.

B 16:15 I think that's because I decided I didn't want to do any commissions. But actually the commissions do make you do it. Because I could easily just not do anything for a quite long period. Which is what's happening at the moment. I mean, making wise.

Annette MILLS 16:39 Yeah, so was the last making the last making you did for an extended making thing? Was that for the exhibition?

B 16:50 Yeah. And that's all really I haven't done much. I was having a practice because I have got a commission. There's not any rush for it at the moment. So this architect designed it and he wants me to make it.

B 18:11 I can't like pop in and out of my workshop like you do.

Annette MILLS 18:21 Is it far away then?

B 18:23 Not that far away. 15 minute walk right 10 minute drive to drive your go long way round.

Annette MILLS 18:32 Yeah, but you still have to definite plan and then when you're there you need to be there for a substantial time to make while.

B 18:41 Yeah. I mean, yeah, normally at this time of year, like I said, but I've got other stuff to do as well. Cutting willow, and then I'll get my accounts done. So it's that sort of good. It's nice not to be there when it's cold anyway. I haven't really been there for much of November either, but usually it's December and January.

Annette MILLS 19:09 It all makes sense. And I would say, I think it's about creative practice. So, you know, doing the accounts and all the other bits that are in your head and that you've just got to tick off and get done. That's all part of it. That's an important thing to recognise. I think.

B 19:33 Clearing out is part of just getting that right. I didn't know where my accounts were or receipts or anything, but now I know where everything is.

B 19:46 That's good. I feel much better. Someone's ordered these baskets, and I have to send them to America. It's stressing me out trying to work out how to send these huge baskets to America.

B 20:31 And then there's another commission. I haven't done very well saying no to commissions.

Annette MILLS 21:04 Why did you why did you decide you didn't want to do commissions? Because it's too much pressure?

B 21:22 Yeah. But it always takes longer than you think. I'm always up against the deadline. And is it gonna turn out right?

B 21:49 Anyway, if I don't have to do many, it might be alright.

B 23:06 I'd rather just do what I wanted. Lockdown was the other time when I was creative. That was another time when you had space. Yes. No other distractions. Nothing else to think about. And I think I just needed all that time. I had, like, probably a month just not doing much at all, which was sort of slow.

Annette MILLS 23:46 It might be interesting, to note, you know, what's stopping you moving on? What stopped you today? Maybe because it's cold. Why? Why I'm not going to studio. Why I'm not gonna go there today. Those sorts of decisions

can be quite useful. And then also what motivates you as to why all of a sudden, something happens. it might be the sun shining, there's something that's going to sort of say, Oh, actually, no, I need to do this today, or I want to do this today. Those sorts of little triggers can be quite interesting that, again, you might not be necessarily aware of.

B 24:39 I suppose the other thing with the willow, is that you can't just go and do it. You've got to soak the willow for a week or two,

B 24:51 not like painting a picture that you can just stop.

Annette MILLS 24:55 Because that's part of your regime as well. Isn't it? Taking all of that into account? Like once you've done all your prep, then you've actually got a limited period of time where you can actually use that material. You don't want to waste it.

B 25:13 You've got it in the back of my mind. If I prepare willow, then I've got to spend time in a week or two in a week's time. Making with it.

Annette MILLS 25:29 Yeah. It's not that spontaneous, is it?

B 25:33 No, especially when you know you've got other stuff that's got to be done.

Annette MILLS 25:41 So do you use other materials? Is it just Willow? Are you using other soft materials?

B 25:46 Mainly Willow. I have used other materials in the past. I've got piles of recycled materials. I'm just gonna throw them out, I never used them. That's the thing, though, there are piles of stuff over the workshop. I've got all this plant material that's really old. So that need throwing out.

Annette MILLS 26:15 Okay, okay. So you're happy to sort of keep going with this for a little bit?

B 26:21 Yeah. Yeah. Are they're more different exercises you're sending through?

Annette MILLS 26:28 I'll send them two more.

Annette MILLS 26:43, and then the second one is an extension of the period log. I'll usually send them a week apart so I send the first guidelines and the second one the second week, just so that purely and simply so that you can get into the first one without sort of going on too fast. If you like,

B 27:07 Is it your very early experiences? It's basically just your very early creative experiences.

Annette MILLS 27:14 It can be it can be anything. It can be anything you want. You can you can interpret them in whichever way you want to. It hones it down because it kind of focuses it down to a specific number of events. Which can be quite useful. And so as you're as you're doing the exercises, just keep reading back through stuff. Or if you get an idea you can add to so if you get an idea through doing the next exercise, then you can add to the period log, you can go back to that and fill in extra bits so that you remember things maybe and you're gradually just building up a picture over time of what I think of like an arc almost as sort of, you know, where am I? Oh, oh, that happened there. Is there a repetition? Yes, that happened like you like is you've identified when you've moved, or when you were in lockdown, there are these periods of time. And then you can just build on those and it gets, you can build them in like more detail. That very, very gently and very gradually, The building is sort of like interweaving a network of things that you just think, I'll just jot that down. That might be quite interesting. Or I've realised that like for me, for example, the weather was really important. And so at the beginning, I've just put down what kind of day it is, or what where I am the locations and, and bits like that. So just little bits of detail that you begin to just recall the don't have think about

even like, I'll just add that in. And then when when I've revised that or looked again at it, it's like oh, that's that's interesting. It's about the same time you know, this is when I'm actually there are specific times when I do the daily log very intensively, like you know, carry it with me and jot it through the day. See what happens other times when actually I'll leave it for quite a long period of time, and then go back to it. So you find your own rhythm. Does that make sense to you?

B 29:47 I think so, yeah. Okay, so yeah, yeah.

Annette MILLS 29:54 I'm quite interested in the idea of being able to identify what I call your creative process arc, of where you actually feel that that's the beginning of something now, and made you to start and then where you are in that process. It might be the tidying or clearing, or it might be stimulus from outside of some kind, or somebody putting a deadline on it and say you need this done by this date. And I'm quite interested in plotting if it's possible to see where you start to when you actually get to your finish. And then I think it's possible to find out where you are then within that, so that relieves some of the anxiety and stress like it might you might think it's procrastination whereas actually, you now identify that as part of the process is actually a really important part of processing with your head sort of sorting things out.

B 31:17 All right.

Annette MILLS 31:18 Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you very much for doing it so far and keeping it going, and being prepared to do the next bit. And I think it's an interesting time, as you said in your email, that this isn't necessarily your making time. I think this is a time for somebody to see what's actually happening in their practice. And how it moves on.

Annette MILLS 31:44 I think it is refined working to a specific number of events. So you can go back as far as you want but as you refine it then the most important of those have more prominence and they become the ones you work with. You might

want to see if there are any connections with the period log and see if there is anything that is relevant.

18.3 Participant B Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 3 09 01 23

Annette MILLS 1:36 Did you have a chance to have a look at the questions?

B 1:48 Yeah, well, just last night, actually.

Annette MILLS 2:10 How did that go?

B 2:16 That was alright yeah. It made me think of directions that I haven't been able to go with my work. All right. I've been thinking about them anyway. Like some of the things about my workshop that I haven't followed up.

B 2:40 I have experimented with them in the past when I've had time to experiment. I think the reason I haven't followed them up is because I don't have any way to sort of sell that sort of thing.

Annette MILLS 3:01 Do you find then that there's a possibility that you'd have sort of different strands of work?

B 3:12 I've tried sort of mixing Willow with other materials to 3D pieces. I'd like to follow that up. I just don't know where I'd actually think I could spend all that time doing it and then not have any way to sell that sort of thing.

Annette MILLS 3:43 Do you think that exercise sort of brought that more to the fore for you?

B 3:50 Yeah, I think all this clearing out I've done, I feel much more relaxed, and I've got most of my workshop. I think when I've done that, I'll have more of a base to think about it. I was just thinking about time, the year suddenly seems to be disappearing. I think about Open Studios in June and suddenly panicking. How

am I gonna have time to get things done that haven't even started cutting the willow yet because of the weather.

Annette MILLS 4:52 So you've had a break from the daily journal over Christmas, which is totally fine. And you know, if you pick that up again, then that will be quite useful. So how do you feel about the process of this form of journaling? The fact that it's in different sections, and you do different things and the exercises. So how do you feel about the process in relation to your creative practice?

B 5:46 I'm not sure. I think the exercise of just writing is a bit more useful to me than the daily journal. I just want to start writing about anything. Yeah, you know, rather than focusing on what you're saying I should focus on like, what you've done and what your moods are and how that affects your creative practice. I haven't been very good at looking back over the writing. But when I've done the exercises, I've looked back at the other exercises. I haven't really got into that looking back at the daily log.

Annette MILLS 6:54 and do you find it quite different from doing what you did with the sort of free writing of *The Artist's Way* [Cameron, J, 1994]

B 7:03 Yeah because that's just like a stream of consciousness

Annette MILLS 7:06 And you quite enjoyed that? It was more beneficial for you?

B 7:13 I think that was quite useful just getting everything out there in your mind
bid

Annette MILLS 7:20 Did you read that back as well like you're when you were doing

B 7:27 not really. I haven't really got into reading it all back I think that's just like a huge job to go back and read it.

Annette MILLS 7:47 It's to just dip into it. I don't mean you have to constantly read it back, but it's just maybe dipping into the odd page and just highlighting bits that sort of come up more than you expect. Or that you're still thinking about that are still relevant to you. You highlight a bit of it or make a few connections, like what you were saying about your time and doing experimental work. And just following up some of those routes. I'm just wondering if that would be when you're doing your daily log, if a tiny bit of experiment became your daily log? Do you know what I mean? So, rather than the writing, setting aside time to think how I would do it without sort of imposing anything.

B 8:58 Writing. Yeah,

Annette MILLS 9:00 So it might be you take a theme from what you're interested in, which you might have picked from the daily log. And thinking, I'm interested in working with this material, or it might be just joining, how do I join two materials together? Or it might be? How do I process different materials? Like what happens if I soak it for longer than I should. So it's like that's an accident but the results are actually quite interesting. So what happens to that material? And maybe see how it dries and stick that into a book, or do something like that. I'm just wondering if that daily practice might shift for you.

B 10:43 The daily log? Sorry. Do you mean doing that instead of the daily log?

Annette MILLS 10:56 It's that thing about transferring that practice. So when you enter that daily routine, so it might be that you just vary it. If you work through that as a process, then it might be that you just literally put the odd word down on the log of saying how that made you feel might be frustrated, might be feeling curious, interested, I'll pick it up again, tomorrow. Just getting into that routine of, sitting down and just playing with stuff around you. In a in a physical way. That makes sense to you.

B 11:42 Yeah, I mean, it's because my workshop is in a different place, it's a bit more difficult.

Annette MILLS 11:54 I'm interested in the structure of this journaling and how people can use the structure in a way that will be of benefit to them. And there might be, there might be a point where the writing of it goes into the background a bit while you try where you try something else. In that time, just conscious of the route being taken. If you picked up from one of the exercises, that there's an area, that you would like to go back to explore. I totally understand the commitment you'd have to give to it when everything else is going on. And your main point of focus is selling. It's just thinking about ways the experimentation would be incorporated into work that would be more saleable. So it's using the structure of the daily log and then transferring it into your practice wherever you wanted to start, maybe it might be in your studio, when you start to clear, maybe you just have a very conscious focus of one kind of clearing, which might be looking at different materials, or looking at those pieces that remind you of the direction you want to move in. So maybe as you're sorting, there's a conscious decision of items going into a box or something because they are interesting in some way. I'll put that to one side and think about that. And then you have a box of stuff that you can go back to. Or think I'm just going to work with one small thing for half an hour. And that's all I'm going to do. And then a quick record of what you did and what you thought about it because I think the recording quite useful. Just a quick note saying, Oh, that was that was an interesting idea. explore it further this way, and then put it to one side, and then pick it up the next day, or the next couple of days.

B 14:19 Okay, so doing that instead of writing down what I've done each day?

Annette MILLS 14:22 Yes, because it sounds as if you're not finding that particularly useful. So it's just sort of shifting the way of working because you've been doing that and you understand how that works for you. Then you're actually more in control of that process for you in terms of that daily practice, so it's the sort of shifting and transferring it. does that makes sense?

B 14:52 Yeah. Just having time to record what you want.

Annette MILLS 14:59 Yes, it's just always the creativity. It's ways to pick up the different directions that might get lost. So you need those ideas that come through and if they're not recorded, then it's easy to forget about them

B 16:05 Yeah, yeah. Okay, I'll give it a go.

Annette MILLS 16:10 Okay, thanks.

B 16:13 I did do some experimenting last night.

Annette MILLS 16:17 You could record just odd words. And it might be your feelings like - just exciting to see what happens next or I could try this or I could try that or is it I don't like getting my hands dirty just tiny notes just so that you've got a sort of context for that for those pieces.

B 16:49 yeah. Okay, a bit difficult to stick a note on different pieces.

Annette MILLS 17:05 well, maybe just attach labels to them

B 17:12 yeah

Annette MILLS 17:16 but it might be just a way to do the things you are really interested in wanting to do. But put to one side because there isn't time. I think the daily log thing is about breaking things down into really small little bits. Which is why you know you're into that. It's almost like habit forming.

B 17:42 Yeah. Okay. I'll have a go.

Annette MILLS 17:44 How have you adapted the process to fit in with your practice

B 18:01 I probably haven't.

Annette MILLS 18:06 Well you said that the Daily Log has lapsed and that's fine But the exercises you found quite useful.

B 18:38 I'm still doing the daily log I just stopped for Christmas.

B 18:44 I found I was getting, I suppose that's adapting it, into just dreaming consciousness writing.

Annette MILLS 18:57 So did you do it alongside making or clearing? Or is it as separate thing when you go to your studio?

B 19:13 I have started just doing it in a quiet room. I was doing it in the living room, but now that I've cleared a nice space in here, my office, which is also like my yoga room and stuff in here in a nice environment away from other people.

Annette MILLS 19:45 So you've adapted it to becoming more meaningful for you which is that stream of consciousness sort of writing.

B 19:55 I just started doing that, and I think, Oh, we're not supposed to be doing this stuff.

Annette MILLS 20:07 If you find that useful then I think that's quite important. If that's the sort of dumping ground and you get your, mind clear from it, but it would be I think it might be interesting, not to reread the whole thing, but just to sample and go back and read just odd little bits of it. And highlight or make notes of things that seem to recur.

B 20:37 Yeah, I think that might be quite useful. I think things come up that I've been thinking of or wanting to make but not done.

Annette MILLS 20:51 So has there been anything that surprised you about working with the journals?

B 20:55 Doing the exercises, the period logs I see sort of patterns times when I think particularly creative times when I face where I sort of had a period when I'm sort of floundering about not knowing what I'm doing and then I had space and time mentally and physically, I think to actually experiment. Sometimes that's carried on depending on opportunities. I've carried on with those ideas or decided not to.

That's quite interesting knowing that I need that space to actually come up with creative ideas to feel relaxed. Feeling relaxed I suppose it is sort of feeling relaxed and spacious in your mind when I've got lots of stuff going on.

Annette MILLS 22:20 So have you got any idea how long those sorts of periods of time last

B 22:37 I suppose the last was during lockdown. Sometimes it starts with a course. I didn't really know what I was doing. And then I went on that course with Lisa Beck then I had lock down with lots of time and space to play and practice. That was sort of enforced.

Annette MILLS 23:37 There's no right or wrong way of doing it. You can always go back to that and just redo them again.

B 23:48 I did do that actually and I got a different set of events. One of them was my first basketmaking course I put that as a stepping stone, but the actual creative urge was after that, I suppose to haven't had time to experiment and just play and live on my own for the first time space you know.

B 24:22 That was a decision I made to do it as a business whether the space just happens by accident or if I choose to make it happen.

Annette MILLS 24:49 Do you look to create those spaces for yourself now? In your practice?

B 25:04 So yeah, I think that's what I'm doing now.

Annette MILLS 25:06 Right? The clearing?

B 25:08 That was triggered by the first exercise it meant I realised that was the time when I was creative. Yes. I was just taking a bit of time to get it all clear. But it's been good. I've been feeling a creative period coming on after that.

Annette MILLS 25:31 So it's like, you know, I need to clear it's taking in the amount of time, but all of a sudden, now I'm feeling there's a change in my feelings. It's not just about clearing and getting rid of all the stuff. I'm actually getting ready to do something. So I realise when it changes again. Just make a note of that look and date it to refer back to it later.

B 26:13 It's quite exciting. I suppose that feeling but then I sort of think, Oh, my God, am I going to have time? For these things I'm going away in April, I think, a few weeks. I don't know suddenly, just the time just seems to be disappearing. Yeah, I've got I've got a commission that I'm doing. It's going to take a few weeks. You know things like that get in the way.

Annette MILLS 26:46 The time thing is quite interesting I think it's balancing of how much time you give to one thing and to another, but actually being able to be in the right frame of mind to get on with it as well.

B 27:10 I've got other things hanging over me. Before I get on with being creative. I just have to get everything else out of the way.

B 27:21 I just want space to make my own things. Yeah. Doing commissions for other people all the time I'm just getting stressed by it and not charging enough.

B 27:56 I write the journal each evening. I have the time to myself. Oh, right.

B 28:10 I think giving myself space each evening, it's helped as well. A lot more relaxed.

B 28:20 That's quite nice.

Annette MILLS 28:24 Good.

Annette MILLS 28:32 So I think you could try a bit of experimentation as well. But keep the writing going. Keep going with whatever you find useful. I think that's your direction of travel if you like, and that, if you can, keep everything dated. And just make the odd notes attached to anything that you're making, maybe you use a wall in your studio for experimental bits that you put up on a white wall or something

B 29:22 might make space like a shelf,

Annette MILLS 29:25 Just a small sort of area that might just be on a board, like a drawing board or something or something you can blue tack stuff onto, or just stick on. So the little bits that you make or play around with, just go up onto there with a label or something. When I start something, or I think I'm starting something new. And, and I just pin it up. So it builds each day or when I put extra things up, and, then you can kind of see connections between things or materials or all that reminds me of something else. So that almost become thinking about that almost becomes a bit of a journal. Because it's there. But it's also temporary. So when that's finished, or I can put those things away, and they go into a box, and then the box is stored. And then every now and then I'll go through the different boxes. And I kind of have those sort of, I might re-sort them into techniques like looping or

braiding or stuff, experiments or materials. And that's, a sort of form of, I think, a form of journaling.

B 29:30 Yeah I could try something like that.

Annette MILLS 29:30 That's great, thank you, thank you very much. Bye.

18.4 Participant B Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 4 21 02 23

Annette MILLS 1:24 Last time, I made some suggestions about transferring the ideas or the structure of the journal, like the daily log into your practice and into introducing a bit more experimental work. Do you remember?

B 1:44 Yeah, I did. I did some new things. I did a bit of just looking through magazines as well, cutting out things that surprised me. I did a bit of weeding out things. Sometimes I just don't feel like doing that if I've been making all day. You said to do it in the workshop, but that hasn't really worked because I like to have time to make. I'm way more comfortable at home where I can just relax a bit more. The workshop's cold. But I haven't got materials here quite often either.

B 2:34 I like the process. of sitting down and just writing, and I have read back through actually this time a bit more.

Annette MILLS 2:48 How did you find that?

B 2:50 There are a few things that sort of come up, which I've sort of known anyway. Just what I have talked about. Just clearing, making space, I suppose. Whether it's physically in my mind, or emotionally even. Just really helps me relax and be able to be more creative.

Annette MILLS 3:19 Like you say, I think it's things that you already know, but actually re-reading helps find that repetition of those ideas.

B 3:45 Yeah it's interesting. I get really stressed if I've got too much to think about. So I found it easier when I've got a long lead in time to think so it's not all just suddenly happening at once. And just saying 'no' more often as well to things that just got one thing at a time more or less to focus on.

Annette Mills 4:28 Has it focused those ideas for you a bit more? Or has it made a bit more positive that that's reinforced that that's what I need to do?

B 4:38 I've been doing that a bit more. Last year I've realised that if I don't panic about things, sometimes things just work out as well.

Annette MILLS 4:55 Yes.

B 4:56 It's like before I spoke to you before Christmas about how I should be making stuff to sell for Christmas, and I didn't, and then I got this inquiry from America to buy three baskets from me and they're baskets I already had. So, I didn't need to make all this stuff to sell. So yeah, I suppose that you realised that things just work out anyway.

B 5:32 just relax a bit. Things come up. Some teaching is coming up. Yeah. Rather than panicking about and also like in the past, I would have just panicked about having my website not working, but I just can't be bothered to sort out the shops not working on my website, basically.

Annette MILLS 6:24 So has the journaling and reading back through, has that sort of helped consolidate those ideas?

B 6:36 It has just made me realise things. Also, I started doing a lot of different activities in the morning from like, going to yoga and doing this dancing thing. Just about every morning, I've got something. Well, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I think that really helps get me going because otherwise I'd just like get up late and not do much. So it helps me get up outside to get up or,

Annette MILLS 7:11 Last time, you were talking how about allocating time is quite difficult, and there was that conflict between I want to do this, but I want to do more

experimentation and everything else. Thinking experimenting could be a complete waste of time, when you need to be getting on with other things that will actually sell and things like that. So it sounds like you're beginning to, equate those things that if you're giving time with your structure for the mornings of doing those activities and realising that gets you going, then it's sort of resolving itself

B 7:51 Time sort of expands, doesn't it sometimes when you're relaxed

B 8:01 yeah, but there are still things I mean, I've got hopefully I've got March to do my own stuff I've kept that free. After April I've got open studios and I need to make some stuff. So hopefully, I can just sort of be a bit more experimental because I'm not making it for anyone.

B 8:29 I just hope I end up doing it. Obviously. I did that other than that exercise you sent me that was quite interesting as well. The dialogue works. Yeah, that was quite interesting. When I sort of became the work because it was a piece that I haven't really shown. I had one of my sort of mini-residency things. It's very different from everything else I've done so I've never I don't even know if I'm going to sell it or how to sell it or anything. That exercise where you become it. It sort of talking, but it was you talking

Annette MILLS 9:24 to? Yes. And then replying.

B 9:28 It turned into this woman, this sort of very ornately adorned woman who wanted to be shown off.

B 9:41 that was quite interesting.

B 9:47 That sort of partly me as well as it is it partly yourself in the work?

Annette MILLS 9:52 So will you develop that or do a bit more work of that kind?

B 10:02 Yeah, I don't know. That's the problem. I don't know how I would sell it.

B 10:09 But yeah, I'll show it.

Annette MILLS 10:13 Things kind of begin to resolve themselves. So maybe if you just started doing some work along those lines without any intention of sales. Just to see just to see where it goes.

B 10:33 It will be at my open studio

Annette MILLS 11:16 You said that you found the exercise interesting. Have you found it's just centred your mind on something or moved your thinking on?

B 11:33 Yeah, sometimes I think we do that once, and where's that lead or hasn't done anything?

Annette MILLS 12:33 Yeah, yeah. So do you think you might incorporate some of these ideas like into your practice?

B 12:44 Yeah, I think that last one was interesting.

B 12:57 But in a way, it's sort of a reflection of myself as well maybe I don't show myself sort of what's going on inside me in a way.

B 14:00 When you're talking about those stepping stones, that's where you're sort of direction changes.

Annette MILLS 14:08 or the choices you have and why you make them.

Annette MILLS 14:17 You said there was a very definite choice where you decided to actually make a living from basketry, and then you had two definite

directions. You can either reflect on that, or think about what would have happened if you had made a different choice. Making a decision about accepting commissions. It might be exploring what you did, what your choice was, and also what would have happened if you had completed that or you'd have made that commission. It can be very small decisions when you are making, the choice is expanded and considered in a neutral way. I think, and just thinking either resolves itself or it doesn't and, if it isn't resolved, then that's something that might be interesting just to rework and explore.

B 15:31 Yeah,

Annette MILLS 15:31 At a future date.

B 15:33 Yeah. I mean, there are things that I've made that I haven't followed up. Like the one I was just talking about.

Annette MILLS 15:40 Was it some time ago that you made it?

B 15:48 Yeah, I keep intending to make more like that. But then, there have been times when I've tried and it hasn't worked out. That's the other thing. I think, maybe it's just a one-off.

Annette MILLS 16:00 Or it just takes a long time to actually get that next step. I think what next you have to keep coming back to it and try again, and then again, that gets put aside, but this is a slight difference that you can build on from the first to the second or the third. And then looking at them, when you've got a range of them, looking at them together might spark something.

B 16:30 Especially the things I've done in one go. I have those things that have worked anyway. I've had a moment where it's just worked. I suppose that's partly with willow. That's partly the nature of materials.

B 16:55 This thing wasn't just when they still just had a moment or an evening when things just flowed. And that was it finished. I don't I don't often go back. I don't really go back to things and finish them. They just done it's usually just done in one go and that's it.

B 18:08 I didn't do many I've done about six or seven experimental pieces.

Annette MILLS 18:12 How did you find that that you were pinning them up and looking at them and

B 18:18 I liked doing some. I don't know if any of them will lead to anything. I mean, it's a bit different from the sort of scale that I work on normally.

Annette MILLS 18:31 So how does that affect what you were making then? If you're just doing parts or something small?

B 18:45 Well, it's just it's just doodling with the willow.

Annette MILLS 18:56 There's a real relaxed kind of quality to that. Like when you're doing it's just sort of a bit absent minded and, you know, making marks and things like that and because willow's so linear, it sort of that's really interesting.

Annette MILLS 19:31 Is there any connection between those that are on the wall and that piece that you were talking about?

B 19:39 Yeah, one piece that I made was a 2D piece, but it had other materials incorporated and things that I'd found and stuff like seed pots and dried flower heads and stuff. So, yeah, I suppose one of one of them has a bit of a connection.

Annette MILLS 20:10 So that might be something that you might develop or think about.

B 20:20 See what happens in March. Yeah.

Annette MILLS 20:26 You said that you've begun to read back, go back and just read over some of your pages or notes. Have you found what I was saying about themes that recur?

Annette MILLS 20:39 How did you find actually making that part of the process? Did you find that quite a nice process? Did you enjoy that.

B 20:55 I mean, yeah, it's quite interesting. Seeing how you're feeling and thinking of certain days. Yeah. remind things that seemed ages ago only last week. Yeah, and the other way around.

B 22:27 But I've sort of stopped that because I've had other stuff on now.

Annette MILLS 23:07 So do you think doing the journaling has helped you as increased your self-reflection or helped you in any way or that self-reflections helped your work?

B 23:52 I think that the process helps. Yeah, I suppose the self-reflection helps.

B 24:25 I think I just like the process of just having some time for myself. Just to write, reflect on the day and what I've done and, or even just empty my mind to do, you know, write a to-do list. Some of my journal is just as good as just writing what I've got to do. It is that sort of, again, that's creating space, isn't it? Space in your mind.

B 25:02 And I usually combine it with just time to do whatever bit of yoga or meditation or something like that hold that doing that every day has been that process is really good.

B 25:19 It's interesting reading back over it as well. But it's sort of stuff that you know, anyway, I think.

B 25:29 I suppose other times. It's sort of been forced clearing or just things that have happened in my life. Making it happen. But maybe I need to do that more often and do more clearing so I could have more creative service.

Annette MILLS 23:54 I think a lot of people seem to think that is very much part of their process. That whole sort of, you know, clearing things away and tidying, or they're doing something physical without actually doing the making. But it allows the thinking or the processing in your mind to sort of begin to work on. the bits of experimental bits and bobs, so it might be that when you move up. It might not be appropriate in the studio, but it might be you just might find another space for just fiddling around with things, particularly if you're interested in incorporating other materials.

B 24:24 Yeah. There's all sorts of things. I think I'd do more but then you never do. Maybe this time I will.

Annette MILLS 25:02 I think you've been saying that you've separated the things out a little bit now. From the work you make to sell, and this other side, which allows you to expand ideas and try different things out that you sort of really relate to, but can't see an end product of and that may be separating them out as to two distinct things would allow you then to just experiment with those sort of ideas a little bit more than just an without an end product to them. Just see where they go.

B 25:48 I've always just thought I've got to make something. I'd better sell it. Yeah. I don't necessarily sell it. Well, in the last couple of years, I've sold before it was more teaching

B 26:22 I suppose it's that pressure, isn't it, that you've got to make a living.

B 26:50 You've still got to make something. Yeah, but yeah, it's that thing. Once you relax, it just falls into place anyway, hopefully.

B 27:03 Trust, it's trusting, isn't it trusting the process?

Annette MILLS 27:07 Yeah. And like you say, it's making sure that you've built up all that sort of that best environment for you to work in like, you know, you've got your routine going now that which makes you feel happy but which you feel better and relaxed?

B 27:46 It's just making sure you keep doing it, isn't it because this week was half term. A lot of things I'm doing didn't happen. Suddenly it all goes to pot. I didn't get to my workshop. I don't know what I've done. The time has gone.

Annette MILLS 27:55 Thank you so much for you know, persevering with all of this. I really do appreciate it.

B 28:01 It's really good. I enjoy it. I enjoy the process.

Annette MILLS 28:05 All right, then. Bye bye.

B 28:08 Thank you. Bye bye.

18.5 Participant B Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 5 13 03 23

Annette MILLS 2:19 I want to what you think about the whole process. If it's had a connection with your practice. If you'd use anything from it in the future and what you think of this form of structured journaling?

B 3:09 I like the process of sitting down and writing. I'm not sure if I really got the period log. The beginning bit helped when it made me aware of the need to create space. In my life, my surroundings. And I got into doing that a lot. But it's quite complicated. And all these different exercises came at different times. And so I've ended up with all these bits of paper with different things on then I can't find anything. I've just done most of them once. I've done some twice, it wasn't really quite clear how they all connected. I think having a bit more explanation might have helped, I suppose.

Annette MILLS 4:21 Right.

B 4:41 I just like remember, that twilight imagery, imagery exercise, which I did once and never used again. I think having more understanding might have helped. I think it's a lot better if you write more during the day. Because it's quite difficult to remember how you're feeling at certain times of the day and what you're doing. When he says a book, it's better to do it. You can do you get more out of it if you do it more often. Or even if you even if you're doing it at the end of the day, you need to sort of be aware during the day that you've got to remember it, don't you? I suppose I wasn't really remembering very well. My emotions and feelings. I suppose you've got to be quite committed to do that. So I think understanding more would make me more committed, I suppose.

Annette MILLS 6:33 I think the fact that it just triggered that awareness in you about the space and the need for you to create space, as you say emotionally, mentally, as well as physically. I think that's a very positive thing.

B 10:11 Yeah.

Annette MILLS 10:43 But using the structure of the journal, you might then begin to read it back as you didn't reread things before. You might start to read some of it and then analyse a bit of that and find your connections or key things that keep coming up. There are different ways of sort of working with it. I think everything you do has some kind of value. But it might be that you have to find out how to work it. Like the twilight imagery exercise. I think that is really to do with thinking in a more symbolic way, in a more conceptual way. And if you linked it to the dialogue with works as you enjoyed that and you hadn't thought of the work like that before, then you're actually working with a kind of imagery focus. So there might be a connection between the Twilight imagery exercise so you might do it again to see if something comes up. That might relate to that.

B 12:02 Yeah, I suppose we were just given that exercise at the beginning. And then it was sort of forgotten about

B 12:10 I realised it's best to keep going back to these exercises.

Annette MILLS 12:14 In terms of your first run through you just have to work through the process. It's through the rereading and adding extra reflections then the connections come through or if you find it useful, or you enjoyed doing the exercise then it's trying it again, with something else or in a different way and then incorporating that information into your journal. So it's completely fluid. but this is a structure holds it together.

B 15:33 I think now I've got more of an understanding of it. There's going to be more energy behind it rather than it seems like just these random exercises.

B 15:47 Yeah. I think if you went back over it and you just use these exercises you would make more sense of it. If you use it in your own way.

Annette MILLS 16:08 So I think you found it a bit onerous, but then you found your way through it and wrote the daily log, that was of value?

B 16:36 Yeah, but I started just writing what I wanted, I suppose rather than trying to write about your feelings and stuff.

Annette MILLS 16:48 But you found a time of day, didn't you? I think you said that.

B 16:53 Yes, I wrote a lot in the early evening, I suppose.

Annette MILLS 16:56 And you incorporated that into other practices, relaxation. So do you think you'll continue with that?

B 17:12 Yeah, I think so I suppose, in a way that's part of giving myself space. Yes. More regular space in my life, rather than just going into the routine of the evening cooking dinner and watching television or whatever.

Annette MILLS 17:33 Yeah. Because it gives you it gives you a purpose for doing it? You know, like to know this is my this is my time for that.

B 17:51 Yeah, it's not my time to do what I want. Like a ritual. I suppose it's like making it's making space time in my head. Doing meditation.

Annette MILLS 18:27 You were quite surprised with the dialogue with works, but interested in that. Have you thought about this a little bit more?

B 18:42 Well, I tried it with another one, and it didn't really have such a big impact.

B 19:13 Actually what I was thinking is like, because a lot of your questions are questions and some in that dialogue of work. I tried to do it again about how you planned your work and stages of it and everything, but I was thinking like all my work, I don't plan stages. It just happens, and it's done in one go. sort of thing. So

those questions aren't sort of irrelevant, really. And I suppose it just has to be the right time for that to happen. And I have to have the right materials available.

Annette MILLS 20:03 It could be that it's before the making, that those stages happen.

B 20:24 But when I'm prepping the materials, I'm not really planning what I'm going to make. Some people do, but when I do, if I've got a commission or something, but when it's just my own making. I'm not really planning. It's like when I go on a residency, I'll just take a bundle of Willow with me and then see what happens when I do the most creative stuff. So that doesn't always happen. So if I try and get what I'm saying, I suppose if I try and force it, like if I repeat, making something that I've made before, it doesn't work at all I get really frustrated because I do try and do that sometimes I think Oh, that's good. I try it again. And it doesn't happen

B 21:19 I don't know when it's going to happen. Making these little things. Maybe one day I'll make a bigger thing like that or something. It doesn't really seem to work.

Annette MILLS 30:06 The focus was on creativity and what you think creativity is. Have your ideas about creativity changed at all?

B 30:16 I don't know. I suppose it's like you said at the beginning everything is creative. I suppose that's a bit confusing as well. Because at the beginning, I wasn't doing very much making, but then everything creative your whole life is creative. But then there isn't much focus on your journal.

Annette MILLS 30:26 But it's your theme. It might be to track where your creativity goes. Whether it's in the garden or cooking or it might be in making something, or it might be your thinking is more creative at the moment it's beyond the mundane. It might be identifying strands of creativity and seeing how they move from one to another and how they link, Or it might be seasonal, that would be another area. It's

not just the end product, is it? What you describe as making in one go and when you settle down to do your work, it's all fluid. I would say there's a lot of pre-amble to that, a lot of working up to that point to allow you to just do it.

B 30:42 Yes, maybe. I don't know if I've found what that is yet, but I found it interesting in the book [At a Journal Workshop] in the introduction where he says people used to write these spiritual mystical ritual texts, and they got burnt during the war. There were lots of those at that time where there aren't today, probably because they had more space in their heads. Like the early times around Jesus, there were lots of mystical spiritual writings which are creative I suppose .

Annette MILLS 31:06:It's just finding them again. It's finding where they are. It's like a network that you just have to create and then you can access them.

Annette MILLS 31:10 Thank you for all of the work you've done.

18.6 Participant B Follow-up email response 01/08 /24

Hi Annette

See replies below,

I hope this finds you well, prosperous, and enjoying the summer. It's a voice from the past, but I am in the final stages of writing my thesis and have a viva show booked for October this year.

As there has been a time-lapse, I wanted to know if anything we did with the journaling affected your practice. It could be just feelings or very minor changes. It doesn't have to relate directly to my research.

Your feedback on the following questions would really help me conclude my research.

- From your unique perspective, have you noticed any changes or gained new insights into how you perceive your practice or discipline? Have your methods of working or outcomes changed in any way?

Well I have decided to have a bit of a sabbatical this year and spend time on developing new designs and art pieces. Not sure if this is as a result of the intensive journalism or not!

- Given your expertise, I'm particularly interested in any changes in how you perceive your discipline or practical skills, e.g., considering different materials or handling materials in a different way.

I am going back to experimenting with different materials. Found materials etc., as well as willow and I have decided to not take commissions any more so that I can focus on unique, one-off pieces.

- Have you repeated, adapted or used any of the things you experienced during the research period?

I tried to follow the Intensive Journaling book for a while but it was too complicated and time consuming for me.

- Have you done any form of journaling since? Can you say why?

For last few months have been doing a small amount of journalling every morning. This was after reading a self help book that suggested it!

19. Appendix I Participant C Interview Transcripts

19.1 Participant C Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 1 31 10 22

Annette MILLS 0:37 Are you okay with me recording just the audio? Right, well, I'll give you a bit more information.

Annette MILLS 1:17 I wanted to develop something that I could use to develop strategies that would push my work forward, rather than have to go on a course or to somebody else for guidance, I wanted to find a way to develop my practice independently. So that was my starting point.,

C 2:06 Right.

Annette MILLS 2:08 I've always kept journals. And I found this specific form of journaling called the Intensive Journal by Ira Progoff, he was a psychotherapist and he developed this system, where you write in different sections different aspects of your life. So it covers events and bits of memories. You might record your dreams, and things like that. He knitted it all together by cross-referencing it so you could begin to see patterns in it. And he originally developed it by studying and working with creative people. Because their lives were always about change.

Annette MILLS 3:16 creatives are always like looking for something new to do.

C 3:23 Creating new works and moving in a new direction. Yes, I see that.

Annette MILLS 3:34 I wasn't interested in the therapy side. I was just interested in the structure. And I thought if the focus was looking specifically at your creative practice.

Annette MILLS 4:15 So I thought if I did that I could use his structure, and try and adapt it, but just focus on creative practice.

Annette MILLS 4:28 I just worked on the initial four sections. And doing that it pushed me on. So, having sort of worked through that in my first case study, I now need two or three people to follow the same process and just see if it made a difference to how they perceived their creative practice. It can be when you've got a bit of a block, or you weren't sure about doing something, to see if it helps you move on. So that's sort of the background to it.

C 5:12 Right. I mean, you see, I don't know whether I'm not like most creatives, don't really make products Just you know, so like, I react to things I get commissioned to do things. So whether I, but I do like to try new ways of working. So but it's not like, it's not like, I don't know, I'm not a fine artist or anything like that. So I don't know if that matters.

Annette MILLS 5:41 No, I don't think it does matter. I'm just looking at creativity in the broadest possible sense. So the fact that you

C 5:52 Yes,

Annette MILLS 5:52 that you're responding to commissions, if you're asked for

C 5:55 Yeah,

Annette MILLS 5:56 you know, and that you'll find the new way through that activity.

C 6:02 Yes, yes. I mean, at the moment. I, I mean, I make sculptures anyway, but I got a particular grant, I think it's called creativity works. And it was about working in a new way. And so it's to do with, well, Christmas, really, and illuminations and stuff. So I'm going to put light on a sculpture, which I've never done before. So doing that, I'll be done this month for December. I've also thinking of a project where using almost not like the waste material, but it's an Intel wouldn't normally consider using them. To make a product to sell in the shop. I have to come up with

some reasonably good labelling and packaging, or at least labelling and sort of tell a story about it. And that's all new. Also just with the way that things are going at the moment financially, exploring new ways of sort of, sort of putting yourself across to people. And so I suppose I'm just exploring new ways of talking about what I do.

Annette MILLS 7:55 That's all exactly that kind of area I'm looking at. That's what this is all about.

C 8:02 Oh, good. I do a lot of different things, and I've often thought it would be good to sort of somehow record what I'm up to. And maybe it might, I don't know, might be helpful in some way, or just interesting, if nothing else, you know,

Annette MILLS 8:22 Exactly. There are four different things to start with. And I've written guidelines and instructions for these that I'll email to you.

Annette MILLS 8:34 The first one is a daily log; now you can adapt it and do it however you want to. So I mean, you might want to do it at the end of the day; it will take about 10 to 15 minutes. Or you might want to do it throughout the day, or whilst you're in your studio. Just make notes about what you are doing.

Annette MILLS 9:29 It begins with becoming aware of your creative journey. So the first one is called a Period Log. It's where you are now in your creative practice and what your starting point is for that now.

C 9:53 Yeah,

Annette MILLS 9:54 so it might be working towards your last exhibition or it might be further back. You can choose. The more you think about it, something will come through. Then you begin to plot important events that happened between where you are now and then and how you can move on from there. Then there's the daily log, which you just complete daily or you might do every other day that works for you.

C 10:24 Yeah.

Annette MILLS 10:25 The next part is looking at looking at symbols. So it might be that a key thing that you might just visualise or think about or a recurring thought. And you just make a note of that. Gradually, it builds, and you can begin to find different patterns. After that, you'll see repeated behaviours. That's the sort of system and how it works. It's very gentle. And like I say, if you don't want to do anything, you don't have to do it. You can stop at any point. Because even if you decide, 'oh, no, this isn't for me', that would be really useful for my research as well. Just say, 'No, honestly, this is I take too much time', or 'Oh, no, I can't do this anymore'. That's all totally fine. Because that's all part of the areas that I'm looking at.

C 11:29 I could certainly do a daily log. And I didn't know if I quite understood about the one you said before that about the starting point was that. I'd like to think about that. I would probably just start from where I am now. I would have thought.

Annette MILLS 11:41 That would be fine. Like I said, I've got some brief guidelines that explains how to do it.

Annette MILLS 12:36 You just the period log to begin with. So you just focused on, oh, this is where I am with my creative practice or my creativity. When did I start to think like this, and you can plot it back in time. So it might give you a direction. So you just do that as once as a record to refer back to on some of the exercises, or go into a little bit more detail. So it just sort of it just gives you that sort of a map to sort of follow.

C 13:15 I suppose one can get rather bogged down in the daily activities. And it's good to have a bit more of an overview of what I'm trying to achieve or something like that. So just a means of doing that, really, I mean, I do actually do something a

bit like that. And I don't actually have to do it, but I find it helpful. At the end of the month, I write a report. I look up what I've been up to and it gives me an overview.

C 13:47 Sometimes it's only like 100 words or so. I just find it quite useful to see anything that's been successful things that are challenging things that I've got to do, and maybe, you know, and it's quite interesting, because if I look at the previous months, I think, Oh, well I sorted all that out, I think oh, well, I haven't done any of that. So that's still a problem. You know, because it because it's so easy to just days and weeks can just go by so quickly.

Annette MILLS 14:29 And that's it exactly, and it's thinking, oh, like, where did that time go? What did I do with it? And then how can I? or what the next step would be like, I really do want to do that. And I've got a deadline to get it done by how can I make sure I work more effectively or something like that. So there might be information that comes out of that?

C 14:55 I think the thing is, often, that's partly the way my mind works, but things tend to be a bit of a blur, and then I have to actually sit down and focus on them. And then once I know what I've got to do, oh, I just got to do that. You know, it's much more obvious.

Annette MILLS 15:23 not so daunting.

C 15:25 Yes, I get more used to doing things like, if there's something new, it can take me ages to learn it. The trouble is sometimes I get very enthusiastic about something. And then I kind of go off the boil or I tend not to think very much about the consequences. Like some people think everything through to the to the last degree? Because I think if I did, I probably wouldn't do anything you know, so I'm a bit. So always having a reason to reflect on things is quite helpful. Yeah.

Annette MILLS 16:16 And the other thing I'm interested in is the idea that you don't just have to use writing, it could be whatever you feel comfortable with. So it might

be like using the computer, it might use photographs. So you'd collage or something will make, you know, you'd record your day through photographs rather than writing things.

C 16:48 I sometimes do one of those, almost like a mind map where you have a picture of what you want to do. And that helps me to visualise the different things, I've got to think about absolutely what I've got to achieve, and then then I can somehow make more of a list of what I've actually got to do. Yeah, but it helps me sort of see it somehow. Yeah, and I like I like doing that sort of thing

Annette MILLS 17:35 But it can be like doodling or things like that, anything that you can kind of look at and read back to yourself, you know, so if it, you know, like little notes and bits and bobs or little drawings, or like you say photographs, or it might be that you see something in a newspaper or magazine and you cut that out. And that's a reference. So anyway, you kind of gradually build up all that. And it might be a focus on how it makes you feel, like you say when you're working, there's that lovely feeling of flow isn't there you can hit that can be absorbed in it. So it's sort of, you know, anything that would help you record, you know, it might be music that you've listened to. So you might just make a note of music or maybe quotes from the book. Anything at all. You'd want to record it

C 18:27 I find helpful that yes, yes. Yes, yes. All right. I'm just writing it down. Yes.

C 19:16 Creatives are often working on their own a lot of time. We have to be our own boss, our own everything, our own secretary, our own creative Muse, you know. I do have one or two people occasionally, like one basket maker you know, I occasionally catch up, but there's not that many people doing this sort of thing.

Annette MILLS 19:58 It's a good point, isn't it

Annette MILLS 27:28 Yeah. Okay, I'll send you the next lot of information. And the guidelines. So any feedback, again, from you about whether it makes sense, or I didn't really understand this, that will be useful as well.

C 27:58 Okay.

Annette MILLS 28:01 And then it's sort of, whenever you can get going with it, you know, just give it a go and see how you go. If something doesn't work, or you're not sure about something, then, you know, leave it. I think probably like that the daily log is the thing that will ground it. So if you can keep one thing going, maybe and we'll have another chat, and also, you know, just focus on how, how you're feeling about getting on with it, whether this is a bit of a pain in the neck, or whether I've said I'll do it, I've got to do it all, or I'm quite interested in this, I'll be interested to see what happens. So any of those sorts of feelings would be really good. So just a quick note of anything like that. And like I said, I'm not going to look at anything you record; it's purely for you, however, you want to record it. And I won't be asking for that. All I'm interested in is asking you, well, what did you think about it? And how did that make you feel? And did that help you do such and such? So I just want your perceptions of any change. That's all.

C 29:06 Okay, so, send some guidance. How often do you want me to send something back?

Annette MILLS 29:40 So three weeks sort of works for that. But if you want it a bit more or a bit less, I'm quite sure I can be completely flexible with it.

C 29:59 I think it sounds right to me.

19.2 Participant C Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 2 02 12 22

Annette MILLS 1:21 How have you found it? You say you've been busy, but have you been able to keep going with it?

C 1:32 Well, I mean, no, I didn't really do the log for a while , So first I caught up with my own stuff and then I did and then I did look at your stuff. but it's surprisingly, interesting for me because when you when I first read it, I thought well I'm going to write these eight to 10 things, you know, and how on earth is that going to help but when you do, you went you know like it is a process, isn't it because you sort of go through them and then you kind of think about how you felt to about what it what was going on each of those times and then and then yes, it made me sort of it kind of builds up into more of a picture doesn't it ever? I've how I've developed or not developed or being hindered or whatever.

Annette MILLS 2:47 Yes

C2:49 So it's quite interesting, actually.

Annette MILLS 2:53 Were you reminded about anything or did anything come out that was unexpected? That you hadn't sort of seen? Or found interesting?

C 3:03 Because my mind works differently. I have always had quite a strong focus on things, even when I was a child you know. Strangely enough, the stepping stone I chose was actually relatively recent, but it was more that I think I've got to a place where I can stand up for what I do in terms of people do sometimes say. I often have to work what exactly in a team because usually I'm fairly in control of the project. But in terms of the actual, like working with those people to help me maybe practically or even, maybe with like, for instance, putting in a grant application or something and then and sometimes they would sort of have their own ideas. And I would have to say, well, this is how I want it to go, you know, and so having

confidence, even if my decision perhaps wasn't the best, but having the confidence to say, well, you know, this is how I want it to be and having the confidence to sort of apply for grants and talk to head teachers about sculptures and stuff. You know, I think that's all been relatively recent and but I didn't realise that a lot of them have lots of what I do is I am very, very dependent on other people or I'm very grateful that I can reach out to people and ask them to help and they and they often do, you know, collaborate with me and so that was slightly surprising. I suppose. I wouldn't, if I hadn't reflected on that. I might not really have thought it through very hard that recently this one of these grants have no idea for come off it's it's about improving the lives of older people and possibly working with a group with say, elder people with maybe dementia or something like that. And I got in touch with his basket maker in Scotland. And he's a good teacher and he's a good basket member. He's now he's worked with people with Alzheimer's and strokes and he was very kind and and they basically talked to me quite a bit and suggested things and he's willing to help me if I get the grant.

Annette MILLS 7:36. That's wonderful.

C 7:39 And it is it's just quite humbling. Who am I to go talk to this terribly clever guy, you know, who's do some little project that's only going to go on for a couple of months or something probably, you know. And but so, but it Yes. Um, so I suppose what I'm saying is yes, it's a good it's a good process to go through. And I'm slightly surprised. I'll say that. Yeah, yeah,

Annette MILLS 8:20 I think it is very much a process, and it's just those little prompts. I think. It gives you a structure and then the exercises, specific prompts that just target how you reflect and say, you know, if it's a recent stepping stone that you've focused on into more depth, then again, it might be looking at that and thinking why, why have I been attracted to that and how can I use it? How can I use that kind of feeling to push me forward for the next one, or just to acknowledge the positive side of it?

C 9:05 Yes, that's a good. How can I push on to the next project? Yes.

Annette MILLS 9:16 I thought it was interesting. When you said that in the past, when you were younger people could be quite judgmental about your work and everything. And yet now, having remembered that, and it seems like now you've had this experience, it's like actually, I can acknowledge that I can leave that behind now. And I can see how I've progressed to be able to apply for grants approach different people.

C 9:45 Yeah, I suppose you're right.

C 9:53 Yeah, I suppose I have. I'm it's yes, it's interesting. I mean, also, I tend to sometimes have an inner voice that tells the things it's not very good. You know, I like I tend to feel in other people's shadow to some extent but I think we all have our own angle things don't really we're not all doing the same thing. It's more probably that I'll get commissioned to do one [a sculpture] by some organisation rather than sitting at home and making sculptures as such, you know, and, but I think I realise it's just the way I tend to work so that's fine.

Annette MILLS 11:13 And again, I think lots of people work in similar ways because obviously we all use the same techniques, and we're all using similar materials. And it's really about being confident and acknowledging what you've just said, actually, like, this is what I do. This is how I work. Yes, and you know, and it's like, and it will, you'll find the market or you'll find your way of working.

C 11:58 Yes. I mean, the slight problem with me is I'm very adaptable, and in some ways that's very good, but I can get distracted by different avenues but then again, you see, sometimes it leads to a new way of working so I think it's quite good to be adaptable. Like I've just done this huge sculpture, one of those illumination events. It's a big property, and they and I've never done it before, but I basically made a huge sculpture that's got fibre optics on it. And it was quite well received, I think.

Annette MILLS 14:11 You get there, don't you? like you say you just deal with it. You just deal with one thing after another. How do we do this and like you say there are always other people around to help.

C 14:25 Yes, exactly. yes there were. Yes. So, I feel a bit more positive about things really. I mean, it's interesting that the question about the dreams, I think I was vaguely feeling rather disquieted about the whole situation in a world, you know, global warming and all this war and everything going to pot. My dreams now seem much more well, more resolved. much more just normal practical dreams or whatever rather than and so I think perhaps, yes, just it's, interesting to reflect on things like that.

Annette MILLS 15:40 And you wouldn't, I'm assuming you wouldn't do normally, you would just like have a dream and just forget about it until it happened again, whereas

C 15:50 I think so. Yes, I think so.

Annette MILLS 16:42 So what are you doing now? Are you harvesting or have you?

C 16:48 I'd like to but I don't know if I'll get much done this side of Christmas. I've seen of course it was so mild for so long. There was only I think Trustworthy and some of the Dickies that have lost their leaves. The rest are still green. So in January, I'll probably be doing lots of harvesting, and I have actually been doing a lot of hazel coppicing Alright, which normally I wouldn't do. But in Scotland they need masses of hazel to make an enormous upside down basket in effect which is the roof of an Iron Age Round House that isn't made in a traditional way with big beam. It's more like I think you start on the outside and you make this kind of ring of like woven material and then it just gradually goes in and then and then in curves, like literally like a huge basket. And he wants masses and masses of hazel for that. So we thought well, we can supply that when we can supply a small fraction of it.

And so I've had quite a lot of nice days out in the Hazel when I couldn't really have been cutting the willow so that's worked out quite nicely.

Annette MILLS 18:57 So, I'll send you another exercise. If that's okay.

C 19:12 Yes, yes. Yes. And I'm looking forward to it.

Annette MILLS 19:15 And I would be asking you to think about if you can track or begin to see if there are any triggers. That is part of your creative arc. So like, when you first have an idea or somebody talks to you about commissioning something, and you've got that initial idea and the process that actually then takes you to the completion of it. It might be that it's not completed. It doesn't matter, you know, in terms of this work, but just begin to notice maybe, okay, what kinds of things do I do when I need to get an idea together? Yeah, do I need to take a rest? Do I need to go for a walk? Do I need to pick things up together, and do I need to collaborate and talk to people about it, and just sort of the end to just track your process in terms of, you know, that arc, like, oh, now I'm ready to make, I might be having to gather your materials together. Now I can actually put this together. And then the energy that comes from that, so does that make sense?

C 20:24 Yeah, I think so. I mean, often, initially, I know I have, you know, all sorts of ideas, and they often give me some fall by the wayside.

Annette MILLS 20:37 But that would be interesting. Like how do you recall those ideas? Or do you recall those ideas?

C 20:45 I'm very pictorial. So I tend to sort of get images from all over the place or maybe, images of things I've done previously, but I get sort of source material and, and I mean, I'm not one of these people who knows how to use Photoshop or some you know, so I literally get the pencil, the scissors in the glue and I kind of make a great big kind of mess of pictures and then and then I can actually look at them you know, and that's kind of my that's often my inspiration. But I think there is

a collaborative process as well. Yes, definitely because of some stuff just might not be physically possible.

C 21:35 Things change. Right at the last minute when you realise the physical constraints or the time involved or the materials involved, which can be a bit of a nuisance. I think I'm getting a bit better at that. So, I think when I'm in the initial stages, at first, I may not have much of an idea, and I do find if I sleep on it, or just forget about it for a while and come back to it. Then I may have suddenly have an idea of how it could happen.

Annette MILLS 22:16 If you can also kind of plot how you're feeling. Like how you've felt more confident. So it might be, feeling a bit dubious about doing something, or, feeling I'm not sure if I can do that or achieve that. So you might put that idea to one side

Annette MILLS 23:30 It's also being creative as to how to include people in the work or how to adapt those ideas. That's creativity as well. Like you say how to ask them, and you know what elements can be included.

C 24:11 Yeah. I suppose so. Yes. And then I think I just leave it I just put it on a shelf for a while. I think when I've got time. I'm going to go into this properly. And, you know, think how I would actually do it. Yes, because it's not just the end result. It's how you physically do it, you know, and so it doesn't fall over or fall apart or ever.

C 25:02 It means I'm more in control of the process or at least I understand the process, even if I get other people to help me with it because I know. I sometimes get people to help, and they just spend the whole time just sort of talking, and you just don't really want to get on stuff so, so if I can do it myself, or at least do some of it, then it's helpful. The way I work is a bit different from some people. I think that wouldn't have happened if we hadn't done this work together.

Annette MILLS 27:38 Yeah. But it seems that you're about to say something about collaborating

C 27:46 I did wonder whether I tend to be the one who can bring in the work and organise the projects, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it all has to be my work. It could be that maybe I could involve my other half. In other things, you know, so he's got other specialisms, you know, he, it might just make the work more interesting.

Annette MILLS 29:14 It expands your range.

C 29:23 It's more interesting because you get tired of just doing the same things. It's nice to have the energy of say if I did work with older people and it was helping them to feel better. Well, it kind of gives you a buzz, doesn't it? To talk about the work gives it a freshness and a meaning, so yes. I don't like just sort of teaching ladies who lunch, you know, I just think what's you know, they're having a nice time for a few hours, but I don't really, it doesn't do much for me. you know.

C 30:02 I do realise that people respect my work and I should just accept that. You know, I'm lucky, and it's nice to be able to do it sort of thing you know. I do feel a bit quite fairly sort of privileged in a way, you know, obviously, because of the way I work, you don't know what's going to come up because I tend to sort of react to things and just take up opportunities as they come, but it's on the whole it seems. I seem to be trusting more than that. It works, you know.

Annette MILLS 30:55 And that's a confidence thing as well, isn't it?

C 31:02 I Think so. It's certainly taken quite a while to feel that.

Annette MILLS 32:47 I'll do another exercise for you. And write that up and send that to you, then make another date after Christmas.

C 33:38 Very good. Well, thanks very much. And I hope you have a nice Christmas as well. Yeah. And so thank you for helping me with this process.

Annette MILLS 33:48 I'm glad you're finding it interesting.

19.3 Participant C Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 3 17 01 23

Annette MILLS 0:52 So last time, I sent you some questions, just to sort of focus a little bit. Do you remember those? I've got them in front of me. It doesn't matter if you haven't had the time to look at them.

C 1:28 I've got answers to them.

Annette MILLS 1:44 So that was all it was, just to give a little bit of warning pre-warning, really. So I've been giving you time to actually engage in the process of the journaling, which you have done. So how did you feel about using the journal or using the structure of the journal to inform your creative practice?

C 2:43 I think I found it quite hard to understand at first what I was supposed to do. So I copied and pasted some of your words into documents or looked at them, and I began to understand what is expected. I've found the whole process quite strange at first. But when I do it, then I'm quite surprised by the results and find it's quite useful. I suppose I'm just not used to thinking about my creative process and practice. And at the moment, I don't understand about this life history log.

Annette MILLS 3:44 The process is about re-reading not all of it necessarily, but different parts and when you re-read, you just add more detail so if you remember a little bit more, then you can add to build a greater picture.

C 4:08 Yes, I see. I did reflect recently about how you get called to it, or you had a pathway that you didn't at various points follow. I was reflecting on how a few more of those have sort of happened, and yet strangely, even if, say, these were years ago sometimes or maybe it's more like I did something I put some work into something, and then it didn't really come into fruition or whatever. And or you think it didn't at the time. And then like years later, maybe even like 15 years later, you

find that that somehow blossoms much later on, or I put work into something for one reason, but then I end up using it for another reason. And so that was quite interesting.

Annette MILLS 5:10 Yes. So, the general thing was it is all about having an initial framework. And then once you're comfortable with it, you adapt it to how it works for you. Then you just keep adding to it when you need to or if you have, like if you get stuck for ideas, maybe you go back, and you could read a little bit, and then you just add as you remember a little bit more or like you say to make those connections and see how you've kind of adapted from one idea and how it's come up later. It's just under the surface almost.

C 5:51 Yes. Yes, that's right.

Annette MILLS 6:46 You were talking to me last time about how you've adapted the process to fit the journaling your practice.

C 7:07 Yes, because I'm not used to doing it. At first, I thought it slightly odd but I can see that it's useful and I mean, I've tended to do the work when I'm less busy like on a weekend or so. So I don't necessarily always do the journals every day.

Annette MILLS 7:42 I think that's really important.

C 8:01 Yes, and I think initially I was just literally writing. I went, and I did this, and I did that. Now I'm reflecting on how I felt, or on what's going on to affect my ability to do things or not. And, yeah, that's more useful. Really. Yeah, that means it's not just a quick note of what I've done, it's more well, this is what's going on and how it affects me and so on.

Annette MILLS 8:39 So, has anything surprised you then as you've been working like that?

C 8:47 I was surprised that I found it quite useful because I got an overview of how I work. And so it forces me to think about other possible ways of working or why I don't work in other ways, right? Because you get so used to working in a certain way. But it helps me to see, perhaps because of the way my mind works, why I tend to just do things in one way and yes. It's quite surprising.

Annette MILLS 9:28 I think it's really difficult to see what you don't know and you don't always know what you're looking for. So, working through the journal, gives you a bit of insight about, why am I doing that? Why I've always done it that way. What's, what's another way of doing it? Is that is that the kind of thing you mean?

C 9:59 Yes, yes.

C 10:02 I've realised how I am quite dependent on other people. I do work with other people, and that's always helpful somehow. Even though I might not kind of acknowledge it to myself, a lot of the time I'm working with other people who I have to ask for advice. So, although one sees oneself as, you know, working away and doing stuff, a lot of it's actually a kind of joint effort to a certain extent.

Annette MILLS 10:43 Yes, definitely. It is like a stimulus as well, isn't it? Being able to have reassurance or just a different way to see things or another person's input, how they interpret what you're doing? I think that's really important.

C 10:58 Yes, it's almost like they're witnessing what I'm doing, and I am witnessing what they're doing also, sometimes it gives you gives me more confidence to try something new or to keep going with something.

Annette MILLS 11:15 So do you think journaling allows you to step outside of it and have a bit more distance for yourself so that you can do it a little bit more for yourself?

C 11:29 Possibly, I hadn't thought of it quite that way. Yes, I suppose having that little bit of perspective is helpful.

C 11:41 It's funny, isn't it? We project ourselves, especially in this modern age with social media and we project to project ourselves in a certain way.

C 13:47 It's almost like telling your story in a different way. And yes, looking at something from outside, instead of always just getting on and doing stuff. Yeah, I like I realised that because I've done the same sort of thing for so long, you know, that it's nice to sort of have something with a bit of meaning behind it. So quite often I seem to be getting more into the idea of seeing my work as therapeutic, and you know, I could help people, especially after COVID and so on, to use their hands and you know, get that get into the zone and be more calm because they have to focus. And so that's an area that I'm exploring of working in. Which is quite energising.

Annette MILLS 14:44 That's really interesting, the whole thing about using your hands, and particularly if you're working with other people, the fact that you're actually able to physically do something with your hands releases, the fact that you can talk it encourages people to talk.

C 15:07 Oh, that's interesting. Yes, I suppose it does. Yes.

Annette MILLS 15:09 It gives you something to talk about, first of all, because you're all doing something, and then that leads you into other conversations that really makes connections and stuff.

C 15:58 Oh, yes, yes. You know, you asked about what would you like to see included in the journaling process. So I think sometimes I find it quite hard to understand what you're expecting, and I think if, at least initially, I might be able to get my head around, work more quickly, perhaps if it was presented in the form of a table, or maybe even pictures this is just something I thought. But I'm not sure if

that's possible, really. But there might be a different way of just me understanding what's needed. Okay, I think it's just because of the way my brain works, to be honest.

Annette MILLS 16:48 Well, I think that's really valid. It was useful when you said, you know, for one of the exercises can you provide a set of questions.

C 17:36 I understand there's an awful lot going on behind what you've written, and it's just because it's new to me, I'm just trying to understand, but then I mean, I do.

Annette MILLS 17:51 I think when you asked me if I could reword it in questions that was really useful for me, because it made me consider a different way to communicate things.

C 17:58 Yes, I think that's right. I think if somebody sends me something for all different types of fonts and colours, I just turn it all into one type of font and remove any weirdness so I can just and then I can read it, you know, it's, something like that or if I have something, you know, maybe in or on a table or listen, I can actually see the separate sentences more easily.

Annette MILLS 18:26 I think that's really important, to actually be able to present the same piece of information in different forms.

C 18:57 When I have a project, I do a kind of mind map and I've got this project I'd love to do, and I've met an artist And I think what I'm going to do is, although I'm responding to what she wants me to do, I'm going to send her this idea I had, because she's the only person I've come across who actually might understand and be able to put something like that into practice. So I mean, I'm not sure when if anything will come of it, but it's nice when you meet these slightly batty arty types who are actually somehow managing to to get their work out there, you know, cuz I, I like the idea of not just making a structure but having some sort of meaning or enabling people to go on a journey by interacting with it or something like that. So if

I could, if I could learn to maybe see how she works and ask her about what to ask, tell her about my idea and see if I can learn something.

Annette MILLS 20:33 just clarifies it, it just a new as you as you work through that process. It clarifies it for you.

C 20:40 It's more like that's the way people would expect to see it, they would expect to see like this kind of tree with bits all over it, but then I bought that house, how I tend to think about stuff initially, it's a bit of a kind of scattergun approach and then I kind of, and then I can kind of distil it into strands, something a bit more coherent.

Annette MILLS 20:58 And do you find that when you're doing that when you're working through that, you get other ideas that are fed in or it refines those ideas in a different way to what you expected?

C 21:09 What it's very easy to sort of on that sort of diagram. Yes, you can put in new little bits on certain bits where it's relevant to, oh, well, that could lead to that. Or I could come back to it again later. And whereas if it's all in the text, it's all like, that's almost like a slice of time. That's, you've written that's it. Whereas with this diagram, you can adapt it more easily and then maybe write a new version of it. So it's, I find it helpful in that way.

Annette MILLS 21:39 And that's very similar to the exercise about you know, the choices that you've made in the past.

C 21:45 yes, I suppose so. Yes. I suppose it's more natural really isn't it?

Annette MILLS 21:53 Once it's recorded somewhere you can go back so you don't forget about it.

C 22:01 yes, that's that's true.

C 22:05 I mean, sometimes I think people think if you if you're constantly writing a diary, then you're kind of bound in on yourself and your own process and all that, and it's not healthy. But on the other hand, I think if it's done, because I think you said somewhere to not really not sort of interpret what you're doing, not rationalise it too much, but just write down what immediately comes to mind and that is different. It's, I think there's a sort of lightness to it I kind of it's sort of an openness, isn't it? enables one to see things you wouldn't normally see.

Annette MILLS 23:25 What do you do with your mind maps when you've when you've finished them or when you're working through them?

C 23:39 I think I've got that either on the computer. I've got a sort of, sometimes I literally just take a photo of them or have them in a file at one point. I just have a pile of them. I've got my enormous notepad. It's a similar kind of thing, really. Yeah, because more for a specific project that I know I'm doing, but it's probably it's useful to be able to look back on them. Yeah, so I've probably forgotten the details. But then, when I look back, that reminds me of what I've done.

Annette MILLS 24:38 Thinking about what you were saying about those other branches of it, and you sort of say that the same idea that you've thought about previously, you could see coming up and resurfacing. It might be just quite interesting to not look at the project that you were working on those mind maps but just look at those little branches. And just see, you know, just sort of skim through them just and think, Oh, well, there was a bit there. And oh, that's quite interesting. I've forgotten about that. The alternatives rather than looking at it in the way you know what was left behind, if you like, do you know what I mean?

C 25:15 Yes. So that might be because it could be that I could apply some of the ideas to this new project because she wants to use new materials, and it's all about changing people's ways of doing things, I suppose Yes. I'll look at the old one, and

then I might be able to use that actually to inform this new one. It is funny how things kind of come around

C 30:43 Like you put some work into something, and then nothing comes of it, and you feel a bit miffed. Then, later on, obviously, exactly the same thing comes up in a different form.

Annette MILLS 30:51 So it could be that you could incorporate those Mind Maps even though you've done them, sometime before, and that would be part of your present journaling. You use the structure that was like, which path did you take, which didn't you take, and then just keep adding to that might be a really lovely way to extend it?

C 31:34 Yes I suppose it gives one a bit more confidence in a way to sort of explore things, and will have a benefit at some point in the future.

Annette MILLS 31:55 Yeah, so and it could be that when you do that, you can actually see that's what I was interested in there, and what I was interested in there, but I've not pursued it. And now I'm actually in the position. I could actually try and introduce that in a more conscious way. Yes. A bit of direction. Yes. And that pushes forward.

C 32:19 So yes, that's right. Yes, I think it's not so much teaching a skill but, like, helping people to understand an idea or something I like I quite liked that. But it's not something I consciously think of myself as doing. But if there was a way of sort of doing some work that was exploring an idea, yes, I quite like that. And then I, the thing is it again, it's this thing of how I get enthusiastic about something and put quite a bit of effort into it, but then I'm not quite sure how to how to take it forward because it's then it gets all kind of messy and difficult.

Annette MILLS 33:17 That's where I think the structure of the journaling could be useful. It can help to reflect a bit more and provide a focus. Also, don't

underestimate what you were sort of saying about the feelings. You know, like, feeling really excited about this or really frustrated. Just dig into that a little bit. So what did you do last time when you felt like that? And what can I use from how I got out of it all? How long was it before you had that thought again? I'm not going to let it go. I'm going to put it to one side for this week but next month, I'm going to come back and look at that again and see if I feel differently about it. So those sorts of strategies , incorporating the feelings can really be quite helpful as well.

C 34:26 Yes. Yes, okay.

C 35:08 I think the thing is, like it's like the first time, it's hard for me to quite understand what I was doing, and I've got more interest seeing. Oh, yes, I can reflect on these different places where I have, I've maybe made a choice and done something different and then and now. I'm starting to I think it's just making me stand back a bit from my busy daily life to see a bit more about how I work and why don't work in certain ways. And then maybe revisit things and maybe just be given a little bit more space. So I think it's so it's hard to explain, quite often I miss meetings. And it's partly because I know I've got a meeting then I kind of forget about it. And it's almost like it's hard to explain about autism, but you have all these organisations that, oh yes, we've got to take notice of autism. And I'll go to an event, and it's in a really echoey place, and people talking really quickly. And you know, and it's the same as say, just having any other sort of meeting. It's like, if, if they reminded me, like they rang me up and said, I had a little chat said we're going to have a meeting will you be there? I'm more likely to go. Well, even though I know it's happening, you know, it's just something. That little that little programme that tells this bit of a brain to do this thing, right? So if you send me something, it's almost like, oh, yes, well, I want to do that, but it's just getting my head together to actually do it somehow. So it's, I don't know, I think it goes with being a bit arty that you know that there are many ways of doing things and we're so fast aren't we this modern age everything. Why does everything always have to be so intense? Yeah. Yeah. And we sort of buy into that, and then we all get totally stressed.

C 36:12 So I think, in a way this journaling is a bit like the reverse of that. It's like helping to step back a bit. Notice how things can happen years and years ago, or similar things can happen. And it's all about the type of people we are reacting to things and so I Oh, that's brilliant. Yeah. I think partly why I like doing, you know, this sort of physical repetitive work is because it kind of it suits my sensitivities and it helps me to be grounded.

Annette MILLS 36:34that's really that's really helpful. Thank you.

C 36:43 thanks for that. It's just nice to have you can help me through the process. And also having an opportunity to sort of talk, you know, because it's always nice to have a chance to talk.

Annette MILLS 37:11 Okay. Thank you very much for that. Lovely speaking to you. Bye.

19.4 Participant C Interviewed by Annette Mills Interview 4 27 03 23

Annette MILLS 1:59 So have you managed to keep going with the journaling.

C 2:06 Yes. I started some new stepping stones. And then I used that to do this dialogue thing. Yes, so that was quite useful.

C 3:03 My dialogue with works. It's quite interesting doing that.

Annette MILLS 3:44 Was there anything that surprised you? What sort of thoughts did you have about it?

C 3:46 The sculpture was of a rabbit it had been the kind of heraldic symbol of this Catholic college and it was just a sort of boring, there's three rabbits in a row and then a shield. And so I felt that this rabbit was glad to be off its stone carving on the various places in the building. It felt joy being a wild and free version of the rather chubby rabbit on the crest. I think my rabbit got to enjoy being seen and enjoyed by families and visitors.

Annette MILLS 5:26 That's fantastic. The dialogue from the rabbit was about really glad to be given a bit of freedom, a bit more air around it and not sort of just part of a group of three.

C 5:43 I was going to call it binking. That's what rabbits do when they're happy, and they kind of jump for joy. But it can be quite rude. We don't want those sorts of connotations of joy. The Catholic trustees really didn't like that so I couldn't call it Binking. They're still quite proper and formal and stuff, and did not like it was a more sleek kind of rabbit, running out of a hole with whiskers. I couldn't make it completely lifelike because all the feet really had to be on the ground. Otherwise it might have fallen over on somebody else. It's still there people see it when they go in. Which is not what I was expecting because it's it was for a kind of one-off well, a month.

Annette MILLS 6:30 But it's so nice that it was made for one purpose and they're they've moved it and that it's still there.

C 6:42 Yes.

C 6:48 it's huge, 11 foot long. It's enormous.

Annette MILLS 6:51 So do you think you might use that technique again, that dialoguing?

C 7:10 I found it useful reflecting back on things in the diary in its simplest form . It's just a record of what I've done sort of thing, though. It gives me an overview of what I've been doing and then I and Yes, I think when I get to sort of stepping stones, and then I kind of look back on them. I've been as I was quite surprised for a lot of the stuff I've been doing I made me realise how much I rely on other people. You know, like I tend to work in a team, like I get the jobs and I organise the jobs that I'm working with other people usually who helped me to bring them to practice quite often. And I help them develop their skills but and then they helped me with this because you know, it's a bit of a because there's certain things I'm not so good at and they're better than other way around and I think sometimes things when you look at take a longer view, you know, things don't work out.

I brought my daughter in to help me quite a bit and I've even been asked by other people to come and teach them or you know, it's just like is quite nice when I feel like I'm being helpful, teaching other people how to make things and then how to look after them. At one point I thought I'm not a proper basketmaker because I don't sit and make baskets and I'm not that bothered about baskets really. But I've become a person who's seen a person who seems like an expert in, in my field. I help people to improve their spaces and maybe improve their skills so they can work with others.

Annette MILLS 8:07 So, has it made you realise how skilled you are and what you can contribute? You said that there's a lot of dependency on others and other people's skills to collaborate and achieve what you want to.

C 10:35 If I'm making a sculpture, I know I can do one on my own. But if I'm working with another artist, we bounce ideas off each other. An artist I work with sometimes sees a different way of filling the space or has a very good idea about a pattern or something. You know, she's not frightened to just say, look, we should do this kind of thing. And that's quite nice for me. I mean, sometimes I have to argue my case I say, well, look, I'm in charge of this job, and I'm doing this. So that's what's happening. I find it easier working with somebody who's similar more similar to me, really? Yes,

Annette MILLS 12:14 Do you think you're moving more towards community projects?

C 12:26 I seem to be. The funding bid is to see if we can evidence that this work is therapeutic for specific groups of people. I'm wondering if I could move into social prescribing or something like that, which would be nice, where people kind of can be signposted to come and learn from me because it's therapeutic

Annette MILLS 16:44 Do you think any of this work has indicated the direction that you really want to go into? Like you were saying about therapy. I wonder whether doing this reflective work has actually pinpointed that for you a bit more?

C 17:35 Yes, I suppose I can put myself more in the shoes of other people. I believe more that I can be that person who supplies that sort of practical teaching role, rather than just being seen as a basket maker. I must have grown in confidence because I'm sure even a year or two ago, I wouldn't have I wouldn't have believed I could do these things. You know I think the stepping stones thing. I think it's being able to look back and sort of see patterns or just have more of an overview of how I work rather than just lashing out on with everything all the time. So having more of a view of how I work with other people. And yeah, sort of having

the confidence to say noticing if I don't want to do some silly little workshop or, or having the confidence to say, I'm going to apply for this other grant. really, when it comes down to it, it's about talking to people and offering what I can.

C 18:47 I think if I can sort of do the little diary and then maybe I can get some more ideas from this and do a kind of little exercise every now and then. I do a kind of write-up every month, like a review. But it's more like from a business point of view. This is like an adjunct to that in a way.

Annette MILLS 19:23 It encourages you to focus on your feelings. a little bit more.

C 19:32 Yes, that's right. Well, that's really important, actually. Because when we understand our feelings. We get things out in the open world.

C 19:50 Or if you do get stressed, you kind of get over it more quickly.

Annette MILLS 19:57 Yeah. We learn to manage our feelings.

C 20:08 Yes. That's right. And, giving ourselves the space to maybe try new things a little bit more. Like to buy yourself the time to do it, but I think it's worth it.

Annette MILLS 20:29 So on the whole then the whole process, like, have you do you think you found it useful?

C 20:36 Well, I think I have, but I think I was slightly surprised I found it useful, That sounds a bit awful. But, I remember kind of commenting once or twice. Looking back, yes, I kind of felt slightly quite surprised.

Annette MILLS 20:56 That's about revealing probably a different perspective or making you realise different things that you kind of might intuitively have known, but never kind of maybe recognised how often that behaviour happens or something like that.

C 21:23 So at first I was just getting used to the process, I think, and then I think I found it useful because it get more of an overview, you know. I think you got more understanding, then you feel more confident and you're less stressed about things. Having an overview makes me think about the way I'm working when normally I wouldn't really think about how I work. The way I work is probably to do with the way my mind works, and perhaps I didn't know going down the path of least resistance or whatever or maybe I shouldn't be involving other people so much, but on the other hand, if we all seem to be enjoying the process, then you know, I think if I can if I can use other people and get better work with me and we both learn.

C 22:30 I think that's fairly valid. Yeah, definitely. But I know other people don't work in that way.

Annette MILLS 22:37 But it seems as you've been talking, as you've been speaking to me about it, it seemed as if at the beginning, or you know, a few sessions ago, you recognised that you were almost like there was a dependency on other people to actually be able to produce the work. But now, it seems as you're speaking, it's more of a proper collaboration, you feel it's more of a proper collaboration that you are contributing, and you've got a very valid position to be in and that the whole process for you is about collaboration.

C 23:12 Yes. I think, at first, I sort of felt guilty about it. Now I think it's it we produce some good work by the end of it, you know, so I think that's useful

Annette MILLS 23:29 and that your work is your skill level. And your contribution is just as important, you know, as anybody else is.

C 23:39 My creative process makes me aware that I can think I need to think around a concept and come at it from different angles.

C 23:53 It's about forming new habits. Then it just becomes part of one's routine.

Annette MILLS 24:09 Thank you so much. I mean that your commitment to it has been absolutely fabulous. I really do appreciate it. I know it's been a lot of there's a lot of work

C 24:20 Its not been too onerous you know, it's I say getting into at the beginning was a bit difficult, but it's been nice.

Annette MILLS 24:3 And it's been lovely speaking to you. I've really enjoyed our chats. So it's been so interesting.

19.5 Appendix I.4 Email from Participant C asking for clarification 05 11 22

Hello Annette,

I have read your documents about the twilight brief. I can't relate to it at all, I don't really understand what you're talking about.

Obviously I am creative person and my work is developing over time, but in your guidance notes I don't find anything to latch onto.

I tend to be very focused and could answer specific questions if you have any for me?

It's easy for me to record a daily log of what been doing , but this first one needs a bit of explaining please.

Appendix 19.6. Participant C follow-up email response 02 08 24

Hello Annette,

My daughter recently created a book of images for me for my birthday, depicting 30 years of my creations.

This was helpful and positive for me.

Although I haven't been journaling I still go through a process of writing a monthly report at the end of the month, for my benefit.

This includes Successes and achievements ,New ideas, Marketing and sales income, Issues to address and Things to do, with time-scales.

It's nice to have the chance to reflect.

It helps me to reflect on what I have been doing recently, look at what I need to do in future ,and gives me more of an overview in my work.

By doing this I feel more confident about my ability to make something even if I haven't done it before, and I am less affected by short term /local disruptions to my work.