

Drawing the space of in-between: Researching a Phantom Presence

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The paper presents an argument for impactful space characterized as a dynamic in-between that on this occasion is illustrated by a personal hallucinatory presence of a phantom appearing in a portal; the doorway between a utility room and a kitchen of the author's flat, experienced as seen by him from his bedroom in the middle of the night. The author discusses this experience in relation to a mechanical means, an action camera, that presents a similar presence in the artwork to the phantom in the nightmare, and in a theoretical context of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's notion of a psychical interpretation of the visual gaze. Meanwhile the artwork develops and proposes offshoots for potential consideration, where the question of impactful space caused by the phantom and how the latter is manifest in and as a visual-material medium can be further articulated.

Keywords: drawing, domestic architecture, phantom, theoretical psychoanalysis

Este trabalho apresenta o tema do espaço impactante, sendo este caracterizado por uma posição intermediária dinâmica, aqui ilustrada pela presença de uma alucinação pessoal: um fantasma que aparece num umbral, na passagem entre a despensa e a cozinha do apartamento do autor, tal como foi experienciado e visto pelo próprio, do seu quarto, a meio da noite. O autor discute esta experiência através meios mecânicos, uma action camera que ocupa na obra de arte uma presença semelhante à do fantasma no seu pesadelo, e, no contexto teórico, mediante a noção de interpretação psíquica do olhar visual, proposta pelo psicanalista Jacques Lacan. Paralelamente, a obra desenvolve-se e aponta ramificações para potencial consideração futura: o modo como o fantasma transforma o espaço impactante, como se manifesta no espaço e como constitui um meio visual/material.

Palavras-chave: desenho, arquitetura doméstica, fantasma, psicanálise teórica



Fig. 1a/b/c Top; view towards doorway between utility room and kitchen, from bedroom, ink on paper, 55.5 x 35.5 cm; lower left, view of action camera from behind it, attached to goggles, and lower right, digital graphic of how the camera appears optically while being worn in front of one's face © Michael Croft

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1. INTRODUCTION

The hypothesis of this paper is that impactful space can be defined and demonstrated as and through the process of development of a drawing that leans towards painting, in this case concerning a particular experience of a section of a domestic dwelling. By impactful space, I as the paper's author mean a sense of at-once constriction and fullness of liminal space, in other terms *interstitial* or *in-between* that is framed by physical and sentient spatial factors, and theory. The above-mentioned *particular experience* concerns a nightmare that involved the appearance of a phantom. This image, combined with another illusory although mechanical image, will increasingly emerge as the artwork approached as research progresses.

1.1. PORTAL

A section of a dwelling, a doorway or *portal* between utility room and kitchen perceived through a heavy wood-framed glazed sliding door from the location of my bed, which framed the phantom presence, can be illustrated by means of a sketch, as shown in Fig. 1a, below. Factors of distortion resulting from the imposition of the curved plane of vision on a rectilinear structure are indicated in the sketch, as well as the subjective phenomenon of a sense of fullness of certain areas of space. The sketch, therefore, may be said to transmute the visual physicality of the location to the domain of imagination.

1.2. ACTION CAMERA

While reference to an apparition can be explained as neurological factors that many people will have experienced during a nightmare, the means of recording the process of making the drawing as video has involved an action-camera worn close to my eyes, at-once disrupting my vision and causing vision to compensate by optically impacting the camera, due to which it appears to me as its own phantom imploded rectangle. According to Nielsen & Zadra (2005, p.930) 'sleep-wake transition disturbances' are where either a 'real perception' comes into sleep or a 'dreamed object or character into wakefulness'. Coincidentally, in my case while the phantom is dreamed the camera is both a material object and offers a perception, between the two of which, it might be considered in relation to the present paper, is a transition. This paper in effect *presents as* the transition. The rectangle of course vastly scales up in relation to anything it is recording, which blocks off portions of whatever is directly in front of it. By looking around the device, or by moving slightly to the left or right, I can effec-

tively see whatever is obscured in front of it. There is another determining factor, however, which is the fact that I am left-eye dominant, so the movement of vision appears to be from centre, in this case lower centre, feeding from the left, mimicking the curve of the clear-plastic goggles, to the right, Fig. 1b/c.

The imploded-rectangle apparition, the material component of technology affected by optical distortion, is not only also in the domain of my own cognition – it is not perceivable by the viewer of any of its videos except as image-based representation within the recording – but also coincides with the proportion, perceived at a perspectival angle from my bed, of the portal in which the phantom appeared. (Compare the graphic of the imploded rectangle of the action camera, Fig. 1b, with the portal dimensions shown in Fig. 1a.)

1.3. TWO KINDS OF IMPACTIVE SPACE

Both the phantom contained within an architectural feature and the camera as means of recording the process of its representation coincide as two different kinds of impactful space. I might say that while the phantom swells out from the frame, the camera swells into it, as a two-and-one spatially pulsatile realisation. Of course, there are human corporeal implications in anything pulsatile, but insofar as impactful space is *felt* space, sentient, but not necessarily without physicality, this is not an inappropriate analogy. Böhme (2003, p.5) states in the phenomenological context: 'Although bodily space is always the space in which I am bodily present, it is at the same time the extension, or, better, the expanse of my presence itself'. This suggestion that while one's corporeal body is where one is at any moment in time, it in effect projects into and includes in its compass relevant surrounding space, is arguably what I have attempted to articulate in the sketch, Fig. 1a, above, through the analogy of how vision distorts space within the near compass of one's binocular plane of reference. In the Lacanian theoretical psychoanalytical context – where certain overlaps do exist between it and phenomenology – the contemporary psychoanalyst Clotilde Leguil (2023, p.5) references Lacan's Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* ([1964] 1998), which is also my own source of reference for questions of vision, when she states of dreams and nightmares: 'Dreaming is... experiencing vision', and goes on to suggest how similar this is to how 'intimately concerned' one often feels when looking at a painting.

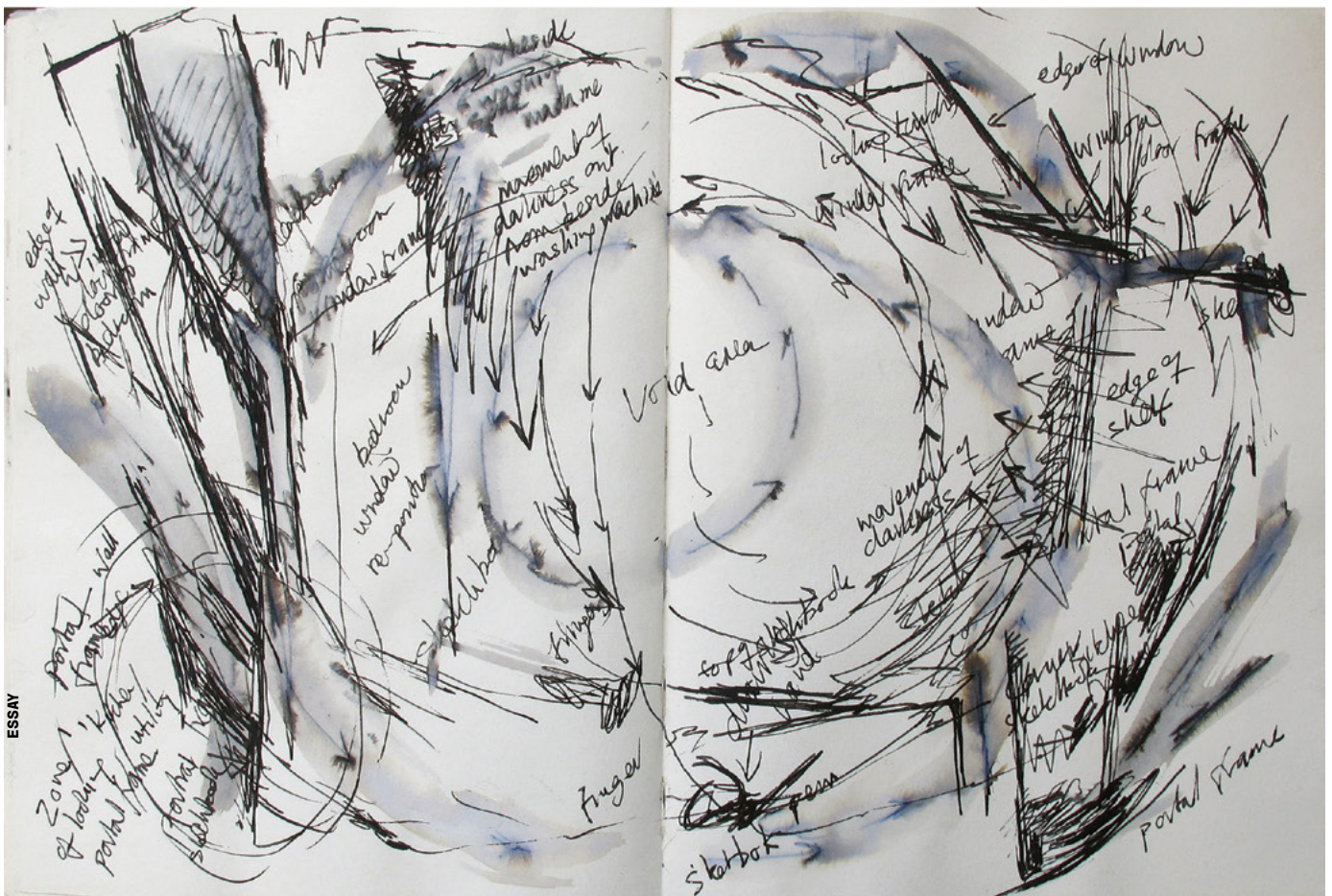
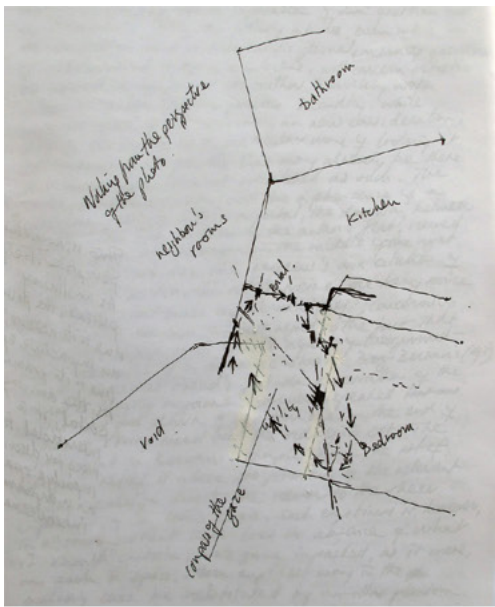


Fig. 2a/b/c Top, sketched floor plan, ink & acrylic on paper, 20.5 x 29.5 cm;
 Fig. 2b: middle, sketch from ground-level perspective, first state, ink on paper, 42.5 x 28 cm;
 Fig. 2c: lower, sketch from ground-level perspective, second state, ink & water on paper, 42.5 x 28 cm © Michael Croft

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. THE SPACE DETAILED FROM A PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

A sketched floor plan imposes a reading of the relevant sentient space of encounter of the phantom in the portal on a rough plan-view of the architectural space, Fig. 2a, below. In order to make the sketch I had to walk around the space and simultaneously imagine myself above it. The marks' pressures and inconsistencies convey, in and through their indexicality, sentient traces that in Kristeva's (1997, p. 35) semiotic theory will have psychic import. Few would disagree that a sense of subjective personality is conveyed in one's handwriting, and with regard to idiosyncratic use of line in mark making and gesture in drawing this may be considered little different. Benjamin (AA School of Architecture, 2005) uses the term 'porous' when he discusses the drawn line in terms that are of architectural interest within a larger focus on a drawing of the unconscious by Freud: "Lines both divide, and allow for movement." This has implications especially for the directional arrows delineating the particularly relevant compass of space in the sketch, Fig. 2b, shown below. From a phenomenological approach to space, the 'porous' line may be useful for designing on the basis of experience of *atmosphere*, the latter of which, according to the architectural theorist Juhani Pallasmaa in conversation with the architect Peter Zumthor (Aalto University, 2018), is "...suspended between the space and the experience," when experience is a phenomenon of the beholder.

While the sketch, Fig. 2a, is relatively conceptual, both Benjamin's and Pallasmaa's points are of greater relevance to the sketch, Fig. 2b, due to its more perceptual orientation from a ground-level perspective. In order to make the sketch I stood in the darkness of night in the threshold of the portal in which the phantom had appeared, and perceived myself as looking down on my open sketchbook, hands, and forearms, across to each of the wood-framed glass sliding door on the left and window and window-sill on the right of the utility area, and upwards towards a washing machine cupboard at the room's far end. The sketch then involved positioning the structural elements while *feeling* and registering their distortion by subjective factors of human vision; trying to locate my experience of the space through the projection into it of my body, as suggested above by the Böhme quote. I then brushed the sketch's ink-basis with water and reworked the result from the same viewing position. The indexical signifier, divorced from any obvious references apart from what is suggested by the relational use of

annotation, is now abundant, arguably, with atmospheric suggestions of its medium, Fig. 2c.

Whether or not line itself can be considered porous, certainly the absorbance of the paper, when wet, will inversely pull the medium of the line out from itself. This results in a degree of autonomy showing within the medium. Pigrum (2021, p.176) cites Heidegger's 'notion of *Entwurf* as a way of "opening the world to possibilities of doing", and states that the nearest equivalent to its meaning in English is 'drafting out or sketching out or transitional notation'. In the pedagogical context, Pigrum (2021, p.178) refers to 'the anxiety of postponing closure implicit in the notion of *Entwurf*, and suggests advising students – which may also be considered useful advice to oneself – in such terms as: 'sketch things out roughly'; 'don't worry about drawing over the top...'; 'if you can't draw it, write it'. In terms of architectural education such drawing, where the *Entwurf* is operative, is most likely to occur at the stage of early exploration, or be a type of exploration where the obligation towards the disambiguation of line necessary for plan drawings' ease of interpretation is delayed in order to see what transpires from more subjective levels of individual identification – of course transposed through one's medium – with one's subject.

Consider, for example, modelling from the three-dimensional suggestions implicit in the sketch, Fig. 2c, above. In this respect, Pigrum (2021, p.178) refers to '...the unexpected and uncanny that generates that form of intellectual uncertainty and anxiety that is a trigger of creativity'. The 'unexpected and uncanny' is in the present context firstly the phantom presence, and secondly, from then on as part of a developmental continuum that will concern what Pigrum (2021, p.178) refers to as 'dialogue and multi-mode use on a dispensable surface of inscription'. The above-referenced sketch in both its states is one such surface. Sketches of this type may or may not survive, as artefacts, but their purpose will have been to generate an interrelated level of intellectual and creative thinking.

2.2. THE SPACE OF PERCEPTION ITSELF

Given that perception is a wholly allusive phenomenon, variously considered through cognitive science, philosophy of mind, phenomenology, and theoretical psychoanalysis, my contention is that it has its place, symbolically and physically, midway between one's gaze and the perceived object. Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the *scopic drive* (1998, pp.67-119) strongly suggests that perception is positioned midway between the object of the gaze and the object's beholder.

An important caveat to one's understanding of the gaze, however, at least in Lacan's theory, is that for paradoxical reasons of the obfuscating influence of the human psyche, the gaze is situated in and projected from the object *towards* the human recipient as their own *subject*: 'What we have to circumscribe... is the pre-existence of the gaze – I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides' (Lacan, 1998, p.72). In visual artistic terms, one may consider that the image has in effect been pulled or released from its basis in the object, and will in any case have been located somewhere physically apart or askance from the object on and in whatever visual-material circumstances hold its presentation. If the artistic terms are drawing, such circumstances are likely to be the paper or other drawing surface. If the artist is observing the object, they will be developing it as an image on a surface, a board or sketchbook, that offers further support between the object and the artist. The artist will be pulling their reaction to whatever is observed towards the drawing surface, which creates an intermediary gap between object and image. Albeit outside of the present paper's scope, the determination of desire in the midst of artistic creative activity, and suggesting why Lacan's theory is of more interest to me than other likely sources, Lacan (1999, p. 5) states: '...desire merely leads us to aim at the gap (*faille*) where it can be demonstrated that the One is based only on (*tenir de*) the essence of the signifier'. For inscrutable reasons, therefore, concerning desire, I find myself attracted by a discreet domestic architectural circumstance, a portal, whose portent has been to suggest a motif for the consideration of impactful space.

The imploded rectangle of the camera, as shown in Fig. 1b/c, above – itself a phantom – has the potential of hovering over the portal in roughly the same dimensions as I see it in askance-view from my bed. At the same time, which is the whole point of wearing the camera, it can record whatever I am drawing as I draw. This mechanistic derivation of the phantom, let alone the nightmare version, is, for the moment, a means of introducing a notion of Lacan of the psychic interference of the perceived image by what he terms a 'screen' that he likens variously to a 'stain'. Leguil (2023, p.6) states that the meaning of an apparition is as '...a strange experience that rips the screen'. If one imagines a screen as ordinarily closed, an apparition '...suddenly introduces an intense light which leaves no room for shade'. Concerning the 'stain', which is often replete with figural associations, according to Lacan (1998, p.74) it is 'the pre-existence to the seen of the given-to-be-seen:

If the function of the stain is recognized in its autonomy and identified with that of the gaze, we can see its track, its thread, its trace, at every stage of the constitution of the world, in the scopic field. (1998, p.74)

To help explain his theory, Lacan (1998, pp. 91-103) takes the familiar optical pyramid, whose point projects from the eye towards any view, and inverts it, such that the point projects from the object and paints a picture, as it were, in one's eye, the gaze thus projected of which is '...always a play of light and opacity' (1998, p. 96). Of the oscillation of the picture in the eye, Lacan adds: 'And if I am anything in the picture, it is always in the form of the screen, which I earlier called the stain, the spot'. There are interesting implications here, of the beginning of pertinent subjective content of the gaze as and from a point, and that this fans out as a constellation variously both transparent and opaque. Inasmuch as this inverted pyramid intersects the conventional optical pyramid (Lacan's diagram, 1998, p.106), the midway is constituted by a mediating 'image' and 'screen', the screen obfuscating the image that one ordinarily assumes to be visually clear in healthy vision or through correctly calibrated lenses, with a psychic dimension. Further in his discussion, Lacan articulates such a situation in relation to the painter (1998, pp. 105-19). While in the present context this is introductory, I explore this theory in more depth in previously published artistic research (Croft, 2022).

The point, however, for which reason the nightmare phantom will after all be a better choice of image than that which I can reproduce as a drawn or painted version of the imploded rectangle of the camera, is that the object chosen for unconscious reasons itself projects the gaze, the latter of which has what may be considered a kernel, in Lacanian terms the *object a* that is a surrogate object of desire. This, for me, is a compelling idea; that certain objects have in them what Žižek (2006, p.17) terms a '...blind spot, something that's ...in the object more than the object itself', which is not the object of desire as such, but is in some way surrogate of the psychical *cause* of desire. Lacan himself states: (2016, p.70): '...there is a centrifugal dynamic of the gaze, that is to say, one that starts off from the seeing eye but also from the blind spot', and that it perpetuates 'the instant of seeing... as its prop'. Lacan (1998, p.72) refers to the gaze as 'a strange contingency', and then that: 'The object *a* in the field of the visible is the gaze' (1998, p.105). The contingency, whatever it is about the object that designates it in psychical terms as object *a*, is protected from the object to the image



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Fig. 3a/b/c: top, screenshot of the author smearing oil paint onto mirror glass, from a video clip; Fig. 3b: lower-left, sketch, first state, ink & water on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; Fig. 3c: lower-right, *Impactive Space* image, first state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft

Fig. 4a/b Top-left, sketch, second state, ink & water on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; top-right, *Impactive Space* image, second state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm; Fig. 4c/d: lower-left, sketch, third state, ink, water & crayon on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; lower-right, *Impactive Space* image, third state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm
© Michael Croft



as both a point and a constellation; variously either a 'stain' or a 'screen'. While oscillating between suggested space and object, suggested by the theory, its psychical dimension means that it cannot be accessed in physical terms. Lacan (2006: 89) also likens the object *a* to 'imaginary space' that is comparable to 'excluded islets' – where there may be some word-play with eyes.

The nightmare phantom could conceivably be considered as a momentary occupant of a psychic 'screen', noticed by and relevant only to me in its otherness from reality, and not least due to its nocturnal timing. – Albeit as part of a deeper explanation of this psychic phenomenon than is within the scope of the present article, Žižek ((2008, p.56) refers to the subject in relation to the object *a* as finding '...a sort of pleasure *in this displeasure itself...*' – So could, by extending the metaphorical potential of the imploded rectangle, be the camera itself in its ability not only to record the objects and impressions in front of it but in how, in this instance, it imposes its own obfuscating presence. This form of phantom may be sharable, but only by others wearing the same device. I build the camera into this combined speculative, reflective and academic narrative because, due to my working methods, it has to be a participant in the following presented and discussed developmental drawing that illustrates and conveys the contention of combined image and screen as impactive space.

2.4. A VISUAL-MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTION OF IMPACTIVE SPACE

The starting-point is a screenshot from a video of myself apparently representing what I can see of the action camera worn over my face in its illusory imploded rectangular version, Fig. 3a, below. This figural image, by coming into the present research from a video clip that was itself research-based working material, links the question of impactive space to a previous consideration, so extending the natural matrix of my on-going involvement. The fusion of this image with the architectural motif will be through the interaction of oil paint on clear-plastic overlaying acrylic drawing on corrugated cardboard. Both a sketch and the larger drawing will be reworked until the figurative image is impacted in the door frame, the *portal* – sketched in as black line drawing at this stage – in the context of the surrounding space that also influences such events, Fig. 3b/c.

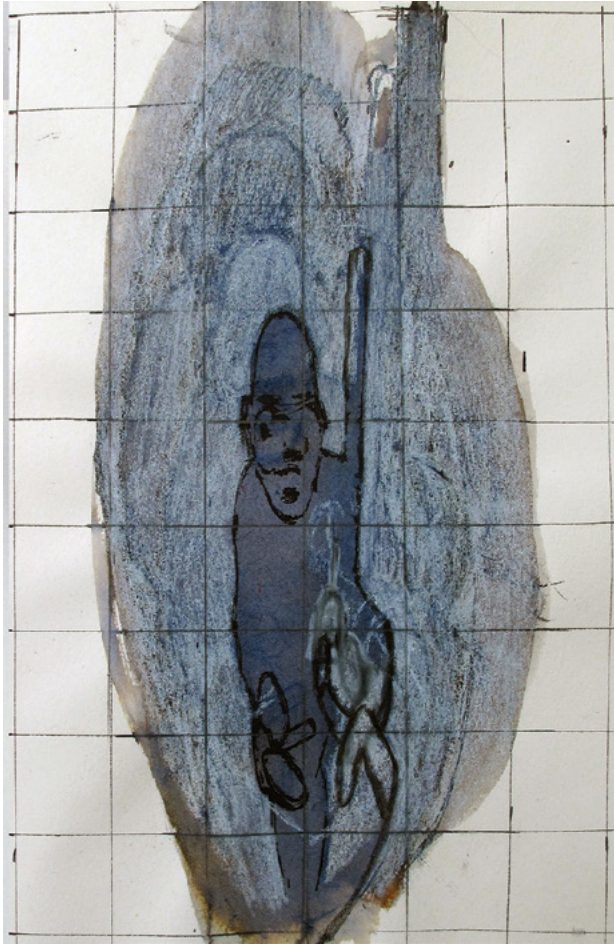
This is the early middle stage of a process that is both active and defers for as long as possible the question of finish. Each successive reworking of the sketch and the larger drawn image results in some

contraction or implosion of it towards the portal, Fig. 4a/b, below. The drawn image as photographed, as seen in Fig. 4b, is subject to reflections of light from the loosely hung clear plastic. Oil paint adheres to plastic, and its transparency on this occasion allows what is behind it to remain apparent. The figurative image is defined between the architectural features drawn in acrylic onto paper and cardboard ground, and therefore presents a conceptual tension between *behind* and *in front*, which also creates a perceptual and more intuitively sensed effect. By the third stage of the process the increasing blueness of the sketch, due to its medium of black writing ink that is brushed with water between each reworking, has been articulated in the larger drawing with blue oil paint on the clear plastic overlay, Fig. 4c/d.

The sketch and the larger drawing have now been imploded about as far as they can go before losing their figural reference. The image has not yet reduced sufficiently to neatly occupy the portal, and therefore bodes the question of further strategies to convey the sense of the phantom presence, Fig. 5a/b.

The under-layer of the drawing will now be reworked to identify aspects of green and brown of the portal, including the wooden horizontal crossbar of a glazed sliding door. The use of two sheets of previously discarded paper to absorb some over-flooded paint, each with a different view of an element not unrelated to the present concern, have been left in place. There are possibilities of both formal and conceptual relationship with this that now need to be considered, Fig. 6.

The question may now concern the diagram, which appears top left and lower centre-left in the drawing. The diagram was initially three-dimensional, comprised of layers of corrugated cardboard painted black, with a red straw running through the cardboard and a wavy clear plastic plane, Fig. 7a, below. The diagram is an image of the camera in its illusory thin imploded rectangular state, obfuscated by the above-discussed Lacanian 'screen' – which Leguil, as previously referenced, cites Lacan as linked with light – as a wavy plastic plane, with the red straw representing the trajectory, *point-of-gaze* (from *object*) to *Subject* on a left-to-right movement (as shown in side elevation, left-hand photo, Fig. 7a), passing through the conflated image/screen. This three-dimensional diagram may also be considered a conceptualisation of Lacan's above-referenced 'centrifugal dynamic of the gaze' and, literally, the seeing instant's 'prop'. My sketch of the drawing in the state shown in Fig. 6, above, shows how and where the trajectory, *point-of-gaze* – *subject*, projects forward from the image/screen and culminates in the region of the hand of the diluted ink sketch that



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Fig. 5a/b left, sketch, fourth state, ink, water & crayon on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; right, *Impactive Space* image, fourth state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft.

Fig. 6 *Impactive Space* image, fifth state, acrylic & paper layers on cardboard + oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft.

has been progressively contracted for each state of the drawing, Fig. 7b.

Coincidentally, the porousness of the sketchbook paper shown in Fig. 8a of the Fig. 8 set, below, has caused the ink sketch to bleed through the back of the page, Fig. 8b. When the stain is digitally superimposed with the sketch, Fig. 7b, above, it corresponds to both the imploded rectangle of the camera and the culminating end of the *object – subject* trajectory, Fig. 8c.

I have now substituted the stain, the region of the object *a* of the trajectory, with a graphically painted rendering of my forefinger and thumb – see Fig. 3a, above – for the origin of this idea – with an indexical print of it to the right in orange-brown oil paint on the final state of the drawing-towards-painting, Fig. 9.

While I have used the orange-brown paint to indicate where the contracted repeated image of the phantom is and how it should ideally conform to its placement in the portal, insofar as the logic of the process has emerged from an interest in certain theory, my use of the same paint to strengthen the wavy-rendered screen oscillating with image in the diagram, top left, may suggest the permeation of a psychical element with the phantom image.

2.5. THE DYNAMIC STASIS OF CONTINUATION

Sketch diagrams of the drawing, Fig. 9, above, attempt a plan-view from the image's frontal aspect, laying the latter over the plan-view of the architectural space, Fig. 2a, above, as shown in Fig. 10a, below. What I cannot ignore, that imposes an anomaly on the represented space of both the large drawing and the present sketch, is the trajectory *gaze – subject*, which Lacan, as cited above, terms a 'centrifugal dynamic projected from an object's 'blind spot' that results in a 'prop' of the 'instant of seeing'. This is exactly what I have tried to conceptualise, using the phantom image of the imploded rectangle of the action camera. The lower diagram in Fig. 10a shows the origin of the trajectory in a spot fanning out, causing the image to bear more of a constellation, especially in scale in comparison with the two representations of the nightmare phantom, the black version standing a little forward from the portal, and the red version contained within the portal. To see what the image in the constellation is, one would need to refer back to the screenshot showing my right hand and its mirror reflection in Fig. 3a, and how I have reproduced forefinger and thumb in the circular near end of the trajectory in the large drawing, Fig. 9. The following reworking of the Fig. 10a sketch on an overlay of tracing paper shows several renderings of the imploded

rectangle of the action camera askance to the right of the phantom image, and how, when projected down onto the plan-view, they orientate with the phantom and the diagrammatic trajectory, *gaze – subject*, in the plan-view, Fig. 10b.

Interestingly, the cloudiness of the tracing paper superimposes an aura of light, alluding to the Lacan reference to 'screen'. Given what the conceptualisation of the blind spot comprises, as explained above, and that it is a psychic projection, or at least an idea of physicality to which such a projection might allude amidst two sets of phantom phenomena, the impactful space is in fact empty, as is the door frame and utility area of my flat until or unless I walk through and into it, respectively. What one may *project into* the space ahead of one, however, is, as cited of Böhme, above, 'the expanse of my presence itself', or, as is my preferred perspective, *receive from* the space, is evidence – however tenuous until one constructs it as artifice – of one's externally negotiated psyche operating both amidst and as one's perception, Fig. 10c.

While a mere sketch, the design suggests the potential for a solid constellation of elements that are in fact wholly illusory.

While there is much to suggest conclusion of the research in the drawing in its final state, Fig. 9, the spirit in which it was conducted is commensurate with Pigrum's above-cited '...multi-mode use on a dispensable surface of inscription', where Pigrum's mentioned element of 'dialogue' that often accompanies my relatively diagrammatic mode of working has been in the form of the present article. If one imagines the drawing as tablecloth paper roughly taped to an appropriated section of a found corrugated cardboard box, with overlain clear plastic tablecloth cover, such a format is itself still dispensable. Only if and when mounted and stretched over a wooden frame will it take on the status of finished work. Yet even when hung on the wall, by chance the utility area bears on the image of which it is a representation with a contingent element, a visible reflection varying through times of day, Fig. 11a/b/c.

While Fig. 11a/b show two versions of reflected light from the image's clear plastic overlay, Fig. 11c shows the source of light as coming through the doorway to the utility area, in this instance rebounding from the open glass door. Under normal circumstances one tends to ignore reflections on the glazing of any artwork, yet on this occasion the effect pulls the image back to a less definitive state, suggesting further workable possibilities, the kind of continuation offered by the briefest of visuals, Fig. 10a/b/c, above.



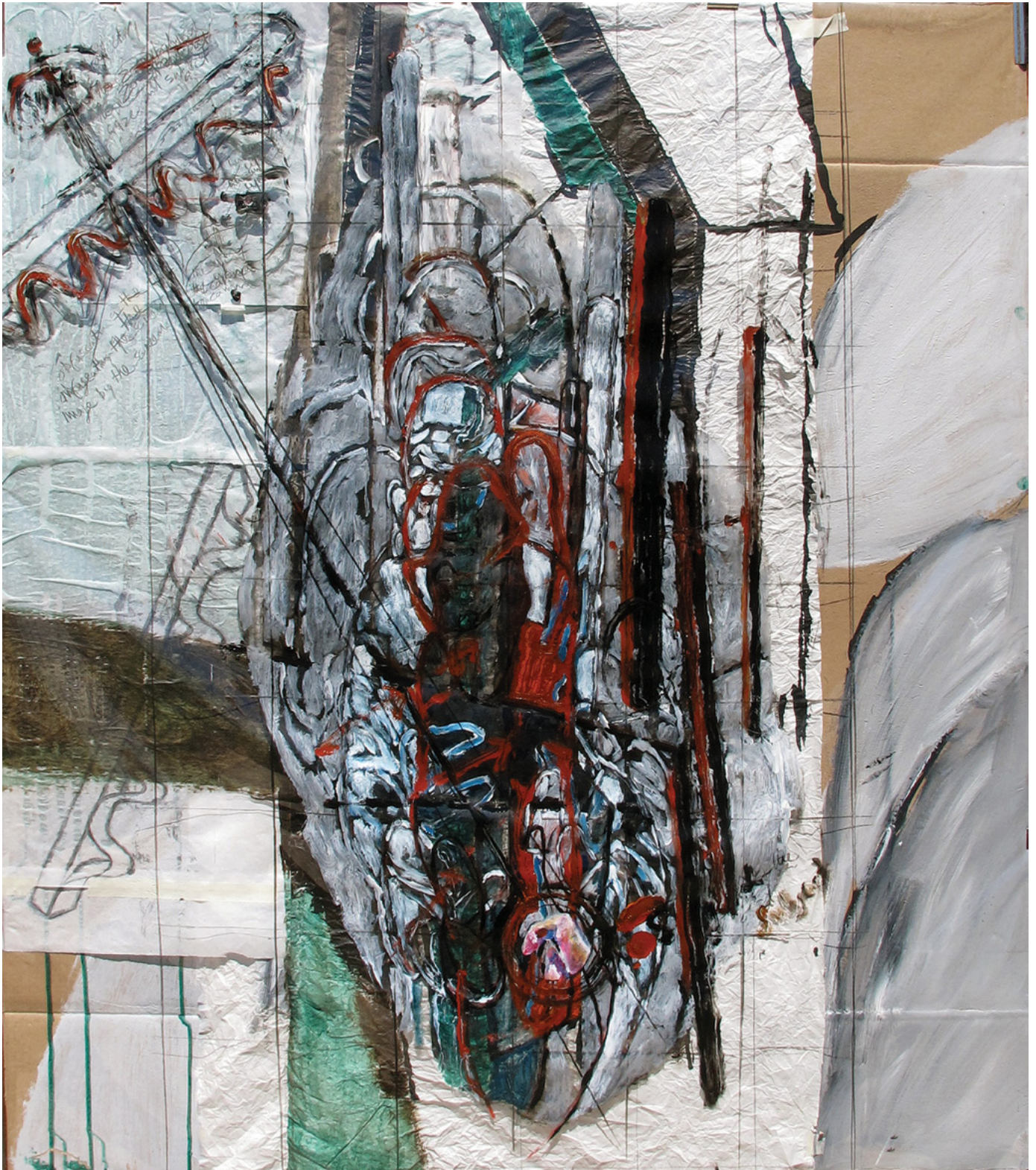
Fig. 7a top, three-dimensional diagram of camera as imploded rectangle, showing trajectory, point-of-gaze to Subject, corrugated cardboard, clear plastic, plastic straw, 40 x 38 x 2 cm; Fig. 7b, lower, Sketch 1, *point-of-gaze to subject*, ink on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm © Michael Croft

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Fig. 8a/b top-left, sketch, fourth state, Ink, water & crayon on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; top-right, stain from back of page; Fig. 8c: sketch 1, *point-of-gaze to subject*, ink on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm, interacting with stain © Michael Croft



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Fig.9: *Impactive Space* image, final state, acrylic & paper layers on cardboard + oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft

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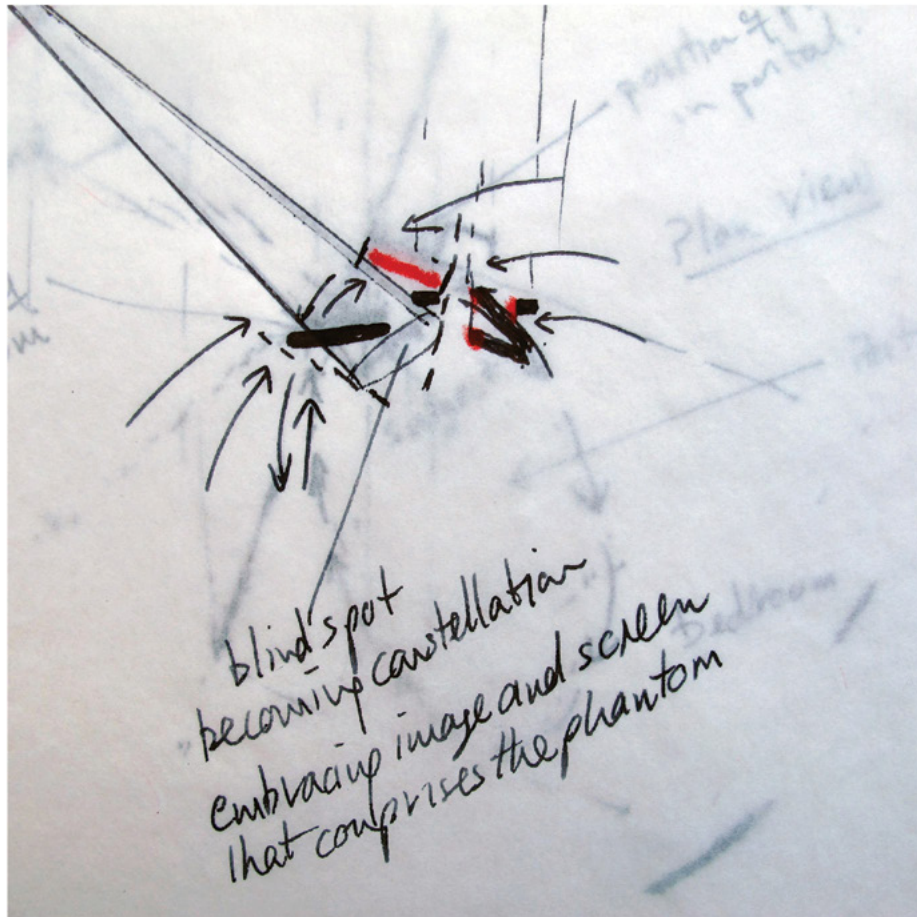
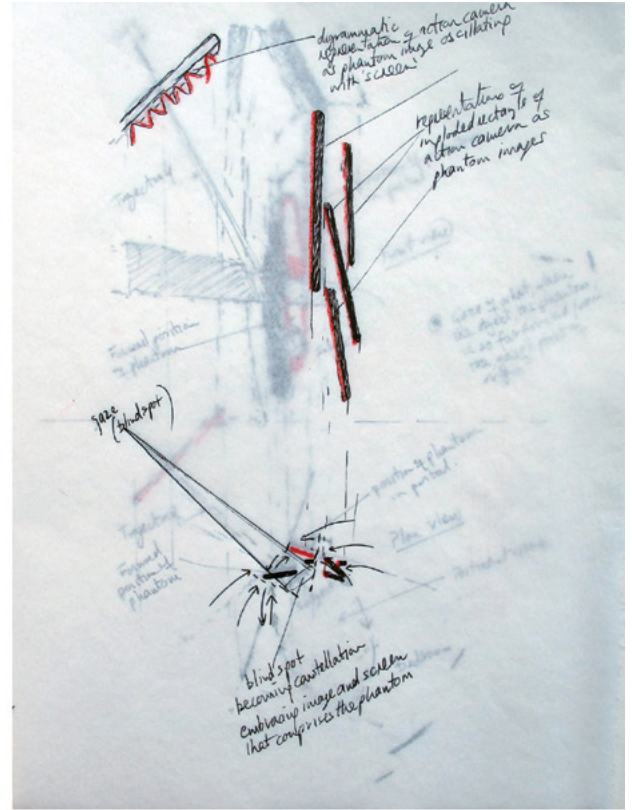
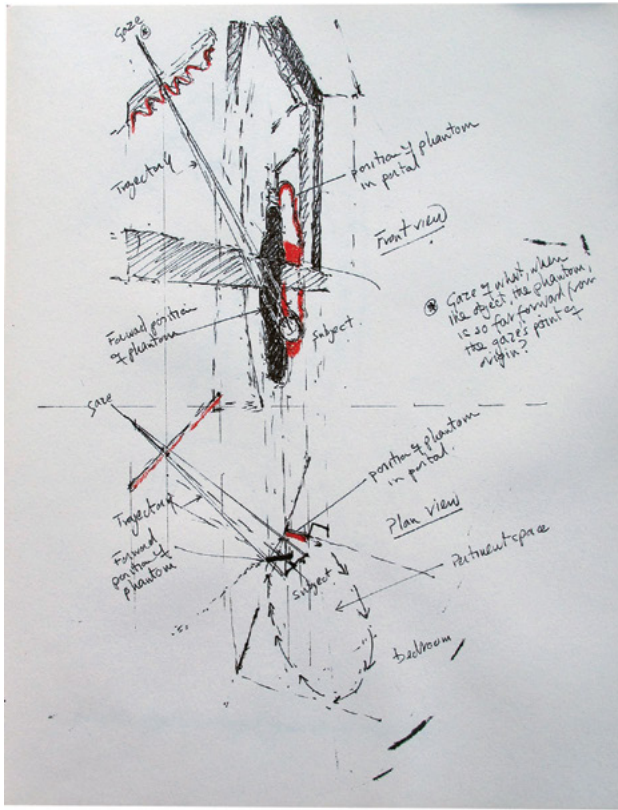


Fig. 10a: upper-left, sketch 2, *point-of-gaze to Subject*, ink on paper; Fig. 10b: upper-right, sketch 2, *point-of-gaze to subject*, ink on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm + overlain with tracing paper and reworked to show imploded rectangle images of the action camera and their projection downwards to orientate with the region *Subject*, of *point-of-gaze to Subject*; Fig. 10c: Lower detail of Sketch 2, Fig. 10b © Michael Croft

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Fig. 11a/b/c: Two views of *Impactive Space* hung in-situ, subject to light reflected from the open doorway between kitchen and utility room
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04

CONCLUSION

The paper mainly references Lacan's theory of the gaze from his Seminar XI ([1964] 1998), The context of the reference has been my experience of a nightmare phantom in a doorway of my flat and its use as a motif for artistic research. The research question has concerned in what terms the experience can answer to the idea of impactive space.

I have also indicated that one of the main mechanical means of enabling the visualisation of such space, an action camera, itself impacts space that I look towards while wearing the camera and looking around its own illusory imploded presence. A pragmatic sense has therefore been imposed on an otherwise illusory neurological phenomenon, albeit occurring in a domestic architectural setting. The visual-material manifestations of the work in progress, however, also convey a sense of the activity as a form of research. What I haven't referenced, but would be necessary for any in-depth consideration of my internal position in my work, is myself as my own *subject*. This has been mentioned in the paper, and occurs in the Lacanian theory, but not explored. The personal, in this sense, has been acknowledged for its starting-point as the experience of a nightmare, but has been displaced onto a research-based process of visual art-working. Research is, as such, necessarily incomplete. Creative work, if conducted as research, is a means of articulating this sense of middle-ness when, to fold the discussion of how I relate to the space in which the phantom appeared back into the discussion of research, I have suggested that such middle-ness can also be a region of impactive space.

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