TERRY SHAVE:
A HYBRIDISED-SYNTHESISED PRACTICE

CARL ROBINSON & TERRY SHAVE

In a time of technological image saturation, painters and photographers examine their respective disciplines in relation to the digital; both to anchor the validity and test the limits of the mediums they work with. This research often takes the form of relating one medium to the other; either positioning painting against photography (and *vice versa*) or developing connections between painting and the digital, or photography and the digital.[1] There is, however, little artistic practice that combines painting, photography *and* digital manipulation in one. This is a surprising omission of artistic research, as bringing these mediums together into single artworks provides possibilities for developing new avenues of creative praxis.

Terry Shave (b.1952) is one artist who does conjoin painting, photography and the digital in individual works. He coheres and contrasts these mediums' inherent visual and material qualities into pictures that embrace a sense of space, and resonate with memories of childhood and home. Whilst Shave is primarily a painter, his *oeuvre* has nevertheless embraced working across a variety of mediums and disciplines such as printing, collage and filmmaking. These ongoing investigations into diverse methods of creative production have enriched Shave's picture-making, creating imagery that is both intangible and concrete, figurative and abstract.

A fire at Shave's studio in 2000 destroyed his entire output housed there, but this catastrophic event became a pivotal moment in his artistic development. Building on the photographic documentation of his lost artwork,

[1] For examples of these interconnections see: *PaintingDigitalPhotography: Synthesis and difference in the age of media equivalence* ed. Carl Robinson, (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018). Also, the essays in this book.

Shave articulated a practice of bringing painting, photography and the digital together within single works.

In the first of these pieces, from 2001, Shave holds each medium to its own discrete picture-surface of single board or canvas brought together in a single triptych. This connection/separation reinforces the differences between the visceral and mediated nature of the material-based paint, the categorical and technological aspect of the photograph, and the diffuse and fluid nature of the digital. These recognisable differences between mediums make the works of this period distinctly hybrid;[2] a playful postmodernist challenge to modernist purity.[3]

These hybrid works were a step toward Shave's creation of unified pictures as he brought painting, photography and the digital onto, and within, the single surface. He achieved a physical/visual cohesion of these mediums (a homogenisation of heterogenous elements) by subsuming them under layers of resin poured on the picture-surface. Works from around 2003, embed painting, photography and the digital within this glossy surface, which forces each to surrender a little of its unique nature; paint's materiality and facture is lost, the painted overglazing of diffuse photographic images denies the categorical nature of that medium, and digital imagery transfers from the computer screen's immateriality to the concretisation of the picture-object.[4] Moving beyond hybridity, Shave's practice steps outside the fragmented "overload" of the postmodern and, in its synthesis, turns toward a unified sense of meaning and purpose.[5]

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[2] Professor of Philosophy Jerrold Levinson (b.1948) states a hybrid artwork is such by virtue of its "emergence out of a field of previously existing artistic activities and concerns, two or more of which it in some sense combines." Jerrold Levinson, "Hybrid Art Forms," *The Journal of Aesthetic Educatio*n 18, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 6. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3332623.

[3] Associate Professor Dana Badulescu notes: "The postmodernists' propensity for hybridity and hybridization has its roots in a rejection, or at least a suspicion, of all forms of fixity, determinacy, authority and purity, be it cultural, linguistic, aesthetic or artistic." Dana Badulescu, "The Hybrids of Postmodernism," *Postmodern Openings* 5, no. 3 (2014): 11. https://doi.org/10.18662/po/2014.0503.01.

[4] Levinson notes that for synthesis of art forms to occur they must "to some extend lose their original identities […]." Levinson, "Hybrid Art Forms," 9.

[5] Landscape architect Tom Turner's (b.1946) ideas of a post-postmodern approach to city design are apposite. He states: "The modernist age, of 'one way, one truth, one city', is dead and gone. The postmodernist age of 'anything goes' is on the way out." He sees moving beyond the "Reason" of Modernism and Postmodernism as an act of

Shave's most recent works, however, have decorative patterns stencilled in paint on their surface. This over-painting provocatively breaks his resin-coated pictures' cohesion, and fractures the synthesis of the works. His stencilling brings a return of the physical intrusion of painting, and the textural qualities of that medium forces viewing back to the surface of the picture. It could be said that in stencilling, there is a (re)surface of painting. This prevents a visual falling into the image (as we "fall" into the "transparent" image of the photograph) and abruptly underlines the status of painting in its relationship with photography and the digital.[6] By breaking the synthesised unity of the pictures through this painterly materiality, Shave "moves" them back to hybrids. It is the continual moving between disruption and unification in Shave's works that allows his practice to oscillate between the hybridised and the synthesised.

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CR. I'd like to begin with that catastrophic studio fire, where you lost all your artwork held there. It seems appropriate to begin here as this event appears to me to be very much a turning point in, or even a rebirth of, your practice. I think it's pivotal, because the documentation of your lost paintings became the basis for the development of new artwork, or at least the foundation of building your practice anew. In effect, you reclaimed the past through photography: the photographic images used for the development of further work makes this a type of paradoxical simulacrum of itself, where new work is a copy of a copy, but at the same time not, in that it is original. I wonder what your thoughts are on that?

TS. I've always had a practice where I've littered the work I do around me in the studio (Fig. 8.1). So, when my studio burned down in 2000, destroying all my work, it wasn't so much that I'd lost everything–that was bad enough–

"Faith" (in God, tradition, an institution). He notes that "post-postmodernism" is a "preposterous term" for this move toward unification, which might possibly be called "The Age of Synthesis." Tom Turner, *City as Landscape: A post-postmodern view of design and planning* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2004), 8-10.

[6] See, Kendall L. Walton, "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism," *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 246-277.

it was the fact that I hadn't got those visual triggers to carry on working that I need all the time. I hadn't quite planned for that, and it was one of those moments where I started really thinking about what my practice and process was, and it took a couple of years to really get going again after the fire. At that time I also heard a sociologist talking about solving issues; he talked about making the problem the solution, and it just struck me that was what I needed to do, put pieces of work around me that I didn't have anymore! That's when I got a printer and started printing out images of the lost work and littered my space with these digital versions of what were very big paintings. They weren't an equivalent size, but they were a way of triggering me to think about the themes and concerns in the work. That was the first time I really recognised that I needed work around me. That need, I think, was like a security blanket. They give me impetus to make more. It was only a matter of time for me to begin working on the digital prints, reworking the image. At the same time, I was doing projects which involved photographs, so I wasn't afraid of mixing the process. It's just by that time, I'd become well known for painting on canvas linen. So, there was that time around 2001-2002 when I reinvented myself. They were versions of what I had been doing with photographs, and with other processes involved as well. I have done, and always will do, transcriptions of my own work, and I make transcriptions of other artists' works. There's that sense of stirring it up, using other people's information.

Fig. 8.1, Terry Shave's studio–Spode Works, Stoke-on-Trent, March 2019.

CR. You're fascinated by Meindert Hobbema's (1638-1709) Dutch landscape, *The avenue at Middelharnis* (1689, Fig. 8.2). In that painting, there is a central avenue with side elements and in your work, there is a central element and outer elements. It's as though you're moving towards something,

but you say you're going off to the side as well. I wonder what that painting's significance is for you, and how your work and practice generally connect to it.

Fig. 8.2, Meindert Hobbema, *The Avenue at Middelharnis*, 1689,
oil on canvas, 103.5 × 141 cm. National Gallery, London © National Gallery.

TS. I return to that painting again and again, and have done all my professional life. It's the grand conceit of painting isn't it, that it has devices to show you the real world. It's the perspective you learn at school: There's a road a mile long and you can see it's very long, and then there are big trees at the front, and they get a bit smaller, and a bit smaller. It's hugely effective. It's a painting about somewhere and everywhere–we can all recognise ourselves being "in it." Coming from Suffolk as I do, it was a perfect imaging of my homeland. Often, the work I do now is about a "place" too, with a sense that you could walk into them in some sort of way visually; you could actually be drawn into a sense of being part of it, and enveloped by it. I don't call them landscapes because that defines them too much: "place" is better for me! I often make a pilgrimage to see that Hobbema at the *National Gallery* to look for the "new" in it, because it just keeps me going. It's interesting because in the picture, on the right-hand side, there is a little nursery of trees which is growing; these trees will carry on making the avenue. I think this is a lovely metaphor for actually how, as an artist, you need your little nursery somewhere near where you carry on making. Those things are often not seen from now until they come out in more advanced pieces

of work. (Fig. 8.3) I keep small pieces from around the time when I was trying to deal with the loss after the fire. They never went very far, but they have memories in them, encapsulated like flies trapped in amber. I bring them out now and again to rethink how I might use them. Around 2004-2005 I was trying different processes. I used a dentist's drill to etch into paint for the first time: I laid layers of varnish and then etched in; then I got another layer of different coloured varnish, scraped it on and then polished it off. It was like a print process without it being that.

Fig. 8.3, Terry Shave, *Swarm Series*, 2016,
mixed media with photograph and resin on board, 250 x 800 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. This triple element, a triumvirate or triptych, with centre and outer panels appears to be a key element to your work. You've talked about seeing the *Doom Painting* from the fifteenth century on St. Mary's church wall in Bacton, Suffolk and the impact of that image on you.[7] You note that the centre is missing from that image; that Christ is missing. Do you see that you are attempting to put painting back into this "centre"–as the centre of the triumvirate? Following this, I believe the sense of the triptych was reinforced for you as a boy, painting stage flats at your local theatre. I think from this, you are conscious of the importance of the sides–the outer edges–of the work being as significant as the centre (which comes back to the *Middelharnis* painting). That the centre is defined by the outer, and *vice versa*: that there is an intertextuality between the three elements, with each being shaped by its neighbour. This is made particularly emphatic in the *Archive* works where the three elements are kept physically separate, and are discrete mediums.

[7] https://reeddesign.co.uk/paintedchurch/bacton-doom.htm.

TS. I look back at the *Doom Painting* that I saw as a schoolboy in the local church to my school, and my memory made it perfect. Christ in judgement in the middle, with Heaven and Hell on each side. However, when I revisited many years later, I realised that the Christ figure wasn't there! I'd completely forgotten that had gone, and it wasn't in the painting. There are other reasons for using the triptych. There was a relationship to my doing theatrical backdrops for amateur dramatics when I was about fifteen. The backdrops could change depending on the scene in the play but the flies, the side panels, had to be the same. Sometimes it had to be lit so it looked like a wall; most times to be lit so it looked like it was a forest, or something like that. I loved how I had to make composite images that could be part of both. So that came from there, and in these paintings–going back to the loss of Christ in the image–the central protagonist is a "soliloquy of nothing." It's an emptiness, and often you'll see that in my pieces; there is almost a void in the central piece. The idea of the outer pieces being key for the viewer to know where he/she's going; needing peripheral vision (which, I think is about one hundred seventy degrees) to be able to know where we're going, in the way that the Hobbema painting is suggesting. You know where you're going, but there are things at the edge which are going on that tell you so much more about where you're going. You're not overly conscious of the peripheral vision; it's there to locate you. I think that's how I see the two sides of my triptychs: they help to fix you, and also problematise where you are. You see this on the beach. You walk along the shore line and you know where you're going, but there is also this vastness of space. The two end pieces don't have to conform to each other, or confirm each other. They can be wholly "other places" with that sense of it being endless. This one here (Fig. 8.4)–the one on the left-hand side–has that sense of claustrophobia with something overpowering you, while the right-hand side has a sort of open space. I like those contradictions.

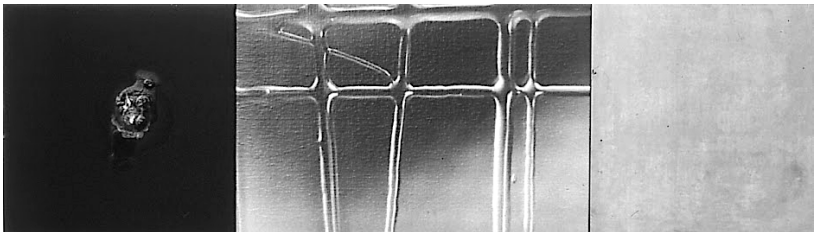

Fig. 8.4, Terry Shave, *Debris Series: No, 5*, triptych, 1995,
oil paint and varnish on linen and board with photograph on canvas, 45 x
160 cm. Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. So, is the void at the centre comparable to the avenue–to pull the viewer in? Because, it seems like that's happening at the same time that there are things happening on the edges that are just out of reach, which alludes to a sense of memories, just on the periphery. Do you see this in terms of trying to evoke either the sense of memory in the work, or trigger an association for the viewer around memories?

TS. Yes, I do, and it's that thing which is a sort of: "Is it this, is it that?" "Can you remember this, can you remember that?" And: "Was it like this, was it like that?" I talk about the Hobemma painting as a metaphor; not only the idea of searching for a type of holy grail of what your works are about, but how in your life you think: "I am on my path looking for it." I now think I'm actually on the right-hand side of the Hobemma painting, tucked in behind the barn, just messing around. I think that's really interesting; that you can read those images as metaphor, and it triggers my memory too in terms of how I used to read it from a very straight perspectival construction of the painting. How you can do it. How you can use the colour to make it be much more metaphorical. Then in terms of it being a flat landscape, and all that memory of me discovering myself through people like John Constable and landscape painters who looked at that endlessness (Fig. 8.5).[8] I talk about not having the ability "to picture" in my head, but that moment where you can recall a time and place. I don't necessarily think of it in terms of "being there," but it's more to do with the people and things around me that allow me to locate that place, rather than necessarily getting a vision of it in my head.

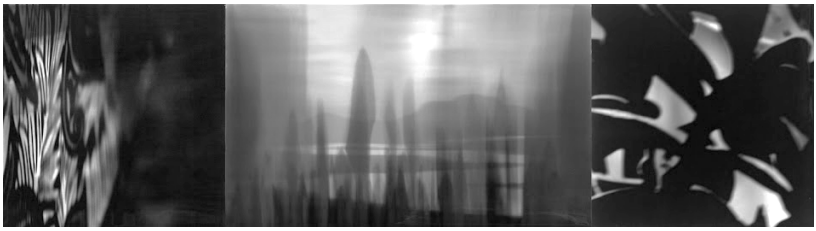

Fig. 8.5, Terry Shave, *Remembered Series–Blue*, 2010,
acrylic paint with photograph and resin on board, 55 x 200 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

[8] John Constable (1776-1837).

CR. Further to this, Roland Barthes thought that because of the categorical nature of the photograph, which forces an emphatic association with the object within the image, it does not always evoke a memory.[9] But I think that your flattening, blurring and overworking of the photograph inhibits the categorical nature of the clearly defined image. It is this diffuseness that puts them slightly out of reach and consequently, I believe, further reinforces this allusion to memory.

TS. I want to address the argument that people, like Susan Sontag, bolt onto photography.[10] If we assume that memory is very fallible–we can't believe it–and we also have to believe that about photography too, that makes them very close then. We can't believe them. They're flawed ways of trying to see anything. I'm saying about my memory "picturing"–I can't do that very well. The photograph is not capable of showing you what's behind, or you can't hear the noise of the trees that are being seen in the idyllic picture of the landscape of the forest. So, we recognise then they are highly unreliable. If you don't then need to use the photograph for the categorical fact, it can become reliable. It's a reliable part of image making that can evoke in others a sense of–maybe it isn't memory–but a sense of "being" and a sense of sharing, or a sense of assimilation. Something the viewer doesn't understand, but which they recognise they can be part of. I'm very conscious of people looking at them, and when I show the works, I am very conscious of the relational thing that you have with people coming in. So much so, that people have talked about ones where I've lit them in very particular way–that they almost become devotional objects. They have a sort of glamour about them. The gloss gives them that other-world-ness, rather than it being the frailty of the edge of a brush that makes a mark (Fig. 8.6).

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[9] Roland Barthes (1915-1980) states: "The Photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*, but only *what has been*. This distinction is decisive. In front of a photograph, our consciousness does not necessarily take the nostalgic path of memory (how many photographs are outside of individual time), but for every photograph existing in the world, the path of certainty: the Photograph's essence is to ratify what it represents." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 85. First published 1980 by Hill and Wang (New York).

[10] Susan Sontag (1933-2004). See, for example, Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2019). First published 1977 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (NewYork).

Fig. 8.6, Terry Shave, *Remembered Series–Red*, 2010,
acrylic paint with photograph and resin on board, 55 x 200 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. Because of the juxtaposition of imagery and mediums, narratives are naturally created within the work. However, these are not explicit and viewers will create their own narratives from what they are presented with. (You mention about the pictures being read left to right, possibly). But the pictures are often displayed in combination, which creates further, more complicated narratives. With your sets of work, I wonder if Jacques Derrida's sense of "differance" comes into play here, where the works are naturally different and, also, having to read between them, meaning is always deferred?[11] I think that, not only within the works, but also across works, a sense of resolution is permanently deferred?

TS. It goes back to that habit of littering the place with pictures, and then selecting the one that epitomises it, and says that's the culmination of all this littering. And now, I think I need to present the works in a way where they appear to be like a trail of images. As in the film *Memento*, by Christopher Nolan, that sense of using one photo to take you from one thought to the next because you couldn't remember where you were when you took the last photo.[12] The fact that you have them all there, tells a different story to the one you tell when you're going from one picture to another. When you go from one to another it's binary; you go from this to that. But when you've got others, that whole story of that journey, including the distorting of the

[11] Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). See the introduction in *Dissemination,* wherein it is noted "differance" means to both differ *and* defer, and that this "inhabits the very core of what appears to be immediate and present." Jacques Derrida and Barbara Johnson, *Dissemination*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017), ix.
[12] *Memento*, directed by Christopher Nolan (2000; Santa Monica, California: 20th Summit Entertainment, Team Todd, 2002). DVD, 109 min.

memory, is, for me, the nature of my practice. I've had to claw all these things back to somewhere, to have a sense of "a unifying". I do this with the resin, so that there is a way you can physically bring it all together, and say: "Ah, it's meant to be one." It's homogenising, which is a sort of denial of the artist's hand. I wanted to play with that idea of: "You don't know what I've touched, and what I haven't, do you; what's paint and what's a digital print or photo?" That sense of it being trapped or encapsulated, and thinking back to scratching the surface and seeing some bit of something else underneath. So that those elements–as well as having a narrative from right to left–have a narrative embedded in it. The very dark, central images become like mirrors, you're "there" as well, in the sense that you are reflected. Not only do you understand it one way, but you're drawn in, and implicated in, whatever is in those pieces. And I have made a couple where there is that Caspar David Friedrich figure of myself standing in front of the visual chaos.[13] This alludes to the painting, but more importantly that I'm looking at this as well (Fig. 8.7).

Fig. 8.7, Terry Shave, *Beyond Doubt 1*, 2016,
acrylic paint with photograph and resin on board, 48 x 170 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

I tend to work in what someone once described as my "factory process". Because of the nature of the resin drying, I will work on three or four at once because I will then "batch" resin, as they then need to be left to dry and cure. So, three or four at the same time became a working process. But it also became a way of seeing things as a batch, which had an integrity within it, rather than it being three or four discrete things I was working on (Fig. 8.8). It was, you could say, economic too in that it allowed me to follow one theme. Often, something I

[13] Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818), Hamburger Kunsthalle.

printed out to work for one would fit in another, because there was a colour range I was using or, for instance, I would play with wallpaper like images across three or four of them at the same time.

Fig. 8.8, Terry Shave, *Spode Branches Series*, begun 2014,
acrylic paint with photograph and resin on board, each panel 55 x 55 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. About the piece which you refer to as like having a bird "plopping" on the canvas (Fig. 8.9). You've got the photograph of an enlargement of Leonardo's *Annunciation* next to that section, and I quite like that playfulness where you have the visceral quality of the raw material next to this allusion to the sublime.[14] I'm

[14] Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), *The Annunciation* (1472-75) Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

calling it "the sacred and the profane". You're stating that the Leonardo comes out of that very same material which has created the bird "plop".

TS. That's a photograph stuck on. It's that thing of: "I can do that." I can enlarge it. I can get it onto a canvas, and it still is no more than that pigment and stuff. At the end of the day, that's what it's all about: it's nothing more than the process of making, and the preoccupation I have with dealing with my big / minor concerns in my head. I don't see them as any more than that. However, the sanctity of the artists doing their thing often seems to many as self-serving and selfish. I still personally think this has a huge role to play because it presents people with dilemmas, and presents people with questions and it often makes them feel uneasy. In exhibitions, I'm very much against putting huge amounts of interpretation up. I want to put people in the position of not knowing who to help them. The fact that, on one level, the viewer will say: "What is it?" I don't mean to be patronising, but it's that way you can engage people with things that are beyond their limited experience–beyond my limited experience, but within my experience of making. We have a world where–I know this through education–we work to the answer all the time, instead of actually enjoying the problems–enjoying the "not knowing" and finding your own way of using the processes to actually be creative. I think that the whole idea of being immersed in the project is what we're about; not trying to find solutions. What you end up with is the detritus of the problem. When I put a show on of what I'm working on, I'm conscious I'm filling another bit of the jigsaw, often by putting that in front of people in a particular way.

Fig. 8.9, Terry Shave, *Beyond the View Series: No, 2*, triptych, 1995,
oil and nylon flock on linen with photograph on canvas, 30 x 107 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. The titling of your pictures directs the viewer toward understanding the works in terms of certain themes. In understanding this, the viewer then "reads" the work in certain ways. Ernst Gombrich talks about orientating the

viewer into a particular reading of the artwork by directing him/her through "cues" (how the work is presented, for instance) one of which is the titling of the work.[15] I wonder what your thoughts are on this?

TS. The title often puts you, as a viewer, on the horns of a dilemma. You're neither "here nor there", or "one way or another", or stuck in a particular set of things that you know (Fig. 8.10). The titles have always been really important to me; that sense of the title being a way of telling you where to put yourself in your head when you're "reading" an image. I also recognise in a lot of the images that are now *not* triptych–that they have ends or edges to them that might be different to the central part. That they are that awakening moment, or closing moment, which comes back to the theatre where the curtains come in, or the curtains go out. This invites you to say whether you think that's an opening or closing. Where do you put yourself in terms of these things impacting on your vision/understanding from the edges of the work?

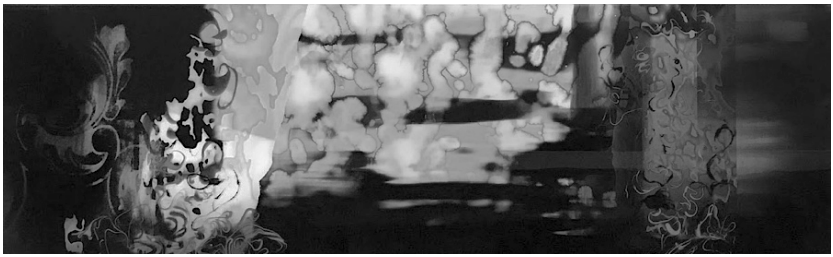

Fig. 8.10, Terry Shave, *Neither Here Nor There Series: No, 2*, 2017,
mixed media, with photograph and resin on board, 250 x 800 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. I want to reinforce the understanding of your works as synthesised. I think this is a unique approach to creating two-dimensional visual artworks,

[15] Ernst H. J. Gombrich (1909-2001) notes that "the chance of a correct reading of an image is governed by three variables: the code, the caption and the context," where "code" refers to that in the picture which directs the viewer to an understanding of what it represents, and where "context must be supported by prior expectations based on tradition." Ernst H. Gombrich, *The Image and the Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP 1982), 142.

and you have mentioned about a homogenisation of the mediums under the resin in the pictures where the mediums become–to varying degrees–indistinguishable. Jerrold Levinson states that to achieve a synthesised hybrid, the elements involved must give up some part of their individuality.[16] I think synthesis in your work is achieved through the mediums giving up something of their nature, but I think there is also a perceptual synthesis (which might be one and the same) in viewing the work. You talk about your practice of moving between photography, painting and the digital in the creation of the works, and so I believe that the overarching practice itself could be synthesised?

TS. Yes, that was why I started doing it in the first place. (I started doing it firstly with a car sprayer). There's that conceit in me, that I quite like the way you can talk about the process of painting, without it necessarily being painted. And the same with the photograph; some of them–like that whole series there with the tree–of being utterly photographic (Fig. 8.8). The piece in Lincoln–the two side panels are just photographs, with some tinted resins and some modification–but very little.[17] Seeing the whole body of them together–they go in and out of looking like categoric painting and categoric photograph, to an amalgam of something in between. This doesn't worry me anymore. It used to worry me, in terms of what I was saying about being a painter. That sense of the authority of the craft of painting and the easiness of photographic imagery and the digital. I worried about it exposing my authority or my integrity. The successes of various pieces in various shows said otherwise. I think the way I homogenise it now was the way I found of removing that problem. It is partly about the "purity" neurosis; whether you can call yourself something if you're straying into another world. I was brought up in a world where the sanctity of the material determined who you were. The painter was the painter. The reason now, for me, is the pleasure principle. When people say: "Well how do you do it?" "How do you do them?"—there is that moment where it's a bit like a conjurer, I suppose, where you can say: "That's for me to know." I don't *not* tell them what I use in the process, but I like the fact that people can't quite work out whether it's digital or whether it's painting or stencil–which I use a lot (and which is, you know, "cheating").

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[16] Levinson, "Hybrid Art Forms," 9.

[17] Terry Shave. *Taboo Series–Milk in its Time*, 2010, acrylic paint with photograph and resin on board, 55 x 200cm. Usher Gallery Lincoln. http://www.terryshave.com/gallery2.html.

CR. Yes, most painters and photographers are still positioned within art historical traditions of undertaking discrete activities. I think artists are still reluctant to bring these mediums together because of the canons within which they want to be recognised. This "canonsisation" of practice continues to provide a means of defining, positioning and valorising artists' practice as part of a western art-historical continuity. Gregor Langfeld refers to this as "permanence," which validates the work.[18] Somehow, bringing these mediums together in hybridised and synthesised works muddies the waters.

TS. I agree with you. I've had that all my life–that's the world I know. I did painting and printmaking at Loughborough College of Art. I ended up doing paintings with neon lights on them and then got into doing painting / printmaking. At the Slade School I went from making prints to making books, and making installations and then to film. And every time you move into those other–what I think are logical progressions–into those other processes, there was always a vanguard there. I remember having those conversations with the Head of Printmaking, when he asked at exhibition time: "Will you still put up print?" For me, work wasn't like that, not discipline specific. I don't think: "Oh, today I'm going to do this." Practically–because my printer's at home–I'm going to print out some things today, but I'm printing them out to bring them to be part of the ongoing practice here. Sometimes, when I've torn paper and have the torn edge, I've left that on the pieces to say: "Look, that's been torn out and that's come from somewhere else," in the way that Kurt Schwitters and others use that type of collaging to say: "This is collage."[19] It was always interesting, even when I was a student; collaging was not quite "in," it was a little bit too "crafty"–you should be painting or making fine prints! I think the sanctity of painting, printmaking and sculpture is kept, as people can't talk around these things. They need to talk in that craftsmanship way, that gives them–they think–the integrity to talk about that, rather than talking about ideas which could be manifested in a number of different ways. Working in *Photoshop*, or something like that, is partly about having to "give up," because

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[18] Langfeld states, canonisation "expresses a process in which specific aspects of culture are established as crucial, of the utmost importance or exemplary." Gregor Langfeld, "The Canon in Art History: Concepts and Approaches," *Journal of Art Histiography*, https://www.academia.edu/38032461/The_canon_in_art_history_concepts_and_approaches.

[19] Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948).

of the infinite possible changes, such as "contrast" and so on. With photography, people learn and do this–they edit. On *Instagram*, people will say: "This is a straight photograph–I've done nothing to it." That sense of it wanting to be pure. And I can't do that. Personally, I find it arrogant beyond words that they feel they can take that position and offer something so "pure" and "genuine." It's a bit like only being able to do painting in an art school. Some of the works are practically all done through photographing the image, and amalgamation, and then printing it out and sticking it to the board, and doing one or two things with the resin. Whereas with others–there's a lot of process but you wouldn't necessarily know because that homogenisation takes it down. In the end I quite like the sense of knowing that within there, I've not had to suffer with it. Life's too short to be doing that with a painting. Why wouldn't you do something that could get you somewhere that didn't take ages? I always remember seeing Photorealist painters–fantastic pieces of painting–but they didn't move me anymore than the photographs of the person anyway. It's that sort of parading of a type of skill. Maybe my works are a type of de-skilling. Where they are a "crash" of things–I don't mind that so much. Pushing the boundaries. It's not a floodgate but it is pushing, and over a period of time it is noticeable.

CR. I can see that using wallpaper in your work very much reinforces a sense of place. The stencils you use represent types of wallpaper, and these are often brushed onto the surface of the picture. The stencil breaks this smooth glossy, impenetrable surface; it "punctures." It's a way of reintroducing the artist's hand, but very subtly, very quietly and cleverly, I think, into the work.

TS. Yes, wallpaper and pattern gives a sense of place and history. I've made a work that's a homage to my mother. She had in her house the things you remember: photographs of the family, the seven children, and all the grandchildren and great grandchildren. All these set against the most horrendous wallpaper! That 1960s and 70s' way of saying: "We can have 'wood' here, 'jungle' there, and we can have flock here." I remember the local Chinese restaurant in Suffolk had put a reproduction John Constable on cheap flocked wallpaper, and as a fifteen-year-old I remember saying to myself: "One day I'll put a real John Constable on flock wallpaper." I had a one-person exhibition in the Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent in the early 1990s. They also asked me if I'd curate a parallel exhibition from their collections including social history. They had a tiny Constable painting of *Trentham Gardens*, a big estate near Stoke, and they let me put that on flocked wallpaper

in the exhibition. Recently, I was asked to be part of an exhibition in Stoke called *The Artist and the City* (2015). I worked with the designer Sophie Bard[20] for the exhibition, and I placed my work on a wallpapered wall using her designed paper.[21] I have used her wallpaper design in my work too as a "thank you" to her. But there are those contradictions using it, and other patterns, in my work. The accusatory way that it can't be high art if it's very decorative. There is that dilemma; that in one world the design, the pattern and the high varnish finish from a craftsman is highly applauded. But that sense of the presence of the artist–the dripping of paint and all that sort of stuff–is eulogised, because of a particular type of history (Fig. 8.11). It also calls you back to the story of the making. You can see the process within that. It's a process that I don't want people to fixate on, but to be part of. It disrupts any conclusion to it, (and the conclusion in the making for me is always that final layer of resin, where I try to get it as absolutely immaculate as possible). So, there is that sense of the story of its making. I think for me this is important, but I don't necessarily want it to be writ large as a book of instructions about how you do it.

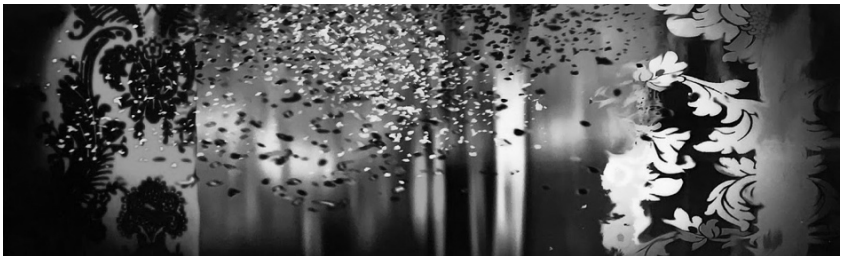

Fig. 8.11, Terry Shave, *Swarm Series*, 2016,
mixed media with photograph and resin on board, 250 x 800 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

CR. There is a playful allusion, as photograph and stencil sit next to each other. You've got something that looks to be quite emphatically photographic–of the tree, and maybe the flowers. But then there is the stencil, which not only links to home, but also has this secondary allusion to nature (echoed in the photograph)

[20] https://www.sophiebard.com.
[21] http://www.airspacegallery.org/index.php/projects/the_artist_and_the_city.

TS. There's a type of universality about patterns, because they're not grand pieces. They are cheap stencils from hobby stores, or which I've cut myself, and which everybody could use. Someone said about it: "But don't you think that cheapens it?" And I said: "No, it's completely the opposite." I go to a well-known DIY store, where you're allowed to take samples of wallpaper to take home and try, and I go and get half a dozen of the crassest. But to then use those with decent works is quite good because they're not about a type of high aesthetic; they're about a real world. They're about that memory of mum, and going back to my family and that sense about people living with it today (Fig. 8.12. Plate. X). I've done a whole series about William Morris.[22] He appeared quite a lot in a series about ten to twenty years ago. I was interested in his philosophy about the social impact of pattern, and what it meant and how he could use it. Those works were much more overtly photographic–of shadows of plants, or buildings, or certain things very close up, but which were definitely shadows. And that was me hiding behind there, "stalking" William Morris, and other grand designs, and about their integrity. It's a bit of a joke way of looking at it, as "stalking" is such a such a loaded word, but it's a notion of how you find ideas that you look for. Can you creep up on them? Are they hidden in what you've already done, and can you just catch them?

Fig. 8.12, Terry Shave, *The Avenue–Almost There*, 2016/17,
acrylic paint with photograph and resin on board, 48 x 170 cm.
Property of the artist. © Terry Shave.

That's what I believe, having had all this work around me. I will do things at the end of my working day–like throw some paint, or stick some things down–which will allow me to come in, in the morning and say: "Did I do that?" "What's that

[22] William Morris (1834-1896).

about?" I think that was when I first started going back to making the problem the solution. I had all these elements that I could move around, and I could move them around in ways that they'd never intended to be seen together. But they were always part of a train of thought that goes on over a period of time. The next morning–here–I will move some things around just to confuse me, or seduce me, I'm never quite sure which it is. I like to think it's both really. You're watching it, as it's playing games with you, and you're playing games with you. That's why, for me, the studio is such an important environment.

CR. Because of the reflections on the surface of the resin on your pictures, the viewer is obliged to move around your works in order to view them. The gloss surface of the resin alludes to the computer screen, but the reflections, which inhibit viewing create another type of screen; one that blocks viewing. Just as the digital image can only be seen through the computer screen, your images can only be viewed through the glossy transparency of the resin. However, simultaneously, the resin (by subsuming the identities of the mediums within it) denies a complete understanding about the natures of the mediums in combination. The resin enables, and simultaneously denies, viewing, and the stencils on the surface of the resin also block viewing what is underneath. There is a double–contradictory–use of the screen here.

Fig. 8.13, Terry Shave's studio–Spode Works, Stoke-on-Trent, March 2020.

TS. Yes, I like the fact that the viewer has to move around the images while looking. I have to do the same while making them. My studio has one wall of windows and their reflections get everywhere in the work (Fig.8.13)! A recent work of images is set inside a wooden window frame. All of them are reworked photographs of my work in here, with the reflection of the windows on it, because you can't *not* see them without the windows. So, windows, and reflections on those things, are in this particular space because I don't *not* want windows in. They are there, in everything I do. You can't not see them in that sense. A couple of years ago in Manchester I saw a large digital Dutch still-life of tulips. It was on glass, in a frame and I thought: "That's a bit weird." And then I went back, and there was a beetle. And, I went back a bit later and the beetle had moved–and it was a 24-hour animation. It was absolutely stunning. You can get flat screens, and I might be doing a time-based piece of work, which almost makes itself over a period of time. I'd get a flat screen, without an edge, and I would make two of the panels to go with it. I would set a whole lot under a piece of *Perspex*, which would then have resin on top of it. This is where the imperfections of the resin would be needed to play off against the fact that it's a commercial screen. What I'd have is nothing more than the middle section of something dropping down. Not a waterfall, but that's the closest I can get in my thinking at the moment; that this screen is changing very slowly. So, you could come back an hour later, like I did with that insect. So, it is that screen within a screen within a screen. I think that's a good way of describing it. But I like the fact that you talk about the stencil as a screen. It's not a screen that we know, for viewing. It is just a barrier: like a hospital screen. It's like reflections in water. You get a surface. But then you get things that happen underneath, and the surface doesn't really exist. Yes, I like that a lot. I take a lot of photographs of reflections in water; it's an obsession that's been going on. I have this huge amount of landscape photography, and I think that's part of my working method too. The way I use these things for looking: it's using the photograph as a way of thinking as well. I wouldn't say they would ever be anything other than something that I reference. I post them on *Instagram* and I've been doing that since it started really.[23] I have quite a lot of photos on there, of all my landscapes. I'm nearly up to 4000 posts. So that's always been important to me. Being in that place, in the landscape, is really important to me.

[23] https://www.instagram.com/terryshaveartist/.

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