Here, I build on the ideas of an epistemology of presentational knowing, deepened through my encounters with Goethean science and my previous education, experience and practice as both a designer and an action researcher, to draw together my and others’ activities and ideas with a key part of action research theory. My primary aim is to embed more thoroughly the practices of presentational knowing within the idea of first, second and third person action research (which I will introduce shortly). I also aim to move beyond the basic idea that good quality action research and inquiry is partly born of many ways of knowing, to ask the deeper questions of:

- **How might presentational knowing contribute to better quality, deeper, more satisfying and more influential first, second and third person action research and inquiry practice?**

- **What constitutes quality in a more committed marriage of presentational knowing with action research and inquiry?**

Whilst “many ways of knowing” is considered to be of key importance for the practices of action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2001), and there are many examples where researchers have used specific parts of presentational knowing within particular projects (for example, Reason and Bradbury, 2001: 171, 363; Taylor, 2004), I have increasingly realised that making sense of the detailed relationship between presentational knowing as a whole, action research and inquiry remains largely uncharted territory.

In addition, I look at quality and validity criteria for presentational knowing in action inquiry in the next chapter, *Trusting the mapmaker, part one.*

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43 I understand “action research” as a kind of umbrella term within which action inquiry is situated. Reason and Bradbury (2001: xxiv) say that action research constitutes a “family [which] includes a whole range of approaches and practices… [we have a] commitment to a full integration of knowledge and action in inquiry as a practice of living.” In this thesis I use both the terms “action inquiry” or simply, “inquiry” (which may be construed as a stance, attitude or way of being which incorporates a high degree of self-reflection) and “action research” (which implies a greater engagement in action in the world). I explore why both (sometimes simultaneously) are relevant in my practice in more detail as this chapter unfolds.

44 A notable exception to this is the pioneering work of the team at the Center for Arts-informed Research at the University of Toronto, who are of key inspirational importance to my work in this field (although I have not met them yet).
I have gradually cultivated this (for me, largely visual) landscape of presentational knowing in action research and inquiry through encountering artworks, books, discussions, exhibitions, performances and my own image-making. It’s a stream of my PhD work which has been so enjoyable that I have until recently considered it almost as an aside\(^45\) to what I thought my PhD “ought” to be (serious, sensible, conforming, vaguely academic, heavy with gravitas… you know how “ought” lists ought to look…)\(^46\). Now, as I pull together the strands of my research from the past five years, I realise with some delight just how figural this stream of “data”, this flow of knowing is\(^47\), and make no apologies for my enthused speculation and imaginings of how a more comprehensive arts-informed inquiry might appear, with presentational knowing more tightly woven in as a skilful, accomplished central part of the whole of inquiry - a fundamental way of receiving and making sense of being part of the world, rather than an added extra, the icing on the cake.

\(^{45}\) And a naughty aside at that, with connotations of sneaking off, not working, playing truant from my responsibilities, and unspeakable luxury. What does that alone say about the extent to which I have simultaneously devalued and rarefied this part of what life has to offer?

\(^{46}\) Speaking of naughty asides, you’ll see that some of these footnotes also serve as such, small “intrusions of irony” as social constructionist Kenneth Gergen says in exploring the postmodern predicament of “the virtual vertigo of self-reflexive doubt” (Gergen, 1991: 134)… perhaps under the gaze of the clown, looking at the thesis writer and saying, with wry self-reflection “I know what’s going on here…”. Similar multi-layering of voice happens in clowning improvisations and sometimes (especially revived now at The Globe in London) in Shakespeare with the “rude mechanicals” who turn to address the groundling audience directly. Gergen also suggests that there’s “an awful irony that all one’s doubts are subject to doubt” (Gergen, 1991: 134). That would be the footnote of the footnote, then. Maybe that’s a good idea. Or maybe not… “Each new growth in doubt turns to bite its own tail” (Gergen, 1991: 135).

\(^{47}\) I also note that it provides a good example of the “gusto” with which I can pursue an emergent line of inquiry…
While I do this, my enthusiasm is edged with a feeling of frustration and desire for my own presentational knowing practice to be more fully fledged, more skilful, more important, more figural and more highly valued (including by me) as a way that I inquire. So this chapter has something of the qualities of a dream or a yearning of what could be, rather than an overblown claim that this is what is. I will attempt to show wherever I can whilst trying to avoid a litany of too much telling and examine the validity of presentational knowing as part of action research and inquiry in the next chapter. Here I look at my own and others’ practices. Later, I’ll explore more deeply how these practices have influenced my work both in pedagogical terms (primarily with the MSc at the University of Bath) and in terms of influencing on a larger scale (through my work for the International Labour Organisation).

Sitting at the point where the two worlds of “art” and “research” meet, some of my inquiry looks like the world of action research reaching into the world of art, and some of it looks like the world of art reaching into the world of action research. The overlap, which is rich and potentially indigestible, doesn’t have clearly defined boundaries and my sense of what’s “in” and what’s “out” is more intuitive and sensed than categorical and definitive. Here, “presentational knowing with a sense of purpose” meets “intentional inquiry with a sense of the importance of aesthetic engagement”.

What has this inquiry stream involved?

This inquiry has had two interrelated aspects: first, my practices of clowning, Goethean science, forum theatre and so on which are variously referred to and illustrated throughout this thesis; and second, a stream of exploration with others on the practices and implications of the intersection of presentational knowing in action research. This section deals with the development of the latter inquiry stream of workshops, discussions, visits and reading, including:

- Seminar session on presentational knowing and action research with PhD students at SOLAR, the centre for Social and Organisation Learning as Action Research at the University of the West of England (25 March 2004);
- Two workshop sessions exploring the nature and possibilities of presentational knowing in action inquiry with intakes 7 and 9 of the MSc in Responsibility and  

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48 I am more than tempted to ask you here to not accuse me of not fully practicing what I preach in terms of presentational knowing and this PhD. But I will not defend myself too much and end up in a paralysis of inadequacy. I want to allow myself some space to dream of what could be, juxtaposed with the mundane reality of what is, in a way that is not so much utopian as using what American Druid and Mage John Michael Greer calls the “prefigurative power of the imagination”, marking a possible pathway into and around this territory (Greer, 200X, date unknown).
Business Practice at the University of Bath (held on 22 June 2004 and 8 December 2005 respectively);

- Co-leading open workshop for CARPP at the University of Bath on visual inquiry (15 April 2005);

- Occasional discussions with Shelley Sacks, leader of the MA in Social Sculpture at Oxford Brookes University and performance artist Richard Layzell (2001-2006);

- Wide ranging reading and research in this and neighbouring fields, such as: arts-informed inquiry; art therapy; participatory, ecological and land art; organisational aesthetics; eco-somatics; participatory research and multigenre writing;

- Visits to exhibitions and presentations in the art world (from those who get labelled “artist” rather than “researcher”) – such as visual and performance artists Tracy Emin, Richard Layzell, Joseph Beuys, art activist Gregory Sholette and the work of students and staff at the Black Mountain College49;

- Participating in workshops on developing sketchbooks, poetry and nature, biographical counselling, freefall writing, voice and speech, subpersonalities, mythodrama, forum theatre, graphic facilitation, Goethean science, storytelling (in addition to my more extensive clowning workshops, which are explored in more depth in other chapters of this thesis) (2001-2006);

- Bringing specific presentational knowing practices into the MSc and other second person inquiry groups I am facilitating50;

- Reviewing material (anonymously) for the Action Research Journal with significant aesthetic or presentational knowing intention or content.

- Telephone (and email) discussion around about the evolution of the concept of first, second and third person inquiry.

50 This aspect will be explored in more detail in the chapter “The Pedagogy of the Privileged”.
Rooting first, second and third person research

I want to introduce first, second and third person action research as a key concept in which I am using to help provide a theoretical structure for this chapter. In the preface to the Handbook of Action Research, Reason and Bradbury say that: “the action research family includes a whole range of approaches and practices, each grounded in different traditions, in different philosophical and psychological assumptions, pursing different political commitments… One way of providing some order within this diversity is to identify three broad pathways of action research practice…”

- **First-person action research/practice** skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness and to choose carefully and to assess affects in the outside world while acting. First-person inquiry brings inquiry into more and more of our moments of action – not as outside researchers but in the whole range of everyday activities.

- **Second-person action research/practice** addresses our ability to inquire face-to-face with others into issues of mutual concern, for example in the service of improving our personal and professional practice both individually and separately. Second-person inquiry starts with interpersonal dialogue and includes the development of communities of inquiry and learning organisations.

- **Third-person action research/practice** aims to extend these relatively small-scale projects so that ‘rather than being defined exclusively as ‘scientific happenings’ they (are) also defined as political events’ (Toulmin and Gustavsen, 1996). Third-person strategies aim to create a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face (say, in a large, geographically dispersed corporation), have an impersonal quality. Writing and other reporting of the process and outcomes of inquiries can also be an important form of third person inquiry” (Reason and Bradbury, 2001: xxiv-xxvi)\(^{51}\).

I see first person research/practice – inquiry for me - as a **personal** inquiry into this being human (which may well resonate with others’ experiences); I see second person research/practice – inquiring together, for us - as a **communal** inquiry into “issues of mutual concern” (as Reason and Bradbury stated above) and I see third person inquiry – inquiry for them - as a **cultural** inquiry (the ongoing quest of finding “better”, more just, more generative forms for living).

The terms “first, second and third person” were first used by Bill Torbert in 1998 in relation to research/practice/inquiry (Torbert, 1998), building on earlier work by Peter

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\(^{51}\) Presentational knowing can be especially important both during and after third person inquiries in order to invite and acknowledge the great diversity that is likely in large scale interventions. McIntyre and Cole of the Centre for Arts-informed Research at the University of Toronto refer to “acknowledging diversity in knowledge construction through diverse forms of communication” as “epistemological equity” (McIntyre, in Cole et al, 2004: 259).
Reason and Judi Marshall which had identified action research “for me” (what turns me on, what’s exciting me?), “for us” (what works?) and “for them” (what’s interesting?), indicating a widening sphere of influence and growing scale (from me → them).

First person research is variously described as: “self-observation-among-others”, “self-study-in-the-midst-of-action” (Torbert 2001: 251-252); “self-reflective inquiry practices”, “robust, self-questioning disciplines” (Marshall 2001: 433) and “[discovering] our own capacity for an attention supple enough to catch, at any moment, glimpses of its own fickleness” (Torbert, 2001: 251). In this thesis, you’ll see evidence of my own first person research and inquiry practices particularly strongly in the accounts relating to my work for the International Labour Organisation in the chapter Do You Want to Improve the World?

Torbert defines second person research as: “speaking and listening with others” (Torbert 2001: 253). In describing second person research/practice, he says: “speaking-and-listening-with-others… is… quintessential,” and goes on to stress the importance in such verbal exchanges of “our intent, content, conduct and effect [being] mutually congruent” (Torbert, in Reason and Bradbury 2001: 253-4). He also points out the connected nature of the domains of inquiry when he says that “second person research/practice presupposes and works to co-generate first person research/practice” (Torbert, in Reason and Bradbury 2001: 256). In this thesis, my work with the “uppers” in the chapter, A Pedagogy of the Privileged offers evidence of my second person inquiry practice, as does the material relating to the experimental clown and deep ecology workshop, “Gaia’s Playground” in the chapter Serious Play.

Finally, of third person research/practice, Torbert points towards creating “organisational conditions where more and more of the members voluntarily adopt first- and second-person research/practices and join in the third person research/practice of distributed leadership (Torbert, in Reason and Bradbury 2001: 256). I see Reason’s ideas (from personal conversations, 2000-2006) of third person research as an extension of scale as more appropriate than Torbert’s distributed leadership conception when considering the relationship of presentational knowing with third person research (for example, Joseph Beuys’ social sculpture work (which I introduce later in the thesis) which is concerned with inviting change at a society-wide scale). On occasion, I would also frame third person research/practice as third person “intervention”. I particularly have this in mind in the gradual movement of my work with the International Labour Organisation toward more participatory, large scale “gestures”, as explored in the chapter Do You Want to Improve the World?.
What is my own relationship to the practices of action research and inquiry?

This section freeze-frames my current thoughts and understandings of my ever emerging action research and inquiry practices as I am at once the observer and the observed in both my professional and personal “self-forming”.

I feel unsure about how I might do myself justice in this section. I have spent many hours with others in developing their inquiry practices and I get influenced and engaged in their work in ways which are at once delightful and potentially confusing. My work with people learning inquiry can leave me over-stimulated by their inquiries and unclear where their work leaves off and mine begins. I could also frame this as generative co-researching into “issues of mutual concern”, especially when the development of the person who is learning inquiry is my professional concern. Some participants become friends over time and individual inquiries can mesh and flow in and out of each other.

One way I can make some sense of my practice is to look at it as having a number of interlocking (G. says “labyrinthine”) facets.
First, I am engaged in long term, personal inquiries (for example, exploring and developing presentational knowing in action research and inquiry). This long term inquiry takes place on multiple platforms across the full range of my work over time. Second, I am engaged in in-the-moment micro-cycles of inquiring into my behaviours and actions in the moment and adjusting my responses accordingly. This micro-inquiry is self-reflective, informal and sometimes covert and, again, takes place across the full range of my work, on an intermittent, moment-by-moment basis. Third, as an essentially self-employed person, I am engaged with many one-off projects, ranging from a few days to three years in duration. Some of these projects (such as the public service leadership programmes I introduce later in this thesis) are explicitly action research-based work. Others (such as my ILO work) are not overtly framed as action research and the impetus for these projects to be more “action research-y” and participative mainly comes from my intentions and influence.

My long term inquiries, such as my ongoing exploration of presentational knowing, action research and inquiry (of which much of this thesis forms a part), have now been a focus for long enough for me to start to receive feedback and see the nature of my influence. Working on the MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice at the University of Bath (which I explore in more detail in the chapter *A Pedagogy of the Privileged*), I have, from 2000-2006, always worked as a co-facilitator with one of the original design team for the programme. This year, in 2006, the MSc has seen the first “second generation” team to co-facilitate a group, as both myself and my co-facilitator were not part of that original design team. I believe that this development has enabled my educational influence to grow in significance as the power dynamics shift and reform in new ways. I have sought to develop my influence through the ways in which presentational knowing is explored during the MSc programme (I offer more detail on this later in the thesis). In response to the most recent workshop I co-facilitated (held at Schumacher College, Devon), a colleague (one of the MSc originators) offered the following feedback on what he’d noticed during the week:

"Chris, I thought it was really interesting that you asked the groups at Schumacher to prepare a presentation of their learning, and all of them offered something that was in presentational form. When I have done that on previous occasions, the feedback has always been verbal. It struck me that in one of those mysterious ways, your concern and interest for presentational form was being communicated to the group and they were responding in like manner.

Something about the way you are working with them give permission, makes legitimate, evokes, whatever the word is, this kind of response. What interests me is that it is not a response that I get-I get the words."
What then, do I actually do in my inquiry, assuming I can define it with such a clear boundary? The following points illustrate my responses to the questions: what is inquiry like for me and what am I like when I am inquiring?

- I inquire with the frustrating suspicion that there’s some deep reflective gem of insight lying just beyond my extraverted grasp, and that somehow I am shallow. I tell myself that this keeps a critical humility to my work – I never know “it”… others tell me that they can experience my writing as self-deprecating;

- I read voraciously, tending to use others’ ideas most often to help me name and make sense of my experience in quite short cycles, where my intellect is catching up with my intuition;

- I also over-stimulate and sometimes overwhelm myself with hours of internet-based reading and research;

- Some literature I come back to again and again to inform and reinforce a slower inquiries and development, such as my ILO work. I might call this literature “inspiration from writers who see more clearly than I do.” In these cases, I work with the anticipation that my actions and being in the world might one day catch up with what stimulates my intellect. Examples of this more aspiration literature are the writings of the philosopher Gregory Bateson, the Sûfi poet Rumi, the farmer-poet Wendell Berry and the potter-poet MC Richards;

- Similarly, some bodies of artworks also dwell in this inspirational territory, for example, the work of Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer (who was a student of Beuys) who are explored in more detail later;

- Together, these works indirectly, subtly name that which I only have glimpses of experiencing. I know I am being hinted at by such works as they trigger multi-layered emotions in me. For example, my first encounter with Kiefer’s vast canvasses brought forth excitement, tears and aspiration all at once;

52 This thought has plagued me since I first encountered action research and is probably compounded by my interest in humour, clowning and transgression (à la “Emperor’s New Clothes”) as an essential part of moving with grace through changes. Deep ecologist, Arne Naess takes this to an extreme in his writing on “The Place of Joy in a World of Fact”, saying: “Suppose someone openly adhered to the doctrine that there cannot be too much cheerfulness under any circumstances – even at a funeral. The sad truth is, I think, that he or she would be classified as shallow, cynical, disrespectful, irreligious, or mocking” (Naess, 1995: 250). G. often accuses me of being cynical (and I think he takes himself too seriously), and I often classify myself as being shallow (and he thinks I lack self-esteem). How do I take lightness (or en-light-enment) seriously? Perhaps that is what this thesis is for.

53 This was added to later when I watched a June 2005 interview with Kiefer (for an hour and a half of this, see www.tate.org.uk/onlineevents/archive/kiefer), who I’d assumed to be rather serious and mysterious, only to find him renowned for his sense of humour and laughter whist at the same time dealing with issues such as the Holocaust and environmental degradation.
The “explaining” and “inspiring” ideas I have indicated in the previous five points form shifting constellations in my imagination as I juxtapose them, tending to spot similarities rather than differences. Like with astrological constellations, the patterns I see might join together bodies which are actually light years apart, the pattern being seen only from my perspective. Sometimes these head-bound constellations glimmer and flux, and it is hard to me to catch them first time around. I feel the connections more than know them as a rock solid “fact”. Academic, Jack Petranker, expresses this feeling like this: “this has happened to me a lot… the ‘halo’ or ‘fringe’ of experience. The halo of a thought or other conscious event if the part of my thought that is not centred on its content, but on its relations, meaning, value, and so on…” (Petranker, date unknown);

My inquiries are fuelled by curiosity and enthusiasm – for which I notice I am occasionally berated by older colleagues (who perhaps are confusing child-like for childish?). Russell and Ison say that for some, enthusiasm was seen as the “offspring of passion and disordered intellect” and that “to avoid the prospect of enthusiasm giving rise to disordered intellect and action, we propose the need for cycles of critical reflection to be an essential part of the use of enthusiasm as methodology” (Russell and Ison, 2000: 154). It seems to me that the suspicion which is suggested by the “disordered” view Russell and Ison mention might be a legacy from long ago. Feminist writer, Starhawk picks up on this point when she quotes ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant, saying: “…‘the animist concept of nature as a divine, self-active organism came to be associated with atheistical and radical libertarian ideas. Social chaos, peasant uprisings, and rebellions could be fed by the assumption that individuals could understand the nature of the world for themselves and could manipulate its spirits by magic’… such ideas were termed enthusiasm, and a vigorous campaign was carried out by the state, the established Church, and the new scientific institutions against them. Enthusiasm was associated with radical activism and rebellion. ‘[A] conception of the world’s being inherently active, full of Gods, and constantly changing helped develop people’s self-confidence, and perhaps better encourage them to step forward to act, to transform the world, rather than to remain passive in the face of the great social transformations’” (Merchant, in Starhawk, 1982: 217, my emphasis). Adding to Merchant’s thoughts on enthusiasm, Ison offers the following definition: “As in intellectual or theoretical notion, the original meaning of the word enthusiasm goes back to the Greek words ‘en’, meaning within, and ‘theos’ meaning god. So the word captures the notion of the ‘god within’ as distinct from the source of all understanding being from without… Enthusiasm could then be conceived of as a drive much like hunger. It is the thing that gets us up in the morning to face the world. It acts as a source of meaning which provides the energy that helps us do what we want to do (Russell and Ison, 2000, 143). He then brings the idea back home to a participatory action research project he was carrying out with rural Australian farmers: “our experience was that farming families wanted to engage with us around those practices which most tapped into their energy, captured their imagination or
represented what they most wanted to do. The generic term that best expressed this complex phenomenon was ‘enthusiasm’… Farmers really did seem to make sense of all sorts of complexities and do all sorts of interesting things when they were enthusiastic about it” (Russell and Ison, 2000: p136, p142).

• I am a participant in several practice supervision groups. These groups serve to offer spaces for support and challenge with “‘friends willing to act as enemies’ and also as ‘friends willing to act as friends’” (Reason, 2000) or “seeking friends” (Torbert, 2001: 252). I seem to have a preference for learning and coming to know whilst being connected to and in discussion with others. This is particularly the case for shorter cycles of “what might I do next?” or “how might I do this better?” type inquiry questions. I design supervision sessions into most of the projects I work on (with the ILO work being a notable exception), sometimes act in a supervisory capacity for others’ projects. If I working with someone else, will often seek opportunities for peer supervision (for example, when travelling to and from client meetings);

• I use all the different ways I have access to and work to open up new channels of knowing (for example, through my clowning practice). In addition to reading, writing and discussing, interrogate my intuition and gut feel, I “sleep on it”, I “stalk problems” (Bill Torbert’s phrase, from conversation on 15 July 2004) through going walking, or swimming or taking a nap. I also visualise possible outcomes for my plans and actions in my head, which feels like a kind of rehearsal. I collect images. I practice in safe spaces. Sometimes I consult Eno and Schmidt’s “Oblique Strategies” for renewed inspiration and direction54;

• Divergent, Dionysian inquiry shapes my first person inquiry practice (as I imagine is self-evident from this thesis). On a first person-basis, I have to work harder at the convergent, Apollonian parts of my inquiry cycles (Heron, 1996: 45). I am stronger on the “liberating” aspect of inquiring than I am on “disciplining”. I would like to suggest that divergence in first person work signifies a zest for living, and that such divergence nourishes greater convergence and richness elsewhere. I bring the fruits of my divergent thinking to clients. The down side of this is that my first person inquiries are processed at a slower rate than the pace at which new “material” or events “come in”. When I am working with others, there is more of a mixture. I am more disciplined when I am in service of others (and, perhaps, tend to take this second- and third- person work more seriously than I do my own first-person

54 The Oblique Strategies are a set of cards gradually developed by musician Brian Eno and his colleague Peter Schmidt to help stimulate creative processes. Eno and Schmidt say “These cards evolved from separate observations of the principles underlying what we were doing. Sometimes they were recognised in retrospect (intellect catching up with intuition), sometimes they were identified as they were happening, sometimes they were formulated. They can be used as a pack (a set of possibilities being continuously being reviewed in the mind) or by drawing a single card from the shuffled pack when a dilemma occurs in a working situation. In this case the card is trusted even if its appropriateness is quite unclear. They are not final, as new ideas will present themselves and other will become self-evident.” I pulled an oblique strategy whilst writing this footnote – use filters – it says. So perhaps I’ll delete the whole footnote, then…
practices\textsuperscript{55}). For example, in my work for the International Labour Organisation, Apollo and Dionysus have to work together as the timescales of my work demand that I simultaneously take huge amounts of information on board, synthesise them and create structure for large scale interventions as I go. This is demanding work, which, at first, gave me nothing but behind-the-eye headaches;

- What am I not good at? Interrogating dreams, which always feels like a kind of retrofitting sense making to me, even though of course it has a huge history. I prefer art-as-therapy to talking therapies (this seems like some kind of inquiring failure on my part, perhaps related to “shallowness”? and I get tired of talking, it feels too much like work does). I am also not very good at long term journal keeping, although I am excellent at recording inquiries as part of my second and third person inquiry projects, in service of other people. The Myers-Briggs personality test consistently puts me in the box marked extreme extrovert, so, if I take this seriously, it is hardly surprising that “wallowing round in a dream” isn’t my strong point. Psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott says: “Schizoid people are not satisfied with themselves any more than extroverts who cannot get in touch with dreams” (Winnicott, 1982: 67). I am also not very good at switching the whole lot off and not inquiring at all.

In addition, my questions and reflections on my own inquiring behaviours are supplemented with a further thought which brings in notions of habit and behavioural choices: “to what extent do I reconstitute my self in relation to the contexts I place myself in, and to what extent do I recreate myself in my own image due to ingrained habits and patterns of behaviour?”.

I believe Judi Marshall is pointing towards the importance of a twin awareness of self and context when she writes about first person inquiry as looking inside at the behaviours of the self as well as “reaching outside myself in some way” (Marshall 2001: 434). She says: “a key notion for me is that of engaging in inner and outer arcs of attention and of moving between these” (2001: 433). The \textit{inner arcs of attention} (“seeking to notice myself perceiving, making meaning, framing issues, choosing how to speak out and so on”, 2001: 433) are concerned with the \textit{self}, and the \textit{outer arcs of attention} (“seeking to influence or change something and learning about situation, self, issues and others…engaging with other people, often to inquire with them collaboratively”, 2001: 434) are connected with \textit{context}.

In his research cycle, Rowan also sees a movement between inner states (such as being and thinking) and outward moves (such as encounter and communication) (Rowan 2001). This cycle has always been an important starting block for me to push off from in understanding my own first person inquiry methodology. Rowan describes a dynamic inquiry process driven by movement around phases of \textit{being – thinking – project – encounter – making sense – communication}.

\footnote{With the exception of image-making, which I find I can take seriously and lightly at the same time.}
Rowan’s theory has always felt a bit too neat and perfect in comparison with the lived experience of inquiry. My own version of inquiry lurches and staggers more than his dialectical circle implies, and is populated by miniature, multidimensional in-the-moment action/reflection cycles. I understand this to be more closely allied to Marshall’s *living life as inquiry*, which she describes as: “a range of beliefs, strategies and ways of behaving which encourage me to treat little as fixed, finished, clear-cut… I have an image of living continually in process, adjusting, seeing what emerges, bringing things into question” (Marshall, 1999: 2), and Torbert’s notion of *living inquiry*: “a kind of inquiry that goes beyond ‘thinking about’ the world outside to a direct experiencing of the relationship between the world inside and the world outside (a direct experiencing that includes the experience of ‘thinking about’)” (Torbert, 1991: 258).

Winnicott says “if we look at our lives we shall probably find that we spend most of our time neither in behaviour [outer action] not in contemplation [inner reflection], but somewhere else. I ask: where?…Where are we (if anywhere at all)? We have used the concepts of inner and outer, and we want a third concept. Where are we when we are doing what in fact we do a great deal of our time, namely, enjoying ourselves?… Can we gain some advantage from an examination of this matter of the possible
existence of a place for living that is not properly described by either of the terms ‘inner’ and ‘outer’” (Winnicott, 1982: 105-106). He calls the space “cultural experience” or “playing”, and says that this takes place in a “potential space” between individuals: “playing and cultural experience are things we do value in a special way; these link the past, the present, and the future; they take up time and space” (Winnicott, 1983: 109). But where are they in Rowan’s diagram?

Nonetheless, I am attracted by the basic form of what, when writing about myth, literary critic Coupe calls “the ‘circuitous quest’ paradigm, in which the end is the beginning transformed, on a higher level”, (Coupe 1997: 77) (although I am also concerned about the domination / subordination connotations of “higher” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) meaning “better”, rather than “wider” or “more encompassing”).

My cycles of first person inquiry practice feel more like biologist Mae Wan Ho’s diagram of the life cycle of an organism, which “consists of innumerable, nested and coupled sub-cycles within” (Ho 2001). From a biological point of view, she goes on to say, “the more sub-cycles there are, the more energy is stored within the system”. I suspect the same concept may apply to inquiry cycles, especially if I consider energy in the sense of self-(re)generation and power-from-within (Starhawk 1982).

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56 I explore these ideas further in the chapter “Serious Play.”
In searching for a model of first person inquiry that mirrored the complexity of Mae Wan Ho’s diagram and better matched my own multifaceted practice experience (where I have many active inquiry strands), I was attracted during 2003 to Bentz and Shapiro’s “Mindful Inquiry in Social Research” (Bentz and Shapiro 1998). Here, the authors adopt a “synthesis of four intellectual traditions” in their approach to first person inquiry, exploring key areas for action and reflection:

1. **Phenomenology**: “the analysis of consciousness and experience”;
2. **Hermeneutics**: “the analysis of texts in their contexts”;
3. **Critical social science**: “the analysis of domination and oppression with a view to changing it”;
4. **Buddhism**: “a spiritual practice that allows one to free oneself from suffering and illusion in several ways, one if which is becoming more aware” (Bentz and Shapiro, 1998: 6).

I took these ideas to a CARPP PhD supervision workshop on 30 January 2003 for discussion with the rest of the group and as I did so, I realised that I wanted to adapt Bentz and Shapiro’s model to better fit with my reality. I wrote that their concept, “as it stands, speaks to me in its meaning, but it uses someone else’s language. I would like to translate their idea into one from my perspective, where phenomenology links to receiving experience and creative expression, and where this links to Buddhism via embodiment and presence... I see another link between hermeneutics and reflection, writing-as-inquiry and action inquiry methodologies, which in turn increase, widen and make more critical the levels of my awareness and questioning (changing the screen or lens through which I perceive the world) and finally connect critical social science with post-development, power analyses and feminism, taking me back once more to the phenomenology of my lived experience of being in different social situations and contexts.”

Based on this reflection, I developed four loosely equivalent facets for my inquiry, based on my actual practice (rather than Bentz and Shapiro’s “prescription”). I have chosen to show the four facets using an image (see below) derived from the field of vortices formed by “an object moved backwards and forwards in water” (Schwenk 1996: 86). When a stick is used to move water, there comes a point where *the stick moves the water at the same time as the stick is moved by the water in a reciprocal action*. I see the relationship of self and context in a similar way: *as I (my self) intervene in a system, I move that system’s context at the same time as I am moved by the context in a reciprocal action.*
The four provisional working themes encompassed: practices of my being-in-the-world, the practices of my writing, the practices of my inner finding out and practices of my outer finding out. The four can be broadly mapped over Bentz and Shapiro’s list, and to some extent related to Heron’s extended epistemology (Heron 1999: 122). I wrote them in an order that differs from both Bentz and Shapiro and Heron, putting the most fundamental (my experience) first, followed by my actions in the world, other’s ideas and theories and my expressions of my knowing.

1. **Returning to ground**: the practices of my inner finding out, roughly equivalent to Bentz and Shapiro’s *Buddhism* strand, and reminiscent of Heron’s experiential knowing;
2. **Knowing in the flesh**: the practices of my being-in-the-world, roughly equivalent to Bentz and Shapiro’s *phenomenology* strand, encompassing Heron’s experiential and practical knowings;
3. **Working critically** (the practices of my outer finding out, roughly equivalent to Bentz and Shapiro’s *critical social science* strand) and Heron’s propositional knowing;
4. **Crafting the story**: the practices of my writing, roughly equivalent to Bentz and Shapiro’s *hermeneutic* strand, encompassing Heron’s presentational knowing.
Three years later, in 2006, I find that the way I approached this model now seems like a borrowed approximation – me trying to make a messy reality look neat and tidy. I am both suspicious of and attracted to neat theory. **I am more consistently attracted to the meaning I see in Mae Wan Ho’s drawing of tangled cycles, simply combined with as many different ways of knowing as I can make available to me in any given client situation, supported by a solid base of peer supervision, friendship and enduring curiosity.**

**Rooting visual inquiry**

During the summer of 2002, I had a conversation with my then colleague Steve Taylor before he left his job at CARPP to return to his Boston home to continue with his work on organisational aesthetics in the US. Over lunch, I’d been telling Steve about my PhD work and how it seemed to me to be rather aspirational and academic when I compared it to the rather messier incoherence my life had been offering me.

“It doesn’t seem to have much to do with Art with a capital A, or art, without,” I said. “It’ll come back to that. You won’t be able to avoid it, it’s inevitable,” he answered.

My educational heritage gave me a mainstream, male-biased classical Eurocentric perspective when it came to art and I wonder now if this limited my first views of how my PhD might spread out before me. Germaine Greer suggests that “Western art is in large measure neurotic, for the concept of personality it demonstrates is in many ways anti-social, even psychotic” (Greer, 1979: 327). It seems to me that a non-classical-European stance based on ways of receiving and responding to the world may offer me a more useful viewpoint for this work. “In recreating the forms of the world through painting, Chinese artists claimed to capture the inner essence of what they painted. This called for understanding: of the world, of oneself and of the means and techniques through which the artist mediated [her] experience” (Mitchell and Little 1999). Contemporary Zen artist, Kazuaki Tanahashi asks “Which is more artistic: to make an imaginative work of art, or to live an imaginative life?” (Tanahashi 1990).

Along similar lines, Jungian psychologist James Hillman says “we become artists only when we enjoy the practicing as much as the performing” (Hillman, 1995: 59), whilst thinkers like Eric Fromm write about “the art of being” and “the art of living” (Fromm, 1993: 1,11). Philosopher Michel Foucault notes that “in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something that is specialised or is done by experts who are artists. But couldn’t everyone’s life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house become an art object, but not our life?” (Foucault in conversation with Rabinow, in Rabinow 1984: 350). Foucault goes on to comment on this almost as an imperative, saying that “from the idea that the self is not given to us, I think there is only one
practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art,” and that “[we should] relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity” (Foucault in conversation with Rabinow, in Rabinow 1984: 351).

Whilst I have experimented with bringing unconventional forms of knowing to my working practice through clowning, storytelling, haiku, spontaneous writing, drawing, body sculpture, photography and poetry, I am most deeply interested in these practices forming parts of an overall *art of living*. By this, I mean learning to bring a quality of attention to living that sees the extraordinary in the ordinary; that re-embeds the sacred into the profane. Jack Whitehead calls this “a life-affirming, spiritual energy that many have born witness to, through a meditation on death” (Whitehead 2002). I believe this has as much to do with my developing the relationship I have with myself as it is to do with my actions in the world. And of course, such life affirming energy flickers and glimmers in and out of view. I would be naïve indeed to expect or assume some glorious state of being waiting for me round the next corner, after the next drawing, on understanding the next idea.

As Steve Taylor predicted, I haven’t been able to avoid this “*Art with a capital A, or art, without.***” In the years following that lunchtime discussion, I have been inevitably caught, and sometimes thrilled by others’ practices where inquiry and art meet.

One outlet for this interest has been a number of workshops I have been invited to put together for Masters’ and PhD level students at various institutions. The first, on 25 March 2004, was a short session for PhD students at SOLAR, the centre for Social and Organisation Learning as Action Research, led by Professors Susan Weil and Danny Burns at the University of the West of England, Bristol UK.

The event, which turned out to be the first time I began to explore the art/Art/inquiry mix publicly, was billed as a general piece about action research education and my facilitation practice of second-person inquiry groups as a whole. In the pre-reading for the workshop, I said that I wanted to inquire with the SOLAR group about “my experience of learning how to be with others while they learn about action inquiry”57. Perhaps inevitably, we zeroed in on presentational knowing during the workshop, with the participants being more interested in this more specific area of interest. I found this strong interest in presentational knowing and action inquiry encouraging – perhaps I had something to contribute around this issue, and the conversation helped me to take my interests in this area more seriously.

During the final round of the discussion, one of the participants (also a PhD student at the time) said:

57 From an email exchange with Professor Susan Weil dated 27 February 2004.
“I’m sitting here thinking how - unexpectedly (not that I didn’t expect your talk to be helpful) – but the way that it’s helped me is very unexpected. Because I assumed that I’m sort of quite creative. I do a lot of crayoning, usually, and stuff. But, actually seeing your sharing, the quality of your sharing for me has opened up something and I wanted you to know that. I feel really excited and quite frightened about the representation of what I’m doing” (transcript of session on 8 December 2005).

Two years later, I asked the same woman again how, if at all, that workshop had influenced her and what she remembered:

Three months later, on 22 June 2004, I was invited to lead a workshop specifically on presentational knowing for one of the MSc groups at the University of Bath (for which I am not an Intake Tutor - I work on the even cohort numbers, 4,6,8,10… and this was MSc758). This gave me another opportunity to refine my ideas about the relationship and potential between inquiry and the arts. I prepared a mindmap (below) to structure my thoughts before the session and started to gather some quotations and references for the group in support of these ideas.

Starting at the top of the mindmap, you can see that I place John Heron’s extended epistemology (Heron 1992, 1999) as a foundational theory for my explorations of presentational knowing in action inquiry. At that stage, I was particularly interested in constructing presentational knowing as (re)presenting experience. I remember saying

58 I notice that I do not explicitly run such sessions for “my own” participant groups.
the word with its different emphases: representing, as in offering a faithful or evocative representation of; re-presenting, as in presenting the experience again for others to understand; and re-present-ing, as in becoming present (to the experience) for a second time.

This seemed quite mechanical, and I was also interested in the role that presentational knowing has in bringing forth imagination and intuition – visions that perhaps had never been seen or experienced before (as opposed to representing as a kind of reproduction of something that has already happened). Then I made the links to first, second and third person inquiry such that the group I was working with at this workshop could relate what I was saying to their own MSc project work. This included naming and offering a variety of presentational forms I had experimented with - I didn’t want to offer some kind of definitive and exclusive list. Instead, my intention was that the MSc participants would acknowledge and develop the presentational forms most available and accessible to them. Finally, I mentioned how the process of presentational knowing is an experience in itself, and that these two ways of knowing can blend together into one.

Here, you can see (bottom right quadrant of the mindmap) that I was beginning to make the links between presentational knowing and the three domains of inquiry more specific, although there are many question marks dotted around. During the session, I could sense my rushed enthusiasm. Time melted away and I began to realise that this was a more comprehensive inquiry than I’d anticipated.
Nearly a year later, on 15 April 2005, along with two colleagues, Deborah Jones (a participatory artist) and Toni Spencer (an eco-design lecturer), I co-hosted an open workshop at the University of Bath’s Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP) on “visual inquiry”. This was born out of a desire to develop a deeper understanding of “relating the visual to the verbal/written”, and was attended by both CARPP students and “outsiders” not involved in the University. On 25 February 2005, we met in the crowded café at Tate Britain to plan the session. Notice here that I am now attempting to bring together the content of the workshop with the form of notation through images and handwritten notes drawn at the café using a tablet PC (enabling electronic marks to be “drawn” straight onto the screen)\(^\text{59}\):

Looking down the left hand side of this planning drawing, you can see that the first, second and third person themes manifest this time in three questions (highlighted and marked 1, 2, 3). Through conversation and shared sense making with my colleagues, I was able to take the comprehensive range of issues I’d attempted to tackle previously and simplify them down:

1. How does visual material inform our knowing?
2. How do we (together) form our knowing through visual processes?
3. How might we (re)present our knowing for others using visual material (in order to influence and invite change)?

\(^\text{59}\) I thought this piece of technology would be great for shared, visually-biased, transparent note taking and sense making during client meetings. And I would have been right, had it not have been for the time consuming interest and fascination clients had for the technology-as-toy, which then turned into a distraction.
These questions then opened out into the following list which formed part of the invitation to the workshop:

- What is presentational knowing?
- How can we use it?
- What skills and resources are needed and how do we develop them?
- What skills do we all already have and how can they be enabled / encouraged?
- What assumptions do we bring to this exploration?
- How might we learn from or use existing artefacts and images in our inquiries?
- How and where might the use of, or addition of visual forms aide our inquiry practice?
- How can we create and use made / visual forms to describe our work?
- How is that useful / different from the written, spoken word?
- How can presentational knowing give us different data on a session?
- How is that data different? What are the qualities?
- How are the activities and outcomes different?

Notice in the list above and in the questions beforehand how my sense making process around presentational knowing in action inquiry is expanding and contracting rhythmically like breath, as I explore the contours of the territory.

We wanted to design the process of the day to be congruent with the content (for example, one exercise was an experiment in visual open space\textsuperscript{60}, using pictures rather than discussion). Here’s the visual agenda I drew for the workshop (look at how much more stylised and controlled it is than the visual “notes” shown on the previous page):

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\textsuperscript{60} Open space technology is a simple (often large scale) participatory process for opening conversational space into and around a subject. It was created in the 1980s by organisational consultant Harrison Owen. See http://www.openspaceworld.org/.
We attempted to use images only for the open space, and not discussion. I noticed how very wide open to multiple interpretation images can be as opposed to words, which seem to have a narrower bandwidth of possible (or plausible) meaning.

A month after the event, I received the following unsolicited feedback from one of the participants. Here I notice that presentational knowing is associated with being “adventurous” and “playful”:

A year later, two more pieces of feedback arrived in my inbox after I’d asked anyone who’d been at the workshop to share their reflections on the event in hindsight, and comment on what might have stayed influential for them. The responses were mixed:
In terms of what I remember of the workshop, it was well prepared, and the 
three of you brought really interesting material and perspectives. I was 
very energized by it, but also felt a bit overwhelmed by the amount of stuff 
to get through in the programme you had devised; perhaps it would have been 
good to focus on a smaller chunk of it eg. honing in on presentational 
knowing in the research process, for example.

I know I was very much looking for a day at playschool, to try and overcome 
my creative inhibitions, and the ‘drawing each others’ portraits’ was great 
from that point of view, I still have mine, and Nigel says it’s the best 
likeness of me he’s ever seen. There was also something quite tender about 
doing that for everyone, felt like a sweet gift. But I would have liked to 
have done more of the messy stuff throughout the day.

Other memories quickly? Deconstructing ads and images, the interesting 
books, your lovely ‘drawn agenda’, good bunch of people to spend a day with. 
And my first experience of open space. But not so much on the research side 
of things.

And what’s stayed influential? The feeling that presentational stuff is 
important to me and my work - I’ll forward you a few presentational bits 
I’ve already done for CARPP 8, which I’ve really enjoyed, and reflecting on 
which have moved me forward. Still not entirely sure whether presentational 
work IS the work, or whether it’s a different sort of stimulus for the work, 
though ie. means or end? Is it a different process to get to the same place? 
Still rather stuck in the mindset that says there’s nothing that isn’t best 
expressed ultimately in words. Hmm. Oh yes, and I bought The Artist’s Way 
afterwards, which I didn’t stick with, but what I did, I enjoyed.

And I’ve used the deconstructing images exercise in a workshop with 
marketing students, especially the ‘Exotic Treat’ Divine chocolate ad of the 
sexy black woman that was part of your exercise.

Oh, and a continued interest in Toni’s ReDesign network, the website and 
events etc.
In obvious (“the day had no positive effect on me at that time or since”) and more subtle (“still not entirely sure whether presentational work IS the work, or whether it’s a different sort of stimulus for the [real inquiry] work”) ways, words and propositional knowing seem to have primacy according to this feedback, and “other than words” comes across to me as a (useful) added extra. What I think this feedback misses, from my understanding, is the view of visual or presentational practice as an activity or process (not just outcome) which is valuable in its own right, and not just a subordinate or instrumental to the “real” work of writing.  

During the workshop, we made space for the thirteen participants to reflect privately on their learnings for the day. Here’s the mindmap I drew on the day. Notice just through seeing its density how my personal inquiry had expanded again as a result of the day’s activities:

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61 Which, of course, is exactly the stance I am taking with this whole thesis, whose mainstay is writing, supplemented with other material... there’s a long way to go before the range of crafts by which we offer and receive multiple ways of knowing are truly valued as irreducible equals.
Picking through this dense mindmap, I see that I was mainly concerned with what I came to know as different aspects of presentational knowing in the realm of first person inquiry:

- Collecting very specific images (from others’ artwork, photographs and drawings as well as my own – see the images below for examples) which express for me that which I am not yet able to express using words;
- Juxtaposing images to show ambiguous and paradoxical ideas - “it’s this and it’s that”;
- Selecting single, iconic images to illustrate text – this is what I mean;
- Generating a sea, or wash of multiple images which give the feel of something (I called these “evocational images”);
- Visual sense making processes where I am generating the visual material (using the visual to make sense in the present);
- Making sense of experience through making visual expressions;
- Enhancing and responding to linguistic expression through the addition of images.

Towards the end of 2005, eight months later, I used these reflections to help me structure another workshop on presentational knowing in action inquiry for the then current MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice group at Bath, the transcript of which I have already quoted from. This time, I arrived at the workshop weighed down by books, DVDs, ideas, pictures and stories, apologising for the presence of some of my most beloved texts. In an attempt both to bring form and content together and...
somehow control or manage the (by now) vast amount of content I wanted to offer, I projected a series of images to illustrate my talk (some of which you’ll see used in larger formats elsewhere in this thesis).

Again, I quickly saw my allotted time passing by. Anticipating this, I switched to a less detailed overview - a “lower resolution” in order to complete my workshop. This writing now gives me the opportunity to explore in more detail what I’d needed to miss out then.
It seems to me that action inquiry demands that the researcher or co-researchers are explicitly made manifest as influencers in the research process, and that this invites the research to be more whole, thorough and transparent.

Any pretence that the researcher is somehow neutral, invisible or minimised in the process is put to one side and (ideally) there’s no objectification of what or who is being researched. A more comprehensive picture is brought to the research than in more conventional approaches and there is an explicit intention to both change and recognise the changes in both the researcher and the researched (or co-researchers). In anthropologist Ruth Behar’s “The Vulnerable Observer”, she refers to George Devereux: “Devereux, a psychiatrist, believed that observers in the social sciences had not yet learned how to make the most of their own emotional involvement with the material. What happens within the observer must be made known, Devereux insisted, if the nature of what has been observed is to be understood. The subjectivity of the observer, he noted, ‘influences the course of the observed event as radically as ‘inspection’ influences (‘disturbs’) the behaviour of an electron.’ The observer ‘never observes the behavioural event which ‘would have taken place’ in her absence, nor hears an account identical with that which the same narrator would give to another person” (Behar, 1996: 6).
At the next layer of detail, the imperative of multiple ways of knowing invites the researcher or co-researchers, through the research processes, to reconstitute themselves as more whole, with a greater thoroughness of investigation, following many pathways to knowing, expressing and making sense of the questions being explored. In this way, a comprehensivist approach is being called for at both the level of the research and the researcher, giving rise to both an outer and an inner “epistemological equity” (a “full-bodied engagement” (McIntyre, in Cole et al, 2004: 259-260). As such, this chapter could be viewed as a call for epistemological equity with a special emphasis on, and intention as, a foundation for presentational knowing as a way of becoming more in tune with the “other-human” and “more than human” worlds.

In short, taking presentational knowing seriously and inquiring thoroughly in more “full-bodied” ways brings what eco-art historian Hildegard Kurt calls “aesthetic competence into the cognitive process – which makes it different from science but at the same time its equal” (Kurt, 2004: 240).

**Summarising so far...**

This chapter has now introduced both the questions and principal activities that have informed my inquiry stream into presentational knowing in action inquiry. The emphasis has been on presentational knowing seen through an inquiry, rather than inquiry seen through the eyes of an artist or performer. I have, though, introduced my and others’ understandings of the notions of first, second and third person inquiry in order to provide a base framework for my explorations of what a more committed relationship between presentational knowing and inquiry might be like.

I have offered some reflections on why an action inquiry practice which embraces presentational knowing more fully offers a greater “epistemological equity” – both internally, for the researcher’s own sense-making processes and externally for co-researchers together. Through feedback, I have also seen that presentational knowing in action inquiry can just as equally be seen as irrelevant as revelatory.

In writing about the various workshops I have (co-)facilitated on presentational knowing in action inquiry, I have gained greater clarity on the way that my inquiry has alternately expanded into almost overwhelming details, materials and ideas and, less often, contracted into simpler, all encompassing questions. Heron calls the expansive movement into detail “divergent thinking”, saying this is “particularly

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62 Again, this is in keeping with disciplines of Goethean science as outlined earlier.
63 Buckminster Fuller (who, incidentally taught at the Black Mountain College mentioned elsewhere in this section), said “man [sic] is designed to be a comprehensivist,” by which he meant one who works with whole systems. I take this to signify an ability to synthesise knowing from many, varying, different domains and oppose it to both a specialist (who knows a lot about a little) and a generalist (who knows a little about a lot).
important in the early stages of the inquiry” (Heron, 1996:144). The process of converging again reminds me of once watching a hot air balloonist battle to bring the envelope under control after the balloon had landed, hauling in great billowing armfuls of unruly material…

Choosing specific art works and inquiry projects as illustrations for the rest of this chapter

In an attempt to bring my billowing armfuls of ideas under some kind of control, I will move on now towards marrying up my explorations on (mainly visual) presentational knowing and the overlapping continuum of the three domains of inquiry by looking at specific illustrations from my and others’ practices.

The criteria through which I have selected my illustrations have emerged rather than been imposed through a rigid, pre-planned checklist. I have encountered more possible illustrations than I have included here, making choices about what seems most relevant for the marriage of presentational knowing with first, second and third person inquiry.

What are the tacit criteria I have used to make my choices about what illustrations might be most relevant? In addition to choosing examples from my own practice, I understand my criteria to be art works (and in some cases inquiry projects) where the creator(s) of the work:

64 Which includes both the notions of widening spheres of influence from first to third person inquiry, and, moving in the other direction, the locating of broad-based third person inquiry back through to second and first person particulars.
65 Stories of experiments and developments with MSc and ILO work will come in more depth later.
66 I am thinking particularly here of some delightful and thrilling long encounters with Dali’s work at Figures, Picasso’s at Barcelona, Kahlo’s at London (including her private diary, which I think is of great relevance here), Keinholz & Keinholz in London, and Richard Serra’s at Bilbao.
• Are exploring the personal and the social / political / environmental contexts;

• Have a comprehensivist outlook, using many different media and ideas, including text, writing and performance elements;

• Have unplanned, spontaneous and accidental elements to their work;

• Are engaged with sustained, multifaceted and varied explorations and inquiries;

• Perhaps, invite the participation of others (or at least invite an active “audience”);

• Offer some resonance with my own experience of inquiry, which may come in the form of a sense of recognition, excitement or a heightened emotional response;

• Also, where I have some kind of stake in the work – with a combination of having spent time at an exhibit (or experienced a presentation / performance) and done background reading or, on occasion, met the person concerned or someone who knew the person concerned;

• In addition, I have selected some pieces because they have had a continuing presence in my life over years with some enduring sense of meaning, excitement and appreciation;

• Where I am looking at a collection of work over a life or other journey… and not just a single image (which isn’t necessarily “pretty”).

I will start with the personal domain of first person arts-informed inquiry for me and move in widening spheres of influence to second person arts-informed inquiry for us and third person arts-informed inquiry for them. Here is a summary of what is to come, which can only ever be a provisional table:

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67 As I see it, there are performative elements in all of life – performance is a part of my continuous reconstituting of my self – selfing - and as such includes both elements of authenticity and artifice as I become the same only different over and over again.

68 I am reminded here particularly of seeing some of Anselm Kiefer’s large landscapes for the first time at an exhibition of environmental art at the Guggenheim in Bilbao and my totally unexpected and slightly embarrassed tears at seeing the works.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First person inquiry for me</th>
<th>What turns me on?</th>
<th>Key ideas relating to presentational knowing in action inquiry</th>
<th>Tracey Emin's diary, Frida Kahlo's travel diary, Erik Hesselberg's travel diary</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What's exciting me?</td>
<td>Bio-graffiti – the drawings of life, the marks left behind by the one who lives.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What do I have energy for?</td>
<td>Capta – material that gets paid specific attention by us, derived through selecting and categorising data.</td>
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<td>Awareness.</td>
<td>Journal intime – intended to be private, image-rich self-reflective sketchbook diaries.</td>
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<td>Personal inquiry which may well resonate with others’ experiences of this being human.</td>
<td>Goethean science – fully embracing multiple ways of knowing through a structured, rigorous process.</td>
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<td>The ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness and to choose carefully and to assess affects in the outside world while acting.</td>
<td>Visual Journailling – making images spontaneously and interrogating them for relevance to inquiries.</td>
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<td>Multigenre inquiry – juxtaposing different facets of knowing to build a rich picture of a theme or inquiry.</td>
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<td>Art-based metaphors</td>
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<td>Conversation.</td>
<td>Improvisation – through dance, performance, image making, games</td>
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<td>Practices of communion – cooking, eating, dancing together</td>
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<td>What's interesting?</td>
<td>Epistemological equity</td>
<td>The Yes Men, Banksy, Basia Irland, Joseph Beuys, Shelley Sacks, Anselm Kiefer</td>
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<td>Organising.</td>
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<td>Cultural inquiry and the ongoing quest of finding “better”, more just, more generative forms for living.</td>
<td>Social sculpture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creating a wider community of inquiry involving persons who, because they cannot be known to each other face-to-face (say, in a large, geographically dispersed corporation), have an impersonal quality.</td>
<td>Finding form</td>
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<td>Social marketing</td>
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<td>The avant-garde</td>
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<td>Slow activism</td>
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69 Three large bodies of theory and practice I am knowingly not including here are: organisational aesthetics (for example, the work of Antonio Strati), land art (for example, Andy Goldsworthy’s lovely work), the practices of art therapy (although this area has been very useful when considering validity issues in the next chapter, Trusting the Mapmaker).
What turns me on, what’s exciting me, first person inquiry, inquiry for me, awareness, evocative presentational knowing...

In “Provoked by Art: Theorising Arts-informed Research,” writer/inquirer Lori Neilsen says that: “We are walking theory, and this way of being and knowing asks a response-ability, invites us to develop all our possibilities – not only the cognitive, but all aspects of our sense-making selves. To be an arts-informed researcher – or to be arbiter, supporter, audience, mentor, or critic – we must engage in the music, the dance, the flow of ink on paper, the arc of hand on clay” (Neilsen, in Cole et al: 2004: 46-47).

This section addresses that first person inquiry question of “What turns me on, what’s exciting me?” through the lens of presentational knowing by looking at the traces we leave behind us – the evidence of our walking theory, our accidental and incidental sense-making and our deliberate full-bodied engagement with the fleshy business of living. In addressing presentational knowing in first person action inquiry in this way, I am seeking to take generalised calls that “we must take an ‘epistemological turn’” (Reason, 2001: 9) forward to examine the practicalities, invitations and challenges to the field of action inquiry of taking that turn with quality, rigour and thoroughness70.

Here, I look at a set of ideas ranging from unintended, intimate and private image making and expression outwards to art works that you might find in galleries and exhibitions and representations of research processes that you might find in academic papers and books. I start with the idea of bio-graphics (or bio-graffiti): “the drawings of life – the marks that are left behind by the one who lives” (Jensen, 2004).

Bio-graffiti – accidental and incidental presentational knowing

“These signs are of the past, pointers to the one who passed by, to the one who no longer lives in that time, in that place71.

We live here, now. Looking behind us we see the trail of signs that follow in our wake. We cannot escape our tale... the endless signs that a person has left behind her. We are on a search for this person, following her trail. Although many parts of the puzzle lie before us, we know that many more parts lie hidden. We try to assemble a picture, holding the fragments up to the light and turning them this way and that. We play with them so that they fall into strange combinations, disconnected from their time and

70 I seek to gain a deeper and more rigorous understanding of validity of presentational knowing in action inquiry in the next chapter, Trusting the Mapmaker.

71 This reminds me of a tiny poem by an artist once local to me, Tom Clarke, which I saw on the living room wall of one of my CARPP colleagues: “Not the light of any evening, but the light of this evening,” which says something so succinctly about the universal appeal of the particular.
place. We scatter the fragments again then bring them together, searching for new levels of interaction and new signs of life.

But it isn’t enough.

In order to being a life to life, we have to build a relationship with a new time, a new place. We have to make contact with ourselves. As an ever greater part of ourselves enters the frame, we discover the biographical traces of another person within us. And so we begin a dialogue between the drawing of our own life and the drawing of the life of another. Through this an interaction takes hold, pressing against us like an urgent question" (Jensen, 2004).

Poet Gary Snyder comments in a similar way when he considers story: “Narratives are one sort of trace that we leave in the world. All our literatures are leavings, of the same order as the myths of wilderness people who leave behind only stories and a few stone tools. Other orders of being have their own literature. Narrative in the deer world is a track of scents that is passed on from deer to deer, with an art of interpretation which is instinctive. A literature of bloodstains, a bit of piss, a whiff of estrus, a hit of rut, a scrape on a sapling, and long gone” (Snyder, 1999: 261).

These accidental and incidental scatterings have silted up my living and my inquiries while I have been doing my PhD work. I wonder what will happen to them afterwards – will I throw it all away and free myself of this burden of the past? Will I continue to create them, but then forget them (more like the wake of a boat, or the jet stream of an aeroplane, visible for a while, close to the craft, but melting away behind). Will I simply cease to create them, relegating what was once a meaningful activity to memories of “when I was doing my PhD”? Or, perhaps I might upgrade the whole idea into something more deliberate and start allowing more time to create more elaborate artefacts for (possible) wider consumption?

I was intrigued by Tracy Emin’s Ten Year retrospective exhibition in Amsterdam and visited it in November 2002. She was then the age I am now, as I write this in 2006. Whilst I am not suggesting that her work is always accidental or incidental, it does hold some of these qualities. I was excited to see how similar her work as an artist felt to the process of creating a self-reflective PhD – both are first person ways of

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72 Jensen was holding a particular awareness of Rudolph Steiner’s blackboard drawings in writing this piece.
73 For me, it’s been a PhD of scribbles on post-its, backs of envelopes and receipts; of faint marginal notes; of computer files; of remembered questions and discussions; of exhibition catalogues; of a trail of scribbled on receipts, saved emails, sketches, gathered pictures, cuttings and photographs; of notebooks, reports, dusty scraps of paper by the bed and scattered writings in pockets, bags and purses.
74 Although, of course, many people think what she does is utter rubbish. For example, on October 20 1999, Richard Dorment of “The Art Newspaper” wrote: “What interests me about Emin is not her relentless self-absorption, limitless self-pity or compulsion to confess the sad details of her past life, but that all of this adds up to so little of real interest. Normally I’d at least be able to summon up ghoulish curiosity about a body of work that amounts to a sort of composite case history of a deeply damaged woman. But Emin’s interior life is so fragmented that when she tries to tell her own story in words and drawings, she can only string together a series of unconnected incidents and meaningless vignettes. We find here no particular vision, nothing universal. Nor is there
making sense of the world which draw on the everyday “stuff of life”. Visiting the exhibition was like stepping inside the pages of a piece of first person inquiry, using sewing, drawing and made objects just as I had done so often as I was growing up. I remember her appliqué, embroidery, sex, the feeling that this could have been me, or was me, once… Emin’s trashiness, her seeming lack of self care, and her craft skills. I know little of the deliberateness or serendipity of her processes. Does she do all that appliqué herself? She does say it takes a long time. How much of her art is her persona? And how does that matter?

Emin's art is one of disclosure, using her life events in works ranging from story telling, drawing, filmmaking, installation, painting, neon, photography, appliquéd blankets and sculpture. Emin exposes herself, her hopes, humiliations, failures and successes in an incredibly direct manner. Often tragic and frequently humorous, it is as if by telling her story and weaving it into the fiction of her art she somehow transforms it” (from www.whitecube.com, Emin’s agents). Emin herself says: “For some weird reason – all my tiny horrors have been liveable – I have not died – In fact life becomes better – Through age and experience there becomes some realization – that life is worth living” (Emin 2002).

Whilst Emin’s work is, on occasion, literally masturbatory, my impression is that it represents her way of garnering and maintaining self-respect and self-knowledge (even if her media persona veers towards narcissistic egomania, I can’t help thinking that the accusations against her work don’t in some way have a deep-seated gender-bias… and that’s another story). Her work has been of value to me, and I guess

any coherence or meaning attached to her experiences - unless it be that you can make a lot of money by talking about your gonorrhoea or your abortion on a video and designating it as art. Looking at her work, we learn nothing, understand nothing about ourselves.” Nonetheless, I feel an affiliation with her work through age and gender – she, like me, is of a generation of women who still did learn embroidery, appliquéd and craft and she, like me, is of a generation where (and perhaps this is still the case) the worst possible thing that could happen could be to get pregnant (unlike me, she had to have an abortion – luckily, I was in time for the morning-after pill and its lurching sickness).

I particularly relish the mixture of “good girl” appliqué carrying “bad girl” messages such as “my name is walking hell”.

I have since bought an Emin picture... perhaps it’s the closest thing to a pension for me…

And maybe that’s the story, the one I didn’t want to use my whole thesis up in writing. Is her work – work of this nature – devalued by a mainstream “rational” society which is still publicly appalled by the idea of young women having something to say about the enjoyment (sometimes), vulnerability, regret and self-loathing of experiences like sleazy sex, booze-ups, abortion and death? The most conservative of the mainstream UK
others. I experience myself as being “with” her visual “text”, rather than observing “about” it. I see it as the autoethnography of a woman of my (approximate) place and era: “an autobiographical genre of writing and research [and art78] that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 739-740). And, I appreciate the delicacy, immediacy and variety she brings to her “confessional” narratives – although I don’t know if or how she holds back: “confessionalism has to know when to hold back… It takes art. Without art, confessionalism is masturbation. Only with art does it become empathy” (Morrison, 1998, in Sparkes, 2002: 90).

newspapers, the Daily Mail, said of Emin that she was spreading a “plague of perversion”. I can see the traces of my own contextually inherited prejudices in all this as well – does such work really “count” for anything? Why is it so hard for me to prioritise such activity in my day to day living?

78 I need to add “[and art]” here to compensate for the gaping hole where presentational knowing could so easily flourish in ethnographic and autoethnographic research. Flick through the pages of books specifically exploring ethnographic representation and interpretation (Van Maanen 1995, Denzin 1997, Tierney and Lincoln 1997) and representation and you won’t see a single image. Van Maanen prefaces his book with a quotation from Bronislaw Malinowski (1922): “What is the ethnographer’s magic, by which he is able to evoke the real spirits of the natives, the true picture of tribal life?” Presumably the ethnographer’s magic is an imageless one, if the book that follows (Van Maanen, 1995) is anything to go by. Whilst different (alternative) forms of writing might be admitted at the edges, visual material and image making apparently is not, thus privileging the written word to the exclusion (in the case of the three books cited above) of everything else. Photographs, films and theatre are mentioned and written about, but nothing is shown or shared with the reader.
I’m intrigued by the collection shown in the picture below (Emin, 1997: “Uncle Colin 1963-93”, memorabilia). The display at the exhibition I visited described it as: “A collection of items make up Uncle Colin. The left side of this is a page of writing describing Emin’s feelings on hearing of the death of her uncle in a car accident. On the right, the front page of a newspaper reports the crash. In the middle, personal effects include a crumpled packet of Benson and Hedges which was gripped in the dead man’s hand.”

Here, Emin’s fragments of her Uncle’s life and death (bio-graffiti) has been drawn together into significance and condensed meaning which, according to Vara (Vara, 2002) she intended to be an engagement with alchemical ideas, with Uncle Colin’s Benson and Hedges packet, at the moment of impact, transformed into the material properties of gold – “like real gold” she said.

I have similar collections of artefacts relating to my father and his brother, Uncle Arthur, who both died in their fifties and their mother, my Grandma, who died just before Christmas 2005. A letter from Uncle Arthur from many years before written in his trademark turquoise ink saying he thought I was a feminist and he was a house husband. One from Grandma, written in pink felt tip pen, about a Christmas pudding what spoke to her. Somehow I don’t take my urge to work with this material seriously enough to actually do much with it – even if that means getting a few frames and transforming it into gold.

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79 And I apologise for the quality of the image. This piece is now in a private collection and this was the only image I could find. How frustrating.

80 Is the reason I don’t do this my lurking suspicion that the most satisfying part of the process of working with such bio-graffiti is in its gathering and collection, and that the framing itself stultifies the material into static clutter? And yet, in some kind of double standard, or devaluing of myself, perhaps, I don’t feel this at all when I see Emin’s work.
My bio-graffiti remains neither curated nor shared with others, the act of framing is metaphorically and literally missing and I have an uncertain, shaky conviction of saying this is important, this is significant, others will be interested in this….

I accumulated a huge collection of bio-graffiti and stories related to my Achilles tendon break and subsequent injuries – is my urge to work with this (merely) therapeutic? Does or could it speak to the politics of health service in Accra, Ghana (where the main injury occurred), Delhi, Dubai, London and Gloucester (where I received subsequent treatments)? Could it say something of greater-than-personal significance about the politics of being injured and debilitation?

A temporary excursion into “capta” and, why do I keep on throwing stuff away?

As much as I save material from some life events, on other occasions, I also notice how I keep throwing away drawings, collages and pictures which I have generated to make sense of situations and experiences. For example, I took some care into putting together a large collage to explore my experiences of gender as a difference, for discussion at a CARPP PhD supervision session on 19 November 2003. Here’s how I started to downplay it at the time:

“I wanted to use this session as a reengagement. I wouldn’t like to claim (hence no real piece of writing) that I’d make any sense of what’s been going on because it’s still happening. I wanted to talk through that a little bit and use the pictures.

I’ve stuck these down, and I tried to do it without thinking and I haven’t talked through this with anyone, so this is the first time to do it. With the exception of [one friend], yesterday who came straight up to me and said – “you put figs in, that’s sex, that is”. I’d just like to get that out the way because every time I look at it I think sex now, which wasn’t what it was there for.

I’ve also been doing the photography. This has lost some energy for me in terms of the images that are coming out, although I like them. But I am still very much enjoying doing the process and I very much enjoy doing this. I really felt very confident around unhinging my brain and just DOING something. It strikes me that the work that I’m doing at the moment seems very heady. A lot of the work seems very wordy and heady and I’m missing the aspects in my life that aren’t… and maybe these pictures were some of the few things that I’ve been doing that aren’t”81.

After the workshop, I left the collage, unphotographed and unrecorded, hanging around on the back seat of my car until it became so damaged that it fell apart and

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81 Transcribed from CARPP PhD supervision workshop, 19 November 2003.

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/c_seeley.html
went to landfill. I now wonder whether the strength of the images when collected together meant that (subconsciously) I didn’t want it in here, as it would end up eating up the whole thesis.\(^{82}\)

Working in the field of information technology and “knowledge management”, Checkland and Holwell (1998) said that only a small fraction of the entirely of what is known (“data”\(^{83}\) – which I would equate with experiential knowing) actually gets paid specific attention to by us. They call this sub-set – which (consciously or subconsciously, I would add) is derived through selecting and categorising data – “capta”\(^{84,85}\), and see it as part of a continuum from data to knowledge:

On 20 November 2002, almost a year before that CARPP workshop with my collage, I sat in the same room with my PhD peer group and Jack Whitehead, a CARPP colleague from the Department of Education at the University of Bath. He was looking at the issue of what counts as evidence in inquiry. How do I come to know what is important in my inquiry and what counts as material worthy of being used in my writing?

Jack talked on about the shift from “data” to “evidence”. He said “evidence is data placed in relation to a specific claim to know (or believe) that you make… and then the evidence supports or refutes that claim”. Prior to the data to evidence shift, I am also interested in the process by which felt experience quickens into data (or, using Checkland and Holwell’s words, “data” into “capta”). After the workshop, I found a note I’d written which could have been Jack’s words verbatim, or my responses to what he was saying at the time: “action research is the living process by which experiences quicken into data which in turn may then be energised into evidence”.

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82 Although some of the images reappear later in the interlude Yearning.
83 Coming from the Latin word “dare” which means “to give”.
84 Coming from the Latin word “capere” which means “to take”.
85 Torbert has also used this term, but with no accompanying explanation of his understanding of its meaning (2000: 257).
I asked myself: “What are the qualities of data that it can stand directly as evidence and offer a real sense of having been there?” (as Uncle Colin’s crushed cigarette packet becomes “capta” from the debris of his car crash - embodied, direct evidence of his death). How do I pick out of the aftermath of experience the “capta” which “captures” or evokes, or conjures up the experience itself in the least mediated, most direct way? How does what I pick out, in turn, curl round and penetrate back into the experience?

Practically, one quality of data becoming “capta” is simply that it **continues to resonate with meaning over a long period of time** (for example, the notes I took after various hospital visits that are included in the section *Achilles*).

Second, as with the crushed cigarette packet, that the data was present or created **during the experience itself** (another example of this is the freefall writing I produced in the moment whilst waiting for a meeting to start in Ghana, included in the chapter Do you want to improve the world? – learning with the lowers).

Third, **similar data keeps appearing over time in a number of different guises** (for example a collection of images representing different facets of gender/power (or “agency” and “communion” from Bakan, 1966). Some of these images are included in the powerpoint presentation shown earlier in this chapter.

During my CARPP PhD supervision workshop in January 2003, I brought up this theme in discussion in a different way when I showed the group two images and said: “these are vortices of water and this is connected to that session we had with Jack in November 2002, when we were talking about experience somehow or other becoming data, and is data the right word? And then we were talking about data becoming evidence. I’m more interested now in things being evidenced using data, I don’t want evidence to be something different from data… it may be a process that the data is put through. This picture, these vortices of water, are a visual articulation of the way in which the messiness of my life, whorls or coalesces into some kind of figural nature. I don’t know if I want to use Gestalt-y type words, but it will do for the time being.”

*Turbulent currents caused by a grating, (Schwenk 1996)*
I was interested in how a seemingly undifferentiated swirl of existence incessantly forms (and is formed\textsuperscript{86}) into shapes and patterns. Notice as well how the patterns are similar to Mae Wan Ho’s cycles and sub-cycles image I used earlier in this chapter to depict my messy inquiry. I continued: “The other day I came across this other image, which is a picture of the fibrous material in the human heart. I don’t know if I’m not just in the pursuit of a neat visual metaphor here, but I rather liked it as an image. I don’t know if that’s good enough, just liking something as an image, and what does “good enough” mean anyway? But this issue of swirling, coalescing ideas, however it comes out, has held resonance for me for maybe a year now. I like trying to articulate it and there is an account that I want to do which is about my response to the things that Jack has said, pushing against that, and not refuting it, but doing my version of it, which is not his version of it. Some of it is visual and I am interested in what contemporaneous evidence is (visually) – as I guess photography must be by its very nature, or composted evidence such as freefall writing often is. I am just interested in the nature of data / evidence… but I don’t like either of those words”.

\textit{Spiralling fibres at the apex of the heart, (Schwenk 1996: 92)}

\textsuperscript{86} By me, and me in conversations others such as my CARPP PhD learning group or the MSc participants I work intimately with at the University of Bath.
For what it’s worth, I don’t particularly like “capta” as a word either, which carries with it connotations of appropriation and acquisition, of capturing something that would be better off staying out in the wild. I’m more interested in the idea of processes by which experiences become and stay figural, rather than trying to pinpoint exactly the right “thing-type” word for each “stage”.

Sometimes, like with Emin’s “Uncle Colin”, knowing can become and stay figural because it is literally or metaphorically framed, becoming part of a “frame of reference”. That she has framed the artefacts is one thing. That the artefacts together have been “framed” again by being placed in a gallery or collection is quite another whereby this bio-graffiti is socially constructed (and contested) as “Art”.

Musician and (to my mind) comprehensivist thinker, Brian Eno says of literal, and other framing: “A frame is a way of creating a little world around something… so, I might present a little sculpture that consists of only one angled wire line, but I might tell a sufficiently interesting story about it, or about how it got like that, to create a world around it that gives it meaning. I might say, ‘This line is the precise trajectory of the bullet that passed through President Kennedy’s body’, or… ‘This piece of wire was bent this way by Joseph Beuys.’ All those statements are ways of engaging a part of you other than your immediate senses and asking that part of you to take part in the appreciation of the work. You can view those statements as a frame” (Eno, 1996: 374).

Bill Torbert says that framing (in conversational settings) is related to attention, intention and vision and is “the element of speaking most often missing from conversations and meetings” (Torbert, 2004: 28). It seems to me that framing, both literal and metaphoric, is the gesture that points out what’s important, what’s figural. She who gets to frame holds power. It makes what’s figural explicit. “Make a blank valuable by putting it in an exquisite frame” (Eno and Schmidt, Oblique Strategies, pack of cards, fifth edition, 2001).

Next, I will move on from the almost accidental nature of bio-graffiti towards deliberate, but intended to be private, image rich self-reflections in the form of the journal intime, sketchbook diaries which may or may not become available for wider gaze and scrutiny.
Journal intime – private presentational knowing (that sometimes gets seen)

Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo worked painstakingly at her paintings, but was much freer when it came to her private sketchbook diary, which I see as a sustained, intense piece of first person inquiry, by herself and for herself: “[Kahlo’s] journal is a deeply private expression of her feelings, and was never intended to be viewed publicly. As such, Kahlo’s diary belongs to the genre of journal intime, a private record kept by the woman for herself… Does it retain its integrity when read by another or published?” (Lowe, 1995: 25).

What I enjoy about this work is its messy uninhibited expressiveness: “Nearly every drawing in Kahlo’s diary is spontaneous and unplanned… [she] relished the element of change in these drawings, and she coaxed a number of figures from ink spots, stains resulting from deliberately spilled and splattered ink, some pressed onto the opposite page, other so thick they soaked through to the next sheet of paper” (Lowe, 1995: 27). Perhaps I am also a little envious that she was both able and willing to prioritise its wild creation (albeit through times of great debilitation, illness and, eventually, her death). Here’s what I said about it to the group I was working with on 8 December 2005:

“I think this as an example of someone inquiring into her own life is gorgeous, I just love it, And it’s such a mess. I get terribly excited when I see messy things. The vibrancy of it. This to me is about living life. These things have a vibrancy about them which I think is almost totally lacking in the business world. I think the business world can learn so much from these kind of things.”

I wonder now, was this work so free because it was never created for others to see? Is it the visual trail left of Kahlo’s play with her own private thoughts, imagery and materials?
SMILE
TENDERNESS
drop, knave, mote,
MYRTLE, SEX, broken,
KEY, SOFT, SPROUTS,
LIQUOR firm hand
LOVE strong chair
LIVING GRACE
ALIVE PLENTIFUL
FILLED
THEY ARE...

(Kahlo, 1995: 240 & plate 70)
The *journal intime* is a form which hasn’t suited me well, although I am excited by Kahlo’s vigorous, expressive work. Maybe I prefer to “play to an audience”, or maybe I am more extravertedly interested and stimulated to want to stay looking at my self in that kind of a mirror for too long. During 2003, starting at the New Year, I spent some weeks writing each morning, evoking a steady stream of degenerative negativity which somehow managed to cast a pall over the day (like when I wake up in the morning after a bad dream). Here are some examples of what this form brought forth from my writing self:

“... just say nothing. Just say nothing. Just say nothing... I am a blabbermouth who ought to keep her bloody trap shut and rely on less destructive forms of communication. My voice can’t be trusted. It’s like that awful conversation with [–] over and over again. Only [–] smacks me down at present rather than walks away. Checks me with all the right fancypants words. And the whole issue could be avoided I I just kept my mouth shut. Not drinking at all would help... I still like the discipline of [writing these pages] and whilst I think they serve as a sink for bad stuff, it spills out. So, they felt destructive, self-destructive. They felt contained, like nuclear waste. They felt part-diary and part waste-thought-bin. I was surprised at the extent to which I dwell in the negative and get drawn back to what gets buggered up, or what I bugger up. They feel embarrassingly miserable...”” (7 January 2003)

“Another depressing CARPP workshop yesterday which left me feeling small, stupid and inadequate (again) and annoyed, this time with both myself and the system as my registration forms were once again lost and I went traipsing round the offices of jobsworth admin staff, all passing the buck to someone else, and one I noticed even having to have a list of instructions for customer care taped to the desk. The last instruction said “show you care”, although there was no indication as to how to do this... The library card machine was broken... no, I couldn’t have a card. I remembered how excited I was when, 3 years ago, I got my first cards at the University and remembered how perky I looked on the photos then. Yesterday’s photos left me feeling like an old bag with limp hair and baggy eyes...”” (24 January 2003)

“I am sick of writing these silly papers. They feel like an interruption to the flow of my day and if they’re supposed to reflect back to me, then I don’t particularly like what I see – a mass of self-loathing...”” (26 January 2003)

I stopped on 6 February 2003, realising that this process of writing (for me) constantly fermented, but did not necessarily purge, dark emotions.

On the other hand, with visual expression the direct physical action of, say, scribbly spikes, serves to purge my feelings in a fuller, more embodied and satisfying way, bringing me back to an inquiring space more quickly. I can watch myself scribble and
be interested in, but not attached to the outcome. With writing, I get stuck “in it” – the restrained physicality of the medium of writing holding back a feeling of fullness in expression. With mark-making, more of me gets involved, with my physical gestures counting for something, too. Here’s an example following some long forgotten rumbling argument:
This drawing came as a result of experimentation with Visual Journaling, a specific set of techniques I first encountered through a colleague on a piece of public service leadership work with the UK Government. I tried the work myself and have subsequently introduced it to one of the MSc groups at Bath I have worked with.  

Visual journaling  

Visual journaling (Ganim and Fox, 1999) carries the promise of “Using art to: reduce stress; release anger; resolve conflicts; get in touch with feelings; give voice to your soul – even if you can’t draw”. So it’s premise is therapeutic, it seems, a kind of do-it-yourself art therapy, which can fit with at least part of what first person inquiry strives for, namely Torbert’s “glimpses of our own fickleness” (Torbert, in Reason and Bradbury 2001: 251). Ganim and Fox say: “Our own recognition that imagery is a language inherent in each individual was verified by our findings: imagery is the bodymind’s first or primary means of inner communication. Words are an outer form of secondary communication – a method we have invented to communicate with each other. Our conviction [is] that inner imagery is a more accurate way of expressing and understanding what we feel and think” (Ganim and Fox, 1999: 1-2).

Here’s how I introduced a brief visual journaling exercise during the workshop on presentational knowing I offered to the MSc group at Bath in December 2005.

“Visual journaling – it’s a really easy way of interrogating your own views and emotions, your own inquiry questions. It’s another way of coming at your inquiry question and surprising yourself… Over here we’ve got lots of sketching stuff. So for those of you who are thinking oh my god I can’t draw, well this is your opportunity to not draw well. Let’s just ignore good and bad. This is not about good / bad, it’s just about letting your hand move across the page and making marks. Grab some paper and grab whatever pens and paper and things attract you. Whatever you fancy.”

As I spoke to the group, I tried to drain any potential anxiety from the situation. Perhaps I try too hard at this. Performance artist, Richard Layzell says that: “as...
someone who works as a facilitator with people who aren’t artists in any sense, working with adults, who are maybe professional. I work once a year in Greece on Skyros – and these people they want something from me. And they’re very scared of the word ‘art’. Even ‘creativity’ is threatening for them, but if I talk about ‘play’ they’re OK. And I witnessed them playing and its very moving. But I see this hunger in people who are a lot like us who are involved in the arts… Why is there this hunger? Where does it go? This ability to integrate play and creativity into our lives, what happens with education with being told that you can’t do this, you can’t sing? I just can’t sing, so I’m not going to. And what does that do to an adult who secretly knows that they want something more?” (Layzell, 2004)91.

Next, I took the group (who were each working on action inquiry questions as part of their ongoing MSc work) through a short visualisation before they began:

“How does your inquiry question feel? Bring your awareness into your body. What do you feel in response to your inquiry question? Where is that feeling located in your body? What is the physical sensation that comes to you when you think about your inquiry question? What might this physical sensation look like if it were an image?

Just allow your hand to move. Follow your instincts. When you’re ready, add more colours and shapes. You can’t go wrong. Steal other people’s pastels if you want to.”

Notice again how I attempt to neutralise any building pomposity in the exercise. The group then worked in pairs to interrogate their images, according to the following guidelines adapted from Ganim and Fox (1999):

**Basic Visual Journaling**

- **Intention** – what do you want to inquire into at the moment? What emotion or feeling?
- **Attention** – close your eyes, become aware of your breath and dwell in your inquiry question.
- **Conscious, embodied awareness** – interrogate your body to notice what you feel in response to your inquiry question. Where is the feeling located? What is the physical sensation?
- **Visualisation** – imagine what this physical sensation would be like if it were an image.
- **Mark making** – now open your eyes and draw your image. If nothing comes to you, pick a colour that best represents your feeling and allow your hand to move in a way that expresses that feeling. Follow your instincts as you add more colours and shapes.

Exploration questions

1. As you look at your check-in drawing, how does it make you feel?
2. What does this drawing tell you about how you feel emotionally? For example, if the colours are dark and cold, could you be feeling alone and isolated and shut down emotionally? If the image you drew is frightening, is there something you are afraid of? If your drawing is playful and bright, is it telling you that you are happy and full of fun?
3. How do the colours make you feel?
4. Is there anything in your drawing that disturbs you? If so, what? Write a few sentences about how or why this part disturbs you.
5. What do you like best about your drawing? Write a few sentences about how this part makes you feel.
6. What have you learned from this drawing about how you feel?
7. Are these emotions related to a particular current issue or concern? If so, what?
8. Does knowing what you feel about this issue or concern help you deal with it? If so, how?
9. If your drawing could speak, what would it say to you?

The participants’ responses in the group I was working with remain private, but I’d used visual journaling myself whilst I enjoyed a week of mad cross-cultural, arm-waving clowning in Southern Italy in June 2004. Here are the results, first showing me in a light, optimistic mood, then gradually more relaxed and finally, giving up on the writing and making very few marks indeed in a disappointing trail-off as the exercise began to feel mechanical. I remember the value of the process – sitting down to “scribble and colour-in” – as being more beneficial to gaining an understanding of my mood or state of being than I recall what any of the words said. I could see the same old inquiry themes coming up in the words, but what was different was sitting quietly in the morning sunshine, left alone, the place respected, while I basically enjoyed the colours and the textures of the pastels and the paper. Note that this work demands the kind of “suspension” of the intellect and “bodying forth” which I introduced in the earlier chapter, “Expressions of Energy”.

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/c_seeley.html
How do I feel when I look at this country?

Sweeping OK past color - I think like the product, I'll forget. When I think instead, it does not exactly recall the map that you looked at as a kid in kindergarten.

2. How does it make me feel?

The sight of a canvas with my first name, it strikes me. I wonder what it is I feel about it? I think about it. I feel that it's in my mind. I'm not able to picture anything.

I've seen it, but I can't picture it. It's a moment, a feeling.

3. The sight seems more as an idea, not a place.

I am distressed by the back page. It makes me feel sad. I don't want to see it.

4. It's like a light moment I'm not sure what it means no idea, just the memory of the back page and the feeling I've seen with the return.

5. This is like to see it, I've learned that. It's just stuff.

It's just stuff. What's interesting is the sight of stuff.

6. This relates to the nature of life. It's about gathering.

It's about gathering. It's about gathering. It's about gathering.

7. How do I feel when I read this page?

I feel sad, and I feel that I miss being from the place.

8. How do I feel when I write this page?

I feel sad and I feel that I miss being from the place.

9. How do I feel when I see this page?

I feel sad and I feel that I miss being from the place.
Uncharted Territory

What is my inner experience of this work?

#1 How does my drawing make me feel?

Light, and concerned with the text, rather than with the

drawing

#2 What does the drawing tell me about how I feel emotionally?

Relaxed, energetic, joyful, fresh, and slightly concerned

#3 What do the colors make me feel?

I like the green and the green color of the green and

the color of the page, too much to the color of the

blue. There are no colors, the color is

the red and the whole "colorful and".

#4 I'm interested about the curve, which converges, is

amalgamated by small curves with the rest of the page.

#5 The one I'm interested in is the rest of the text, on the rest of

the color, which is easy to read and readable. The colors

are colored in or the rest of the rest of it.

#6 What do I like best about the drawing?

I like the curves between the two graphs, the white

color on the white on the white background. I like the

curves on "happy", because it's the first time I

look at the yellow with the green on the green on the green.

#7 I've learned from this drawing that we can be too discriminative.

Like elements with many contours and that (general

related) look understanding.

#8 The curves and we related to the black, the yellow.

Emotions: the black, the yellow color, and the rest, and

the yellow color on the white, and the rest. The yellow

color on the black, and the rest. The yellow

color on the black, and the rest. The yellow

color on the black, and the rest. The yellow

color on the black, and the rest. The yellow

color on the black, and the rest.
Unlike the freely sustained work in Kahlo’s diary, I don’t go very far with this self-referential image making before I want to look up and make contact with the other-than-me world. Working all week with one single plant during the Goethean science workshop offered me more engrossing interaction than repeatedly turning in on myself in Italy. But even with the Goethean science, I found it less meaningful to do the “mood paintings”92 than the more detailed and expressive work based on my experience of the plant itself – I turned the inner mood into an abstract for the pleasure of the painting process.

The first task is to do a dreamy inner picture from your memory.
My inner landscapes were more about enjoying the paint than feeling and expression.
Am I just enjoying the drawing and playing with the paint?
Is that “good enough”?93

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92 At this point, two possible narratives pop up: first (and this thought always comes up first), “does this mean that I am a shallow extravert with no inner life, then?”; and, second, “surely there’s something desirable about contacting the more-than-me world in this increasingly individualistic society?”.
93 Extracted from my notes taken during the Goethean science workshop in April 2006.

In both 2003 and 2004 I went to theatre performances in one of the few remaining “mirror tents”, temporary fin-de-siècle structures lined with mirrors. How rich to be there for an evening, but a life-time of self-referential gazing?

I remember a few years ago asking deep ecologist, Stephan Harding, about how he imagined human life post (further) climate change, when a hotter earth had meant the decline of (even) more species. He said: “it’ll be like looking in the mirror all the time. As we step from one air-conditioned space to another, all we’ll see reflected back to us will be products of the human imagination. We’ll be impoverished for that lack of diversity.”

Facing out again

There is a long history of travellers drawing and writing journals, reflecting back and making sense of what’s around them as well as what’s in them. I’d say that it’s only a small jump over from an inquiry into an unfolding journey to an inquiry into an unfolding life.

Australian artist, Frank Hodgkinson (a former official WW2 war artist), travelled along Papua New Guinea’s Sepik River in a dugout canoe during 1977 and produced “Sepik Diary” as a record of his 500-mile journey. I came across this gorgeous (kangaroo) leather-bound book 20 years ago in a bargain bookstore for £5 (and as a student at the time, deliberated about whether I could afford such an extravagance). It shows his journey, his thoughts and his encounters94 as he travels in a wonderfully

94 Although Hodgkinson’s writing is more descriptive (he seems to see so much of both the human and more-than-human worlds, in such satisfying detail), than self-reflective in Sepik Diary, what he notices and the vibrancy of the images he creates say something to me about the man’s engagement with living. To bring Hodgkinson’s noticing together with Gregory Bateson’s anthropological studying in “Naven” (Bateson, 1958), where both are
free, impressionistic and evocative way what makes me wonder why first person inquiry accounts of travels through life and practice can somehow miss the mark of this vibrant engagement and zest for living when they are squeezed through the processes of academia. How might these kinds of evocative qualities be retained and combined with other types of knowing?

“One of the greatest problems with all qualitative research is the constant need to seek its justification within someone else’s language game and in relation to someone else’s definition of suitable criteria” (Green, in Fisher and Phelps, 2006: 144).

taking their professional stances to understand life and culture in Papua New Guinea, would symbolise the kind of strong marriage between presentational knowing and research which I am exploring.
As the sun sets and the day's temperature begins to fall, we enter the serenity of the reeds and the sluggish backwater. Swift current and the current's power propel us downstream at an exhilarating pace. But for the drivers, control of the motor is essential, for it allows for speed and direction. The motor's power is enough to propel us through the water's flow, but it requires constant attention to ensure safety.

Mid afternoon, the boat's current signals the driver pointing to the left bank, where children are paddling and painting the scene. Returning from school, they play.
Uncharted Territory

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/c_seeley.html
I don’t want to finish this part of my writing without including two more references. The first is another favourite travel sketchbook diary, and the second is an insight into one of the ways I interact using presentational knowing in an un-premeditated way.

When I was a kid, one of my Dad’s favourite library books was Thor Heyerdahl’s *Kontiki Expedition*. He loved reading and used to pilfer our library tickets so he could get more books out each week. Apple cores could pile up under his chair as he devoured the books. In my imagination, he got the *Kontiki Expedition* out many times. Or was it one of the books he owned? What I didn’t know until many years later was that one of the other crew members drew his way across the Pacific with great wit and lightness. Erik Hesselberg’s *Kon-Tiki and I*, is not packed with academic insights, but it does show what it was like for this man, on that journey, at that time (Hesselberg, 1949).
The Kon-Tiki's wireless station was called L12B.

It wasn't first-class gear and it was full of electric shocks. The rest of us took good care not to touch the operators Torstein and Knut without rubber gloves while they sat at the key. The dry batteries were continually wet and had to be changed over.

That was what they used the soldering paste for.

One day we had a fright. A full-grown octopus waved all its arms close by. We remembered what the fishermen in Peru said, that the largest octopuses had a habit of embracing people.
As a reader, you’ll have gathered by now that I am in the fortunate position to see some interesting speakers related, one way or another, to inquiry, sustainability, systems and so on. Sometimes, if I’m quite anonymous in an audience, I’ll end up drawing the speaker, for example, here’s the amazingly sprightly cognitive biologist, Humberto Maturana nestled in my dense notes from his workshop on “Fundamentalism, Ethics and Leadership,” held in Oxford on 6 September 2004:

95 Notice as well how I have the habit of cramming so much onto one dense sheet of paper. It would be simplistic to suggest that I do this to save paper, or as an indication of some terrible anal retentiveness. I suspect I do it to be able to see as much of the whole as possible in one sweep of the eye.
And a second sketch of transpersonal psychologist, John Rowan, at the flipchart stand during a workshop on subpersonalities held in London on 28 February 2002:

Seeing these images again brings up a series of questions for me:

- What kind of attention am I paying while I am drawing?
- How do I remember the workshop, and the presence of the speaker differently?
- How does the process keep me in the detail of the present?
- How do I learn from “studying” their ways of being as well as their words?
- How, particularly with Maturana, was I exercising exactly the kind of gaze that his “biology of love” might advocate?
I have found a few pockets of academia where the full implications of presentational knowing in research is being taken more seriously. I will introduce two here. The first invites multigenre forms to be crafted as a reflection of the kaleidoscopic, multi-faceted way in which we know things, and that things, relationships, events, biographies, research issues are known (Romano, 2000, 2001, 2004). Finding Tom Romano’s work (via researching the University of Toronto’s Centre for Arts-informed Research at the in 2005) has been an important and inspiring focal point around which I began to converge my inquiries. Here, at last, was someone who had really looked into the practical implications and of presentational knowing and research, and has for years worked with his students to find new forms for research writing, which do justice to non-linear, often fragmented and multi-faceted understandings of the ways we come to know and make sense of experience.

The second is an academic paper which focuses back on writing as the presentational form, but it nonetheless of interest as it takes artistic styles, techniques and genres as metaphors for writing research (Beach, 2001).

### Multigenre inquiry
- collages of understanding that are meant for sharing

I first came across Tom Romano’s work when I read his chapter, “Multigenre Stirrings” in the Center for Arts-informed Research’s publication “The Art of Writing Inquiry” (Romano, in Cole et al eds, 2001: 242). Romano is an educator working in the Department of Teacher Education at Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio. I looked him up and discovered some web-based material (including recordings of him talking) and two of this books, which I found refreshing, clear and humorous: “Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers” (2000) and “Crafting Authentic Voice” (2004).


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96 Ondaatje is, I believe, a Burgher of the Sri Lankan élite. See “Class and Seduction in Sri Lanka” later in this thesis for the story of me meeting his brother and sister.
Out of his inquiry into Billy the Kid, Ondaatje created a complex, multi-layered, multi-voiced blend of genres, each revealing information about his topic, each self-contained, making a point of its own, unconnected to other genres by conventional transitional devices. I cannot emphasize enough this idea of separateness. Each genre is a colour slide, complete in itself, possessing its own satisfying composition, but also working in concert with the others to create a single literary experience" (Romano, in Cole et al eds, 2001: 246).

He describes the multigenre form as arising “from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes language, images, and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author’s. The trick is to make such a paper hang together. (Romano, 2000: x-xi).

Luckily, Romano has given this issue of “hanging together”, or “unity and fulfilment” as he calls it, some serious consideration (Romano, 2000: 149-164). He says: “Multigenre papers require a great deal of readers. So much is implicit, so little explicit that multigenre papers can be quite a cognitive load. Because they can be so demanding to read and because they lack traditional transitions found in regular research papers, I nudge students to provide recurring images, echoes of language, and repetition of form that reverberate among genres. And this I find fulfilling… Events connect, images recur, words repeat, themes emerge" (Romano, 2000: 149).

It seems to be that Romano’s approach carries the potential for the kind of epistemological thoroughness invited by the Goethean science methodology, welcoming many different types of knowing simultaneously juxtaposed against one another as facets creating a more complete, and pluralised picture.

Romano suggests the following basic design for getting going with multigenre research, aimed primarily at schoolchildren, but equally relevant, I think, as a start point for adult action researchers. I appreciate his simple, but not simplistic,
pragmatism, which, together with his fertile ideas for multigenre forms, carries the possibility of a radically different approach:

1. What is your topic?
2. Describe what you know about your topic.
3. Tell what you want to learn about.
4. Describe the origins of your research. What sparked your interest in the topic? Why do you want to know more about it?\(^\text{101}\)
5. List at least a dozen questions you have about your topic\(^\text{102}\).
6. Describe your plan for collecting information about your topic.
7. Provide a preliminary bibliography.

(Romano, 2001: 3)

In his writing and teaching Romano details a rich array of multigenre (re)presentational and expressive forms, which he seeks to inspire students to juxtapose (Romano, 2004, 2000). He’s not particularly an advocate for sense making framing to glue it all together, but seems more in favour of creating a text which, through sharp juxtaposition, invites the reader to be actively drawn in to the sense making process – an active readership demanding that “readers feel, care and desire” (Sparkes, 2002, 94-95). I endorse this stance and want you to be seduced, challenged or repelled by the images, stories and ideas I have chosen and blended for this thesis.

Romano’s menu of genres and materials to blend includes (but is not restricted to):

- Biographies
- Character sketches, doing what they do, central acts and central images, vividly described, crucial things
- Defining moments, dialogue, diary excerpts and dramatic scenes
- Encyclopaedia entries, expressive writing, extended metaphors
- Family memorabilia, found poetry and found prose, fragmenting the story
- Haiku
- Letters
- Mindmaps
- Newspaper articles – real and imagined
- Photographs, poems and “photograph poems”, plays, postcards, prose poems and prose fiction, faction and fact, poems for two voices
- Recipes, repetends\(^\text{103}\), repetition and rule books
- Voices of the chorus

\(^{101}\text{In inquiry terms, I would view this question as “what stake do you, as a researcher, have in this work?”}\)
\(^{102}\text{Again, from an action research perspective, this is a congruent and useful beginning, although I would usually work with students to start out with one “how do I?” question relative to the topic, which implicitly incorporates both action (“how do I?”) and a first person perspective (“how do I?”). In addition, I would suggest that action research projects invite researchers to engage with questions and topics of both personal and political significance. I don’t think Romano is explicitly doing this.}\)
\(^{103}\text{Like a reprise.}\)
I wonder if Romano’s multiple, sometimes starkly different voicings offer a more
elegant opportunity to accommodate Gergen’s “virtual vertigo of self-reflexive doubt”
mentioned earlier, by spreading the voices wide or horizontally, rather than deep or
vertically.

Like Tom Romano, educator Dennis Beach is concerned with thinking about “artistic
styles and techniques… with regard to their possible bearing on the practices of
professional research writing” (Beach, 2001: 314). Unlike Kahlo, Emin and
Hodgkinson who, it seems to me, live with image-making both ontologically (as a
way of being in the world) and epistemologically (as a way of knowing the world),
with Romano and Beach we have now moved into a part of the territory where we are
considering (re)representing research projects and inquiry. Here, we are exploring
presentational knowing more as an epistemological device, a means to some other
end, rather than a way of being, a life stance.

Somewhere between the two I see another field in the landscape, which I’ll be
exploring in more depth next, which is presentational knowing as an intrinsic part of
the whole processes of inquiring and researching together. These three elements –
making images as a way of being in the world, making images as a way of knowing the
world and making images together as a shared activity through which we come to
know the world collectively - influence each other closely; they permeate each others’
boundaries. My aim is to suggest that taking presentational knowing on board as part
of the ontology as well as epistemology of living an inquiring life is a desirable thing
in the face of humanity’s increasing dislocation from each other and the more than
human world. This means allowing the processes of presentational knowing to
penetrate back into experience, thereby allowing presentational knowing – in
whatever forms – to become a more explicit and valued part of our day-to-day lives.

Back to Beach, who, in his paper “Artistic Representation and Research Writing”
identifies four “artistic styles and techniques” and three “art genres” for his
investigation, using them as metaphors for the production of (mainly) written research
texts (Beach, 2001: 314):

Four artistic styles and techniques

1. **Bricolage** – assembling miscellaneous available materials in an ad-hoc way which,
   Beach suggests, is fine for data organisation and pre-analytic work, but is not
   sufficiently refined for final report and thesis writing;

2. **Collage** – bringing together various carefully chosen textures in a more finely crafted
   way, which, according to Beach is more in keeping with the “sophistication and
   intention behind the production of research texts” (Beach 2001: 316);

3. **Montage** – juxtaposing fewer types of material to build a picture of a situation (for
   example, extracting quotations from many different transcribed interviews, or using
   lots of magazine cuttings to make a composite picture);

4. **Collage** – bringing together various carefully chosen textures in a more finely crafted
   way, which, according to Beach is more in keeping with the “sophistication and
   intention behind the production of research texts” (Beach 2001: 316);

Link to: http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/c_seeley.html
4. **Pop-art** – using contemporary available materials in research representations (for example, packaging or newspaper cuttings).

**Three artistic genres**

1. **Realism** – writing or representation that “claims to show an absolute truth in a single form” (Beach, 2001: 320);

2. **Impressionism** – writing or representation that “is said to lift out textures of possible meaning” from a situation. Beach suggests that fieldwork journal writing can carry something of this lyrical, impressionistic quality (Beach, 2001: 320-321). I would place Hodgkinson’s work in this one of Beach’s categories;

3. **Expressionism** – writing or representation that puts the researcher’s emotions, subjectivity and empathy right at the centre of the research work. I would place Emin’s work and Kahlo’s work in this one of Beach’s categories.

Beach’s own article writes about, but not particularly from or with these forms, using a writing style of illustrated realism. I recognise from my own experience that it is difficult to write from or with these more adventurous spaces when trying to carve out spaces for their legitimacy without also needing a certain amount of *aboutness* writing (Shotter, 2005) to frame the issues. It’s like trying to be subtle and explicit at the same time. I am not saying that *aboutness* writing is wrong or needs to be dropped, or that the pendulum needs to swing the other way and we embrace the more open-to-interpretation richness of “other” *withness* ways of presenting what we know at the expense of everything else. My intention is for a more adventurous, skilful blend of both to continue to develop and be recognised, not as bivalent opposites, or even as a continuum so much as a kind of blurred, multivalent “fuzzy set” of equally valuable possibilities (see Kosko, 1993 for an accessible explanation of “fuzzy thinking”).

While we are working with Beach’s art-based metaphors, I’d like to add another one, namely the inquirer as *curator*, bringing together found images that evoke specific inner states or situations. For example, this image (which I saw pegged up in an art gallery window in Cornwall) said something about my inner experience of a situation where I became trapped in a particular system of power:

![Image](http://www.bath.ac.uk/carpp/publications/doc_theses_links/c_seeley.html)
…and this one, which offered me an image to visualise when seeking to lighten situations of unmitigated agency and thoughtless power-over:
… and, finally this one, which imagines the largely divergent nature of my multi-stranded inquiry processes:

This exploration of first person presentational knowing / arts-informed first person inquiry would be too incomplete without the ideas of *writing as inquiry* (Richardson, 1994, 2000). Richardson validates writing as a way of knowing, saying “*I write because I want to find something out …I write in order to learn something that I didn’t know before I wrote it*” (Richardson, 1994: 517).

The primary process I use extensively for entering a writing-as-inquiry mode is *freefall writing*, a technique I have learned through a series of intensive workshops facilitated by a Canadian writer and teacher, Barbara Turner-Vesselago.

Many of my own written illustrations throughout this thesis are “freefall”, particularly when I examine and recount my experiences through my work with the International Labour Organisation. Some of those longer pieces were written during Barbara’s workshops, and she always found the sense of conscious purpose I needed in order to write the accounts somewhat at odds with the spontaneity of freefall.

Freefall is a practice for spontaneous writing designed “to allow the process of writing to unfold in a way that is neither tortuous nor fraught but rich and absorbing… [it is] a means of interacting with the essential energy of life, creating itself anew in every moment” (Turner-Vesselago, 2000: 3).

The picture is not all rosy, though and she also recognises the difficulties of writing, noting that freefall involves “the daily leap into the void. There is a moment-by-moment interplay of will and surrender. There is effort, and sometimes there is grace” (Turner-Vesselago, 2000: 3).
Jungian writer Helen Luke also affirms such struggles when she says “... real peace... can only come... after I have obeyed the command from the core of my being and made the often agonizing effort to put into words the emerging thoughts. Why? Says my spurious humility – why do you have to do this? You’ll probably only wreck their spontaneity with your clumsy expression and you only do it so as to gain approval. And anyway, there is nothing important about preserving them” (Luke 1992: 8).

Through attending three one-week freefall writing workshops, I have been able to place myself in a “ready-made” context which respects the writing process to such a degree that I can put aside my own “spurious humility” for long enough to learn something about the craft of writing in the first person. Such a supported context has enabled me to simultaneously hold open the possibility that my expression is not too “clumsy” and hold off the self-destructive miasma of self-rejection and self distrust, as described by Ted Solotaroff, an American writing teacher whose work I encountered during a freefall workshop. He says that a “writer has to learn through adversity to separate rejection of one’s work from self-rejection, and with respect to the latter, self-criticism (otherwise known as revision and what one might call re-envision) from self-distrust. For the inexperienced writer, a year or two of rejection or a major rejection – say, of a novel [or a PhD] - can lead all too easily to self-distrust, and from there to a disabling distrust of the writing process itself. Anxious, depressed, defensive, the writer who is suffering this distrust, whether temporarily or chronically or terminally, gives up her most fundamental and enabling right: the right to write uncertainly, roughly, even badly. A garden in its early stage is not a pleasant or compelling place: it’s a lot of arduous, messy, noisy work – digging up the hard ground, putting in the fertilizer, along with the seeds and seedlings” (Solotaroff 1987: 61).

The freefall process is in itself simple. There are four basic precepts to work with (as well as a fifth injunction to write about “well-composted” material from which you can gain some temporal or emotional distance):

1. I will write down what comes up for me
2. I won’t change anything
3. I will give all the sensuous detail
4. I will go where the energy is; “go fearwards”
   (Turner-Vesselago 2000: 6)

Working with these principles can, at best, result in a compelling and sensuous evocation of experience, written from the position of a compassionate, dedicated witness to the unfolding events of a life. Solotaroff says that “the writer’s defense is [her] power of self-objectivity, [her] interest in otherness, and [her] faith in the process itself, which enables [her] to write on into the teeth of [her] doubts and then improve it” (Solotaroff, 1987: 67, changed gender).
This “power of self-objectivity” seems to me to be remarkably similar to the definitions of first person inquiry I cited earlier. Solotaroff goes on to comment on the reflexive nature of writing, which adds to my view that writing can be an inquiry process in itself. He says that the writer, “must learn to think of [her] medium not as a flattering mirror, but as a lens that [she] must grind and polish [herself] so that [she] can see more sharply and closely and powerfully” (Solotaroff, 1987: 73, changed gender).

Laurel Richardson considers writing as a “method of inquiry” or a “method of discovery”, saying that “qualitative writers… don’t have to try to play God, writing as disembodied omniscient narrators claiming universal, atemporal, general knowledge; they can eschew the questionable metanarrative of scientific objectivity and still have plenty to say as situated speakers, subjectivities engaged in knowing/telling about the world as they perceive it” (Richardson 1994: 516-518). Thus, my accounts of my being in India, Ghana and Sri Lanka, for example, are openly and unashamedly from the perspective of a white, European woman in her mid-thirties who is new to that kind of work and operates from an inquiring perspective.

First person inquiry of any sort provides a foundation, the bedrock for other second and third person inquiries with co-researchers and wider groups of (potentially) interested and relevant people. As such, I will take this opportunity to briefly summarise what kinds of practices sit inside the territory where first person inquiry and presentational knowing meet.

- I drew together thoughts from the history of first, second and third person under the title: *What turns me on, what’s exciting me, first person inquiry, inquiry for me, awareness, evocative presentational knowing...*
• I introduced the **bio-graffiti**, the unintended trails and traces of our living;

• I moved on to my first of two examples of people ontologically wedded to producing images of their lives – British artist **Tracey Emin**’s (sometimes controversial) work, which uses many different media to express her inner life for public consumption, as well as “curating” the bio-graffiti of her own life;

• Then there was excursion to explore the movement of “data” or “capta” from experience through to representation and knowing, drawing on my own research processes and experience, as well as others’ ideas (notably, Checkland and Holwells (1998), Whitehead (2002) and Eno (1996));

• Next, the second example – Mexican artist **Frida Kahlo**’s diary, a private, wild exploration of her unfolding life intended for her own gaze only, in the form of a *journal intime*.

• This lead to two examples from my own practice – excerpts from **expressive journal writing** intended for my eyes only, and expressions of my inner life through **image making**;

• I explored **visual journaling** as a kind of do-it-yourself art therapy, and offered examples of my own experimentation with and facilitation of that practice;

• I referred back to my experience of Goethean science and my apparently limited capacity to stay in the “**mirror tent of self reflection**” without longing to face outwards again and connect with that which is more-than-me;

• Facing out again, I introduced two **travelogues** combining visual and written material and pondered how inquiry journeys might be similarly encountered and represented;

• Then I showed another example of my own practice – **drawing workshop speakers** as part of my note taking, which I also questioned;

• Moving wider to specifically representational work, I detailed the idea of **multigenre papers** and how **art-based metaphors** can inform research representation;

• Finally, I explored the practices of **writing as inquiry**, including freefall writing, again relating these ideas to my own practice.

Now, I will move on to look at fewer, more specific examples of where presentational knowing meets second and third person inquiry. All of these examples implicitly and explicitly draw on the kinds of first person inquiries already introduced.