

The Beauty of Seeing







# The Beauty of Seeing

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To our inner Light











## ABSTRACT

We tend to wander through life not really seeing the world around us and simply taking it for granted. The intense rhythm of life, the load of our societal responsibilities making it difficult to pause for a moment and be in the moment. This thesis has been the vehicle for exploring how I see, and to what extent I observe, the world around me. The way humans perceive and experience the world, has always been of great interest to me. What is seeing and what forms our experience of seeing? Is our world a reflection or is our reflection our world? Where do we stand in all this? How does it work?

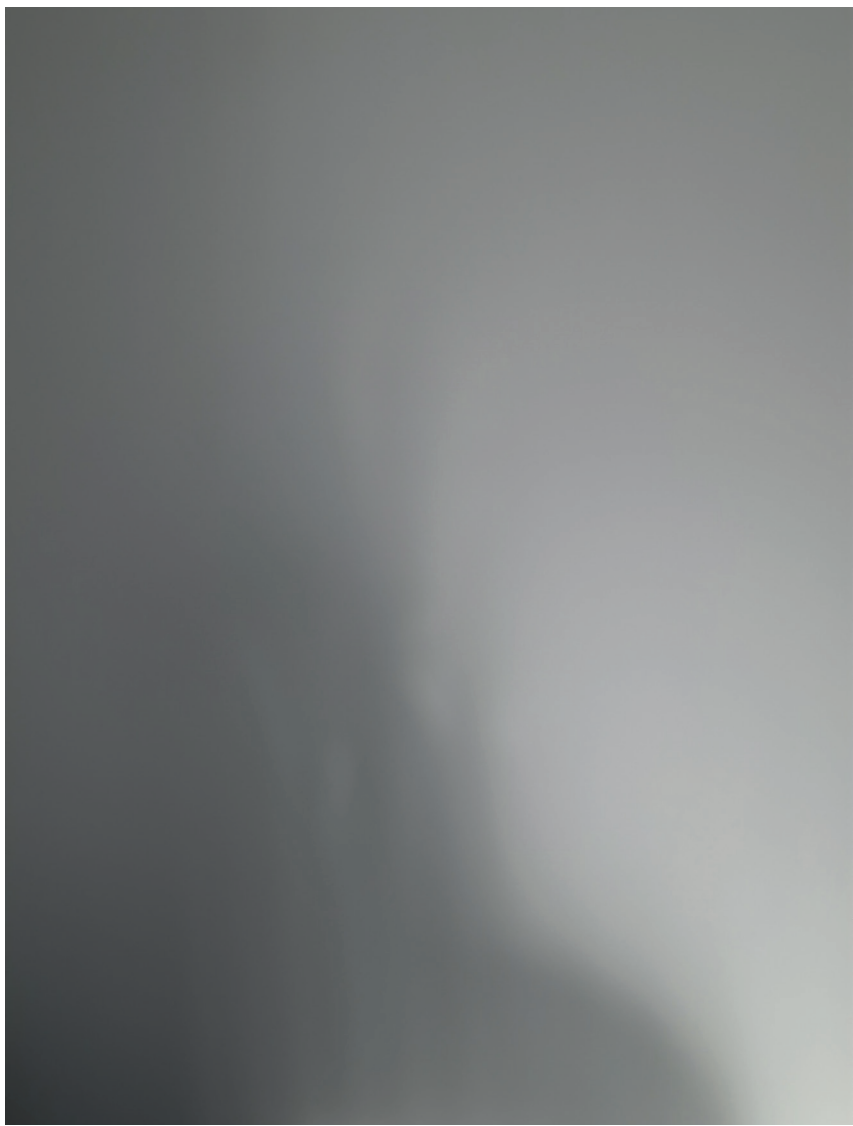
This thesis is a collection of observations, experimentations and realisations, that aims to extend the understanding and awareness of my own perceptual process of seeing. Through that process I came to realise that I am interested more in how I see than what I see. Photography, writing and analysis have been the tools that assisted me throughout this learning experience.

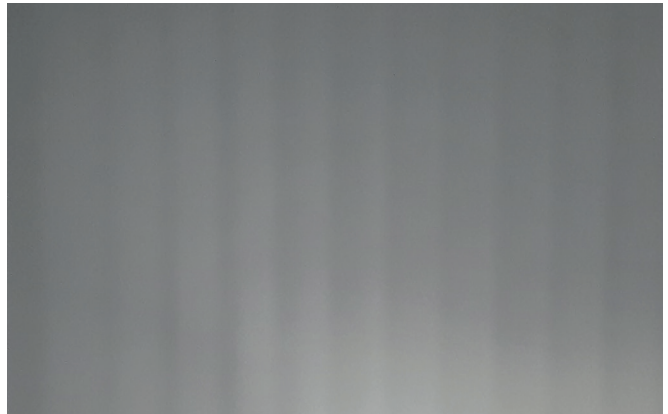
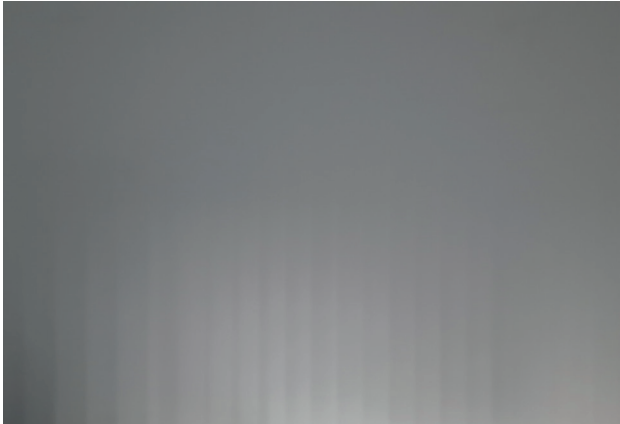
My main focus has been my house as my most intimate space and the route to the Greenwich area and back which assisted the contemplative process. I wanted to understand in this phase what is the nature of this daily dialogues, what am I really experiencing through looking. There are many layers and levels in the act of seeing. For the purpose of understanding better what I see, I applied pause for a moment and prolonged seeing by excluding any possible thought processes.

The methodology has been vague at the beginning, and through various approaches of exploration it started to reveal itself in a meditative nature that leads its own way. Uta Barth, Agnes Martin, Robert Irwin, James Turrell, Thomas Wilfred, Rudolf Arnheim and Plato have been my guides on this journey, on questioning and redefining terms such as perception, reality, space, light, presence, and time.

This thesis' contribution is a different way of seeing that may work as a reminder and as a guide for those who want to develop and expand their own ways of seeing. An invitation to pause and feel, to look within and around and connect with our world on another level. The importance of those active observations and reflections showed that every path is interconnected and interdependent either seen or unseen and the answer to this path lies in the act of allowing with awareness while in presence.

Key words: frame, ways of seeing, perception, reality, mindfulness, space, presence, out of focus, light, reflection, time.







## Window and frame

Rudolf Arnheim, describes the function of frames and windows and their first stages of development during the Renaissance, by discussing the emancipation of the pictorial space from the wall, the construction of profound vistas, and the emergence of a clear visual boundary between the physical space of the room and the world of the painting itself from a psychological perspective. Because the edge of the picture identifies the end of the composition but not the end of the space, this world became boundless not just in depth but also laterally. The frame was envisioned as a window through which the viewer may gaze out into the world, limited only by the frame's opening, which was unlimited in itself. This indicates that the frame was employed as a figure, with the picture area serving as a borderless ground beneath it.

Similarly, in the visual appearance of windows in architecture, originally, a window was only "a hole in the wall", like Hiroshi O Hara describes in one of his interviews, a little region of simple shape within the broad wall surface (Igarashi, 2013). This contains a strange optical paradox in which a little enclosed region on a ground plane is destined to be "figured," even if it is physically a hole in the wall and intended to look like one. Perhaps this is why simple cut outs in modern windows are perceptually undefined.

This was the first observational point of my practise, that informed my understanding on the origins of the frame and its connection to space. This practise intended to investigate the extend of my curiosity of the relationship between the inner and the outer physical space, the appearance or disappearance of the border itself if any.

The cornice serves as a window frame as well as a decorative element. The walls are transformed into horizontal and vertical grids, revealing the interior of the building as an empty cube. The network of crossing grids, a visible analogue of steel structure, has become the main figure, possessing the contours, whereas the windows are portions of the underlying continuous and empty ground.



### Active visual exploration

I observe something. The world around me is visible to me. What is the meaning of such observations? Seeing is essentially a way of practical orienting for the purposes of everyday life, determining with one's eyes that a specific thing is there at a certain place for a certain purpose. This is the most basic form of identification. A man entering his bedroom late at night might notice a dark spot on his white pillow and "see" his wife in about the same place. He would be able to see more in better light, but in general, orienting in a familiar context requires only a few signs.

A person suffering from visual agnosia, on the other hand, that resulted from a brain damage may lose this capacity at once, to differentiate even basic shapes like circles and triangles, even though, he may still be prepared to operate and function in daily life. So how does he see on the street? "Everything is narrow on the street, people; everything is really noisy, big, tall in the middle of the street—that may be buses, cars" (Calle, 2011). Many people do not take use of their unimpaired vision during the day.

Sight might as well mean a lot more. But what does it involve? The description of the optical process by physicists is well-known. Objects in the surroundings either emit, reflect or deflect light. The retinas transmit the message to the brain through the lenses of the eye, which project images of these things onto the retinas. But what about the psychological experience that goes along with it? Science tells us that the retina's image activates 130 million tiny receptors, each of which responds to the wavelength and intensity of the light it receives.

Many of these receptors do not function on their own. Neural wiring creates groups of receptors. Moreover, it is known that at least in the eyes of certain animals, such group retinal receptors cooperate in reacting to certain movements, and kinds of objects.

### The visual bidirectional path

Arnheim, challenges himself with questions such as, how can it be possible perception and intelligence to be bidirectional and contained within each other? Isn't intelligence a mental process? Isn't it true that thought begins when the senses' activity ends? (Arnheim,1997). His argument is that cognitive activities such as active exploration, simplification, abstraction, analysis, comparison, problem solving, as well as combining, separating, and putting in context, are inherent parts of perception itself. These activities are the way in which human and animal minds deal with cognitive information at any level. In this regard, there is no fundamental difference between what happens when a person looks at the environment and what happens when he "thinks" of the environment while his eyes closed.

"Cognitive" is one of the terms that Arnheim uses to refer to any mental functions that are involved in receiving, storing, and processing information: sensory perception. Memory, reasoning, and learning are all skills that may be as well developed. This definition of the term sensory activity from cognitive, differs from one that many psychologists are familiar with as it excludes one from the other. This is a distinction that requires elimination, by expanding the definition of "cognitive" and "cognition" in order to encompass perception. Similarly, there is no thought processes that cannot be found. Therefore, visual thinking is visual perception and visual perception is visual thinking. The mind reflects the world, and this reflection acts as raw material to be examined, sorted, restructured, and stored. It's tempting to believe that the organism has a separate active ability of elaboration to augment a passive capacity to receive.

On the retinal background of a human or animal's extirpated eye, one may see a tiny, but comprehensive and truthfully conceived image of the world towards which the eye is directed. The mental representation of the outer world and the retinal projection differ significantly. As a result, it is reasonable to attribute these variations to the alterations occurring after the sense of vision has completed its task.

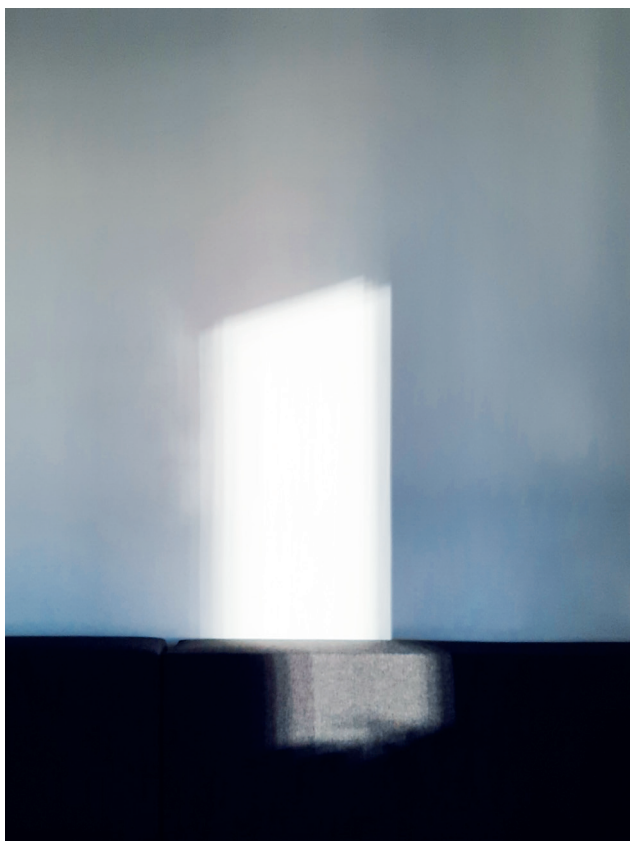
Even in basic visual perception, however, there is a distinction between passive receipt and active seeing. As soon as I open my eyes, I'm surrounded by a pre-terminated world: the sky with its clouds. The mountains and the stream's moving waters. In one way, the window, my desk, my body, mimics the retinal projection.

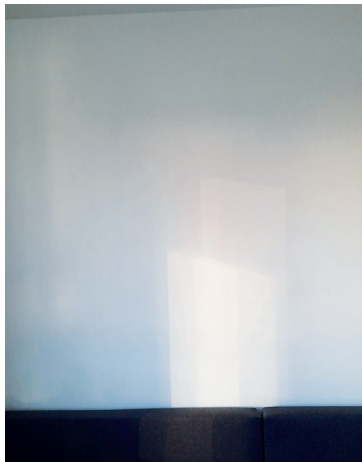
Specifically, it is provided. It exists without my having done anything to make it happen to create it. Is awareness of the world, however, all there is to perception? Is it even the essence of it?

That particular universe is only the setting for the most distinctive component of perception. The stare, directed by attention, travels through that environment, focusing the small range of clearest vision now on an item, then on that location, tracking a distant bird's flight, to investigate the form of a tree, to scan it.

What is genuinely meant by visual perception is this extremely engaged active performance. It can refer to a tiny portion of the visual world or the entire visual framework of space, in which all currently visible things are located. The reality that emerges from this perceptual inquiry is not obvious right away. Some of its elements develop quickly, while others take longer, and all of them are susceptible to ongoing confirmation, reassessment, change. This leads to the realisation that, while perception and thinking are studied independently for theoretical purposes, they interact in practise: our thoughts influence what we see, and vice versa.

"Every visual experience is rooted in a space and time context. We've been informed that what we see today is simply the product of what we've seen or experienced before". (Arnheim,1997). Much of what we know about things and what lies within things appears to be a genuine aspect of their outer appearance. I see my notebook within the notebook's cover, and the china porcelain pot on the shelf as empty. This is visual knowledge. The past's visual acquisitions are stored in the right areas in my present perceptual field, usefully completing it most usefully. The notebook isn't just known to be under the cover; it's also known to be in the proper position indicated by the notebook, it is seen. This introduction leads to the main body of my research, where I examine different ways of seeing in various contexts. I also describe my process of exploration through profound observations and realisations.













## Light Lines of Music

There is another kind of seeing. Helene Binet, a French-born architectural photographer, uses architecture as her frame of seeing. When she photographs, she talks not only about the process, the possibilities of the limitations, and the importance of the on-the-spot preparation, but also about the significance of “framing moments, that have happened, and you feel the energy of the place and this urges you to give your best performance at that moment and catch those moments because then they become history, they are forever there”. (The Architectural Review, 2019).

She also refers to human beings and their existence and wonders on earth, and more specifically when trying to understand and grasp the experience of life itself, within its multi-dimensionality, through our emotions and feelings. At this point, she gives Peter Zumthor's photograph, of the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel as an example, where he manages to frame the light in a particular way, so that we can like this, connect to it. In every aspect of her exhibition, she has carefully created different atmospheres, so according to her theme and her powerful approach to her photography, enables the visitors to feel as well as see through her lenses. It is about a response that is formed through connection. Furthermore, referring to Zaha Hadid, one of the greatest architects she collaborated with, speaks about the love of making, and her invention of new forms of construction. The power that the architect holds, in sensing the forces of nature, the impact that this has on our visual experience and then translating this through the lenses of architecture.

I followed Binet's approach in an attempt to refine my own way of understanding and seeing, by emphasizing on the connection between layers, foreground and background, stillness, rhythm, space and light. Taking into consideration the characteristics of space, in the specific moment light, colours, temperature and shapes. By allowing the presence of the context to emerge, an extra dimension is revealed, the awareness of the performance of Light and the rhythm which is created in between. “A view of the infinity”, (The Architectural Review, 2019)

## Learning how to look

Continuing my research, to further understand another level of seeing through my practise, I came across Uta Barth, a conceptual German-born photographer who lives in the United States. I started to delve deeper and read every possible interview that Barth has given, looking at every possible piece of her work I could find. Barth's work focuses on the act and experience of looking. The perceptual experience over what we think about, whatever it is that we may be looking at, is brought to the foreground. By prolonged vision she immerses herself in the innate experience of looking at something, from peripheral vision to simply staring without any cause, to after images, her work investigates the phenomena of sight, aiming to exclude the process of the distraction of thought and various interpretations a mind creates. In one of her interviews, she explains the reasons behind her approaches by describing that she is "interested in perception; in vision itself and in how we see, more than in what we see" (Barth, 2007). Every body of work that Barth has created evolves around the concept of the dialogue and nature and the relationship between "subject-meaning".

Given the conventional and unconventional approach in the history of photography, it was necessary for me to explore a different element than those given, in how I see. So far, I have been taught about meanings, and symbols, that "what the picture is of is often what is about" (Barth, 2007). However, I came to realise that what we see or how we see is solely our own interpretation, as we are the receivers and the creators at the same time; therefore, my practical research is a dialogue of how I see, either internally or externally. How do I navigate my seeing within the seen and unseen field?

Part of my experimentation included looking out through my windows or every possible window I could find, from every possible angle I could. The first "tool" I used was a window, which had the role of a frame through which I was looking. The second "tool" was my eyes, my sensorial receivers of experiencing the world around me. The third "tool" was a camera. Many times the eyes see one thing but what the camera captures is different, a camera's technical nature can be in a way a little rigid and due to its nature unable to resemble the lenses of the eyes and mind. My intention was to understand the layers in between, the facets of the spectrum of looking and its limitations.

This process continued to enforce my methodology. Through observations, I started to notice the way I receive, store, process and project information, the nature of my filter and the reason behind it. I started to realise that the act of looking encompasses presence, light, time, space and awareness. The first experimental space was my house. Spending most of my time in it, breathing it, experiencing it as the most intimate space, I thought that was a fertile ground to start, develop and cultivate a dialogue.

The environment of our home has become so visually familiar, that sometimes it feels invisible. When we live, walk, navigate ourselves, and interact with things in an automatic way, blindly, without engaging much in space, results in losing the sense of the space itself and the nature that grows along with it. The moment you choose to bring your awareness and feel the essence of the space, it is the very moment that you start to notice, things that have always been there, and have the ability to transform into something else.

For example, when the afternoon light falls through the window on the wall, this act transcends the moment and the nature of the light and wall relationship, and at the same time this radiates in space as well. Then you start to observe and be aware of the field, and all that which coexist in it. And it is up to us to choose a way to bring those qualities, in focus or out of focus, into the foreground for further exploration and discovery.

Spending much time at home I tend to stare at the window or look through, sometimes for hours. It may sound like a waste of time, but for me it is a pause that creates a sense of optical space, where the realisation and awareness of where I am in space unfolds and reveals the multidimensionality of existence. It was until I started to explore light that I realised the presence of time. In one afternoon and within fifteen minutes, with prolonged looking at my living room wall, the afternoon light passes through the blinds and reflects the wall on the opposite side of the room. It is an act of looking without motivation, where an optical space, is formed, while the light is still there, until the moment the presence of time is realised, and beauty revealed itself in the field.

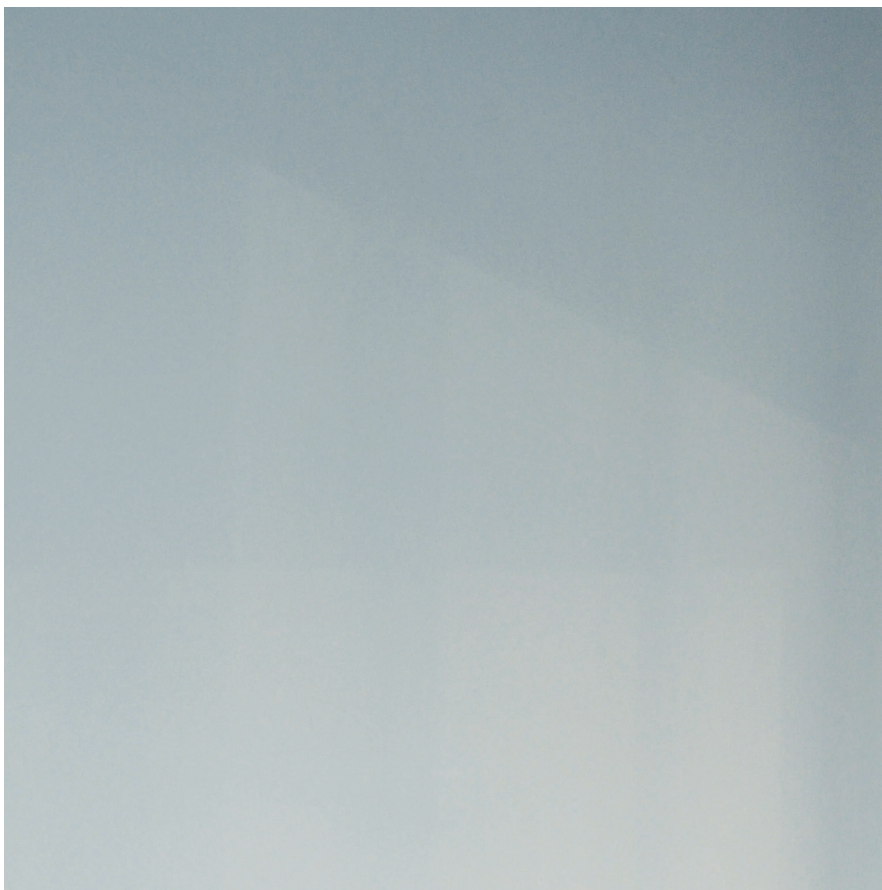
Uta Barth's approach has been the most fruitful in my practise so far as it involves a type of conceptual looking. I came to realise that one of her approaches, pro-

longed looking, has many layers and levels which unfold. While, I was staring at my white, half closed blinds one morning, I noticed that the first stage of looking is the natural one, then this layer moves one step to the background and the next one follows. This gives in turn the various depths that the light reveals on the shapes. A flow light and shadow is also created along with the movement and rhythm. In this context there is no colour involved, instead the light plays a significant role of revealing the many tones that emphasize the infinite picture of time and space. After this momentum I withdrawn my focus and brought all the layers of seeing one by one to their initial position and returned to the first step of physical seeing where this observational experience completed its cycle.















## Mindful Active Awareness

When I began my research, my intention was to understand the very nature of seeing, and through experimentation, what it is that drives us to see this way. Agnes Martin has been an invaluable inspiration in the ongoing exploration of my process. I would find myself questioning the nature of the relationship with herself, her art, tools, observations and the degree of essence that was absorbed by her, from the surroundings. How would she look at the world? What was her driving dialogue with the process itself?

Agnes Martin has been one of the most influential Canadian-American abstract artists of her generation, who has left her own unique imprint on the evolution of abstract art, which has always been in alignment with her life's approach. She was able to synthesize emotions through colour, many times combined with invisible notes of music on her canvases and vice versa. Her ability to intertwine feelings with the strings of her grids and later on, transcend those strings as if she was contemplating her own existence, has been an extraordinary mastering of her practise.

Martin would have hoped for a response from people when "They wake up in the morning and they feel very happy about nothing, no cause"; they may then realise, that this is what she paints for, about completely abstract emotions, that we feel without cause in this world, and that our lives are broader than we think. (New Deal Films, 1998).

"With my back to the world, 1957", Martin intended exactly this: the transformation of the notion of the frame with an intention to dissolve and set free the existence from the frame. Her work does not seek to depict any reality or personal experience, but rather elicit a response in the viewer: a mood, an emotion, a state of being where joy happened naturally, with no cause whatsoever.

When you stare at the window for some time and then you decide to close your eyes, or turn your back to it, what is left in the mind is the skeleton of the closest part of the picture, or the last memory of the thing that you saw before the eyes close.

In the beginning you are still able to see the frame and then this frame disappears, and you are left with a picture which was depicted and faded away in your mind



as time passes, and later on, an idea of the window/frame or what you thought you saw is left with you. A play with the eyes and the mind takes place. When you choose to remove everything you know, every picture or a notion every taught or realised experience, what are you left with? The dynamic of the quality in this experience transcends.

Another way to understand Martin's process is to look at her paintings as something of a mantra. She often talked about the untroubled state of mind, and its nature. The lightness of stillness where inspiration took place, "a happy moment that takes us by surprise and is always there for anyone whose mind is thoughtless, whether people realise it or not". (Martin and Glimcher, 2012).

Painting is not about ideas or personal emotion, it is an alive process, it is inspired, as Martin has described in one of her conversations with Ann Wilson, in the summer of 1972. It is a process where someone gets rid of everything that happens in the mind. Arne Glimcher who was Martin's gallerist at Pace, New York from 1974, said in one of his interviews that her process of creating is of a meditative nature; every grid is carefully felt and drawn on every inch of it, that her paintings are pure emotion, they are states of mind and existence, something that her way of life proves in a great measure.

One day Glimcher's granddaughter Isabel and himself went to Martin's apartment. There was a rose in the vase that caught the little girl's attention, and Martin's attention was caught by the girl's expression towards the rose. Then Martin picked up the rose and asked Isabel "is the rose beautiful?", and the girl's response was that "it is beautiful". Martin then put the rose behind her back and asked the girl the same question, and the girl's response was "yes, it is still beautiful". Martin then said to her, "you see the beauty is not on the rose the beauty is in your mind" (Genious, 2013).

Observing the way Martin patiently and momentarily worked with colour and the layers of the diluted paint that were applied on the canvas, made me see the meditative nature of her practice in more depth. Even though the spaces on the canvas were carefully separated, at the same time they were working as a whole, an eco-system where different parts coexist. Thousands of repetitive pieces are put together so that the whole picture is completed and work as a whole: disempowered and empowered simultaneously. Life consists of transparent layers of

existence that blend with each other, exactly like Martin's colours on the canvas and along with it, the interconnected tones of music tied to every step of making.

When there is no thought there is always a space for inspiration. Martin mentioned that there were moments when she had to simply wait until her inspiration appeared and then paid attention to it and acted upon it; always on alert and in respect of the inspiration, because when it happens you need to make sure you keep every thought out of the way. In moments like that, she met innocence in a form of a grid. "It felt like innocence," she said (Martin and Glimcher, 2012).

What drives and flows throughout Martin's practise and way of seeing is a state of pure, active, mindful awareness and stillness; something that goes along with the invisible innocence and inspiration. I wonder, how would the sound of silence sound like in Martin's context? Where she was living, either in her apartment or studio, there was no sound, except the natural invisible tones of her awareness.

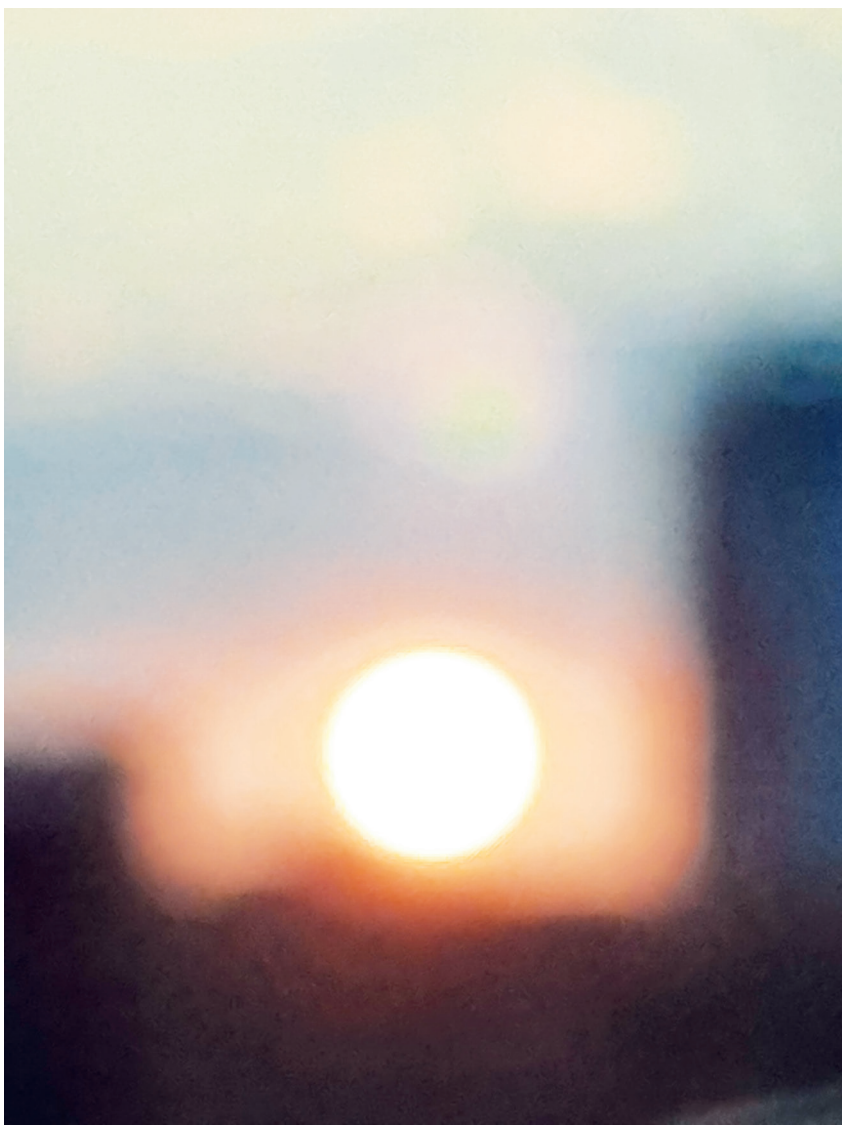
This mindful way of seeing and the careful examination of Martin's approach, led my research one step further, to Robert Irwin, whom I am to draw attention to in the following chapter.

### **Perceiving Ourselves Perceiving**

Robert Irwin, one of the most important American artists of our time, speaking about his process of creating, explains that "there is a kind of logic involved, that allows us to frame our intentions and our activities, and it's a quantitative process, having to do with identifying those kinds of critical pieces of information on a meaning structure and on the basis of that we can make the object as an object who becomes central". (McCoy, 2012).

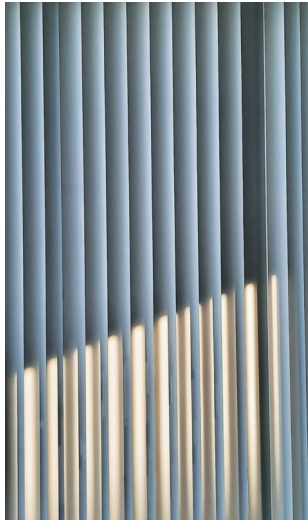
My understanding of Irwin's process is that it was not so much about the object itself, but about what was happening inside, that seeded the result in the object. He pointed that "the answers we are looking for have led the way for the wonder which brought us to the questions themselves. And in the making of something, the relationship of knowing and making the right decisions is an inherent part of every process" (McCoy, 2012). This was a significant point to take into consideration, as it further supported my understanding and the structure of my own way of wonder in the process of making.

For Irwin, “art is about seeing”, about being aware that we are contained in it, as well as containing everything around us, and through this realisation, art then, becomes the medium that supports the expansion of our consciousness; a silent calling to explore, see through it and grow from it. And once somebody arrives at that quality of realisation, then the frame of reference challenges itself and every context after this point is questioned and redefined. A new level of seeing starts the process itself, if not realised thoroughly from the beginning, as a way of refinement.





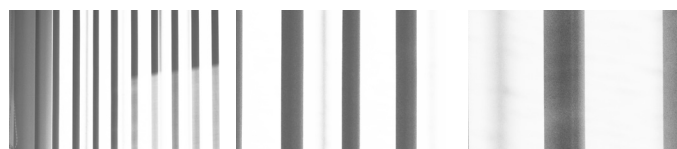














### Transcending the frame

In “The Dots” painting, Irwin put very small dots and then in between those dots he added opposite correct coloured dots that would get softer at their ends. Finally, an energy field was formed on the canvas where the viewer had to devote time to look, so that something would be eventually visible, and yet if you compared it with the environment, you would notice that there was nothing there, except for the realisation of the shadow around the actual frame, where at times the shadow would be even stronger than the frame itself. “This brought up an insight which clarified the fact that all our ideas, concepts, questioning, and wonder are “acted out” within a pre-structured frame” (McCoy, 2012). That was a shifting point that brought awareness to my way of seeing; a world that envelopes everything around us and has no beginning, no end or frames in that sense; a fluid world, ready to take every form we choose to give, at any moment as co-creators.

That was a key moment where Irwin actually realised that the world does not necessarily look the way we think it looks, and pushed himself more towards the “why” and “how” we look, and to what degree we allow things in. Therefore, perception has never been a given, it is part of our fluid world as it shares the same nature. Something that brought a new level of awareness, that led my exploration and understanding to a different direction of perceiving the frame, the idea or even the absence of the frame itself. Letting go of one way of thinking is necessary for another way of seeing to reveal itself. Perception started to interfere and made its presence more visible in my process.

## The consciousness of light

There is another way of seeing for James Turrell, who has always been mesmerised by the infinite light and its nature; one of the orchestrators of experience, who managed to capture light and share it with the world, through his sculptures and architectural interventions. His work is not about his seeing but more of the viewer's way of seeing through his own. He creates the environment and invites the viewer to a discovery of experience through experience itself: a process of experiencing our perceptual limitations through light and space. As he points out, "My work has no object, no image, and no focus. With no object, no image and no focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you, looking. What is important to me is to create an experience of wordless thought". Turrell uses "illusion to draw our attention to perception's limits, by revealing a paradox between what the eye sees and what we know to be seen" (Hammonds, 2017).

Turrell's work revolves around perception and challenges that "we are part of creating that which we think we perceived, as we are quite unaware of how much that we perceive we are part of creating", (Hammonds, 2017). According to his experience and experimentations, light occupies space, it has presence, it is something that you feel, and as co-creators, he wants us to realise the joy of seeing; a state of beingness. He speaks about the intelligence of light, that light knows when we are looking as through diffraction grading, he discovered that light behaves differently. It is filled with consciousness.

Another observation that Turrell shares, is the light that we see with our eyes closed; for example, in lucid dreaming, there is a full vision with our eyes closed. So, where does this light come from? Therefore, one of the goals he is aiming to achieve in his work, is to give a different dimension to the familiar light that we see with our eyes closed, but not with our eyes open.

This takes us to his beginning, where it all started as a child wanting "to touch the light of his dreams and bring it before the eyes of day, to build new worlds of light as powerful as the lucid dream". (Yu, 2017). In his first experiment with the black curtains in his bedroom, where he used a thick needle to make little holes in the fabric, he created a map of the sky, where the stars were there but you could not see. It was the idea of seeing what was beneath which inaugurated his process in the way of seeing.

Does light really reveal, as we have been taught and seen throughout art history so far? What is light? As it has no form, you cannot touch it or carve on it, you cannot stop it, it is something continuous which penetrates. Turrell describes it as “a sound, where you can make an instrument that produces it the way you want. For instance, we think the sky is blue, we forget to realise that it has actually awarded its own colour, so if I change your circumstance or your context division then I can change the colour of the sky. So those qualities of vision are like a melody” (Yu, 2017).

### Mastering the Essence of Light

Turrell, in his foreword of *LUMIA and the art of light*, (Orgeman et. al., 2017), talks about his first work encounter that he believed at the time was, “Vertical Sequence, Op. 137 (1941)”, by Thomas Wilfred. He described it as “a glowing orb of light slowly rotating and spreading about auroral spectra, that was not a depiction of light, it was light, alive.”

Wilfred, a Danish born musician, engineer, artist and a pioneer, used light as his medium for producing his art and exploring its very nature. He invented, and built himself a colour-light organ, the Clavilux, which helped him to find a way to generate live colour through light, as he emphasised that “colour is a manifestation of light and simply cannot exist in any composition without it” (Faber Birren, 1984). Clavilux, was intended for aesthetic silent experiences in dark rooms, while darkness played the role of silence in his performances.

Wilfred worked on his inventions for half a century striving to perfect his light. Through his colour spectrum, profound knowledge and combinations, he was able to generate all possible colours of light, like the aurora borealis, to which his work has been compared quite a few times: a unique way of seeing and embracing the nature of light. He spent most of his life perfecting his works, by reaching the highest form of art performing itself.

Joseph Thomson, the lead of the British astronomical society, stated at the New York Times Newspaper, that “rays of light coming from the stars are bent or deflected from their normal course by other aerial bodies acting upon them”, which led to “the interference that light has weight” (New York Times, 1919), something that brings along a significant contribution of discoveries that have shaken the ground of the older scientific theories.

Another interesting coverage of the same newspaper during 1921, on light-bending phenomenon explains that Einstein's theory of the curvature of light, communicates "that light may be as deflected, and that the star which we see in a certain place may be somewhere else. This would make possible the curious result that, if light were curved and the universe infinite, we could see the same star by looking in different directions" (New York Times, 1919).

Similarly, Wilfred speaks about his only medium of expression, that of light, which he is called to shape into form, colour, motion, in such a way that your form will appear to have volume and movement. Alfred Barr, the director of the Museum of Modern Art, during 1941-43, recognised at the time that movement and duration played an equal fundamental role in Wilfred's work. In Lumia compositions, Wilfred attempted to represent something that would not be able to experience on a painting or a sculpture, "the majestic, the unearthly, that which is not connected with the activities and movement of the human being" (Wilfred, 1968). He aimed to depict the accurate length of time, the essence of living, but even further, to extend this duration to a scale beyond human potential.

In a similar way, the central core of the Platonic Philosophy, encapsulates the view that the perceptible world is a false world, the reflection of another and only real world, the supersensible world of ideas. There is a simple resemblance between these supersensible ideas and what our senses give us, nothing more.

In Timaeus, Plato refers to the fact that the gentle fire that warms the human body comes through the eyes in a smooth, continuous stream of light (Plato and Francis McDonald, Cornford, 1959). As a result, a tangible bridge is formed between the observer and the item observed, and light impulses coming from the object travel over this bridge to the eyes, and so to the soul.

Aristotle in the "A Treatise on the Soul" emphasizes that it is necessary of an in-between element for the act of seeing (Boss and Ferwerda, 2008). In the meantime, the myth of Plato's Cave presents a dynamic picture of the powerful ability that philosophy has, to enlighten and liberate. The Cave refers to the human condition in general; even in an ideally just society, we all start through the Cave as a state of being. Philosophy, however, as the content of a true education, is addressed to all; it is nothing more than the use of logic, of correct reason more precisely, as well as of science, as the guiding factor of human life.

“Even if there is vision in the eyes and the one who has the vision can use it, and also color in the objects of vision, if a third genus is not inserted, created especially for this purpose, you know very well that the vision is not going to distinguish anything, and the colors will be invisible. What is this thing? asked. This, which you call light” (Plato, 2013).

### The Antithesis of Light and Dark

It is a given that the cave symbolizes the visible - perceptible world. This in turn (the world outside the cave), symbolizes the world of intellect. By the same reasoning, the light-dark antithesis also implies a double (sequential) symbolic connection:

Light-Fire – Helios and Helios – Good

If the light of the fire inside the Cave allows an illusory vision, something similar happens in our world: even though the sun and its light guarantee the possibility of vision, it is far from the truth. The truth is really guaranteed only by the knowledge of the Good and the Ideas. However, it is important to move away first from the modern, everyday perception of vision; that we understand it as a human aesthetic ability that includes only two terms: the seeing subject and the visible object. For the ancient Greeks, however, a third, intermediate, factor of vision is necessary and active: light. Without light there is no seeing, the subject and the object are not bridged. “The eye itself has a solar nature, it emits light, and this light, embedded in sunlight, allows vision” (Plato, 2013).

The Platonic division of the world is well known: On the one hand, there is the perceptible world, the world as our senses perceive it. On the other hand, there exists the imaginary world, the world as it is perceived by our mind. This distinction immediately means the expansion of two modes of existence; of two different worlds. It is not only the man who reflects this antithesis, but every being. Every piece of human experience participates simultaneously in the world of the senses and in the world of the conceivable. What is the relationship between these two separate worlds though?

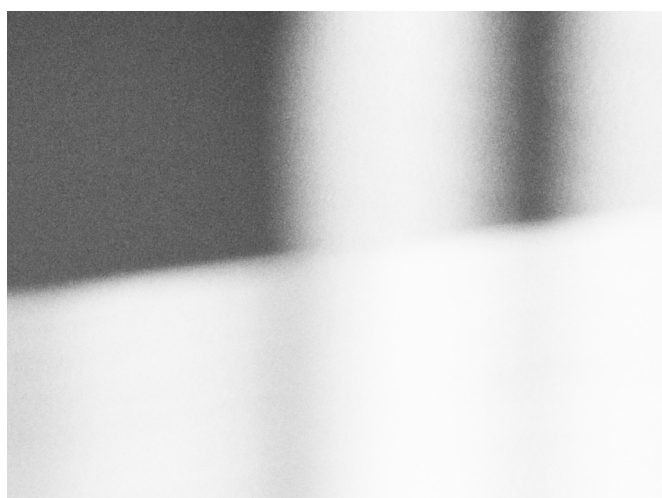
One is the world of logical forms, the eternal prototypes of every perceptible phenomenon, the world of indestructible and unchangeable imaginary realities and therefore of the ones that truly exist. The other is the world of transient and doomed

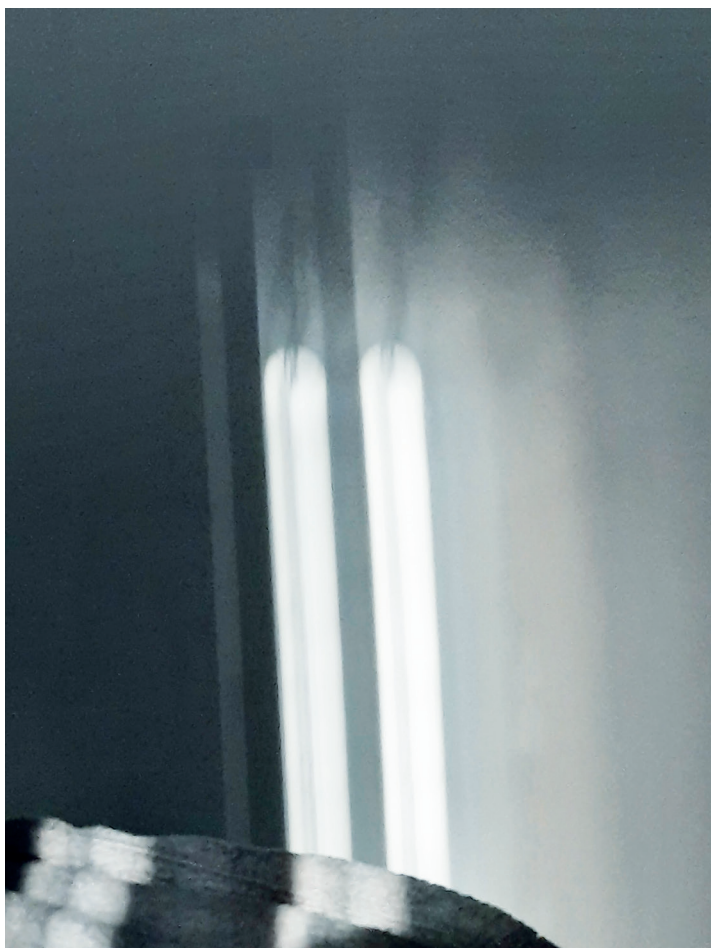
sensible realities; it is the reflection of eternal logical prototypes in ephemeral and perishable matter. Man has the direct experience of both worlds: his body belongs to the world of the senses, the world of matter, and the senses of the body inform him of the phenomena of this material world. But his soul belongs to the world of thinkers, he owes its existence and origin there; therefore he pre-existed in this world before being connected with matter. And where it pre-existed, with its own direct senses, the soul saw the indestructible and unchangeable forms of the really existing - man - has imprinted in his soul the Ideas of beings. Thus, in the forms of the ephemeral and perishable objects of the material world, the human soul (mind) - which recognizes - with a function of remembrance - the reflection of the eternal originals, the reason of the incorruptible and unchangeable conceivable forms.

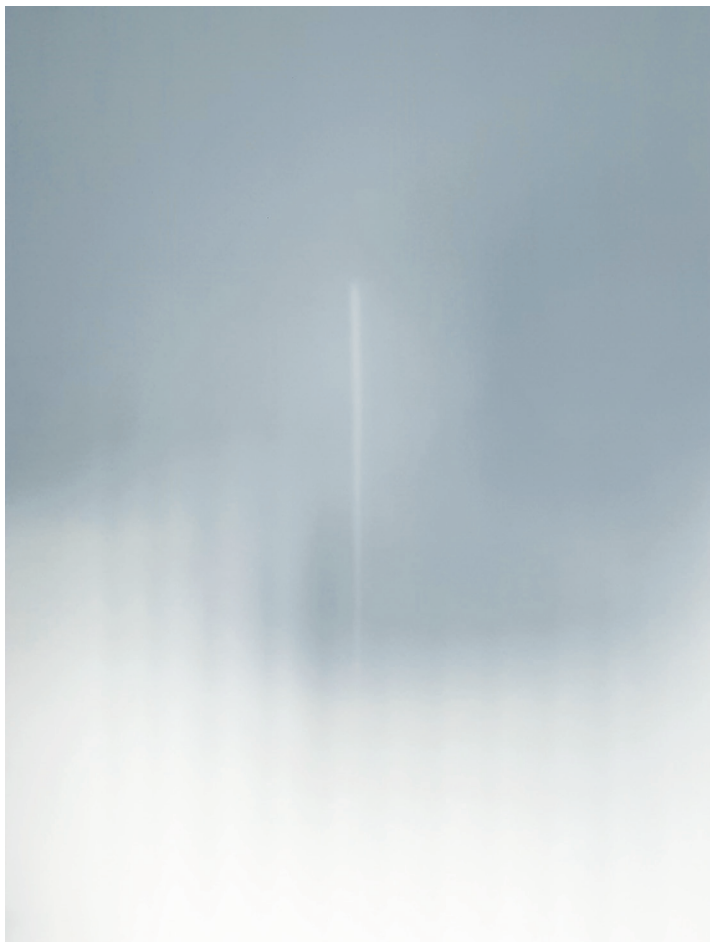












# IV

## Conclusion

This work of thesis has laid the ground for a deeper understanding on the essence of perception and light: how various ways of seeing give birth to the emotion of joy and the desire to connect. Art is harmony and beauty, thus “sinnomos” which means to be in alignment with the laws of beauty, therefore a higher cognitive process; perhaps the highest.

Light and The Word are one and the same, according to Plato. “Logos” = logic, the ability to “think”. The mind is the only dimension of the human and not only existence that has the ability to think, so to design and act upon it. The rest of the acts are considered to be instinctual products, referring to the animal kingdom and humans who have not yet experienced a state of awareness. Everything has been created in the mind, it enlightens everything, it is the cognitive light that generates an act; in this case the “act of seeing”.

In the allegory of Plato's Cave, there are two levels of light. One is external, we could say conscious light, which is mainly unconscious, and it is the light that it is described as the fire which illuminates in Plato's Cave and generates shadows on the wall that the dwellers see and believe. The other level is the higher, the light of inspiration. This is the light of enhanced realisations and expressions, and this is also the light that creates beauty and harmony and therefore need and connection tendencies, with the higher realm that is created.

From my understanding so far, the aim of every artist in this thesis and not only, is to open, connect with this inspirational channel, so that a flow of a higher inspiration is established for a greater expansion of awareness. And this expression is the vehicle for the creative light on earth. It is the light of the bright sun which falls on the real items outside Plato's Cave.

Perhaps we never actually learn how to see; we simply remember forgotten higher laws that already exist in us. In Plato's Republic, it is clearly said that, only the like-ones converse; something that according to my opinion encapsulates everything. It is believed that artists and muses are at the forefront of every civilisation, even ahead philosophers, as they are the ones who produce and generate every culture. They create works that are expected to be expressed in the broader sense of culture within a period of at least fifty years.

In this body of work many of my experimentations are in grayscale. This denotes the fact that “even though there is vision in the eyes, and also colour in the objects of vision, if a third genus is not inserted, then you know that the vision will not be able to distinguish anything, and the colours will be invisible” (Plato, 2013). A monologue of observations assisted my steps in an effort to realise where I stand in the fluid spectrum of my own perceptual process of seeing, and seeded my next phase of experimentation: that of Memory and Innocence.







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