The Lido in the Forest: Memory, Landscape, Painting

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Abstract:
This essay presents a consideration of the relationship between 'landscape,' memory and painting from a practitioner's perspective and contributes to the aesthetic discourse about art after the trauma of the Holocaust. Painting, both as object and as process, has become a site for my investigations of loss, memory and mourning. I consider a triangular relation between three types of place and temporalities: pre-war photographs, a contemporary resort in the German forest and a new, third place between history and memory: re-presentations of the former two through drawing and painting. I examine my recent series of works, *Tense* (2008), in which I re-present lido architecture in order to form a meaningful connection to the surrounding Thüringan forest. I think about this swimming pool architecture in the forest as bringing a domestic space outdoors and through this trope interrogate the uncanny in this landscape. I reflect upon the uncanny disposition of both the actual place and the painted place. While this series references photography, it also emphasises the difference between painting and drawing as a materialisation of the seen. I read my re-presentations of 'landscape' in relation to notions of 'transposition' and Marianne Hirsch's considerations of 'postmemory,' and I also bring into play the implications of John Urry's notion of the 'tourist gaze' and Anthony Vidler's considerations of the 'architectural uncanny.' Through these explorations another set of interrelations become apparent including the paradoxical and anxious associations of grief to leisure and mourning to visual pleasure.

Key Words: Painting, postmemory, landscape, lido architecture, Marianne Hirsch, Antony Vidler, John Urry, Jill Bennett.

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1. Background, Back-Story

For several years both my material practice and thinking has interrogated the relationship between the practice and objects of landscape painting and theoretical concerns relating to intergenerational transmission, in particular Marianne Hirsch's notion of postmemory. Photographs from my grandmother's album, considerations of second-generation memory and the practice of painting have triggered this work. Within my practice, the journey to a particular place, working on location and then developing that work in the studio have always been central. My paintings and drawings are infused with a sense a sense of being elsewhere than the site of direct experience, of

being not there but here. I realised that the paradox of distancing and then attempting to connect across that distance created a tension that became the subject of the work. My mother and grandmother were refugees from Hitler's Germany arriving in Britain in 1939 after Kristallnacht. I wondered if unconsciously, through my painting practice, I was repeating, in a seemingly inconsequential way, some aspects of a sense of dislocation that might result from this uprooting. This has become much more self-conscious over recent years when I have been informed by considerations of transposition or postmemory. When working on location now it is as if I attempt to anchor fragments of relived experience in a new embodied encounter, perhaps in an attempt to create a corporeal echo of a ghostly memory.

For several years my paintings and drawings employed the metaphor of the border between land and sea, which offers possibilities of passage and displacement. I developed this in my recent series of exhibitions entitled *Resort;* these works were developed after visiting the seaside resort of Ahlbeck, North Germany. In this series I employed the motif of the Strandkorb.[1] The structures themselves appear strange, indeed bizarre, to British eyes, yet to German eyes they are a familiar, even clichéd, sign of holidays. They might also be seen as a way of bringing a private world into the public realm: in one way they complicate notions of inside and outside by inviting a consideration of the domestic in the wilderness, the risk of an intimate space within the basket contiguous with the open expanse beyond. These structures fluctuate between offering a sense of being places of protection and in their very deficiency becoming almost mawkish ciphers of vulnerability. The representation of the Strandkorb through painting and drawing further explored this web of interconnections. In contrast, this new series, entitled *Tense*, takes a designated leisure space in an enclosed inland location as its starting point, yet, as I will argue, this space, too, might be considered liminal. In these images I re-present lido architecture in order to form a meaningful connection to the Thüringan forest, notions of the relation of the private in public are developed further and through this trope I interrogate the uncanny in this tourist landscape.

2. Private Snapshots: Public Photographs

In this section I consider two contrasting groups of photographs and their relation to a wider social history. Annette Kuhn has observed in relation to family photographs: 'In these case histories outer and inner, social and personal, historical and psychical coalesce; and the web of interconnections that binds them together is made visible.'[2] The making visible of a complex set of associations, the bringing together and blurring of inner and outer, the relationship between public and private strikes a chord with my own preoccupations. My grandmother brought with her to England some holiday photographs of various trips to resorts in Germany. The sets that particularly

caught my eye were a series taken in two resorts. The first was a beach resort and the second in a forest resort: Friedrichroda in Thüringia (formerly in the German Democratic Republic). The group taken in Friedrichroda during the mid-1930s provided the catalyst for this body of work. These are amateurish snaps of forest walks, teas in villas and swimming lessons. Of these photographs, the ones I found most intriguing were those of a swimming pool. One of my mother learning to swim wearing the apparatus common in those days to help children swim also had the look of a hangman's noose. Figure 1 is a painting derived from this photograph. The other was of a group of girls, including my mother, all wearing swimsuits and sandals, all with one arm raised, probably in imitation of athletes on a sporting occasion but with unfortunate and obvious resonances of a 'Heil Hitler' salute. I found this peculiar mixture of innocent enjoyment and intimations of death inherent in the belated viewing of these holiday photographs compelling.

Figure 1. *Evi Swims* (charcoal, 76 x 61 cm).

It was not only that public swimming pools and the interest in the healthy body reminded me of my grandmother who, against her parents' wishes, trained to be a gymnast, but that the architecture and setting all seemed to evoke and locate the interwar era very specifically. Furthermore, the swimming pool architecture in the forest and the space of the pool seemed to offer a logical development from my previous motif, the Strandkorb. Both incorporate the notion of bringing the domestic outside, of creating a 'home away from home.' I discovered that there was a pool in Friedrichroda in which the famous 1936 German Olympic diving team practised. My mother had holidayed there that very year, a strange coincidence. This seemed a rich seam of enquiry to pursue - all sorts of resonances occurred to me including, of course, Leni Riefenstahl's epic film *Olympia*. On arrival, I realised this was not the same pool that my mother and grandmother had used. On consideration, it occurred to me that, as Jews, they would probably have been forbidden to swim there. Through examining old maps of the town I discovered that there had been a smaller pool elsewhere which was now no longer there. This at first seemed disappointing, but this other pool has proved to be a lasting motif for my concerns. I realised this was in keeping with my project: it is poignant that there is nothing to return to and, had the pool been there, the work might have become rather literal.

Figure 2. A postcard of the official opening of the Friedrichroda pool in 1935.

The Friedrichroda pool is neither ruin nor a site of destruction; indeed, while it is a recognisable remnant of another era it is actually rather well cared for. While the historical photos of both pool and forest might bear the traces of unknown lives, the actual pool with its careful paintwork and the surrounding forest with its re-growth as a covering do not. This lack of evidence actually allows space for imaginative projection. The state of not being a ruin, not being clearly of the past and yet somehow not being quite of the present is one of the things that attracted me to the pool: it seemed to be strangely between. The ease with which I could now enter this lido area opened up the possibility of emotive and resonant metaphors of forbidden places, of transgression, of enclosures, of places that are concomitantly places of pleasure and danger.

Figure 3. The changing rooms in 2006.

When I had drawn, painted and photographed there for some time, the Schwimmbadmeister suddenly presented me with a CD of images of the pool from its construction in 1935 to its seventieth 'birthday.' This was an incredible gift for my work. It contained a range of photographs from its official opening by Nazi officials (figure 2) and strange images of its construction; it also included images from the German Democratic Republic period, including from the 1960s and 1970s when the pool became strangely tropical, sprouting cacti and large plants. There were also shots of those who worked there and of families enjoying the space. This semi-official archive

provided me with a way of developing the work I had begun in *Resort.* The work in *Tense* was similarly triggered by family photographs and a new embodied encounter in a particular place: this swimming pool where my family could not have swum did, while playing no part in my family history, become a site for thinking about the relationship between the social and the personal, the historical and the psychical. The work that I have produced in relation to these photographs of holiday resorts might on one level be seen as memory work. Yet, as Griselda Pollock contends:

> In the space of the second-generation thinkers, however, memory work on and with family album has other connotations than tracking the inscription in this informal, private space of class gender and sexuality. Often, precious photographs were the only remnant of the past that survived.[3]

The following section in which I discuss Marianne's Hirsch's notion of postmemory will elucidate and expand on the significance of this. Through the catalyst of investigating an intimate family history, of visiting the resorts where my family once holidayed, I found that there is, inevitably, a link to a wider cultural context, to external events.

3. Belated

Marianne Hirsch has developed her important and now well known concept of postmemory, which is a 'second generation' memory or 'transposition' informed by belatedness, dislocation and displacement. Through considering the effect on those whose childhood was eclipsed by events that happened before they were born, Hirsch distinguishes postmemory from memory by its generational distance and from history by its deep personal connection. Hirsh's post memory is:

> a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated, not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation . . . Post memory characterises the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated.[4]

In a way there is a paradox here for those of us who are second-generation artists: the overwhelming nature of the traumatic events can simultaneously

overshadow and stimulate a search to articulate one's own experience. The somewhat indirect, oblique approach that I take to the subject matter echoes and indeed, it might even be claimed, embodies the nature of postmemory's distance from its source. The character and methodology of my practice does not operate in a teleological way in search of answers. There are no definitive answers here: the affect of the work is unfinished and unresolved. This would seem to resonate with Hirsch's considerations of what she calls a diasporic aesthetics of temporal and spatial exile that needs simultaneously to rebuild and to mourn:

> It creates where it cannot recover. It imagines where it cannot recall. It mourns a loss that cannot be repaired. And because even the act of mourning is secondary, the lost object can never be incorporated and mourning can never be overcome.[5]

While I accept that the business I am dealing with is almost by definition unfinished, this inconclusiveness may itself become valuable. Through my practice, I explore not only a resonance of the experience of the past but also the affect of the vicarious, mediated experience of the second generation. Thus, while this work certainly concerns the effect of the past, it is, in fact, very much a journey in the present. There is an attempt to connect to the past yet the attempt is made in the full knowledge that the connection is impossible. Recognition of the impossibility is both an acknowledgment of the gap between the generations (avoiding an over-identification) and an acceptance that the act of attempting to connect is in and of itself worthwhile, allowing for precisely the kind of imaginative investment which I understand Hirsch to consider as consistent with postmemory. The impossible attempt might be considered a cipher for the subjectivity of the second generation and, indeed, I speculate whether it might allow for the possibility of some sort of working through.

4. A Tourist Landscape: Friedrichroda 1935-2006

In the following section I consider the significance of visiting the site of my family's holiday snaps. Central to *Tense* is the journey made to the resort and spa town of Friedrichroda. My mother and grandmother somehow managed to go on holiday there between 1933 and 1938 when it was very difficult for Jews to find places to stay. Jill Bennett discusses artists who produce visual art in the context of conflict and trauma; of particular interest to me are her deliberations on the relation between corporeality, *place* and affect:

> The artists I consider may each be understood to produce affective art, although affect in this context does not equate with emotion or sympathy, nor does it necessarily attach to persons or characters in the first instance, In many of the works discussed, affects arise in places rather than human subjects, in a way that allows us to isolate the function of affect, focusing on its motility.[6]

The relation of affect to place and, in turn, the relation of corporality and affect to a painted representation of place are themes to which I will return. We need to consider what kind of place is Friedrichroda, what kind of affect might it engender? The changing fortunes and popularity of Friedrichroda and its pool are, of course, absolutely connected with the wider political situation, giving rise to implications for the possibilities of travel and the question of whether or not a resort such as this is seen as a desirable holiday destination. Mimi Sheller and John Urry remind us of the ways in which a holiday destination can be altered by the changing behaviour of its visitors and inhabitants: 'places to play are also places in play: made and remade by the mobilities and performances of tourists and worker.'[7] Holidaying in the 'landscape' is inextricably linked to urbanisation. Urry has pointed out that mass tourism developed in industrialised Britain, soon to be followed in the rest of industrialised Europe; the rise of the seaside resort followed.[8] Spa towns such as Friedrichroda also became attractive destinations. In general, the rise of foreign holidays and of indoor leisure centres during the 1960s and after contributed to the drop in popularity of the outdoor pool, but the situation was different in East Germany where travel was much more difficult. Hence this particular pool kept its glamour and romance for much longer than it might had it ended up in West Germany. Similarly, a modernist-looking hotel that was a workers' holiday home has remained. Apparently, another hotel was once a Stasi safe house.

Urry considers what kind of place might produce a distinctive tourist gaze:

> Minimally there must be certain aspects of the place to be visited which distinguish it from what is conventionally encountered in everyday life. Tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary/everyday and the extra ordinary. This is not to say that other elements of the tourist experience will not make the typical tourist feel that she or he is 'home from home,' not too much 'out of place.' [9]

This can help to explain why my decision to make work in the landscape context of a holiday resort seemed strangely appropriate, opening up as it did questions of home, of here and there, of the everyday and the extraordinary. Dora Apel comments that many of what she terms 'secondary witnesses' attempt to work through their relation with the past through retracing aspects of their ancestors' lives, perhaps visiting birthplaces or locations of death camps. She notes that 'their journeys of discovery often end in perplexity,'[10] and Tina Wasserman similarly asks in the context of Daniel Eisenberg and Rea Tajiri's work, 'How can one access the temporal past by confronting a place? What can a place reveal?' Wasserman answers herself: 'In many ways, nothing is revealed. A place cannot be interrogated. The landscape is mute . . . Yet a landscape can be physically investigated and examined.'[11] My own answer would be that, personally, my painterly investigations do actually become a kind of interrogation of place: might they be a journey to the past through an embodied exploration in the now? As Wasserman acknowledges, 'landscape and site are concrete remnants of the past that continue to exist in the present. Thus, they have the capacity to be powerful visual surrogates for a tie that no longer exists.'[12]

However, I knew from the outset that there would be no physical site of a 'home' to be found; I was not searching for a home or for roots. Unlike some other second generation writers and artists I did not want to go the more obvious sites of atrocities - I would rather look at the everyday, the apparently innocent spaces of leisure. I wanted to steer clear of 'dark tourism' in such places that have now become metonymical for the Holocaust. What intrigues me is that, in the viewing of holiday photographs from 1930s' Germany, now in the present tense, there is disjuncture between this voluntary, everyday travelling to be safely 'home away from home' and a concomitant evocation of other kinds of perilous journeys, ones in which there will be no home to return to. This echoes the structure of the uncanny. Indeed, what I have come to realise through making this body of work is that in certain landscapes pleasure and horror seem to be inextricably intertwined, I will be developing this theme in the following section: 'Sun and Water: Night and Fog'. In visiting these resorts, these 'remnants,' this work becomes not so much an attempt to bear witness to past events as an attempt to understand and unravel the present.

5. Sun and Water: Night and Fog[13]

Lido architecture and the rise of the cult of the healthy body have come to be regarded as the epitome of the interwar years in both Germany and beyond. Of course, it was the usual mixture of economic, social, cultural and political matters that resulted in a sudden increase in the construction of open-air pools. Christopher Wilk considers that the whole Modernist enterprise was infused by a deep concern for health. He notes that

Modernism's social agenda was a direct response to the interrelated problems of poor health and poor housing. Health was discussed and written about in literal terms but also as a metaphor for a bright Utopian future.[14] Of course the link between health, hygiene and *water* was considered paramount: swimming pools were an important contribution to this. Interestingly for my project, Ken Worpole, who writes influentially on architecture and social policy, notes in relation to the rise of pools in parks in Britain and beyond during the 1930s that 'The design of the new pools sought to merge the park pool into the surrounding landscape, rather than to create hard-edged, municipal and highly functional facilities.'[15] As he points out, the atmosphere of the surrounding terraces was more holiday then sports setting; this is certainly true of the pool in Friedrichroda where the water is surrounded by grassy lawns, broad sun terraces and plenty of benches. Helen Pussard explores the idea of the outdoor pool as a mini-holiday area in detail in her case study of London's Tooting Bec Lido. She is writing about pools in cities but the way that the space surrounding the pool provides an opportunity of making a 'home away from home' is nevertheless pertinent to my project. Pussard focuses on the performative:

> It is also through rituals and practices that the domestic sphere is reproduced. Visitors to the lido recreate domestic, often gendered, roles in setting up an area with towels and blankets on the ground and laying out food and drink for each other. This produces miniature versions of home at the lido, where the private world comes under the public gaze. Some groups come for the whole day, others for a swim and a picnic, but there are observable domestic rituals that characterise the lido experience.[16]

It might also be apposite to consider these informal, self-constructed 'homes away from home' both in relation to and as reactions to the more formal, modernist architecture of the pool that, in turn, reflects the city architecture of the period. In Friedrichroda there is a further layer as here the architecture of the lido itself becomes a manufactured 'home,' a sheltered and enclosed place of play artificially created in the forest. The constructed space of an outdoor pool can be seen as an in-between space: 'a halfway house between town and country, between a London suburb and the Cote d'Azur.'[17] It can also be seen as a designated space for escapism. What intrigues me for my series of paintings is the potential of these designed spaces to contain these informal activities; whilst the paintings and drawings have very few figures depicted in them there is a potential place for them. To image empty pools and their surroundings is, therefore, to invite considerations of who is not there. In my paintings it is very the fact that the depicted spaces are relatively

empty that creates a tension and thus the possibility of imaginative projection for any viewer. He or she knows that in these spaces there is not only the potential for these activities to happen, but also that in the past they would have happened and, indeed, have the potential to happen again.

Exposing the body both naked and dressed for sport to the open air became commonplace during the interwar years. Christopher Wilk tracks the rise of nudism in Germany from the late nineteenth century when it was upper middle class pursuit to its transformation during the 1920s into a widespread political and social movement.[18] Furthermore, he goes on to make the well-known link between social hygiene and racial hygiene.[19] Taking this into consideration allows for a rich and complex metaphoric interpretation of both the pool itself and the water in the pool. It is interesting to note that, whilst during the modernist era the pool of water might have been considered a symbol of cleanliness and health, nowadays by contrast, open water in fountains or pools in hospital grounds is often opposed by infection specialists due to its health risk as a breeding ground for 'super bugs' such as MRSA. In this image of apparent health there are in fact the incipient beginning of a deadly illness, toxicity in the midst of wellbeing. This seems very apt for my project.[20] Thus, implicit in my images of the pool, these images of spaces of pleasure and leisure, are thoughts about those other bodies, those far from healthy bodies that perished in the same forest: in Buchenwald and at Ohrdruf. The entwining of resort and camp is explicitly examined in a sequence in *Memories of the Camps*.[21] This documentary film of the camps as they were liberated lay for years in the archive of the Imperial War Museum London since, intended for de-nazification purposes, it was considered too inflammatory for release in the aftermath of the war and as new alliances were being formed. The section I describe takes place at the beginning of chapter four and is part of the less polished footage taken by the Russians. The hand-held camera hovers and wobbles slightly as it moves over idyllic-looking scenes of a chalet by a lake surrounded by trees; couples, holiday makers and locals in lederhosen and traditional dress sit, chat, walk and boat; and then, as instructed, the camera pans across to barbed wire and inmates, demonstrating the closeness of the camp to the everyday. The slightly incongruous voice of Trevor Howard intones as a voiceover:

> Ebensee is a holiday resort in the mountains. The air is clean and pure. It cures sickness and there is sweetness about this place: a gentle peace. In this place the Luftwaffe or S.S. Panzer officer on leave relaxes, eats well, breathes deeply, finds romance. Everything is charming and picturesque. But the concentration camp had become an integral part of the German economic system, so it was

> here, too. They were able to see the mountains, but what use are mountains without food?[22]

We might consider that the uncanny double of the lido architecture might be the architecture of the concentration camp. On first viewing this seemed to provide a literal example of the themes with which I was working: without recourse to being illustrative or heavy-handed I seek to create understated images of everyday architectural spaces that contain both pleasure and violence. This domesticity cut into by catastrophe is profoundly uncanny. Anthony Vidler reminds us in *The Architectural Uncanny* that:

> As a concept then, the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community . . . has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity.[23]

In his terms, the spaces of this outdoor pool, which appear private and secure and yet are also vulnerable, might offer the potential for provoking a sense of the uncanny, but Vidler reminds us that no architectural space in and of itself can be guaranteed to bring about an uncanny feeling.[24] In the following section I examine how painted and drawn representations of such spaces might do so.

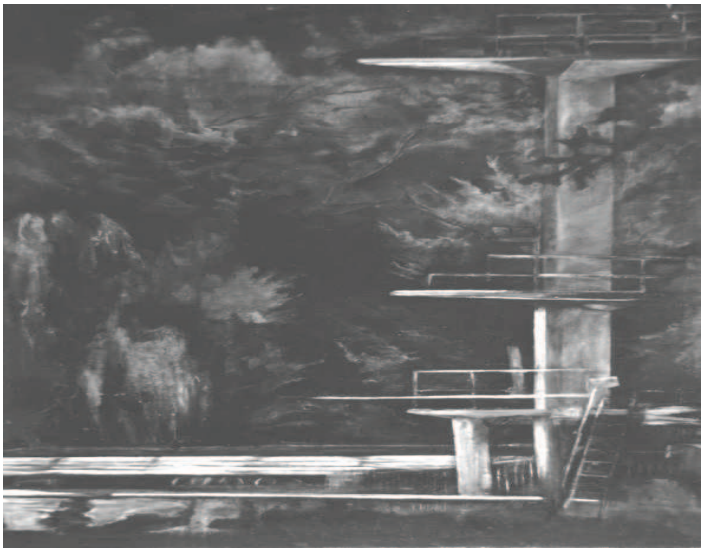

Figure 4 *Tense* (oil on Canvas, 76 cm x 61 cm).

6. Painted Pools

Figure 5. *Changing* (large version, oil on Canvas, 121 x 152 cm).

In my series of painted pools I do not seek to be overt or didactic in my approach but rather to infuse these painted spaces of leisure, these places of play, with a sense of tension and anxiety. I chose to focus on three motifs: the high diving board or platform, the springboard and the changing rooms, all situated against trees and sky. In the paintings the chosen motif is not subordinate to the landscape - the two are in conversation, and it is precisely the tension of the relationship between the two that is one of the subjects of these paintings. The landscape here serves both as a refuge from city life but also as a threat to the designed spaces of play. In some of the paintings the forest looms behind the changing room block, in others it appears indirectly as a reflection and the doubling of both architecture and forest are distorted.

Figure 6. *Platform 1935* (charcoal, 76 x 61 cm).

The hills and terrain depicted behind the pool, while clearly developed through photography, are also peculiarly painterly, employing a pictorial space reminiscent of much earlier painters, in particular Lucas Cranach the Elder, who himself used the Thüringian forest as a setting or parergon to his paintings. I was struck by Bodo Brinkmann's description of a fragment of landscape: 'Light and dark, close up and far away, steeply rising elements and flat surfaces, barricades and wide open spaces form a mysterious symbiosis.'[25] More or less five hundred years later, the parallels seem unexpectedly exact. I am particularly interested in the way in which

Cranach images the barrier in proximity to the expanse of landscape beyond. At first these parallel interests were entirely unconscious and derived entirely from being in place, but latterly I have begun much more self-consciously to emulate some of the ways in which Cranach so successfully combines opposing binaries in a limited space. The sort of painted space both implies distance and yet is also a little claustrophobic.

Griselda Pollock argues that in the *Resort* series the strandkörbe may be seen to both stand in for and displace a figure in the landscape in romantic tradition.[26] In *Tense*, I would suggest that the pool and in particular the high diving platform might also be seen to operate in much the same way. The diving boards become transformed into a combination of monuments, viewing platforms or towers in the forest (see the image on the front cover of this volume). This allows for multiple readings, including a possible relation to fairy tales. In some paintings they are imbued with a rosy tint, the red edges of the boards serving as pictorial devices that demarcate the edges and also appear to hover spatially in front of everything else. There are other images of the platform derived from photographs of its construction. In one photograph the workers standing atop seem to have a sense of pride and achievement in their task, yet they become transformed through paint to become much less certain: there is a sense of a fragility in the scaffold wrapped around the shadowy diving board, an ambiguity to the figures and in the whole a sense of surveillance. The chiaroscuro has been heightened and the tower is painted in predominantly cool dark blues with some highlights in warmer colours. The ground is painted in reds, pinks and golds, infusing this muddy building site with a hint of violence.

The springboard might be thought of as having the potential to turn the quiet, passive water into an active, physical space. Most of the paintings of the springboard do not focus on it, often it is not in the light and it seems to slide in from one side and make an incision into the paintings. Changing rooms are spaces for bodies, intimate, yet at the same time public. Both the boards and the changing rooms invite considerations of bodies, both absent and present, both then and now. The drawings and paintings of this aspect of the pool depict several interior and exterior spaces, some hidden and some available for viewing. The interiors of the changing rooms are hidden and so is the interior of the forest: it encloses, surrounds and protects but also hides. Like Russian dolls, there are spaces within spaces. Sometimes it is the outside space that is concealed from view and sometimes the inside and viewers are, as it were, sandwiched between knowledge and unknowing. This partial concealment and the consideration of the blurring of public and private that these images evoke brings to mind Freud's thoughts about Schelling's definition of the uncanny as 'something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open,' the return of the repressed. [27]

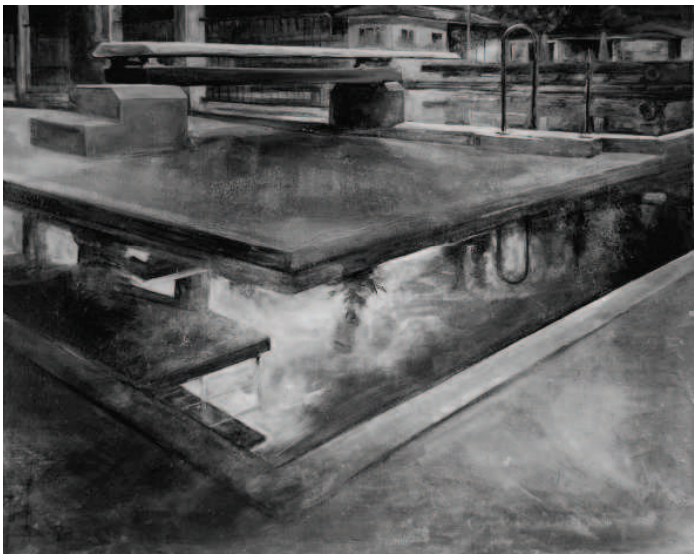

Figure 7. *Springboard* (oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm).

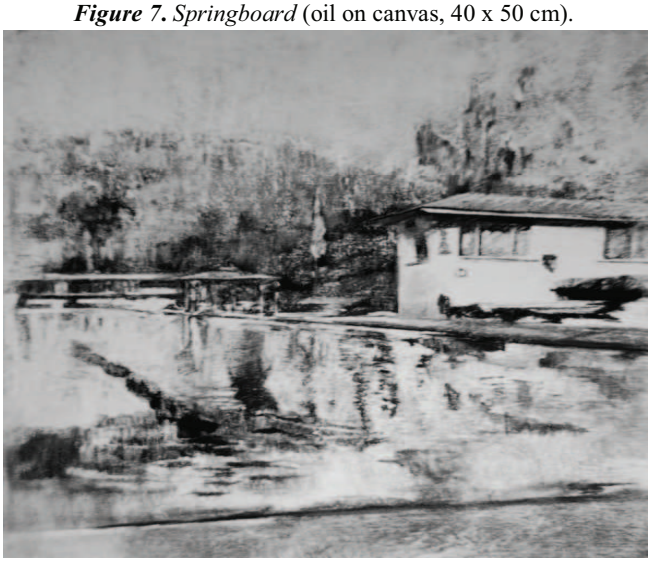

Figure 8. *Changing* (charcoal, 76 x 61 cm).

The use of exaggerated parallel perspective in some of the images is reminiscent of well-used images of the railway tracks and of the low perspective of some totalitarian art. Yet these images lack that sort of bravura, seeming somehow brittle and delicate: the surface's delicate colours merge with the geometry of the architecture to form an uncertain pictorial space. The iridescent pigment that I use shimmers and appears to hang in front of the apparent picture plane reminding the viewer of the materiality of the pieces and counteracting any sense of perspectival space or sense of three dimensional form created through chiaroscuro. Not only this, but the constant reminder of surface can feel claustrophobic and closed off: there is not a trace of the canvas ground visible. The water in the pool is sometimes transparent and available but at other times the reflections prevent us seeing within; indeed, in some paintings, the paint surface and the water surface appear to be transposable.

Why paint then, why not present the images in a photographic form? After all, most artists whose work may be considered postmemorial use photography or lens-based media, in many cases directly incorporating family photographs into their work. In my own case, the family photograph, rather than being literally embedded in the work, is used at one remove and also acts as a catalyst to visit the location where the photograph was originally taken. It is important that it is evident that my paintings and drawings reference photography: through their tonality, their compositions and in the bold use of chiaroscuro. In addition the liquidity of materials and the iridescent and metallic pigments appear to reference or mimic the photographic process, seeming to echo the emergence of an image in a dark room and also adding to the fluid sense of spatial ambiguity. This hints at an already mediated experience - experience at a distance - yet also, in apparent contradiction, at a phenomenological experience of place.

My choice of medium, either oil paint or charcoal, influences the way in which I image the pool in the forest. It is through paint that I turn what might be a comfortable image of a swimming pool in the forest into an unfamiliar one. In shifting light the image emerges and is then obscured, refusing to be precisely pinned down. All paintings appear to change in different lights but since I use metallic pigments and reflective surfaces mine alter more than most. At times the layering of glazes and the metallic and reflective surfaces and pigments completely obscure the images when the light catches them directly - all that is visible are trails and globules of liquid paint. At other times the whole image is clearly visible and in certain lights the iridescent pigment, the blue in particular, appears to hover in front of the picture plane almost like a hologram. The smoothed, dragged and modulated surfaces draw the viewer close in, the shimmering glazes both offer an invitation to explore this uncertain place I have made and, since they are highly reflective, deny entry to the viewer's eye. The result is that each

painting has multiple viewing possibilities; I have paradoxically created static images that refuse to remain still. There is a corresponding series of drawings: the fact that they are monochrome emphasises the photographic source materials, the rough textures and heavily worked surfaces operate in a way that is parallel to the glazed surfaces. The dramatic monochrome and tone in combination with the use of line and marks made on the surface simultaneously invites the viewer's eye to explore the space and reminds him or her that it is a drawn surface. This promise of a pictorial space which is then denied is redolent of Hirsch's considerations of the spatial dimension of postmemory in relation to photography:

> Photographic images are and also, decidedly, are not material traces of an unreachable past. They invite us in, grab us, giving the illusion of depth and thus deep memory, and they also repel us. They convey the spatial dimension of postmemory, where trapped on the surface, we never the less fall for the promise of a glimpse into the depths of remembrance...a granting of alterity and opaqueness.[28]

In much the same way, the constantly shifting, complex web of iridescent pigments and richly textured surfaces operates both as enticement and as a screen preventing one from seeing.

The painter Marlene Dumas considers what for her is the significant difference is between painting and photography:

> Unlike photography, in painting there is nothing to start with. You start with emptiness . . . even if you use photographic sources as inspiration, you don't manipulate the photo. You make something else out of it. A painting is not an image. A painting is not like its reproduction. A painting is physical even if you may compare it to a corpse. An image is closer to a ghost.[29]

Her reminder of the very physical presence, the materiality, of paint strikes a chord with my practice. Hirsch suggests that in the present we 'try to reanimate it [the photograph] by undoing the finality of the photographic 'take'.'[30] I speculate why I am transmuting a photograph into paint or drawing. It is not precisely to reanimate it. Rather, it occurs to me that, to use Dumas's metaphor, I might be attempting to change a ghost into corpse. Might then this activity allow mourning to begin? The corporeal nature of paint (for example, the time taken, layering, the evidence of the body which made the marks) is one characteristic of what I consider to be particular to painting as a practice. This is a way of mediating the external world that

offers some sort of possibility of fusion not only between the internal and the external.

While painting or drawing on location allows for an embodied experience of place as it unfolds, the viewing as well as the making of paintings has often been considered an embodied practice. In almost all painting there are clear indication of the body of the artist: this is indexed in the marks, in the tactility of surface through those traces of the contact between brush and canvas. Jill Bennett argues that certain 'images have the capacity to address the spectator's own bodily memory; to touch the viewer who feels rather than simply sees the event, drawn into the image through a process of affective contagion.'[31] Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's considerations of the relationship of sensation and thought and the way in which, through the artist's engagement, the medium (in my case paint) does not become a residue of self-expression but emerges as sensation in the present, Bennett summarises thus:

> Painting is thus essentially non referential; as the emphasis shifts from expression to production, from object to process, sensation is less subject matter than modus operandi. A Deleuzian framework does not, therefore, allow us to theorise are as a transcription of a psychological state. But this may be of the essence in so far as sense memory is about tapping a certain type of process; a process experienced not as a remembering of the past but a continuous negotiation of the present with indeterminable links to the past. The poetics of sense memory involve not so much *speaking of* but *speaking out* of a particular memory or experience. - In other words, speaking for the body *sustaining sensation*.[32]

What is important for me in this thought is the implication that, while my paintings and drawings themselves depict a liminal space, indeed perhaps an uncanny space, they also, through the mediation of my material practice, themselves become places between, interstitial areas, between past and present. As such, they arguably hold the potential for a postmemorial affect.[33]

It is critical that the paintings which derive from the different source material are seen in relation to each other: those from the family album, from the semi-official archive and those derived from my own photographs and drawings referencing an encounter in Germany. For the viewer these works might create a consideration of the intertwining of public and private, of inside and outside, of social and individual experience and in addition, perhaps, act as a bridge between what Hirsch terms familial and affiliative memory.[34] Hirsch suggests that post memorial work:

> strives to reactivate and reembody more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression. Thus less-directly affected participants can become engaged in the generation of postmemory, which can thus persist even after all participants and even their familial descendants are gone.[35]

Using this particular combination of public and private imagery, of both directly experienced and mediated images of place, facilitates a way of avoiding some of the possible risks of over-identification and sentimentality. Nevertheless, the decision to include the paintings derived from my family album indicate that there is a deep personal connection; this also both acknowledges the importance of past and shifts the focus to the present.

7. Tense

The summer I visited Friedrichroda it happened to rain a lot. That led to a certain amount of wandering around the town and on one of these aimless strolls, I peered in through the wet glass of a shop window at some miniature aeroplanes. I was intrigued to notice that they were models of World War II planes and duly photographed them. I then noticed a grainy black and white photograph of a plane with the name of the manufacturer Gothaer Waggonfabrik. What was odd about this photograph was the decision to carefully, but only partially; cover the swastika on the tail of the plane with a very neat masking-tape cross. There was something very telling about this gesture: it is very easy to imagine the dilemma the shop owner went through in wanting to show the photograph - just precisely how much of the swastika, if any, should remain visible? He or she would not want to be seem to be denying the difficult past, yet by the same token would not wish to be seen in any way condoning it either. The result of this internal debate was a strange compromise; this small cross of cream tape seemed to me to epitomise some of the complexities of a contemporary relation to a difficult past.

It brings to mind Jörg Heiser's thoughts in relation to Susan Hiller's J Street Project, in which she records the 303 street names in Germany that still bear the word *Jude* (Jew). Heiser contrasts the two possible readings of the photographs that seem to him to be 'evidence' and the accompanying film that is more contemplative:

> These two readings - 'soft' everyday scene and 'hard' crime-scene - can each be understood as the dangers of an inappropriate handling of German-Jewish history . . . the danger of being lost in the present, our awareness of history

> eroded by the sheer abundance of everyday banality. The danger of a kind of 'pleasure in guilt' that revels in the viewer's own horror at the gravity of historical atrocities even in their absence at the empty 'scene of the crime.'[36]

This kind of revelling in guilt at past atrocities might also distance and obscure an appropriate relationship to the present and current events. In his reading of Hiller's installation Heiser argues that placing the two kinds of images together results in the forming of a tense relationship and that this indicates precisely how unresolved and uncertain is our contemporary relation to history. It seems to me that, in a small way, the inadequacy of the masking-tape cross attempted to acknowledge the difficulties of these issues, becoming a clumsy metaphor for events that we cannot remember properly nor completely forget.

It has been important for me to circumvent and avoid the pitfalls of the two dangers Heiser outlines: forgetting a sense of history and the fetishisation of a violent past. I offer this tense relationship in a less clear-cut fashion. The tension in my work lies between the subject of the images, a cosy everydayness and the way in which they are depicted. It is crucial that in my work there are no images of distress or devastation: the opportunity to reflect on the implications of genocide is only incipient, never determined. I depict the concurrent possibilities of the space of the lido pool: escapism and of fear, release and entrapment, reassurance and anxiety, pleasure and mourning. In some ways my paintings are analogous to the masking-tape cross: on the one hand they hover between revelation and secrecy, on the other hand they become an attempt to both *mark* the place between remembering and forgetting and to *become* that place.

Notes

[1] The literal translation of Strandkorb is 'beach basket' and these hybrids between beach hut and deck chair are synonymous with the beaches of North Germany.

[2] A Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*, Verso, London, 2002, p. 5.

[3] G Pollock, 'Going to the Past via a Journey to the Present: Mother/Daughter and Other Germans in Judith Tucker's Painting from Caesura to Resort,' in *Resort* by J Tucker, Wild Pansy Press, Leeds, 2006, p. 17.

[4] M Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1997, p. 22.

[5] M Hirsch, 'Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile,' in *Exile and Creativity,* Susan Suleiman (ed), Duke University Press, Durham NC, 1998, p. 422.

[6] J Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2005, pp. 9-10.
[7] M Sheller and J Urry, *Tourism Mobilities: Places to Play, Places in Play*, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, p. 1.
[8] J Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, London, Sage, 1990, p. 12.
[9] Ibid., p.12.
[10] D Apel, *Memory Effects: the Holocaust and the Act of Secondary Witnessing*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ and London, 2002, p. 109.
[11] T Wasserman, 'Constructing the Image of Postmemory,' in *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*, F Guerin, F and R Hallas (eds), Wallflower Press, London and New York, 2007, p. 169.
[12] Ibid., p. 165.
[13] The title of this section refers to *Night and Fog/Nuit et Brouillard* (France, 1955, D: A Resnais, Sc: J Cayrol), which in turn refers to 'Nacht und Nebel,' a directive of Hitler of 7 December 1941 which resulted in the deportation of political prisoners to camps and thus their disappearance into the 'night and fog.'
[14] C Wilk, *Modernism: Designing a New World,* V and A Publications, London, 2006, p. 250.
[15] K Worpole, *Here Comes the Sun: Architecture and Public Space in Twentieth-Century European Culture*, Reaktion Books, London. 2000, p. 117.
[16] H Pussard, 'Historicising the Spaces of Leisure: Open-Air Swimming and the Lido Movement in England,' *World Leisure Journal*, vol. 49.4, 2007, p. 20
[17] Worpole, p.114
[18] Wilk, p.250
[19] Wilk, p. 257
[20] This is an idea widely explored in literature; among other examples, I am thinking of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in which the public baths are discovered to be polluted and also of Aharon Appelfeld's novel *Badenheim 1939* in which the Holocaust is explored through the trope of a resort town.
[21] *Memory of the Camps*, UK 1945, D: Sidney Bernstein.
[22] Ibid.
[23] A Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992, p.11.
[24] Ibid., p. 11.
[25] B Brinkmann, *Cranach*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main, Hatje Cantz Verlag and Royal Academy of Arts, London. 2007, p. 112.

[26] Pollock, p. 22.
[27] S Freud, *The Uncanny*, Hugh Haughton (trans), Penguin, London, 2003 p. 248.
[28] M Hirsch, 'Marked by Memory: Feminist Reflections on Trauma and Transmission' in Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw, eds., *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 2002, p. 81.
[29] M Dumas, 'Marlene Dumas,' in *The Painting of Modern Life 1960s – Now*, R Rugoff (ed and curator), London, Hayward Publishing, p. 121.
[30] M Hirsch, '*The Generation of Postmemory,*' *Poetics Today*, vol. 29.1, 2008, p. 115.
[31] Bennett, p.36.
[32] Ibid., p. 38.
[33] Elsewhere I have considered painting as a place, using Edward Casey and Bridget Riley among others. See J Tucker 'Painting Landscape: Mediating Dislocation,' in *Culture, Creativity and Environment: New Environmentalist Criticism*, F Becket and T Gifford (eds), Rodopi Press, Amsterdam, 2007, pp. 197–213, and J Tucker, 'Painting Places: A Postmemorial 'Landscape',' in *Migratory Aesthetics*, S Durrant and C Lord (eds), Rodopi Press, Amsterdam, 2007, pp 59 -79.
[34] Hirsch, 2008, pp. 114-116
[35] Ibid., p.111
[36] J Heiser in S. Hiller, *The J Street Project,* Compton Vernay and Berlin Artists-In-Residence Programme/DAAD, 2005, p. 625.

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