

What does brokenness look like?

By Lindy Rose

Abstract

Rooted in the teaching practice at William Booth College, London and taking the concept of Henri Nouwen's 'wounded healer' as a foundational basis, this work seeks to explore the question, 'What does brokenness look like?' Using Jackson Pollock's 'action painting' as methodology, supplemented by an artistic journal, a dialogue is created both verbal and non-verbal which explores the relevance of this practice as a legitimate method of theological reflection. The researcher's journey of spiritual discovery is critiqued to determine connections that may embrace the theology of creativity and other concepts from the Christian tradition as being embodied by the artist.

Introduction

Whilst working at The Salvation Army (TSA) William Booth College in London, I was responsible for coordinating practical placements for trainee officers, (cadets) in addition to teaching pastoral ministry. As part of my personal development, with a desire to lead by example, I engaged in study as a spiritual discipline (Foster 1989:80). It is out of this experience and linked with the reflective practice, post cadets' extended summer placement, that this major project was conceived as the analytical and devotional, verbal and non-verbal avenues meet (Foster 1989:81). Using theology without words was an alternative way of encouraging the cadets' capacity to notice, to perceive, to discern (Nash and Nash 2005:119) and subsequently care more effectively. I believe that if our sensitivities and awareness of both ourselves and those around us are heightened we would have a greater capacity to care for those trapped in the cage of our own humanity (Nouwen 1972, 2010:19); recognizing the transforming potential of our own woundedness whilst remembering that our journeyings can also be shaped by 'defective cultural norms' and 'personal flaws' (Nouwen 1972, 2010:4 and Pembroke 2002:1).

Cadets were encouraged to visualise images arising from the pastoral encounters during practical placement. Lester, (1995:6) suggests that previous experiences,

present reality, 'future stories and the hoping process' are all affected by humanity's fractured and distressed position. As the cadets explore the question "what does brokenness look like?" they are invited to draw upon their own response and the observance of others in the hope that 'imagination reveals not new vistas but revelations of reality behind reality' (Fujimura n.d.).

Rookmaaker, (2010:44) reminds that 'art helps us to give form to facets of our life and helps us to grasp reality.' It is this grasping of reality that has the potential to make pastoral ministry in the twenty first century effective; an antidote to the virtual reality that exists in the lives of many. As Turner suggests, 'we are fallen people observing a fallen world. Because the world is fallen we need to take notice of its brokenness and acknowledge it in our work.' Nouwen acknowledges that living today, 'our wounds have become all too visible' (2001:68). However, Seamands comforts, in the knowledge that 'God's recycling grace takes our infirmities, our damaged emotions, and the garbage of our lives and turns them from curses that cripple into means for growth and instruments to be used in His service' (1986:145), hence my question.

Reflecting on the results of their creativity and the depth of their reflective praxis caused me to challenge myself with the same question, yet explore the subject in a different way. As my approach would be a personal exploration I decided to use 'Action Painting' (Rosenberg in Friedman 1995:195) as the outward expression of my inmost self, supplemented by a written and photographic journal. A critique of this material should explore whether this brokenness may be considered a source of healing and wholeness, recognising that I will interpret my experience through biased lens.

Action Painting as methodology

In his *ArtNews* article of 1952, critic Harold Rosenberg coined the term 'Action Painting' (in Friedman 1995:195) to describe an innovative new technique of producing artwork where the process of creating in itself becomes just as important as the finished work. Conceived at a time when America was in the midst of the Great Depression¹, Action Painting was literally *state of the art*, communicating

¹ Severe world-wide economic depression prior to World War II which originated in America.

feelings directly from inside the artist. Killen and De Beer, (2012:33) suggest that our emotions form a full response to our being and as such 'are a source for creativity.' As Ossorio, 1951 describes, 'what is without is within' (in Harrison 2000:108). When we permit our emotion to animate our enquiry, and then move beyond this to visualising the experience, we can then understand and explore more deeply (Killen and De Beer, 2012:33).

The preparation for Direct Painting is minimal as the artist does not require preliminary sketches; no preconceived idea, as the urgency of approach to the canvas begins a dialogue of creativity (Pollock 1950 in Harrison, 2000:27; Rosenberg 1967. in Harrison 2000:132). However, time in preparation or 'incubation' often preceded the painting; almost a hovering over the potential of the blank canvas expectantly waiting or recharging (Nash and Nash 2012:120-121; Seiberling 1959 in Harrison 2000:59). If the painting dialogue was considered to be the utterance of the artist, then the period prior to speaking could be described as silence or stillness, anticipation with a purpose. What follows is more than graphic design, it is as Friedman (1957), describes 'visible...energy' (in Harrison 2000:47). It is what Nash and Nash propose as 'illumination.' (2012:121) Dalley (1984 in Nash and Nash 2012:118-119) recognises art as 'symbolic speech', the resulting imagery having greater power than verbalising alone.

Abandoning the usual easel, forming a framework for the painting, Pollock tacked his simple canvas to the floor, taking his artwork back to basics, hitting the floor, foundational. This was an important aspect of his new approach as it enabled him to be fully part of the painting, his being integral to the creative act; in the painting (Matter in Potter 1987:129). Pollock describes painting as 'a state of being' (in Rodman 1957 in Harrison 2000:53) where, as Rodman prompts, 'being' and 'becoming' are united in 'self-discovery' (Rodman in Harrison 2000:53-54). A picture opens a way for our experience to be incorporated in our meaning making, and for that meaning to be developed by such opportunities (Killen and De Beer 2012:35).

What is clear is that connection with the canvas was as vital as breathing, as the process of creativity was not just hands on, but required the whole body be surrendered to the dialogue. The surface of the canvas is also significant, not only as recipient for the paint, but of itself, often left bare in places, reminiscent of space and

light and void of the need for anything further. It has a tension all its own, particularly as I am using a pre-stretched canvas. There is depth beyond time, which points towards unending continuum (Ossorio 1951 in Harrison 2000:108.). This also offers a glimpse between the layers of dialogue, a refreshing honesty and openness, a raw edge leaving an opening which some could not accept (Friedman 1957 in Harrison 2000:48).

In order for the conversation to flow effectively, the consistency of the paint is key. Pollock would walk around the sides and paint from different angles mirroring a conversation from varying points of view as differing aspects are explored (Pollock 1950 in Harrison 2000:28). His body would mirror the paint as each gesture took on liqueous form, rhythmical and intentional. Each line, a sign of communication from deep within, characteristic of the feeling which fuels the vision; whether it is dripped, poured, splashed or printed. Pollock, (1950 in Harrison 2000:28) suggests 'technique is just a means of arriving at a statement.' What is important is the internal, responsive energy being held whilst progressing towards greater insight and the power of 'imaging' to do this (Killen and De Beer 2012:36). Like Seixas, 'something had moved me about his painting, and I had tried to fit it in to my own experience' (1963 in Harrison 2000:216-217). Henderson argues that Pollock's work does not suggest 'any therapeutic value' (1982 in Harrison 2000:84). Yet Pollock describes his desire 'to look in, like a personality or soul x-ray' (in Potter 1987:140). I acknowledge Pollock's desire and accept that when we intentionally include insight from our Christian faith tradition into this process of exploring meaning from our living, we are engaged in theological reflection (Killen and De Beer 2012:46). My intention was to combine both aspects of this human reflection of action painting and the informing of my Salvationist background as recorded in an artistic journal to provide an effective theological methodology. Within the journal itself, there was personal reflection and photographs of the unfolding action within the painting. Also included was a couple of letters, a medium used by Pollock on occasion, which also reveal deeper reflections as this 'theology by heart...turns life into text...that results in faithful, and often adventurous living' (Graham, Walton and Ward 2005:18).

In creating a design for this theological reflection I used a four stage model as proposed by Killen and De Beer (2012: 122-142) namely 'experience' which explores

the questions, “what happened?” and “what does this mean?” Secondly, moving to the ‘heart of the matter’ where I considered context and reality and “how do I understand this?” Thirdly, a ‘conversation’ of “what do I believe?” which included doctrine, tradition and scripture, and “where is this rooted?” Finally moving towards the development of ‘new truths and meanings’ I explored “where do I go from here?” “what difference does this make?” and “how does this change me?” It was anticipated that this would provide an effective tool for processing the experience and reveal learning opportunities using art as ‘a sign – rather than telling it where to point’ (Notarianni 2013:7). It was hoped that utilising all these elements together would help to avoid the temptation for this work becoming self-indulgent, lacking in objective critique, rather, creating the opportunity for it to fulfil the promise and realise its potential; the power of my “laughable humanity” becoming ‘a valuable healing resource’ (Ballard and Pritchard 2006:142; Nouwen 1972, 2010; Campbell, 1986 in Pembroke 2002:1).



Figure 1. Reflective Palette based on Killen and De Beer (2012:122-142)

The theological process and how it speaks to me

How do I process what I see and hear and know through my experiences? ‘Theological reflection is simply the practice of naming and describing the major commitments that guide thought and action’ (Dyrness 2001:87), and in my thoughts and actions I can name several *guides* who have enabled me along my journey of experience. Using this experience and exploring it within theological or philosophical

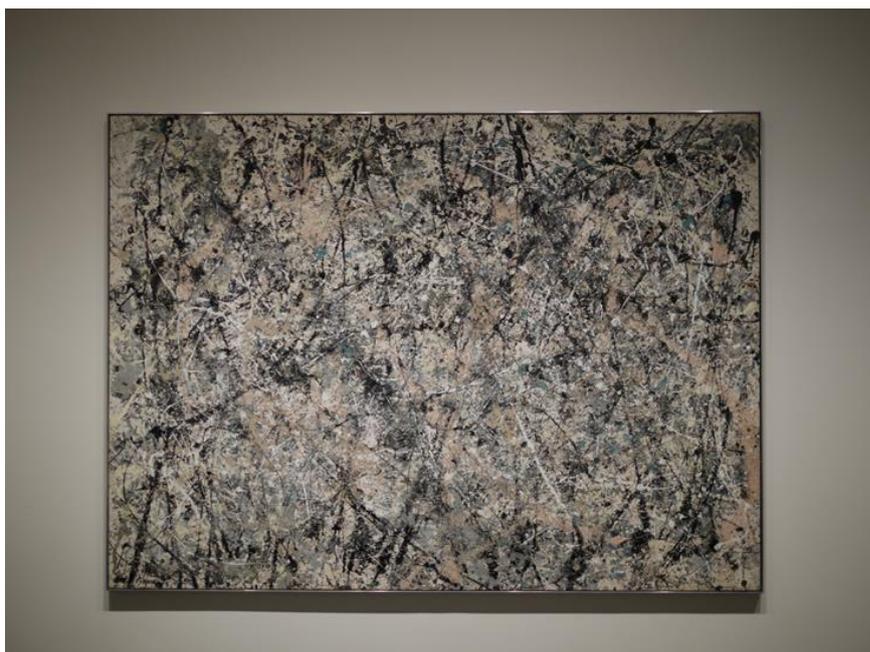
methods is already part of who I am, regardless of my awareness or otherwise (Bennett, 2014:55). My desire was for my creative journey to be playful; having dialogue which is rooted in experience, grounded in context and reality, informed by my beliefs and ultimately inviting change within myself and offering such opportunity to others (Turner 2001:53). Lisak suggests 'nothing I knew could permit me to connect with my soul and the Divine in quite the same way that Art did' (2014:4). I wanted to experience this for myself. Turner warns, 'some people think you are only really glorifying God if you are doing something religious' (2001:9). But Rohr advises 'we need some form of contemplative practice that touches our unconscious conditioning, where all our wounds lie, where our defence mechanisms are operative secretly' (Rohr 2014).

As an avenue for theological reflection, action painting is one form of dialogic art that can 'give shape and voice to our feelings in the language of imagery'(Killen and De Beer 2012:35). Brook suggests that 'visual texts are vital hermeneutical tools in themselves in that they have the capacity to critique and reveal deeper understanding and knowledge of the human condition and the questions that originate within it' (2006:345 in Nash and Nash 2012:119). Yet Pattison complains 'the ineffable quality of images frustrates linguistic imperialists devoted to the all-powerful word' (2007:90). Recognising that paintings that often arouse greatest interest are created by the combined efforts of imagination and technique (Elkins, 1999:194), I was content to acknowledge the place of my creation as being relevant to the conversation. I believe as a Salvationist that 'he that believeth, hath the witness in himself' and as the saying goes, *what goes in must come out!* (The Salvation Army, 2010:xvi). Supplementing the art work with a journal cannot kill the work as ceasing to have a voice of its own; because it has come out of me in that moment does not mean the dialogue has to stop with the painting. What I have said on canvas will continue to speak as it is there, visible, engaging, alive. It does not die. If scripture can be considered 'alive and active' (Hebrews 4:12 TNIV) and the bible is for me 'the divine rule of Christian faith and practice' (The Salvation Army, 2010: xv) then surely there's a link as the living word is part of who I am? If a part of who I am now exists on canvas then this painting exercise is not just a visual aid; without the artwork there would be no experience to critique. 'A dependent revelatory

situation exists in every moment in which the divine Spirit grasps, shakes and moves the human spirit' (Tillich in Allen,2012:186).

Living in a visually stimulating world where increasingly communication is word and image, to integrate this within reflective praxis is significant. Theology by heart recognizes an intimate relationship with God who communicates 'through the interiority of human experience' (Green 2012:145). Journal and letter writing are ways of creating reflexivity within theological reflection which demonstrates appreciation for the role of self in understanding, and is also regarded 'as having theological significance..' (Graham, Walton and Ward 2005:19-20).

As I entered the studio of House 8, I was conscious of being on holy ground, just as I was (Exodus 3:5 TNIV). My vision of reality was not only recognising who and whose I am or in the sense of knowing where I am and what surrounds me, but in creating a realised vision within the space I occupy (Rookmaaker 2010:42-43). Prayerful meditation or 'incubation' (Henderson 1982 in Harrison 2000:85) has incorporated sustained looking at Number 1, (1950), '*Lavender Mist*' which is one of my most favourite Pollock paintings. There has been an element of 'hovering' both around the space, the canvas, and the anticipation of creativity. Jenkins, 1984 describes that in Pollock's most abstract work 'presence was always hovering' (in Harrison 2000:175). I am reminded that part of the biblical creating process was the Spirit of God hovering and I recognise the work and person of the Holy Spirit both within me and beyond me at work in the world, creating and recreating. 'The Holy Spirit is always contemporary' (Gen. 1:2, 2 Cor 5:17 TNIV; TSA, 2010:57).



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Heib suggests 'authentic seeing is restful, energizing, transforming and completely natural. Seeing will slow you down. Seeing will center you. Seeing will intensify your experiences of the ordinary. Seeing is a creative act' (2005:23). I come to God, seemingly blind, yet in confidence make my prayer, 'Lord, I want to see' (Luke 18:41 TNIV). I have always been struck by Pollock's handprints which must have come first at the very start of the work. The creator placing his identity on canvas; his DNA at the heart of his creation, always visible, but not always noticeable; a definite connection. I began to think about God's hand upon my broken life as acknowledged in Salvation Army doctrine as 'Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things' (The Salvation Army, 2010:xv). I have to acknowledge that there have been times when His mark upon me may not always have been as visible as it should have been and am reminded of a quote from Lieutenant-Colonel Alan Burns offered at a one day leadership conference at the college in 2011, that someone once said 'God's reputation hangs on the thread of my holiness' (William Booth College 27/3/11). That is a sobering thought, even for a tee-total Salvationist!

As I approached my canvas prayerfully this experience of the ordinary was transcended yet again, in vocal prayer, 'Breathe on me, breath of God, 'til I am wholly Thine, until this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine' (Hatch in The Salvation Army 1986:155). I carefully placed my hands on the right hand side of the

canvas and then moved to the left to do the same, almost an embrace of love, the beginning of an intimate relationship journey and definite connection. 'God's image and mark on us and breath in us is a profoundly creative breath (Genesis 3);...that creativity of God is a part of what God made us, it is part of who we are, or more accurately part of what we are called to become' (Boulter 2014:8-9). I was full with emotion and just knelt at the foot of the canvas as tears rolled down my cheeks. My sense of brokenness becoming more evident as my ordinary, everyday self, my basest being is laid open and bare, integrated with the blank canvas; marked forever. As I looked upon the handprints I was caused to think of those who have marked my life; I stood and sensed the closeness and at once felt a rush of feeling which reminded me that this moment can also be shared, others can be invited to the table, creating community. I painted my hands a second time, reminiscent of the table from Rublev's icon of the Trinity, placing my hands from the back of the canvas out towards those who might come to view the work offering a space in which to call them in.

Canvas 1:10a

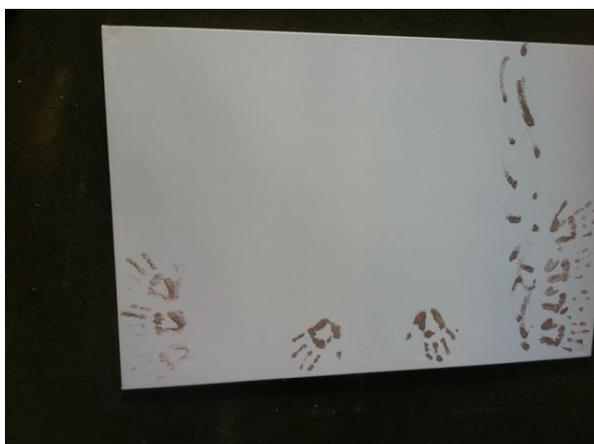


I had not expected when I painted the canvas that the start of the lines and the arcs was way beyond the canvas in order for the time delay to allow the paint to fall and hit the picture. I wonder if this time delay has significance in itself? Ecclesiastes reminds that 'He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no-one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end' (3:11TNIV). God, outside of time (Gen.1:1TNIV), is the heart and source of

continuum. The marks left beyond the canvas are a testament to there always being more! This is part of the original creation and my new creation and yet may never otherwise be seen or noticed. How much within me and now visible without me is missed or ignored in the same way because of time? If this is true of me then this is probably true of others. “All art points to a transaction between reality of the seen and reality of the unseen.” Grace is the thread that connects the reality of the seen and the unseen’ (Fujimura 2013). Maybe on occasion the most significant marks are those which have been overlooked for whatever reason, not necessarily intentionally. I am comforted to believe ‘that grace is manifest in the most unlikely individuals and that it inhabits, indeed seeks out the company of the struggling’ (Glasson 2007:6).

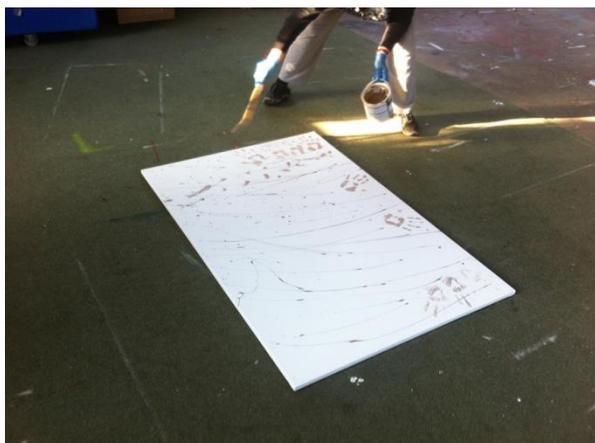
There are some marks which can purposefully create time. On occasion Pollock would mix his paint with other medium, sometimes this was ground sand. As I reflected upon whether I would do the same I recalled the scripture where Jesus bends down and writes on the ground (John 8:6b, 8 TNIV). I am content not to know what He wrote, but like Pollock, acknowledge significance in the action. I want to take time out to speak as prompted by Jesus and reflect by lowering myself and using earth coloured paint mixed with sand, marked out the start of my journey up the right hand side of the canvas. The marks are not legible as words yet the action of stooping or bowing, marking the moment in the sand is a helpful and sustained pause, silent adoration at the wisdom of Jesus as He thinks before He speaks. I realised that is not always my approach and take time to bring before God the conversations where my wisdom may have been sadly lacking.

Canvas 4:1



Ordinary is something I am familiar with in some way each and every day. My constant sense of humanity is represented by two colours which are mixed within my canvas, Earthy Hue and Deep Base. Grounded in reality of the present, the everyday, this colour marks a shift towards regularity. The earthy hue mixed with deep base was my starting point of ordinariness as I emptied myself. The journey continues as an experience of the ordinary, using the same utilitarian colour in passing sweeps which move backwards and forwards across the canvas from right to left and then left to right as I move around the edge to work from all four sides. My life is approached in a no nonsense way, down to earth with a humility which I account to servant leadership. My caring is grounded as I reach up in devotion and out towards others. I am caused to think of whether I take time to recognise the extraordinary, as God reveals himself to me in ordinary ways on ordinary days.

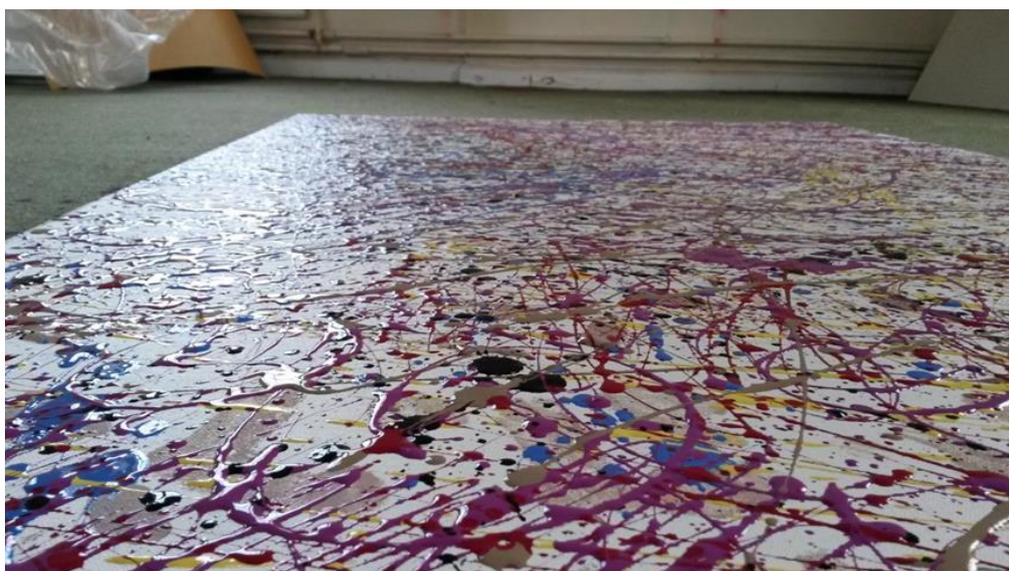
Canvas 4:6



During this process I became slowly aware of my own unworthiness and faltering, as the noise of the painting grew and I sensed this deeper 'oneing.' (Rohr 2014). I experienced transcendence once again into the extraordinary of God's presence, becoming far greater than mine, to a point where the deep base no longer appeared sufficient. Black is added to my canvas in small parts as a total contrast, representative of that part of me which fails, the element within me that Paul describes as 'although I want to do good, evil is right there with me' (Romans 7:2TNIV). As Begbie adds, 'every single individual maintains a struggle of some kind with the forces of good and evil, and in the silence of his soul holds some secret intercourse with the universe' (Begbie, 1957:10). Notarianni suggests that 'good art

is a catalyst for a variety of feelings and interpretations' (2013:6) and Williams identifies the sacramental quality of art, employing the material, to journey towards the spiritual (in Notarianni, 2013:7). Brokenness co-exists with wholeness held in tension by the potential of hope and restoration, (1 Chronicles 29:14TNIV) where 'tranquillity has more meaning if the hum of life is all around.' (Hyem in Worth, 2010: 153).

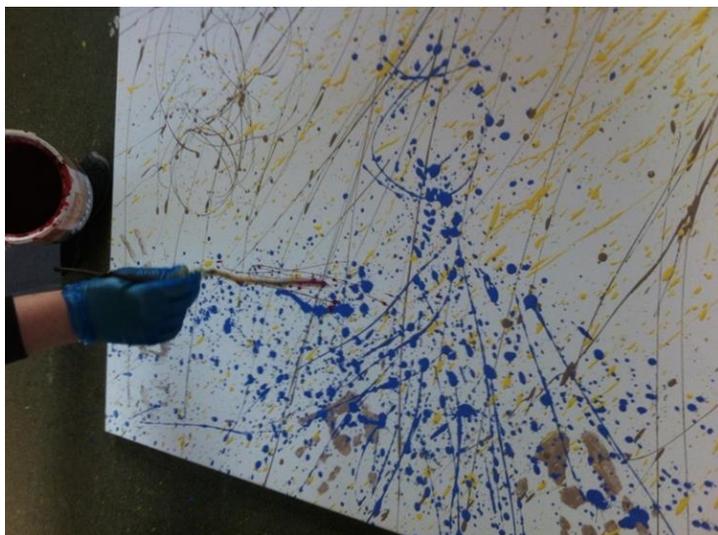
Canvas 4:layers 3



Submission to authority is something with which I am familiar serving within a church with a quasi-military structure. A feeling of surrender and submission came upon me almost in response to the light I experienced, coming naturally from a window, but created by God, spoken into being (Gen. 1:3 TNIV). I moved to the colour midnight hour, a bold blue which as a Salvationist would be understood to represent the holiness or purity of God as in our flag, a symbol and constant reminder of the Trinitarian presence (TSA, 2010:58). I started making haltering trails across the bottom of the canvas which then moved to sweeping arcs which simply finished at the mid-point of the canvas. I stayed with this motion for some time allowing the paint to fall in lines which as I stood back had created a triangular form. I was drawn back to the virgin Mary, often imagined as clothed in blue; thinking about her purity, her surrender and submission to the task that God had planned for her to do. I wondered what more God had for me to do and to be? I endeavour to serve Him as best I can, but do I surrender my will as Mary did? Am I as willing as Mary was? As I continue to

paint I experience an overwhelming desire to submit to God's authority in every area of my life. My prayer response came mirroring Mary, 'May your word to me be fulfilled' (Luke 1:38 TNIV). Am I ready for the turmoil this new-birth may bring?

Canvas 4:13

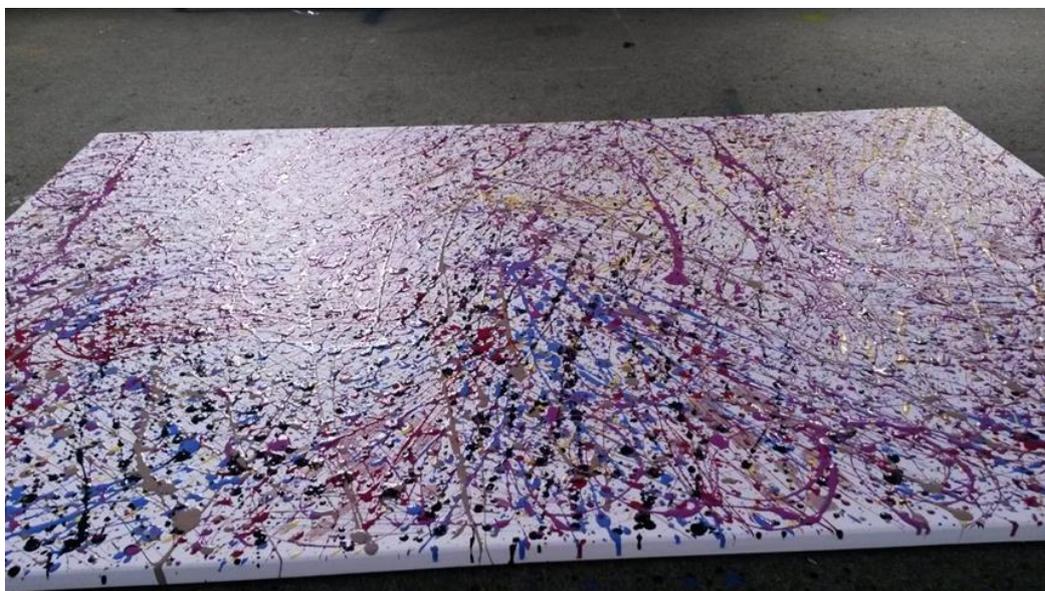


I felt myself starting to question 'But what is your word to me today?' 'What should I fulfil?' and I was left looking at what I was doing, what I was holding in my hand. I was expressing my devotion on canvas and this has to be enough; my sacrifice is what the Lord requires of me, broken and contrite (Psalm 51:17 TNIV). Where is my sacrifice? is a question I often ask as part of my spiritual formation in an attempt to keep my submissive self in check. Submission and sacrifice are not comfortable concepts for me. I am mindful of Jesus being 'born of the spirit' and the fact that I am 'washed in his blood' (Crosby in *The Salvation Army* 1986:248). I could feel the scourge of the paint in the efforts it took to move beyond the canvas in order to hit it. Sin is hard hitting and I am well aware of mine; broken again. As I reflect on the shapes I am drawn to the scripture, Isaiah 53:5 'and by his wounds we are healed' (TNIV). By his wounds I am healed; he is my *wounded healer*. I have the promise of becoming a wounded healer! Within pastoral caring Whorton warns 'there is particular power when a wounded part of ourselves meets a similar wound in the other person' (2011:5). It is important that the caring agenda is not dictated by the carer's wounds but offers support during the other's journey. As Lyall proposes, pastoral carers can permit their practice to become 'moments of ecstasies, parables

of grace' where those they accompany discover 'new perspectives' exploring 'truth about themselves and about the love of God' (Lyll 1995:15).

This inspiration drew me to reflect more deeply on the layers which now existed on my canvas, an intricate web of veins, full of feelings, beliefs and tradition which have been drawn out of me by this process of action painting. In looking at my experience, I can understand why someone might describe Pollock's work 'like being hit over the head with a sledge hammer' (Neiman 2000. in Harrison 2000:195). An action painting is like taking the internal emotional organs of a person and laying them on the canvas to be examined. Like a post-mortem what comes out can be messy, mixed up, jumbled, diseased, enlarged, enflamed or entirely normal. Unlike a post-mortem this process is happening in real time, the present, a gift and reminder that this is a 'living human document' (Boisen in Lyll, 2001:55). In addition it speaks to me of the priority of the viewer, 'The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart' (1 Samuel 16:7). To some my heart may appear chaotic, but to me it makes perfect sense.

Canvas 4: texture



Light is a vital element, both within creation and in living. Even the smallest light can radiate enough power to illuminate the darkness. As a Christian I am called to 'let my light shine before others' (Matt. 5:16 TNIV) because 'if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on

you' (Luke 11:36 TNIV). The space in which I was making this painted journey had no electricity or running water; it was a storage place, a holding place, room for maintenance. I yearned for more light which suddenly blazed through one window, spotlighting the action. The lightness in my spirit and the sense of joy which welled up inside me and radiated out, I could not explain. I was drawn to the light and positioned myself to receive it conducting a thankful cadence of delight in yellow paint which moved its way across the whole canvas. For a Salvationist, yellow is included in our flag as representing the fire of the Holy Spirit and the burning enthusiasm and warmth which welled up inside me became clear as the glory of the Lord shone through (Luke 2:9 TNIV). My reflections imagined the shepherds on the hillside, in the midst of the ordinary being visited by the angelic hosts, (Luke 2:13 TNIV) yet whilst they trembled in fear I had a boldness which grew with every beam and glow which shot out from the end of the stick. I had moved from creating in the earth to the exclamation 'Let there be light', and there was light (Gen. 1:3 TNIV). The sweeping rays of colour did not reach every path across the canvas, despite my best efforts and energy. Within my ministry I am called to dark places as a bringer of hope and light (Ephesians 5:8 TNIV). Light creates depth; it permitted me to see below the surface.

Canvas 4:9



The surface itself is noteworthy; Am I a blank canvas? I'm not sure; I am more than nothing or absence. Yet 'the contemporary artist begins with nothingness.'

(Rosenber in Potter 1987:118). Updike suggests religion empowers us to ignore it (in Appleyard 2014:7). Am I empty and available, waiting to be filled? Yes, I believe in a sense this is true, but not entirely. What I know and recognise is I am ready as 'imagination is the language of the soul,' (Whorton, 2011:11) and Art is its wake up call (Appleyard 2014:6). The surface is more than just the bearer of my soul, but of itself, laid bare in places, devoid of paint where space, light and void are apparent. Internally an action painting dialogue should form a process whereby 'a state of grace' exists (Rosenberg 1967 in Harrison, 2000:130). I experienced the integration of my artistic self as painter, dancer, pray-er and linguist; a holy state which is a beautiful and blessed experience. A transfiguration which calls for lingering, yet coupled with a reality which draws me back down to earth (Mark 9:2-10 TNIV). The post experience reflection likened to the drain or outpouring of the most profound sermon suggests this to be true. The nuanced layers, a tirade of emotions embraced by the canvas and beyond. The flatness of the surface is mirrored in the flatness of emotion once the experience has passed. This leads me to believe that to engage in such practice on a regular basis would be helpful as both a continuation of the dialogue, an opportunity to reframe the present and re-orientate the future. Longeran acknowledges 'an invariable movement within human consciousness' starting with experience which then purposefully shifts from longing to understanding, resulting in change (in Sheldrake 2004:66). As for this being a self-indulgent adventure symptomatic of 'the narcissistic spirit of the age masquerading as reflective practice,' the answer may be found in the question as to whether such exploration removes you from others, isolated within the self, or if it liberates you to more effective caring? (Whorton, 2011:10)

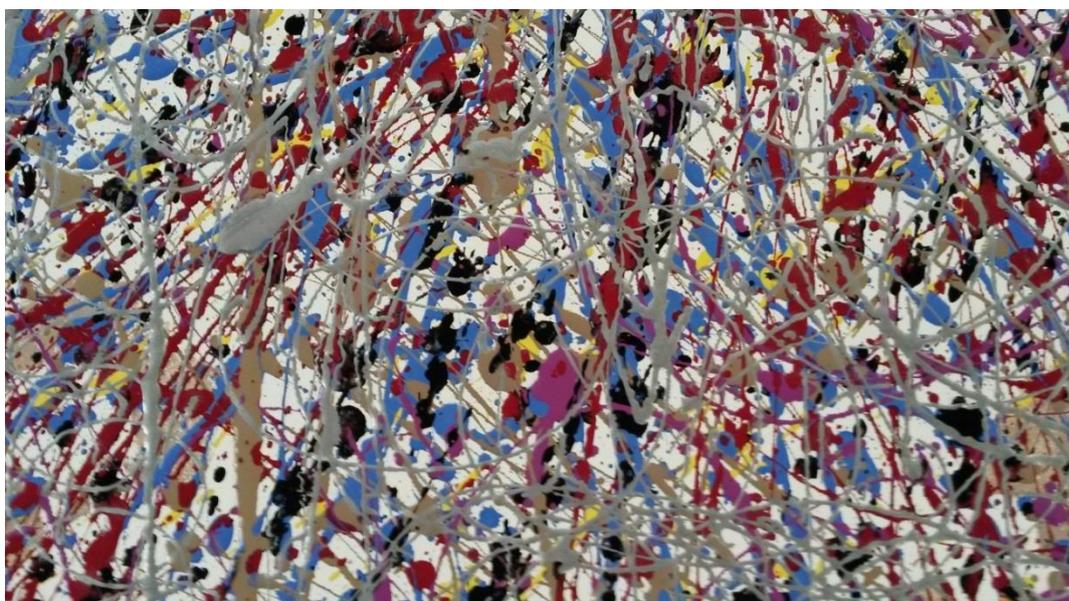
There is still a definite element missing within this work I feel something more is coming out, not bursting forth or splurting out in dribs and drabs but steadily rising within me; gently, but firmly, positively shimmering. Like the weft and warp of the canvas create the foundational surface on which to lay out my visible self, I have the recognition that I am being covered, surrounded, protected and sheltered by an even stronger thread. Turner suggests Christianity as a 'spiritual relationship' can only take effect in our ministry as it permeates our living (2001:128). I choose the silver metallic paint and begin to move quietly around the canvas twirling and refining, looping and gliding effortlessly over the veins creating a covering of something more

permanent. I know and witness the binding and restoration of all the elements of my canvas as the silver gilds what has already been created. My basest self, made the best self I can be. 'Breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure, until with Thee I will one will, to do and to endure' (Hatch in *The Salvation Army* 1986:155). I know who and whose I am and it is as if all that has gone before has been taken into account and connected together; not blended or watered down but overlaid and strengthened all over, gilded and precious.

Canvas 4:complete?



Canvas 4:section



As I walk away from the canvas I notice something on the floor which must have been there each time I have worked in this studio for the past weeks, although I cleaned it and risk assessed the area thoroughly. I decided to add it to the image as I recognised its significance and it brings me full circle; Jesus nailed it!

‘You should treat artworks like quasi-subjects: they should be met with the care with which you meet people. They are ‘people-made’, somebody spilled their life and guts in fashioning them, and you can detect in the piece, in between the lines, what made those persons tick, what they stood for and, if it is deep art maybe, what they would die for.’ (Duffrenne 1973:146, 196, 392-98 in Seerveld 2000:16)

Canvas 4:nail



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