

## Supporting Material

Reflections on the frame: medium and process

By Amy Owen

### FRAME

In both the practices of film and painting the frame is a common structural component which creates a boundary or edge between the physical space and the image.

The frame can be physically visible or invisible. The decorative surround added to an artwork once finished, as a means of display, creating a physical addition to the picture. The frame or stretcher behind the material canvas, creating a support. Or the edge of a projected image, creating a frame by forming a break between the reflected light of an image.

There is a completeness, a finality, to the frame, what is enclosed within its boundaries is the whole picture as the artist intended it to be viewed. There is an element of speculation surrounding what goes beyond, behind, before the edge of the picture.

In film, the moving image allows the artist to transport the viewer from scene to scene with multiple view points and voices, creating a narrative. Each scene is captured and enclosed through the process of selection and framing in the initial moment and then further cropping at the editing stages before the footage is projected onto a screen or displayed on a monitor.

In painting the canvas and stretcher are used as the frame, the base, the structure, the foundation, the support to be marked and scored with the colour and line. The assembled components create a surface to be applied to. The fluidity of the medium is held together on the material support.

There is a process of removal in both practices by the intentional use of the frame to fragment, interrupt, divide, split, separate, provide an edge, an interval, a boundary, confine the excesses.

The confinements of the frame are a prerequisite of the medium, a process of selection by the artist. The canvas suggests an empty field, open to possibilities. There is a conflict of interest between the terms; support verses boundary, one to enhance and one to confine.

Both mediums are similar in how the work is translated on a flat plane. The perception of the viewer is controlled; where they stand and what they see, what information is available to them and the point at which they fill in the gaps beyond and in between the scenes and images.

The frame is rigid and specific, but the medium within it, applied to it, projected on it, is more fluid and abstract in its process of production from source to outcome.

### MEDIUM, n.

II 4.b. Chiefly in medium of exchange: anything commonly agreed as a token of value and used in transactions in trading systems (as a medium of circulation, circulating medium)

II 4.c. ... any raw material or mode of expression used in an artistic or creative way.

II 4.d. A channel of mass communication, as newspapers, radio, television, etc.; Freq. in pl. as in media.

(Armstrong, C. 2013:123)

In the classifications used to support Armstrong's discussion around painting and photography, medium in its raw state is linked to the physical material, but the term also implies communication and transaction. The multiplicity of the definitions signifies the diversity of a medium's applications.

Artists are frequently defined by their chosen medium; painter, sculptor, filmmaker. This specificity is used to anchor to a way of working, to give an identity to an artist's practice.

To be specific within a chosen medium would suggest that exchange does not take place. It would confine an artist's practice within one way of working, researching, gathering ideas. Like the frame's enclosure, rigidity in medium creates a border closed off from other inputs. In reality it is impossible for an artist to be oblivious to external influences and alternate mediums. The artist's frame of reference is always stimulated by the surrounding world.

no medium is singular or autonomous: by definition mediums are go-betweens.  
(Armstrong, C. 2013:124)

Painting and film are 'optical experiences: whether that be static or kinetic' (Moholy-Nagy, L. 1969:124) and each of these properties creates possibilities for a process of conversion between the two. Between the static and kinetic, there are moments of motion and action and moments to pause and reflect. Film creates movement within the confinement of the frame, whereas the frame captures the movement of a painter within its boundary and surface. As with the definition of the frame there is a conflict in defining how the frame is utilized with different mediums.

To create a hybrid between the mediums of film and painting is to allow for both the static and kinetic state to inform each other, to create a process of interaction between the ideas attempting to be communicated through both optical experiences. The viewer's perception is altered dependent on the kinetic or static state of the medium. The frame dictates a specific view point for the audience, however, the direction of the gaze follows the medium and is kinetic in itself. The eye moves around the painting, attempting to take it in as a whole. Or, it follows the kinetic movements of a film, attempting to keep up with the narrative from scene to scene. The visual perspective is free to go beyond the fixed frame.

## PROCESS

In Supporting Material, the practices of painting and film are not kept separate. Both Amanda Loomes and Ian Parker traverse the two mediums, they are not specific or confined. The open nature of the research process running alongside their independent work highlights the divergences between painting and film.

Loomes is a filmmaker and Parker a painter, and these definitions are explored throughout the work exhibited, in a discussion surrounding the frame and canvas. As a process of collaboration during the research for the exhibition the pair exchanged artworks, found objects, texts, images and film clips. The interaction provided a way of communicating their developing ideas as they occurred within the progression of their individual practices. The process allowed for exchange and response, to share points of interest and commonalities and to encourage extensions within specific mediums.

Through the repeated process of production – response – production, connections are made over time. Time is used to exchange, interpret and further unpick unresolved ideas and ways of working. Removal from the initial material as it is received in a new space and context, allowing for new external influences and ideas to inform a response. The process allows for communication and interaction between the artists where individual practices can be isolating. There is dualism to the process, a parallel continuation of reflection and response, circulating, back and forth.

Through the process of exchange Loomes and Parker undertake, the linear system of an individual practice is undone as the mediums start to overlap between the artists and collaborate, with the commonality of the final state within the flat plane and frame.

This collaborative process acts as the support behind each individual's practice. The process is in one way communicative and in another way silent. The exchange acts as the conversation between two artists and two mediums as it travels and is received in a new context and time. The outcomes are open to

interpretation and response because of these variables.

The slippages between the research process and practice overlap in a way that is only possible through the multiplicity of mediums. Each artist is subjective in their interpretation and responses; the collaborations are framed by a fixed viewpoint.

## RESOLUTIONS

Supporting Material marks a pause in both Loomes and Parker's practices. A predetermined marked point in time where the process and transaction of ideas is paused for reflection from an outside audience, but ready to resume, another strand to the collaborative process.

Through the development of work for the exhibition and the process of communication and transaction undertaken by the artists, more possibilities and extensions to their ideas and ways of working have opened up. The process is never linear and therefore cannot reach a finality.

Instead the exhibition is a point where the practices of Loomes and Parker meet and are viewed together for the first time throughout the process of exchange, in a public space. The supporting material developed through the process does not sit outside of the exhibition as preliminary research. It is playful and abstracted, creating connections and slippages between the two practices and the meanderings of idea and production.

With the introduction of the viewer in the public domain comes the limitless possibilities of perception. The frame of reference of the artist is open to the subjectivities of the external context, as control of interpretation is relinquished from artist to audience. A further extension of the conversation.

Through the collaborative process of exchange the mediums of painting and film are unspecified to artist and to practice, the boundaries and borders are removed and then reformed at this point of momentary resolve within the exhibition context. The frame no longer holding onto its rigidity and fixities because of the multiplicity of mediums and exchange.

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## REFERENCES

- Armstrong, C. (2013) *Painting Photography Painting: Timelines and Medium Specificities*
- Moholy-Nagy, L. (1969) *Painting Photography Film* London: Lund Humphries.