The Impact of Studio Space on Creativity and its Implications for Artistic Practice

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A thesis submitted to the University of Sheffield

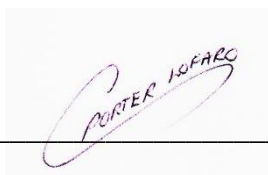for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education

December 2016

DECLARATION

I, Christine Porter Lofaro confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signature: _____

Date: 8th December, 2016

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between the physical space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practices – namely the art production triad. Moreover, the study sought to elicit what meanings artists and art students attach to the space or environment in which they work. Furthermore, this research explored how the affordance of a space might contribute to the creative process of artists and art students.

The study adopted a qualitative approach. It analysed seven in-depth interviews with artists, as well as informal conversations with, and observation of, a group of art students at secondary level, which spanned over four weeks. In addition, plan drawings obtained from the students were also analysed.

This research has reaffirmed that the art production triad bears complexity and that many different processes are at play simultaneously. Nonetheless, a number of findings have shown that the affordance of space contributes to the creative process of people engaging in art practices. This was particularly observed during the 'doing' phase of the artistic process. The 'thinking' phase seems to draw more on external spaces and locations. Furthermore, understanding the notion of encountering might yield important benefits for the creative process. The art production triad is assumed to comprise an interplay of different elements performing concurrently, such as: materials and tools; the artist's own performance; tacit knowledge; and the physical aspect of studios. Building on existing literature, this research has located the need for policy makers, school leaders and educators to recognise and better grasp the potential of art rooms and art spaces.

KEY WORDS: space, place, creativity, artistic practice, inspiration, material thinking, affordance, experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To

Chris, Mum and Dad

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APA	American Psychological Association
CABE	Commission for Architecture and Built Environment
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IWB	Interactive whiteboard
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
RQ	Research question
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
WB	Whiteboard

VIGNETTES – OBSERVATIONS OF PRACTICE

6th October 2010

During a lesson with one class of art-option students, we were trying to set up different still-life arrangements and the students were trying to come up with different and interesting compositions. Some groups were organising set-ups according to a particular theme, while other groups based their arrangements on colour or textural unity. It was interesting to observe one particular group as they were trying to find a solution to a small problem. They had chosen the theme of 'the arts' so they had musical instruments, ballet shoes and paint tubes, amongst other objects. They couldn't find a way to make the violin stand. The members of the group were trying to find some kind of stand or box for this purpose. One student was looking around the room and found an empty corner where they could make the violin stand upright, and so they organised the other objects around it. In general, this particular student is very practical and I asked her about this great idea of changing the location of the still life to their advantage rather than looking for a stand. She replied that a room is full of possibilities. The more objects it has the more possibilities there are. She added that you can always use your surroundings to find solutions to your problems. She also expressed that she would feel stuck in a completely bare room. For her it meant fewer possibilities.

Figure 1.1 Vignette: Observation of practice – art option lesson with secondary students, Reflective Diary, 6th October 2010
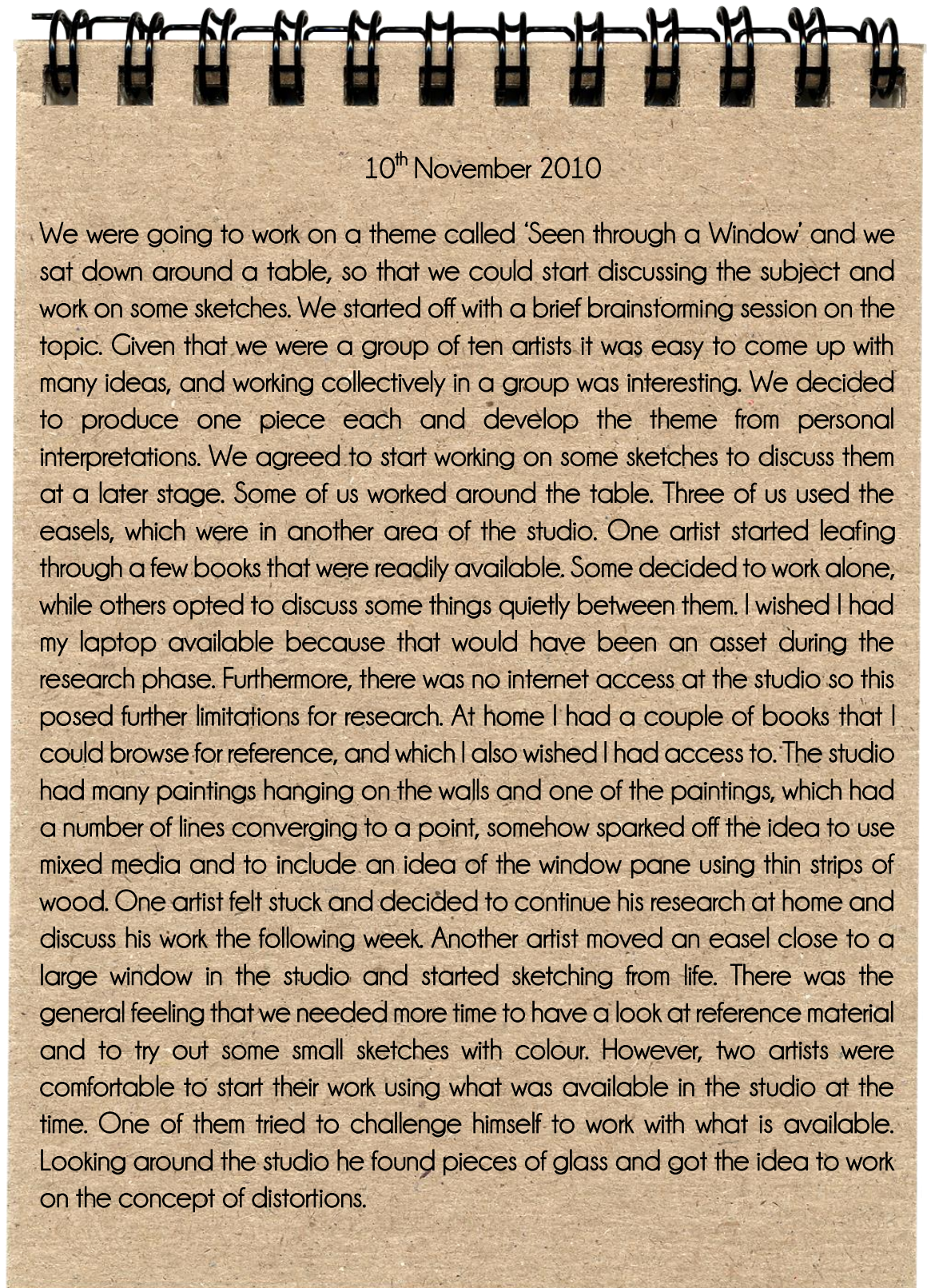
10th November 2010

We were going to work on a theme called 'Seen through a Window' and we sat down around a table, so that we could start discussing the subject and work on some sketches. We started off with a brief brainstorming session on the topic. Given that we were a group of ten artists it was easy to come up with many ideas, and working collectively in a group was interesting. We decided to produce one piece each and develop the theme from personal interpretations. We agreed to start working on some sketches to discuss them at a later stage. Some of us worked around the table. Three of us used the easels, which were in another area of the studio. One artist started leafing through a few books that were readily available. Some decided to work alone, while others opted to discuss some things quietly between them. I wished I had my laptop available because that would have been an asset during the research phase. Furthermore, there was no internet access at the studio so this posed further limitations for research. At home I had a couple of books that I could browse for reference, and which I also wished I had access to. The studio had many paintings hanging on the walls and one of the paintings, which had a number of lines converging to a point, somehow sparked off the idea to use mixed media and to include an idea of the window pane using thin strips of wood. One artist felt stuck and decided to continue his research at home and discuss his work the following week. Another artist moved an easel close to a large window in the studio and started sketching from life. There was the general feeling that we needed more time to have a look at reference material and to try out some small sketches with colour. However, two artists were comfortable to start their work using what was available in the studio at the time. One of them tried to challenge himself to work with what is available. Looking around the studio he found pieces of glass and got the idea to work on the concept of distortions.

Figure 1.2 Vignette: Observation of practice – weekly group studio practice, Reflective Diary, 10th November 2010.
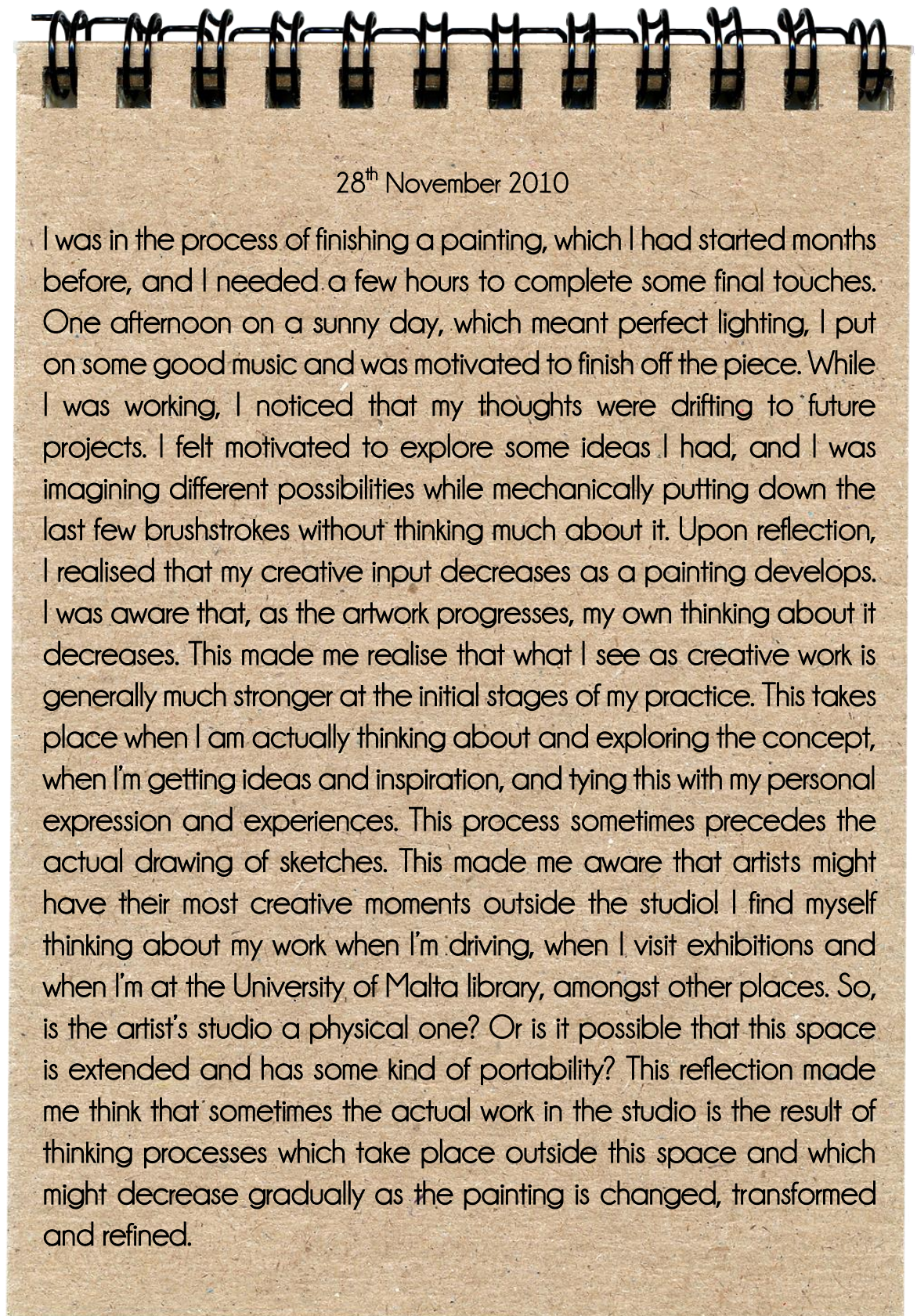
28th November 2010

I was in the process of finishing a painting, which I had started months before, and I needed a few hours to complete some final touches. One afternoon on a sunny day, which meant perfect lighting, I put on some good music and was motivated to finish off the piece. While I was working, I noticed that my thoughts were drifting to future projects. I felt motivated to explore some ideas I had, and I was imagining different possibilities while mechanically putting down the last few brushstrokes without thinking much about it. Upon reflection, I realised that my creative input decreases as a painting develops. I was aware that, as the artwork progresses, my own thinking about it decreases. This made me realise that what I see as creative work is generally much stronger at the initial stages of my practice. This takes place when I am actually thinking about and exploring the concept, when I'm getting ideas and inspiration, and tying this with my personal expression and experiences. This process sometimes precedes the actual drawing of sketches. This made me aware that artists might have their most creative moments outside the studio! I find myself thinking about my work when I'm driving, when I visit exhibitions and when I'm at the University of Malta library, amongst other places. So, is the artist's studio a physical one? Or is it possible that this space is extended and has some kind of portability? This reflection made me think that sometimes the actual work in the studio is the result of thinking processes which take place outside this space and which might decrease gradually as the painting is changed, transformed and refined.

Figure 1.3 Vignette: Observation of practice – personal studio practice, Reflective Diary, 28th November 2010.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Thesis motivation**

The aim of this thesis was to understand the relationship between the physical space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practices. Space and creativity were explored in relation to the making of art. The links and tensions between these three variables – namely, space, creativity and the making of art – which I have described as the 'art-production triad' (see Section 1.5.6), are framed around abstract and intangible underpinnings. In this study, I attempted to untangle some of these constructions in an endeavour to shed light on these abstract notions and their connectedness.

In the literature consulted, research on space, creativity, and also on artistic practice has become extensive. In spite of this there is a gap in the literature that aims to bring together and also investigates these three spheres and their mutual relationship. As will be demonstrated in the literature review (Chapter 2) it is highly beneficial to explore this area of research in order to understand more clearly how people engaging in artistic practice make sense of the physical space they work in as part of the multidimensional process of their practice. During the distinctive activities of making art, physical spaces become an integral part of the flexible and dynamic interplay that takes place. Thus, understanding this relationship in the context of art education and also in that of artists' practice contributes to both fields. In light of this, the present research has aimed at reflecting upon the ways in which schools evaluate and make choices about spaces, and how these are allocated. Building on existing literature (see Chapter 2), this research has located the need for policy makers, school leaders and educators to recognize and understand more the potential of art rooms.

Furthermore, the study I proposed is based on the premise that creativity is viewed as an important ingredient in different fields and research areas (see Section 1.1.1). This recognition is also echoed in the current educational and cultural policies in Malta. Given that the study carried out in this thesis is based in Malta, the outcomes of this study are also a contribution to the local scene. Alongside the increasing importance that is assigned to creativity, the study of physical spaces has been gaining attention. This is especially so due to several regeneration projects in different locales and

through restoration works, which have brought about the revival of many historical and valued places. The above setting, coupled with my interest and background in art (see Section 1.3), situate the study I proposed.

1.1.1 Creativity in education and the economic future

In this study I have presented creativity as a contested term, which has been shaped by different discourses that have affected how the term is understood by different people (see Chapter 2). This section draws on some of these different discourses in the process of displaying creativity as an important ingredient in education, and today's society in general. This is one particular viewpoint of the term, and endorses some of the common contemporary stances that the main educational and social policies have been seeking to address, namely that creativity is an essential part of education and the ever-changing economic climate (National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2012; National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE), 1999; National Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries - Malta).

An effort to understand the meaning of creativity has been made since the earliest civilisations (Albert & Runco, 1999). As studies on creativity have progressed, an increasing list of traits have been associated with the term, also allowing a space for a parallel list of myths to develop. To mention a few, creativity has been linked with lack of discipline, perceived to belong to a few gifted individuals, and has been solely related to the creative arts (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Regardless of the clear disparity between the positive and undesirable connotations many authors, particularly in the field of education (Kelly, 2005; Fisher, 2004; Cropley, 2001; Craft, 2000; Amabile, 1996), have argued in favour of employing creative measures on an individual, as well as on a more generic level. Robinson (2011) has taken this a step further by underlining the importance of creativity in meeting the demands of today's constant change, as well as challenges. It would be beneficial to build an understanding of what improves or hinders an individual's creative potential, and the factors that might affect this, have been studied by different authors across different domains (Jones, 2009; Craft, 2000; Nickerson, 1999; Weisberg, 1999; Amabile, 1996; Csikzentmihalyi, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 1996).

If simplifying and grouping the main types of studies on creativity the most common would be the following: (1) studies related to defining and understanding the concept,

(2) studies related to the measurement of creativity, (3) studies that tackle how creativity could be learned and nurtured, and finally (4) studies that explore what might affect and influence the concept. Due to the different discourses, the literature on creativity crosses many fields and is often multi-disciplinary in nature. The studies that have been most beneficial for the purpose of this thesis were those related to defining the term and, in addition, those studies that investigate which external factors might heighten or impede creative potential. Within the latter position of research, this study has been particularly concerned with how physical space, as one factor, might shape an individual's creative potential. Existing studies that examine the role of the physical space vis-à-vis the creative process tend to focus, although not exclusively, on organisational creativity, and how this relation is understood and supported within business and organisational domains. The study I proposed allocates its focus on practicing artists and their studios, as well as on art students and their art room at school. It attempts to address the gap relating to studies that link the physical space (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991; Tuan, 1974) and the creative process (Robinson, 2011; Sternberg, 1999; Wallas, 1926), with particular reference to art studios and art rooms (Sjöholm, 2013; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Davidts & Paice, 2009; Buren, 1983). Its contribution to the artistic and educational fields lies in the fact that it explores these disciplines alongside a notion, namely creativity, which is very much looked into in other areas of research. More so, the physical space is very often taken for granted and regarded as an obvious, but simultaneously unobtrusive, detail. Artists and art students are unlikely to disengage themselves from the physical space they work in and, since this becomes an evident constituent of their practice, it would be highly beneficial to explore it particularly, as is the case of this study, in light of creativity. It is generally presumed that art production hosts some degree of creativity as, according to a number of authors (Alperson, 2003; Bertinetto, 2011; Feist, 1999), this is its most obvious form. Therefore, it was deemed meaningful to explore the two components, that is, physical space and creativity, against and alongside each other. As a consequence, this research seeks to inform and inspire art education and art practices.

1.1.2 Practicing artists and young people studying art

This research explored the perceptions of both practicing artists and young students studying art. The former group is typically associated with studio spaces and the latter group with art rooms in schools. Throughout the research, I have been aware and

acknowledged that both groups are influenced and affected by different experiences, motivations, necessities and priorities. Their reasons for making art differ from each other and these different perspectives have been viewed to add valuable insights to this particular investigation. Since this study has considered art practices as spatial, the decision to explore both the studio and the art room as two places where particular modes of spatial practice occur was believed to present a broader outlook. It was also deemed useful to look at both groups because the experiences they encountered were very different, nevertheless both outcomes from the two parts of the study could potentially construct insights that inform art practice and education. In these two settings, the artists have more command on what they do with their own art spaces and, given their experience with studios, much could be learned from the way they relate to their space. On the other hand, although art students could be very sensitive to their space in schools, it is very often the case that they have limited control over these spaces since these are often managed by other individuals. Therefore, the combined input of both groups has served to provide a richer understanding of artistic spaces. An additional ascribed value would be that insights from these two groups could inform and inspire stakeholders in an educational context to plan, organise and maintain the appropriate spaces for students. Furthermore, with particular reference to the young people's art education, exploring both perspectives might also inform their process of becoming artists. Finally, my own interest and experience of working in studios and also in art rooms has motived me to study the perceptions of both artists and art students.

1.2 Research questions

Research (Edwards, 2003; Epstein & Seldin, 2003, Williams & Yang, 1999; Amabile, 1998, 1988) has shown that physical surroundings in both educational and organisational settings could influence creativity, productivity, the mood and overall performance of people. Based on this and the number of points discussed above, this research was set out to answer the question (RQ1):

What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

The present gap in the literature for research that brings together the three spheres of space, creativity and the artistic process, has been a strong influence and motivation towards exploring this specific relationship. This has led me to form the overarching

research question above. Furthermore, the decision to study creativity was supported by the varied body of literature that demonstrates its importance within an educational setting. In addition, my personal interest stemming from my work as a practising artist and art teacher (see Section 1.3) has led me to form a number of questions around the subjects of space and creativity. Following the solidification of these ongoing ideas and how these are situated in the existing literature, a set of research questions – which this study aimed to answer – has been formed. As a result, and in addition to the overarching question (RQ1) the sub-questions below (RQ2-4) form the basis of this inquiry. In fact, the research design was set in a way to address them.

RQ2 – What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?

RQ3 – How do art students relate to the space or environment around them in the art room?

RQ4 – How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?

In view of the above research questions, this study has proposed to investigate the role that certain components of the physical environment may have in the creative process of people engaging in artistic production. The focus of this study was to understand the relationship between art spaces and creativity of individuals, and it has aimed at doing so by examining what meaning artists attach to the space and environment they work in. Furthermore, the question of how art students may relate to their school environment was also explored. In addition, another question explores the role of the creative process as a mode of the spatial practice that occurs in studios and art rooms. The set of research questions has been formulated in an attempt to understand more clearly the relationship between practice and the physical environment. These questions have steered the study in the direction of understanding what implications this particular focus would have on art education and practice.

This research made no attempt to focus directly on the teaching and learning of art, and how this might be affected by the physical environment of studios and art rooms. Furthermore, it has neither examined how the physical environment might affect creativity in the teaching and learning of other subjects, nor attempted to measure creativity in any form of quantifiable degree. The main aim of this study was to provide an understanding of how artists and art students may relate to the physical space around them in the course of their artistic production, and how this space might have an

influence (or not) on their own creative process. It has considered art practices as spatial, and explored the studio and the art room as two specific places where particular modes of the spatial practice occur. It has been purposely determined to solely address the creative process of people making art rather than the output. Nonetheless, in investigating the creative process it is being understood that the creative output was also directly or indirectly concerned in the study, but the creative output was not the main concern. This aspect was only considered in relation to an analysis of the process. Furthermore, this study was set out as an open-ended investigation. The nature of the questions put forward is very exploratory and these were set apart from any set hypothesis to be proven or disproved.

1.3 Positionality

In this section I will discuss my own positionality and how my thesis is located at a point that reflects my work experiences, background and personal interests. The subsequent section will then discuss how I approached my research, following a development in thought and perspective.

1.3.1 Background – previous research and work

In my previous study on creativity, which I have carried out in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a master's degree in creativity and innovation, I had been introduced to a number of factors that might have an effect on creativity. In the process, I have become extremely intrigued about the relationship between physical spaces and creativity, and was drawn towards exploring it further. Individuals are exposed to different spaces and different environments and I have always questioned whether any modifications to such places would somehow affect their creative efforts.

I have given this relation between space and creativity much consideration, both during my work as a teacher at a girls' school and also during my practice as an artist. Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 feature three vignettes of practice that present excerpts from a reflective diary that I started compiling upon beginning my research. Over a period of a couple of months, I noted the instances where space was examined or reflected upon by me and by others. I also observed how people interacted with space in certain situations. My observations were situated within practice, and these reflect the nature of this thesis, in that it sought to explore what takes place within practice. These observations have

been significant in reflecting upon the art-production triad (see Section 1.5.6) in related settings.

I have been teaching art at secondary level for the past thirteen years, and for the last four years I have also taken on a lecturing role at a local college and at the University of Malta. Hence, over the years, I have worked in different allocated spaces. The work space I used for some years has been a very small art room which was not planned to meet this purpose when it was designed. It forms part of an old section of the school building. As a result of the small dimensions of the room and the restricting structure of the building, students have to share tables and there is no space for a fixed projector or to set up still-life arrangements. Storing supplies and drying artworks became very challenging tasks. On a day-to-day basis I have been struggling with this issue of space and it provided me with a context on which to reflect. Additionally, the staff room where I currently spend my non-teaching periods also presented me with points to reflect upon. Day after day, I faced a number of issues that seemed to point to the way space was arranged and how the environment was created. The room is extremely small for the number of people who use it and it is highly unconducive to work. At different points during the day it becomes extremely noisy and, since the tables are often used for storage, the worktop space is practically non-existent most of the time. Experiencing similar outlooks, a number of colleagues have opted to try to find an alternative space around the school where they could carry out their work. Using these two spaces has presented me with significant opportunities to contemplate the space I use and its implications for practice.

Having the possibility to reflect on space and creativity, and to understand the relationship between these two within the context of practice, has given me some insight on what meaning I attach to the spaces I use on a daily basis. Furthermore, I also believe that, as a teacher and lecturer, I could create more awareness amongst young and older students on the importance of the relationship between space and creativity within practice.

1.3.2 Studying art in Malta

This thesis has been written from the position that studying art in Malta might reflect a number of different practices and systems when compared to teaching art in other countries, particularly in the UK. Although Malta has been influenced by the latest developments in art that are steered towards a more conceptual nature, art education, here, might still be partly embedded in the traditional approach. The main exams (O Level and A Level) taken by students focus on traditional skills in art, and therefore art courses designed to prepare students for their exams do not focus extensively on conceptual art. The Malta Government School of Art is still based on a traditional way of teaching art, in that students study drawing, painting and sculpture in a conventional manner focusing on established artistic skills and practices. Nonetheless, at university level, Maltese students find more options to engage with conceptual art and more progressive forms of art.

This situation inevitably affects the way I perceive art in this thesis. Hence, in this research, there is a focus on artistic skills and techniques that are mainly traditional in nature. This does not mean that other forms of art that are less traditional are not given their due importance. It simply engages with art which is focused on traditional techniques and skills, given the Maltese scenario. The students of art who participated in this study are part of this system, and the majority of the participating artists are also coming from this system. Therefore, they engage more closely with traditional methods of making art.

1.4 Approaching my research

As discussed in the previous sections, this study has explored the relationship between space and creativity, particularly in settings involving artists and their studios, as well as art students in schools. The nature of the questions being explored relate, to a certain degree, to abstract notions. This is so because space in itself, although it could be physical, has deeper links with the abstract. Creativity is also a term which bears some association with the intangible. In my study, both these two elements – space and creativity – are explored in relation to the making of art, which although is an actual tangible process, it may involve complex dynamics relating to ideas, thoughts, concepts, and dealing with uncertainty. Thus, the links and the tensions between these three variables, namely, space, creativity and the making of art, which I have described

as the art-production triad (see Section 1.5.6), are framed around abstract and intangible underpinnings.

My initial response to the questions surrounding my research was to embark on a quest towards the 'absolute'. My journey had started by thinking in the fixed, in the definite, in the certain. I had started thinking in terms of right and factual answers. Given that my research background was influenced by methods and approaches prominent in the domain of psychology, my original reaction was to try to understand creativity through methods conducive to measurement and perhaps exact definitions. It was then that, with the guidance of my supervisor, I had started to develop a sense that there is an additional dimension to this view. How could subjects as broad and multifaceted as the art-production triad be reduced to merely fixed answers or rigid measurements? Furthermore, how could the relative relationship between these three variables be diluted to strands of fixed responses or descriptions, when there are so many layers to each of their meanings? In no way does this study disregard the above methodologies, which have been adopted in the works of leading authors on creativity (Runco, 1987; Torrance, 1974). However, I have considered a different position which focused on communicating and recounting the human experience. This study was based on more social and practice-based disciplines. I have also drawn on philosophy and geography, both of which presented me with a new direction given my background in psychology. Although no method is more prominent than another, I have mainly drawn on the disciplines of cultural geography, philosophy, creativity, art education, arts practice and anthropology.

1.4.1 Choosing the methodology

The multidimensionality of the subjects involved determined the nature and approach of this particular study. By considering the multi-layered qualities of the art-production triad, together with the fact that human activity is at the core of this relationship, different research approaches started to become more meaningful and evocative. Since this research centres on artists, as well as art students, and their artistic practices, it has placed the inquiry at a position where the human experience and reflections upon it are a primary concern. In order to understand these unique experiences of artists and students, the inquiry borrows methods from the ethnographic paradigm, together with visual methods from arts practice. I have turned to these processes, as they seemed to best reflect where my study is situated. This study draws on elements from

ethnography, such as writings and descriptions of people and culture through methods of observation (Ellis, 2004) and also through in-depth interviews. It also elicits the views of young people in terms of their environment (Rose, 2012), together with observations and informal conversations.

The study set out to include two distinct parts (for a detailed rationale see Chapter 3). The first part consisted of in-depth interviews with seven artists. These were chosen through snowball sampling. The second part of the study involved observations and conversations with a group of seven art students at secondary level. The students also presented plan drawings of their ideal art room, which were later analysed. The boys' school was chosen through convenience sampling. As discussed earlier in this chapter this two-way nature of the research approach reflects the aim to draw on two distinct groups and superimpose the insights elicited from their respective experiences within artistic spaces.

1.4.2 Art as a way of knowing

The two parts of the study are based on the notion that reflecting on practice and using art as a means to understand experience would lead to new knowledge. This takes form in the relationship between experience, practice and knowledge: namely, the aesthetic experience (Shusterman, 1992). Predominant educational theorists, such as John Dewey (1934), Elliot Eisner (2002) and Maxine Greene (1995) encourage arts-based inquiry as a way to expand learning and educational research. The latter two were influenced by the work of Dewey. Research that draws on lived experience, and engages with materials and objects, provides an alternative mode of knowledge production when compared with a more science-based approach. This type of approach acknowledges that knowledge, and the situations and experience in which it is used, cannot be separated. This makes situated inquiry as that inquiry which brings together problem, context and solution (Barrett, 2007).

1.4.3 A Relationship between topic, theoretical frames and methodology

As has been mentioned earlier, this study has stemmed from the aim to lessen the gap in the literature that seeks to bring together the study of physical spaces, creativity and the artistic process. Building on existing literature and theories on space, creativity as well as artistic practice, this research has used a number of theoretical frames that

served as a lens in order to explore and understand the topic under study. These have been employed in view of the fact that they particularly view spaces as processes. Moreover, these theoretical frames position art practices as spatial in that the activities of art are multi-layered and situated. Moreover, theoretical frames on creativity position the term as constructed. The methodology selected for this research was designed to reflect the focus on the experience of artists and students, and the meanings they define concerning their practice.

1.5 Key terms as used in this thesis

The following terms are explained according to the way they were used in this thesis. These do not serve as definitions of the terms but as a way to clarify what is meant by the terms as to how they are used in this research. Most of these are later discussed extensively in the literature review. The way the terms are presented in this section is also informed by the literature review.

1.5.1 Space and environment

In this thesis, I have made a distinction between the terms 'space' and 'environment', as they were not considered synonymous in this context. References to the term 'space' have represented tangible physical spaces. These could range from familiar inhabited spaces to anonymous undetermined spaces. The strongest overtone of the term 'space' as used in this study was that of a physical surrounding. Successively, the use of the term 'environment' pertains to those sensory and recognisable qualities that make a space acquire a particular feeling. This has addressed the human-experience dimension of a space.

1.5.2 Place

In this thesis, the term 'place' refers to a space that has become meaningful. Places are lived-in or experienced by individuals and are not anonymous.

1.5.3 Creative process

The creative process is that process associated with thinking and the generation of ideas. In the context of this study, the creative process refers to any process in the making of an art work that is related to the generation of the concept, and the development of ideas that form the basis of the work.

1.5.4 Studio practice

Studio practice is the activity performed by the artist in relation to the manner in which the individual uses the studio to do his or her work. Studio practice could include the way the studio is set up, the materials and tools that are used, the way the artist approaches his or her work, schedule and work ethic, amongst others.

1.5.5 Artistic production

In this study, the term refers to the process of creating artworks. This does not only refer to the output or the final result but also to the process through which the artwork is created as part of studio practice.

1.5.6 Art-production triad

In this study, space and creativity are explored in relation to the making of art. The links and tensions between these three variables are investigated in relation to one another. The term 'art-production triad' refers to this group of variables around which the study revolves.

1.6 Thesis outline

The aim of this study was to gain further understanding on the relationship between the physical space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice. Furthermore, the investigation has helped to recognise how the aesthetic experience – namely the relationship between experience, practice and knowledge, provides a mode of knowledge production. The two parts of the study focused on the experience of the relative stakeholders, and on reflections and observations situated within practice. Additionally, this study has given the opportunity to a number of artists and art students to share their experiences and reflections related to their practice.

Following this introductory chapter (Chapter 1), the next chapter (Chapter 2) consists of a review of the literature consulted. Research and theoretical studies related to space, creativity, artistic practice, and materiality, were selected to best depict the position of this research, and to identify the missing gaps relative to the possible contributions of this thesis. Chapter 3 involves a description of the methodology that was designed with a view to guiding the research process for this study. This is followed by Chapter 4, which describes the data analysis process for the two parts of the study. All the steps

taken have been illustrated by presenting code and theme maps, together with the frameworks selected for the analysis process. Chapters 5 to 8 present the findings of the study, and attempt to interpret these findings and their relevance to the existing literature. The findings from the two parts of the study were discussed together and across each other according to the relevant theme represented in each chapter. The concluding chapter, Chapter 9, provides recommendations and further synthesises the findings from the two parts of the study and their implications, while revisiting the research questions.

1.7 Overview of the study conducted in this thesis

Table 1.1 gives an overview of the two parts of the study and the timeframes within which they were carried out.

Table 1.1 Overview of the study conducted in this thesis

STUDY ⟶	PART 1							PART 2A/B
	In-depth interviews with artists							*School study*
Participant/s ⟶	Henry	Jack	Brigitte	Gabriel	Daniel	Adrian	Maya	Secondary school (7 students)
	Pilot interview							(4 sessions)
Date ⟶	January 2013	April 2013	April 2013	April 2013	April 2013	April 2013	April 2013	2nd May-23rd May 2013
Methods used ⟶	In-depth interview	In-depth interview	In-depth interview	In-depth interview	In-depth interview	In-depth interview	In-depth interview	Part 2A: Observation and field notes Informal conversation Part 2B: Plan drawings

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents different discussions on the central themes that underpin this study. The literature selected reflects the main research questions that frame this thesis, while the discussions aim to give an understanding of, and to shed light on, the relationships between the foci underlined within the research questions. It is not the objective of this review to be exhaustive but it is regarded more valuable to critically engage with relevant literature that would best illuminate and address the research problem (Ridley, 2008).

As seen in the introductory chapter (Chapter 1), the overarching research question of this thesis (RQ1) is:

What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

This positions the study as an inquiry that delves into the tensions between creative and artistic practices as well as the physical space that accommodates such practices. The emphasis on particular aspects of these issues is supplemented by the following set of sub-questions (RQ2-4), which continue to refine and construct the specific objectives of this study.

RQ2 – What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?

RQ3 – How do art students relate to the space or environment around them in the art room?

RQ4 – How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?

The literature review is divided into three sections (Sections A, B, and C). The first section (Section A) discusses various constructions of the meanings of space and place. It begins with a discussion of major theorists on space focusing particularly on space as a social practice and as a process. The chapter also looks at notable scholars and their theories on space and place in an attempt to provide distinctive aspects of these two terms. Next, I look at how space is constructed in education through a discussion that embraces a spatial lens in education. Given that the understandings of space and

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place are contested and multifaceted, the review draws from various disciplines such as philosophy, cultural geography, education, and practice-based approaches. As has been discussed in the introductory chapter (see Section 1.4) drawing on the disciplines of philosophy and geography was a new direction, in view of my background in psychology. However, my choice in this direction to draw upon these disciplines is an attempt to address the issue that space is a complex phenomenon. It is my purpose to highlight different angles for approaching space and I review particular work that considers outlooks and directions that enrich the understanding of space and place. Although a number of studies (Boys, 2011; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Chism, 2006; Augé, 2008; Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1989; Tuan, 1977, 1974; Relph, 1976) have examined space and place there is a gap in the literature that studies space and place in relation to the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice and which brings together these three spheres. Therefore, this thesis builds on the work of other scholars in an attempt to lessen this particular gap in the research of space and place.

Section B of the review similarly attempts to unravel the different meanings for the term 'creativity'. It is not easy to define the term without understanding what claims are being made for each definition. Thus, the review endeavours to do this through a presentation of different discourses that ultimately present 'creativity' as a negotiated and contested term. Other dimensions, such as flow, motivation, inspiration and the creative process, are also discussed within this section.

The third and last section (Section C) of the review concerns artistic practice and making. This section deals with the elusive nature of art and highlights the role of subjectivity within this topic. Emphasis is made on the role that art and art practice have on the generation of new knowledge and on the role that practice-based experience has in the process of informing learning.

2.2 **Section A: Space and place**

2.2.1 **Understanding and defining space and place**

The same spaces, and the objects within these spaces, are evaluated according to various reference systems, bearing in mind that for each person they hold different meanings. As will be discussed later in this section, people come into a process of transforming spaces into places by combining together their objective and subjective realities of space. This is represented by a shift from a homogenous space to something that is believed to be more meaningful and distinguished. Concurrently, this is translated in the problem of defining space and place, and typifies both terms as contested. Different disciplinary perspectives from different authors (Boys, 2011; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Chism, 2006; Augé, 2008; Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1989; Tuan, 1977, 1974; Relph, 1976) are considered in relation to the concepts of space and place. In this section I discuss some of the salient arguments, coming from different fields and standpoints, which best locate the understanding of space and place in relation to the research questions of this thesis. In particular, the following part of the review draws strongly on a number of key authors on space from the fields of philosophy and of cultural geography in a specific attempt to use this lens, and related theories, to effectively shed light on spatiality in education and practice.

The work on the concept of space by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre is a useful way of looking at the idea and meaning of the term 'space'. The theories of Lefebvre have exerted a strong influence on other authors, as could be witnessed in the collection of articles edited by Gulson and Symes (2007b), to give an example. The majority of the articles in this publication draw on Lefebvre, Soja and Massey and further apply and readapt their theories on space and place. In Lefebvre's landmark work, *The Production of Space* (1974, English translation in 1991)*,* his fundamental argument is to challenge the abstract idea of space as an empty thing and he positions his understanding of the term as something that people produce together, hence the term 'production of space'. By looking at space in this way, space is not a given entity but, through ongoing processes, societies engage with physical spaces, organise them and think about them. Within this view, people create the space in which they live and build their lives. Through such a process, people have different mental images of space and various ways of using it. Moreover, Lefebvre provides a further deeper meaning for

space and claims that it is more than just a setting where activity occurs. While space itself is a product similar to produced things and services, it is also a producer because it shapes the way people interact with that space. This duality makes the process of interacting with spaces even more complex, given that the same space has parallel roles at work simultaneously. Hence, one of Lefebvre's major contributions is to define space in terms of its specificity and to lessen the gap "between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one, between mental and social, between the space of the philosophers and the space of people who deal with material things" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.4). Nonetheless, Lefebvre acknowledged the difficulty of separating in totality the mental space and the lived experience. In his endeavour to theorise the production of space, Lefebvre challenges the gap between what professionals produce, such as the work of architects as well as urban planners, and the inhabitants of such places in the process of everyday life. One of the things he accomplishes is to determine the problems of representations by asserting that, up to a certain extent, images of things do not offer a complete and full view of reality, and in some cases could also disguise and mislead. Even though Lefebvre was aware that these representations could not be avoided entirely, he advocated for attention and awareness to be directed towards the gaps that these images create between expertise and actual lived experience.

Lefebvre's (1991) emphasis on space as the product of social relations, and the way he gives weight to the lived experience to make sense of spaces, is extremely useful to this study as it allows me to think about spaces in a way that are not fixed and that people living in them create and construct the meaning they give them. To this end, Lefebvre's conceptualisation is generative for grasping how spaces in schools, together with studio spaces that artists spend time at, are produced and given particular meaning through lived experience and through the way people interact with that space. It is also of great value that Lefebvre's attention to the gap between lived experience and expertise acts as a helpful reminder that the way people who work directly with spaces, such as architects, urban planners and designers, might not always be on the same lines as to how people actually experience and attach meanings to such places. Borrowing on these conceptualisations of Lefebvre presents me with a fundamental framework of how to look at space in the context of education and also art practice.

The production of space or social space somehow encompasses a combination of geographic landscape, architecture, cultural symbols and ways of living. It is the space

where different activities take place and, furthermore, a combination of ingredients, as mentioned above, support or limit these activities. Lefebvre (1991) asserts that the many different things and activities going on determine what could be done in a space. In a sense, the way people engage with space supports or privileges what activities happen in that space and, on the other hand, what activities might be discouraged. Therefore, with this in mind, a predominant concept in Lefebvre's work is that space is produced and reproduced through the intentions of people.

Latching onto the above, according to Lefebvre social space takes three chief forms and he presents a triad made up of three dimensions, these being: 'conceived space', 'lived space' and 'perceived space' (what he calls in spatial terms: representations of space, representational spaces and spatial practice). The first dimension refers to how dominant groups in society select to represent and define space. These are abstractions of the lived space as conceptualised by various individuals whose claim for such places might be different from the actual ways that spaces are lived and experienced. Succinctly, the lived experience is not left in its raw form and is codified and simplified in easier forms of representation. The second dimension involves the mental constructs with which different people approach space in everyday life. This form of space embodies symbolism and is a "space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.39). This is situated in the realm of meaning-making through reference to many signs and symbols by which people understand their world. The last form of space concerns social practice and identifies space as a social product through a process that is experienced and lived directly prior to its being conceptualised. This dimension is about the negotiations between daily reality and urban experience. Collectively, these three categories bring together both abstract and more pragmatic ways of looking at space by talking about the mental, physical and social space. Moreover, the way he has presented space as a concrete product provides a shift from the abstract to the tangible.

This distinct understanding of space as comprising of a tangible form also brings forth another consideration. The specificity of a place, the related time, and so on, assign a specific character to a space and furthermore localises space. Spaces have histories and are therefore not complete at any point in time but continue to be "appropriated" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.165) according to the needs of the people who are engaging with these spaces. The term 'appropriation', which he defines as a spatial practice, suggests

that the original purpose of a space may not be valid any longer for its new use and in a way this space has a disposition to be re-appropriated and put to a different use. As Lefebvre asserts:

> […] every society – and hence every mode of production with its subvariants […] produces a space, its own space. […] Whence the need for a study of that space which is able to apprehend it as such in its genesis and its form, with its own specific time or times (the rhythm of daily life), and its particular centres and polycentrism (agora, temple, stadium, etc.). (Lefebvre, 1991, p.31)

Utilising this theory to look at built spaces in particular, it helps us understand that, although we may think of buildings as having a sense of permanence, especially when considering longstanding buildings that have been transferred through generations, these structures are continuously being transformed over time. People and society determine the production of these spaces and also what may transpire of a building. This activity of appropriation is in itself a practice exemplified in the transformations of space. In a sense, I perceive these transformations as a series of temporary spaces that are changed and reutilised according to the needs of the people using them.

Here, I draw again from Lefebvre (1991), this time predominantly on his triad of social space, to make my argument that it will be useful to view space from these three inseparable and interweaving dimensions of space, that is, the conceived/lived/perceived space. Viewing space from this angle would allow me to understand space through a historical reconstruction, it would allow me to experience the physicality of the space and it would also enable me to locate what personal feelings and meanings are attached to such a place. This would be even more beneficial if it is employed alongside Lefebvre's contentions that space is a concrete and tangible product, and that spaces are continually transformed and appropriated over time. Moreover, building on this concept of a tangible link to the everyday, Soja (1996) further extends Lefebvre's views that considering only real and imagined (first and second) spaces would be a reductionist view of space and he further theorised the concept of 'thirdspace'. In a way, this locates a space which is in between real and imagined spaces (see Section 2.2.1.1). According to Soja this is a place that is lived. It is related to actions and interactions with physical spaces. This is a space relating to the individual, and focuses on the unique personal experiences of people encompassing individuality and collective experience to create a fully-lived experience. This again

emphasises the notion of inclusivity, where a look at space that includes everything is deemed to be a favourable and constructive position.

The concept of space as having the potential of being re-appropriated and constructed out of social relations is also strongly evidenced in the work of the cultural geographer Doreen Massey. Her contribution towards constructing space as a process was a powerful theoretical shift in the study of spaces. In her influential publication *For Space* (2005) she gives particular attention to space as the core element that affects geography. By way of comparison, in the way that history is about time and how things change over time, similarly geography is fundamentally about space. Through her work, she aims at bringing space alive and presents it as a dynamic entity, rather than something static. Massey's re-conceptualising of space was an attempt to change the way the concept of a flat space has saturated our lives for many years. Although, like other authors (Boys, 2011; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Cresswell, 2004; Tuan, 1977, 1974), she does acknowledge a physical and material side to space in the way space could be actually represented by physical locations, at the same time she acknowledges a more abstract dimension that is present, and re-conceptualises space as a process, as heterogeneous and uneven.

In Massey's (2005) view of space, there are different stories taking place at the same time and, as a result, she portrays space as inter-related and multiple. Moreover, there is a particular special relationship and connection between space and time, and Massey brings to light the contemporaneous heterogeneity of the planet. This view opens up the politics of space to the potential and possibility of alternatives. In addition, space is not converted into time but it allows for a multiplicity of views and varieties to occur simultaneously. In her work, one finds a strong presence of discussions related to the homogenisation and fragmentation of space resulting from capitalism. This experience has instilled in people a strong need for 'a place called home' or 'a sense of place' which, in a way, makes up for the sense of disorientation brought about by the said homogenisation and fragmentation of space. Place and home are represented by ideas of security and belonging, and are imbued with notions of stasis and nostalgia. Massey's work is very useful in understanding space in terms of this inherent need to attach special meanings to spaces and, in the process, transforming them into places.

In her earlier work, Massey (1994) communicates her central argument, which formulates conceptions of space and place in terms of social relations – a product of

interactions. Space is recognised as constructed out of social relations. For Massey space is not something universal, in the sense that the way people live is made up of a multiplicity of spaces that are present simultaneously. Moreover, Massey views place from a similar lens that emphasises a dynamic and changing quality to it, and that there are multiple meanings of places endorsed by different social groups.

In addition, Massey (1994) also argues that a number of claims have attempted to attach to places the notion of a fixed identity and that these places have even been represented as instances of stasis. This position contradicts her views asserting that places are continuously shifting and transforming. Massey contends that it would be valuable to view places as characterised by flexibility and movement that take place between places, and also inside them, by way of different movements such as travelling, communications and so on. Therefore, the people who inhabit these places do not share the same sense of place since they are part of different connections within and beyond these places. This is what Massey describes as a "progressive" or a "global sense of place". On the other hand, although social relations prevail in the construction of spaces, perhaps it would also be beneficial to balance out this view by considering aspects of history, culture and representation since these are part of the ingredients that constitute the identity of people and give a sense of uniqueness to the different spaces. In addition, she also asserts that this could be challenging because thinking about defining the boundaries of places might be a way of segregating and distinguishing between one people and another. And it is difficult to have a particular sense of place which everyone shares. As she puts it, a progressive sense of place acknowledges these points and does not feel intimidated by it.

The way Massey (2005, 1994) reconceptualises space provides me with an additional useful look at spaces and places and, although the roots of her argument are visibly traced back to Lefebvre's (1991) contentions she offers further insights. What is highly significant to note is that Massey's central understanding of space is framed around three characteristics, which she proposes as follows:

1.   Space is the product of interrelations, being constituted through interactions that vary from the global to the smaller instances

2.   Space is the dimension of multiplicity

3.   Space is always under construction, it never finishes and it is never closed. (Massey, 2005, p.9)

These three points describe space as the product of relations, which is possible through the notion of multiplicity. The first point locates space as a product. It is produced through the formation or lack of relations. Space and multiplicity are mutually constitutive. Thus, space is the dimension of things being and happening at the same time. Although, on one hand, things happen successively in a dimension of time, space makes it possible to have multiple things being at the same time but in different places. In fact, another aim of this re-conceptualisation of space is to bring the concept alive, and also detach it from the way it has been presented as to oppose time. Even though space is certainly a dimension that differs from time, the fact that it is always being made and that it is the product of ongoing relations and links, it makes it inevitable that the dimension of space has a temporal quality to it. In her essay, *Politics and Space/Time*, Massey (1992) challenges the notion that space and time are separate. She contests Laclau's view of space (1990) as a 'closed' and 'self-determining structure', and she critiques his arguments by drawing on radical geography, feminism, as well as physics.

Another trajectory that merits attention is the phenomenon of 'time-space compression' which Massey (1994) builds on the work of Harvey (1989). It refers to how the relationship between space and time changes resulting from innovations and new ways in which people in different places could interact. People in different communities come together as a result, and through this process the different layers of histories and backgrounds of different places are merged. In the process, the identities of places become more complex as they continue to shift and adapt. There is an extremely complex social differentiation:

> […] different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections […] some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. (Massey, 1994, p.149)

Space as social is the product of the different relations people have with each other and how they connect. Moreover, it examines the way people live together. Furthermore, Massey also adds in the view that space can never be a "completed simultaneity in which all interconnections have been established" (Massey, 2005, p.12). Space is a product of our ongoing lives. Space is continuously in the making and it is "a space of loose ends and missing links. For the future to be open, space must be open too" (p.12). Moreover, a strong argument in Massey's work is that it is difficult to go back and

experience a place as it was before because everything is constantly moving and changing:

> For the truth is that you can never simply 'go back', to home or to anywhere else. When you get 'there' the place will have moved on just as you yourself will have changed. And this of course is the point. For to open up 'space' to this kind of imagination means thinking time and space as mutually imbricated and thinking both of them as the product of interrelations. You can't go back in space-time. (Massey, 2005, pp.124-125)

What is also key to consider is that, apart from places moving and changing, people alter spaces through their actions and their material engagement with it:

> You are not just travelling through space or across it, you are altering it a little. Space and place emerge through active material practices. Moreover, this movement of yours is not just spatial, it is also temporal. (Massey, 2005, p.118)

Reflecting on the above points, the meaning of places might not always be immediately clear due to shifts and fragmentation arising from globalisation, which makes it challenging to retain a sense of local place. At the same time, in today's postmodernist context, discussing place as the product of interconnections and relations makes sense for people's everyday experience. In this way, place is a concept that is flexible, permeable and adaptable to the increasing complexity of everyday life.

For this study, what I would like to draw on from the contributions of Massey (2005, 1994, 1992) discussed above, is the notion of multiplicity and the way this enables space and time to become intimately connected. This allows me to view space as an entity that makes it possible for different things to happen at the same time. Spaces are always under construction and this process has a linear temporality to it, reflecting the succession of events. However, it also has a dimension that makes it possible for things to be and exist at the same time. This look at spaces secures a way of looking at actual processes in action and also at the potential for activities to take place within the same spaces. It is a useful way of moving away from looking at spaces as the backdrop of activities and by, drawing on Massey's arguments, space becomes an integral part of what people do in everyday life. With particular reference to educational environments and artistic domains, this view would give spaces the affordance of being an active component partaking in the practice of everyday life. Moreover, the deep need for 'a place called home' or 'a sense of place' is also intrinsic in the everyday life of people, and it makes it even more valuable to understand what this means and what constitutes such places.

At this juncture, I will refer to the view put forward by Tim Cresswell (2004). Cresswell, a social and cultural geographer, presents a particular argument on the meaning of place and concludes that place could be both a subjective and objective concept. He introduces the concept of place as dichotomous. On one hand, it is easy to understand since the term is used in everyday simple situations. However, at the same time, the term could prove to be slippery and complicated to pin down. As Cresswell (2004, p.5) puts it, "all over the world people are engaged in place-making activities" and, although the examples of such activities vary in type, they are all centred around making spaces meaningful. People become attached to spaces and they transform them into a "meaningful location" (p.5). Here, Cresswell claims that space becomes a place when meaning is attached to it. This view attributes a particular emotional investment to the process of transforming spaces to places. Through the process of experiencing and living in spaces, people may attribute particular feelings to a space and this becomes meaningful to them, thus transforming it to a place. This interpretation is also why different individuals may perceive the same physical space as either a space or a place, depending on their interaction with it.

Developing the work of the geographer John Agnew (1987), Cresswell further discusses three aspects that make a place a meaningful location. These are "location", "locale" and "sense of place" (Cresswell, 2004, p.7). Location refers to the physical placement of space. All places have fixed or moving coordinates, making it possible to identify and locate where they are. 'Locale' refers to the physical and material form of these places. This encapsulates the way places look like and what is contained within them, and therefore highlights the material aspect of places. Cresswell extends this idea of material form to imaginary places, which also tend to comprise of imagined material things. In addition, a sense of place refers to the outcome derived from the relationship with a space and what feelings and emotions are attached to that space. What Cresswell stresses in his work is that, in the process of transforming spaces into places, both physical and emotional dimensions constitute the overall way people experience space. Although his view of sense of place does relate to the way Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (2005) support the spatio-social relations as a foundation for understanding spaces, Cresswell also gives importance to the physicality of spaces, not merely as a backdrop where activity occurs but as having an influence on transforming spaces into places.

This also brings to light the opposing idea of 'placelessness', which Cresswell defines as those spaces that have lost a particular meaning, and become devoid of such meaning. Similarly, Augé (2008) discusses 'non-places' (or, to use his term, '*non-lieu*') where he describes spaces that are completely emptied of eventfulness. Place is linked to prolonged practices of dwelling. He also suggests that place is going through the process of transformation. To an extent, his work also echoes the work of Edward Relph (1976) on placelessness. What is different from both Cresswell and Relph is that Augé acknowledges the ever-present experience of non-places and the way it may be comforting to many people. It was in later works that he strongly advocated that places like airports, motorways and other spaces could be experienced simultaneously as a place or as a non-place. The prevalence of non-places indicates supermodernity. Bauman (2000) also talks about liquid modernity, which is a dimension where what is permanent gives way to things that are transitory. Our contemporary world is infused with a continuous and persistent sense of change. This outlook focuses on what is transient rather than permanent, and more attention is given to what is immediate. This idea of fluidity enables people to easily move from one social position to another, with a particular focus on shifting. Non-places result from changes in the mode of production. Bauman's arguments also appear in contrast to those by Massey (2005) and Thrift (1999), who do not attribute a sense of placelessness to such experiences. Moreover Augé (2008) adds that people could experience feelings of solitariness and detachment, even in other places such as the home.

Cresswell (2004) gives a further description of places by distinguishing between places and landscapes. In his distinction, he associates the notion of vision with the latter. Landscapes are viewed from a particular spot, and in most cases the viewer is outside of it. On the other hand, things and people are inside places, therefore there is a sense of being embodied within places.

Additionally, another interesting way in which Cresswell (2004) defines place is that of a way of viewing, recognising and perceiving the world. This approach to unveil the meaning of place makes it possible to witness and examine different elements, such as attachments to a place, connections between places and individuals, meanings made and experiences lived. As Cresswell (2004, p.11) adds, "to think of an area of the world as a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment – as a place – is to free us from thinking of it as facts and figures". The author also suggests that the types

of places found in the literature are not numerous, and they tend to only address large and more obvious places. Thus, Cresswell, also drawing on the work of Tuan (1974) claims that places concerned with little spaces such as corners of rooms could still be viewed as places. Tuan had suggested that there is something of a place in all of these little spaces. This is, in relation to this study, a particularly interesting way of thinking about places. It makes it possible to hone in on many different types of places and how individuals construct meaning about them. In the case of art rooms and art studios, it also encourages me to look at the physical and material components of these spaces as an integral part of place-making processes. This recalls again Cresswell's aspect of locale (2004), which is already discussed above. The physical components of a space and the materiality within a space have active roles in the way people engage with spaces, and in the way they invest in the process of creating a sense of place. Cresswell's (2004) work appears to offer a constructive lens that positions the physicality and the materiality of space as a fundamental aspect of the making of places. In a way, it pragmatises the process of place-making by a focus on the locale.

Nigel Thrift (2003), a cultural geographer, approaches space by considering different standpoints and focuses on the rich complexity of the subject. He presents spaces in terms of how modern geography thinks about space, particularly including a mapping out of the way technology has triggered a change in the nature of space. In his analysis of writings on space, Thrift claims that geographers are mainly writing about four different types of spaces. These four kinds of spaces have something in common, that is, they present a "relational" view of space (p.96). These four modes look at (1) empirical constructions, (2) unblocking space, (3) image space, and (4) place space. Within these four representations of space a number of similarities posited by other authors could be identified. Additionally, these four ways of thinking about space are all ways to rethink what constitutes power. These are new spaces being imagined into being. As he puts it:

> […] all these ways of thinking space are attempts to rethink what constitutes power if we can no longer think of power as simply command and control […] So new thinking about the empirical construction of space involves considering the prolonged hard grind of actually putting viable pathways together, especially when, as nowadays, they can stretch around the world and back. (Thrift, 2003, p.105)

Empirical constructions deal with the developments and historical achievements of measurement. The space of measurement is one kind of space that people engage with

every day. This empirical construction of space is still changing and developing and, in the process, objects and activities taking place in the world could be located. This produces micro- or hyper-coordination (Katz & Aakhus, 2002) where people use technology for logistical purposes or take it further as a means of how to represent and express oneself.

In the second way he identifies when thinking about space, Thrift (2003) focuses his attention on connections between things, people and money. This reflects the issue of globalisation. Thrift flags the concern that it is difficult to represent these spaces, in the sense that these representations tend to leave out many relevant issues. Geographers are now seeking to represent these spaces in ways that reflect the dynamic situations. Their focus is on flows, which moves them away from thinking of space as a container. This is particularly reflected in the work of Doreen Massey (2005, 1994) as has been discussed already.

The third space, or image space, concerns the importance of images in space. It highlights the idea that images compete for our attention, and geographers are studying different kinds of images and their geographies. In this regard, Scollon and Scollon (2003) talk about "geosemiotics": an analytical method concerning the understanding of meanings of signs and visuals in the material world, and how people engage and respond to such settings. They argue that people can understand the meaning of texts in public through a process that takes into account the physical and social world of where these texts are situated. Images become part of the landscape that people regularly experience and thus, in part, spaces are also experienced through the interpretations and translations of these images.

The fourth and last space, defined as 'place space', talks about the fact that places not only offer resources of different kinds, but they also have a link to memory and behaviour. Places become part of the interaction. Moreover, within this representation of space, place is involved with embodiment. The body is part of a process that is more complex, where Thrift (2003) compares it to a spatial dance with other aspects. In this regard, place is a crucial player because "it can change the composition of an encounter by changing the affective connections that are made" (Thrift, 2003, p.104). The expressive quality of people has led to the emphasis on "performance" in geography.

The way Thrift (2003) condenses different ways as to how geographers view space, provides practical angles that could be used for understanding space and place. The four modes in some way intersect with theories discussed already. However, the modes presented by Thrift additionally focus on how new technological developments locate a new reality for discussing space and place. Moreover, Thrift attributes particular significance to visual images as being historically influential in the production of space. Thrift's reflections are also key to highlight the importance of the body and the expressive quality of people, and the way they perform within spaces.

Hubbard, Kitchin and Valentine (2008) in their edited collection *Key Texts in Human Geography* present fundamental writings and essential readings highlighting the spatial contributions of a number of authors. The essays in this collection are aimed at evaluating how the publications discussed have been an influence on the development of human geography. These act as a reference guide, which assesses the key arguments while tracing what responses and debates have shaped this field. A similar, yet potentially distinctive collection of works by Hubbard and Kitchin (2011), *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, in the same way offers a set of theories and arguments by prominent scholars on space and place. These essays were developed as another reference guide to key thinkers on space and place who have affected a focus on the spatial in the social sciences. The essays focus on the evolution of space through time and its position in contemporary society by looking at social, cultural, economic and political positions.

Of particular interest is Edward Relph's (1976) phenomenological study of place which explores place and its significance as an obvious dimension of human life and experience. Relph's idea of space is also similar to others' view of space, as discussed already, where it is not merely seen as an empty physical container, but it is investigated in terms of how people experience it. He acknowledges various intensities of space, from the most direct experience to the highly abstract space. In his work, there is an underlying understanding that space is heterogeneous and imbued with multiple dimensions. Relph argues that in order to ascribe a particular meaning to a place, and before places can be improved upon or fixed, it is important to be able to accurately describe place.

A particular contribution of Relph's (1976) work is the way he defines identity with place through the concept of 'insideness'. This is the extent to which people get

involved and become attached to a place. He asserts that the more a person feels inside a place, the stronger is the identity with that place. Contrastingly, a person could feel alienated from a place and he labels this particular experience as 'outsideness'. In Relph's work both these two concepts are presented as a central dialectic in human life, which features in a mixture of intensities. Relph goes further to explain the strongest sense of place experience as 'existential insideness' where people feel depth and a strong immersion in place. On the other hand, a strong sense of alienation, which might be felt in different situations, is labelled as 'existential outsideness'. In addition, Relph argues that places could be experienced authentically and inauthentically. He asserts that, in this modern era, the authentic quality of experience is frequently replaced by a more inauthentic outlook, and this is what he calls 'placelessness'. This is very similar to how the lack of attachment to a space has been described by Cresswell (2004) and Augé (2008). The dualisms in Relph's theories presented in *Place and Placelessness* (1976) have been criticised, since they might not represent the complexity and range of experiences arising from the fast-paced dynamic world of today. Another point that could be raised is that understanding places in this way is possible only when other qualities such as history, culture, personality of the people are removed, to leave only a particular human experience. In a way, this view does not take into account all the different dimensions of the human experience that come into play. However, this perspective is still very important as a starting point in understanding place. What is also important in this work is that Relph provides the language that describes how places are not experienced in the same way by different people, and that a person may also have different experiences in relation to the same place. This point seems to resurface in a number of writings about space and place.

Space and Place (1977) by Yi-Fu Tuan addresses the question of how people create a meaningful world and a meaningful life in this world, and it employs the notion of place as a central element of this view. Before this work was published, human geography has seen the emergence of more scientific and dehumanised approaches, and this work by Tuan is set as a way, not necessarily to criticise spatial science, but to instil an awareness about the different ways people experience the world. He builds his work on philosophical theories but does so by reworking these ideas in the production of new knowledge. He centres his work on the relationship between people and the world through the way they relate to their environment and experience the world. A core concept in his argument is that experience changes space into a place. In this

process, an anonymous space is given a personal meaning and this is transformed into a meaningful place. In tackling the argument, he weaves in the notion of a multiplicity of the senses, which gives a full experience of space (both self-aware reflection and habitual action). A pertinent addition in Tuan's work is the way a space is turned into a place through kinaesthetic experience. The familiarity with a place and the way people can move around, without much thinking, is part of the process of this transformation. There is a specific interdependence between space and the performance of people during their activities. In sum, the kinaesthetic experience complements the list of features, like the sensory and the spatial, that play a part in the way people experience space and how these experiences differ from one person to another, and from space to space. A particularly interesting link Tuan (1977) makes is when he talks about the importance of a temporal element for space and place. He argues that this consciousness of time comes together in the body. What is interesting in this argument is that he presents place as a way of making time visible.

2.2.1.1 Spaces 'in between'

The concept of 'spaces in-between' is useful in acknowledging the different dimensions associated with space, and how these interact with artistic practice.

Framed spaces delineate an area within the routine world. As Turner (1979, p.468) explains, "to frame is to enclose in a border", which frames may be permanent or situational. In this space of boundaries lies another transitional area that lies in-between, and this could be considered as a liminal location. However, rather than just a location between two spaces, it could also be viewed as a regular process of making places. This specific location comes into existence in the instant when this threshold is crossed and experienced.

This position of transitional spaces examines them as tangible locations of everyday life, rather than as gaps. This recalls the earlier discussions about the everyday spatial constructions and the concept of the other (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) as they suggest that this existence of a transitional in-between location is an actual third instance. This is a reminder that these places, although of a transient quality, are sometimes full of new possibilities. Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) advocate that designers should give more attention to the design of these transitory spaces and their connections. The aim would be to enhance and develop the way people experience and 'live' these transitional

spaces. Similarly, Herman Hertzberger (1991, p.188), a Dutch architect who has predominantly worked on designing schools and learning centres, also writes about the importance of these in-between spaces as part of the way people experience their everyday life:

> The habitable space between things represents a shift in attention from the official level to the informal, to where ordinary day-to-day lives are led, and that means in the margins between the established meanings of explicit function. (Hertzberger, 1991, p.188)

Latching onto an earlier discussion of non-places (see Section 2.2.1), the non-place could be regarded as positive and enabling. In certain situations, these places could sometimes be the only places appropriated for a marginalised form of identity. This could be explicated through the concept of liminality, which was developed in social anthropology by Arnold van Gennep and later by Victor Turner. The latter (1982) had observed that people go through moments of 'betweeness', when one particular state or identity is completed and a new state is approaching. These liminal spaces are intermediate spaces between two clearly defined areas. As Bjorn Thomassen (2012) describes:

> Liminal spaces are attractive. They are places we go to in search of a break from the normal. They can be real places, parts of a larger territory, or they can be imagined or dreamed. Liminal spaces are found at the fringes, at the limits […]. Liminal landscapes are in-between spaces […]. Liminality implicates the existence of a boundary, a *limes* the Latin word for threshold from which the concept of liminality derives. This limit is not simply there: it is there to be confronted. (Thomassen, 2012, p.21)

The concept of transience or liminality is also influenced by contemporary mobility. This is now generating particular spaces that are continually shifting. As discussed above, earlier discourses have transformed their focus from fixed spaces to spaces that are moving, in transition, circulating and reflecting the shifts by which people are living their everyday life. Within this view, mobile spaces are those spaces that layer together different locations and moments in time, all contributing towards the same experience.

Building on this, the lived space includes the spatial representations made by individuals while living their lives, also encompassing the mental constructs with which they manage the bodily world. In-betweenness, as discussed in this section, also intersects with the lived space since the way that people habituate these transitional spaces also depends on the way they experience these spaces.

2.2.1.2 **A spatial lens in education**

As discussed already, this research is situated within a developing body of research in education, which draws on cultural geography, sociology, history and geography. This lens offers a dynamic view of education and schooling which, rather than positioning it as taking place within a rigid physical container, posits notions of space as productive and dynamic. Thus, in this section of the literature review I draw from a number of key authors on space from the field of cultural geography, who discuss a number of points having implications within an educational setting.

The current, and perhaps limited, emergence of research that employs a spatial lens in education policy and practice warrants reflection and discussion. In the last part of the twentieth century social theory took a turn that focused on the spatial. However, this has not been analogously and fully undertaken in education. Although there exists research in this area, the focus on space within different aspects of education is still developing. Additionally, as Gulson and Symes (2007a) claim, the argument accentuates the point that employing such a spatial lens possibly yields a fuller and richer understanding of education policy, context and practice:

> The use of spatial theories appears to challenge the notion of what it is to research 'education'; not only in terms of the object of study, but also in relation to theoretical and methodological possibilities and problems in the spatial turn. (Gulson & Symes, 2007a, p.107)

The work edited by Gulson and Symes (2007b) is a collection of works by different authors who contribute to the varied and contested concepts of space and their application in education. The works are in some way built on, and inspired by, the seminal work of Lefebvre, Soja, and also Massey, in that they employ some of their influential theories as a conceptual framework to develop an understanding of space in relation to education policy. The principal argument across these writings is that examining education policy from a spatial perspective provides new possibilities for education policy studies. This, in addition, implies that spatial theories are not solely restricted to geography but promise significant value when they are applied beyond this field. A recurrent understanding within this collection is also the significance attached to the transient and social nature of space. Hence, extending this idea further, these collected works present spaces as spatial practices, which is an outlook that treats spaces as fluid and ephemeral. This concept of "space as process and in process (that is space and time combined in becoming)" (Crang & Thrift, 2000, p.3) reflects the latest

theories and models associated with space, which do not stop at the view of space as merely something fixed or else a physical container of activity. On the contrary, they display space as the product of a number of intricacies and complexities at different scales and levels.

These underpinnings provide useful ways for looking at educational space, which is often ascribed a clichéd meaning and regularly presented in obvious and diminishing forms, such as the fixed and stationary components of school architecture. Coinciding with this view, another drawback is the lack of emphasis on the relation between space and the social. In fact, what Lefebvre (1991), Soja (1989) and Massey (2005, 1994) provide, apart from other things, is the possibility to work with a socio-spatial framework that enables a rich outlook of space that unites different features, processes and practices. Green and Letts (2007) write about the way that a socio-spatial framework enables a rich outlook of space in a manner that brings together a number of features, processes and practices which collectively make part of the actual and the imaginary. This concept of the real versus imaginary places is developed by Soja (1989), which he draws from what he refers to as "thirdspace", as has been discussed already. It is also based on Soja's distinction, following the work of Lefebvre (1991), between the perceived space, conceived space, and the lived space. Singh et al. (2007), coming from an educational research discipline, also explore the potential of space in analysing how the identity of international students shifts over time, form their conception of life abroad, through their perceptions of life overseas, to their lived experiences at home and away. Their work explores how space is central in analysing how the identity of international students shifts over time. They take space as lived and imagined practices, in a study with international students from China, studying in Australia. Supporting the idea that space is constantly being produced through socio-spatial relations they claim that:

> […] the production of space is a dynamic process incorporating practices, values, and beliefs shaping students' capacities to make and re-make their identities. However, the space into which they moved was not merely a passive backdrop" (Singh et al. (2007), p.204).

Another issue that is explored in the collection (Gulson & Symes, 2007b) is the way modernity has favoured time over space. Education studies seem to have been subjected to a focus on time and change, with an emphasis on progress and reform, and attention being given to instances of social development.

A number of the articles edited by Gulson and Symes (2007b) also make reference to the work of Massey (1994) where she claims that:

> […] the spatial is socially constituted. 'Space' is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global. (Massey, 1994, p.265)

For example, Armstrong (2007), in her work concerning disability, education and space, centres her discussion on the work by Massey (1994), and explains how the spatial cannot be separated from the social since their relationship is at the core of the development of places, communities and identities. This is because the social roles and identities, together with relationships and practices, are the products of culture, the geographies and the social lives of places and communities. Thomson (2007), in her work on the in/visible geographies of school exclusion similarly draws on the work of Massey (2005) and maintains that space is not homogenous. This view advocates the prospects of producing more open theory and practice through acknowledging that there exist multiple experiences, trajectories, and narratives of space and place. Furthermore, Thomson also suggests giving attention to the everyday temporal-spatial relations, which might provide opportunities of change.

Another suggestion of this advantageous spatial outlook, is the work of Cindi Katz outlined by Skelton (2011), which is centred around children and the way children and young people's geographies have been emerging. Her best-known work on the conceptualisation of social reproduction is centred around children, and she positions them as central to understanding the practice of globalisation of capitalist production. Her work has been influential in the developing area of the geographies of children and young people (Hubbarb & Kitchin, 2011).

By way of synthesis, I would like to locate the above views across the earlier discussions of space and place. As can be attested in the collection of writings edited by Gulson and Symes (2007b), examining education policy from a spatial perspective provides new possibilities for education policy studies. It sees spaces as spatial practices and focuses in essence on the social aspect of experiencing spaces. This view portrays space as the product of a number of intricacies and complexities at different levels. This focus also subjects education studies to a focus on space, rather than on time. My work in this thesis similarly aims at utilising such a spatial perspective which, drawing greatly on cultural geography, offers a useful way for understanding, and

defining space and place in education. The theories I have drawn from provide unique insights on space and place, but also overlapping concepts and ideas. Thus, in this landscape I have attempted to underline and map out distinctive conceptions to be used as the core framework that underpins this study. These conceptions form a representation of space that is built on a number of different constructions. Putting these understandings together places this study at a particular position that incorporates a spatio-social factor within an educational setting.

2.2.2 Spaces in schools

Children and young people spend a good portion of their day at school. The educational approaches and different schooling methods vary from place to place. Similarly, the physical space of schools takes different forms, possibly reflecting the limitations in the structured space (e.g. the ratio of indoor versus outdoor space and size of built up area) and also the philosophy of a particular school (e.g. the importance of communal spaces and areas for physical activity).

2.2.2.1 Space and the Reggio Emilia approach

Of particular personal interest are the educational approaches of the Reggio Emilia and the Montessori methods (see Section 2.2.2.2). In a way, these two systems have provided an alternative approach to education, in that both philosophies have focused on the child and the different ways in which children learn. Hence, it would be useful to examine the role of the physical space within such approaches. Formal schooling takes place in a physical space and, given that students are performing within this space on a daily basis, it is very important to give attention to this aspect of schooling, namely the physical environment.

Loris Malaguzzi (1921-1994), the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, together with a number of parents from the region, focused on a system of schooling targeting early years from infancy and up to six years. This system is based on the view that children have strong potential for self-development (Abbott & Nutbrown, 2001). Amongst the central beliefs underpinning this philosophy are:

(1) collaboration and interaction between children, teachers and parents;

(2) co-construction of knowledge;

(3) interdependence of individual and social learning;

(4) importance given to the educational environment;

(5) focus on children as having rights rather than needs.

This approach became an inspiration to many other schools all over the world (Edwards et al., 1993; Rinaldi, 1993). A distinguishing element of this multifaceted system is that it puts into practice many core aspects of the work by seminal authors, such as Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and others (Rankin, 2004). It is not enough to bring in concepts and theories from literature. However, in the case of the Reggio Emilia approach theories and practice were interwoven to bring forth a method that had particular meaning and relevance to its core philosophy. The centrality of this philosophy is built on a recognition of diversity, rather than a focus on the standardisation of students. Malaguzzi's philosophy is based on what he referred to as 'the hundred languages of childhood'. Reflecting this philosophy, Reggio children are offered opportunities to engage with different types of resources, ways of expressing themselves and diverse ways of seeing in processes that use their hands, minds and emotions.

An important characteristic of the Reggio schools, which is particularly relevant to this study, is the notion of 'the environment as the third teacher' (Gandini, 1993). This is an appealing concept in the way it positions the space and environment as important constituents of the Reggio experience. Malaguzzi believed strongly in the relationship between the environment and the quality of learning. He maintained the view that the environment should empower children to express their potential, ability and curiosity (Edwards et al., 1993). In addition, these spaces have emerged as a collaborative endeavour with architects, pedagogy specialists and visual artists (Edwards et al., 1993). Amongst the fundamental physical attributes of a Reggio school, one can find a *piazza* – an open space for meetings and interactions, which is not just used during break time. There is also the concept of a flexible space, which could be adapted according to the needs of the children. Another unique feature in these schools is the *atelier* – a workshop and studio rich in materials and tools made easily accessible to students. Further to its obvious aim to be a creative space, this *atelier* is also intended as a space for research, where the children could 'test out' their theories and experiments. Aesthetically, Reggio schools include an abundance of natural light, using very large windows and white walls. Some of the rooms are also partitioned using glass, thus promoting a strong interplay between the indoors and outdoors. The use of mirrors assist the children in becoming self-aware, apart from helping them with the

construction of their identities. Elements of colour are also supplemented through the children's own work, which is generally accompanied by showing the development process of the work. Through the way the layout of the rooms is designed, and the way furniture and materials are planned, children could progress in their activities with minimal assistance.

> We consider the environment to be an essential constituent element of any theoretical or political research in education. We hold to be equally valuable the rationality of the environment, its capacity for harmonious coexistence, and its highly important forms, and functions. Moreover, we place enormous value on the role of the environment as a motivating and animating force in creating spaces for relations, options, and emotional and cognitive situations that produce a sense of well-being and security.
>
> It has been said that the environment should act as a kind of aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people who live in it. (Malaguzzi, 1996, p.40)

Although the work done by Malaguzzi and his followers focuses on early years, their view of the role of the environment as having the potential to add significant value on many levels of education may also be applied to other levels of schooling, including primary and secondary levels. This study puts forward the argument that the benefits shared by these young students might also prove to be beneficial to older students. In practice, this approach has been an inspiration to many other schools all over the world. Likewise, what could be transferred to other levels of schooling is the fact that this appealing concept of space has emerged as a collaborative endeavour with architects, pedagogy experts and visual artists. The success of these schools could perhaps encourage other school-building projects to employ such practice of collaboration. Moreover, this study takes into consideration the role of the students as constituents of this collaborative approach.

2.2.2.2 Space and the Montessori method

Another progressive approach to early childhood education is the Montessori education approach, which was developed by an Italian educator – Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Montessori's background as a physician also characterised her focus on the development of children within this educational approach. Three main qualities of her approach are:

(1) independence;

(2) freedom within limits;

(3) respect for a child's natural psychological, physical, and social development (Montessori, 1995).

Montessori's work on a new pedagogy stems from her reflections on children experimenting with the environment and interacting with materials, as well as lessons offered to them. It is believed that children and young adults engage in psychological self-construction while interacting with their environments. It is also believed that young children in their early years have a native ability to develop psychologically. Essential elements that could be found in Montessori inspired approaches are:

(1) mixed-age classrooms – programs are based on the key developmental planes in the journey from infancy to childhood (0-6, 6-12, 12-18, 18-24 years of age) and the programmes for adults are less developed than those for younger children;

(2) students are left to choose activities from within a suggested list of options;

(3) work time planned in continuous slots, for example three hours at a stretch;

(4) the use of a model based on discovery;

(5) a focused set of material formulated by Montessori and her co-workers;

(6) classrooms where freedom of movement is allowed;

(7) a teacher trained in the Montessori method (Montessori & Gutek, 2004).

The latter's purpose is very central to this approach, since teachers are meant to stimulate the children's enthusiasm for learning, and to direct it in a way that does not interfere with their innate aspiration to teach themselves and become independent.

The developmental planes described above are the fuel that drive each programme design. A plane which is particularly useful for this study is the third plane, which targets students between the age of 12 and 18. This encompasses the period of adolescence, which is characterised by turbulent physical and psychological changes. Montessori has emphasised the psychological instability and other difficulties, such as concentration, at this age (Montessori, 1995). Montessori also makes use of the term 'valorisation' to explain how, during this period, students try to make sense of their worth according to external evaluations. This third plane is the period during which the students construct their adult self in society and the programme, together with the environment, are designed to reflect these primary goals.

What is particularly interesting for this study is how the Montessori approach works within a 'prepared environment'. This prepared environment is personalised

according to basic human characteristics, in particular the characteristics of children at different ages and also to the individual characters of each and every child. The Montessori philosophy suggests that environments should display specific elements. One example is having layouts arranged in such a way as to enable movement and activity (Montessori & Gutek, 2004; Montessori, 1995, 1966). Moreover, it is believed that spaces should exhibit a sense of beauty and harmony, in addition to order and cleanliness. Spaces should be constructed according to the child's needs using proportions that are practical for children. The materials offered as part of the teaching process should be limited to those that support the child's development. There should also be access to nature, both inside and outside the classroom. Environments should reflect freedom, structure and order, and in addition social and intellectual interaction. Freedom, here, refers to the ability of children to move and explore freely, to interact socially and to learn and grow with minimal interference from others. Structure and order do not oppose freedom. However, they simulate the structure and order of the real world (Montessori, 1966). Thus, an organised system could assist children in making sense of their surroundings and, consequently, the world they live in. In this scenario, the prepared environment prepares a social environment whereby multi-age classrooms allow children to mix with different ages and to experience being both the eldest and the youngest at some point throughout the programme. Finally, the intellectual environment makes use of all the previous aspects, and combines the Montessori curriculum and materials to allow children to move from simple to more complex and abstract ideas.

Part of the Montessori approach also focuses on early years. However, it positions the role of the environment as having the potential to add significant value on many levels of education, and this may also be applicable to other levels of schooling, including primary and secondary levels. Again, it is being argued that the benefits shared by these young students might also prove to be beneficial with older students. The theories proposed by Montessori related to the school environment have been practiced and emulated with success, and it would be interesting to explore how these physical elements are experienced by the art students participating in this study. In addition, engaging with this literature has shaped and influenced my perspective on the environments in schools.

2.2.2.3 **Enabling environments**

I particularly selected these two educational approaches because I believe that they offer students an alternative approach to education and because both philosophies, although very different, have diversity, children and their different ways of learning at the core. Amongst some of the differences between these two approaches are the curriculum and the role of the teacher. However, given that they appear to be ideal educational approaches, my line of argument is that it would be beneficial to uncover what attention is given to the physical environment in both cases. Table 2.1 shows a summary of the main elements of the environment as displayed by each approach. Given that these two approaches are very different, I have sought to highlight similarities in the importance that each approach gives to environments. In the attempt to answer RQ3, whereby the meaning of the space and environment of art students is investigated, it would be illuminating to see to what extent these elements are sought by students. As indicated above, the table represents features in the environments of young students. However, it is still interesting to see the degree to which these older secondary students also seek these features.

Table 2.1 Enabling environments and their elements

Reggio Emilia approach	Montessori method
The environment should encourage children to exercise their **potential**, **ability** and **curiosity**	**Movement** and **activity**
A **collaborative endeavour** with architects, pedagogy specialists and visual artists	**Beauty**, **order** and **cleanliness**
Piazza (open space) – **meetings** and **interactions**	**Adequate proportions**
Flexible space	Nature – strong interplay between the **indoors** and **outdoors**
Atelier – workshop/studio rich in **materials** and **tools**	**Freedom**
Natural **ligh**t/large windows and **white walls**	**Organised system - structure** and **order** to reflect the structure and order of the real world
Glass – strong interplay between the **indoors** and **outdoors**	
Mirrors – **self-awareness** and **construction of identities**	
Colourful	
Minimal assistance – a sense of **independence**	

In both these educational approaches, children and young people are viewed as active authors of their own development. In each of the two cases, the teachers rely on thoroughly prepared environments, which are also aesthetically pleasing environments. These enabling environments are in their own right pedagogical tools. In sum, these approaches focus on children as having ownership of their own learning, and move away from the idea that children cannot guide their own development. These are environments where knowledge is socially constructed in collaboration with teachers and students in a kind of democratic space that is endorsed within the community.

2.2.2.4 Different spaces for learning – formal and informal spaces

Although socially, historically and culturally constructed (Mayall, 2002; James et al., 1998) children tend to spend their everyday life between three places: the home, the school and recreational facilities, which Rasmussen (2004) calls the 'institutionalized triangle'. She also distinguishes between 'children's spaces' (which they make) and 'places for children' (which adults make for them). This shows that children need different places, and not just those set out for them by adults. A place that includes

'places for children' becomes a 'children's space' once a particular meaning is given by the children upon physically experiencing this space. The concept of 'children's spaces' is also linked to the idea that children are actors and co-producers of their lives (Christensen & James, 2000; James et al., 1998).

Alison Clark (2010) provides different examples of the meaning young children give to spaces in their schools. As an outcome of her research Clark divides such spaces into the following categories: (1) 'official', (2) 'informal' and (3) 'physical' school.

The 'official school' context is defined as a controlled space, whereby rules and expectations influence the students' behaviour. During her research, a number of students have contrasted this space with their home space wherein the latter students are allowed to make more decisions. Adults surrounding children in their school, including teaching, administrative and other staff, are considered to be an important part of the official school context. This also applies to curriculum spaces, as children identify with these spaces of learning. It is interesting to note that children experience a difference between school and home due to rules and order. In this context, children feel that they can make less decisions. This perhaps limits their empowerment. These spaces seem to exclude collaboration and students are likely to inhabit these spaces of schooling without much immersion and control.

Clark (2010) gives importance to informal school practices and how students relate to them. Different layers of informal spaces are looked at in terms of different kinds of spaces. In three studies carried out by Clark (2010) children gave importance to personal spaces since these were associated with themselves, their family members, and friends. Children expressed the importance of self-identity, together with a sense of belonging and well-being. These have been illustrated through links between places and family members (such as siblings). Children also pointed out spaces pertaining to time spent at school with other people including teachers and helpers. This seems to echo an earlier discussion on space, where Tuan (1974) and Cresswell (2004) have identified many different kinds of places from the most obvious to the smallest corner in a room. It also recalls the idea of social space expounded by Lefebvre (1991). Here children make meaningful links between place and family members, and with the people they spend time with at school. Here, spaces at schools move away from the obvious understanding of space and become a product of relationships and interactions.

Clark (2010) also goes into the idea of private physical and imaginary spaces for children. Children tend to choose places in which to spend some time alone (quiet time) or with friends. Sometimes, such private spaces are not even physical but internalised, enabling children to be observers and to be themselves. Social spaces, in various forms, enable student interaction whereby students take on different roles and perform related practices. Imaginary spaces allow children to experience alternative worlds, wherein imaginary narratives are derived from visual images, artefacts or purely from imagination. Although here, reference to such spaces might be accommodating for young children it highlights the need for spaces of reflection which could be utilised by older students. Drawing on the work of Clark (2010), a constituent of space that seems to be important for students and children is that of imaginary spaces, and spaces for thinking and reflection. Bringing in this facet of space is important for this study, since it would be useful to explore what meanings students attach to spaces that are more abstract in nature, and which are related to thinking and reflection.

Drawing on the above arguments by Clark (2010), in this study it is being contended that children have many different interactions with space and are faced with a number of roles that the environment affords, on a daily basis. This illustrates that the same place and the way students interact with it offers different meanings. This point is connected to the theories of Lefebvre (1991), Cresswell (2004) and Massey (2005) as the students' interactions with space result in what the place means to them, and also what happens in that space. More so, the virtual, or imaginary, spaces also come into play in this place-making activity. The way Clark identifies these non-obvious spaces has urged me to look at the many levels of spaces in the implementation and analysis of this study. Through this lens, I have taken into consideration different levels of school spaces faced by students on a daily basis. This could imply that even one particular space, such as the art room, could be a combination of different types of spaces that students are engaged with.

Clark (2010) also delves into the perceptions of design qualities and other physical features as expressed by children. Outdoor spaces are also considered important as social spaces for interacting with friends, while having access to outdoor-specific equipment and resources. Apart from the outdoors, Clark denotes the importance students attach to the material aspect of the school's environment, including lights, ceilings and floors, as well as aesthetic qualities such as beauty and colour. According

to Clark, this highlights that children are aware of their learning environment, its various spaces and what constitutes good design around them. These features, which the children seem to prefer, echo a number of elements that are found in Reggio and Montessori inspired philosophies. The idea of light and outside areas seems to feature in different studies; beauty and colour are also elements that take priority. It has been useful to explore to what extent these findings could be replicated in this study and what physical features are preferred over others.

Burke and Grosvenor (2003), in *The School I'd Like: Children and Young People's Reflections on an Education for the 21st Century,* trace the development of school buildings throughout the last century. The authors discuss the idea of forgotten spaces in which formal and informal learning takes place. These include the school building itself but also canteens, schoolyards and playgrounds. Rigid building plans reflecting the traditional methods of instruction are being revolutionised to reflect new child-centred pedagogies. However, traditional approaches to school design have prevailed throughout the years. Burke and Grosvenor report the recommendations made by the UK's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to consult the users of school buildings, so as to elicit the needs of all stakeholders while being guided by the curriculum. This, again, echoes an element of collaborative play between all the stakeholders, which seems to be an essential approach as seen in the philosophies of the Reggio Emilia approach and in the work of Clark (2010) as well as Burke and Grosvenor (2003). Burke and Grosvenor's (2003) work shows that students tended to compare schools to prisons. This transpired from two competitions organised by the authors, as part of their research, in which students were asked to describe their ideal school. Circular and open spaces, rather than rigid squarish and rectangular layouts, were generally preferred. This also mirrors the seminal theories of Humphry Osmond (1957) who stated that 'sociopetal' spaces (i.e. spaces designed around radial structures) bring people together and are conducive to communication. On the contrary, 'sociofugal' arrangements (i.e. spaces that take the form of grids and linear set-ups) are said to inhibit communication and this might be the reason for the feeling of rigidity they instilled in students. Participants, in the work of Burke and Grosvenor, preferred comfortable, private, colourful, softly textured interiors as spaces for social activity and rest. These findings demonstrate that there are many spaces in schools that are potentially suitable for learning to take place - be it formal or informal learning. This agrees with the research of Clark (2010) that has been discussed above. Moreover,

students care about the way their spaces look and which features improve their encounter with that space. It also recalls the interplay between people and the environment (Cresswell, 2004) and this seems to take place in the way schools are experienced.

The building of schools should ideally emerge from a collaborative endeavour with all the stakeholders involved, and this gives voice to students because they care about their school's spaces and what they look like (Montessori & Gutek, 2004; Rankin, 2004; Burke & Grosvenor, 2003; Edwards et al., 1993; Gandini, 1993).

These perspectives have helped me to further understand the meanings that art students might attach to the space around them in schools, and they have also helped me to understand what positions these students might take in terms of their interaction with spaces at school.

2.2.2.5 **Learning-oriented pedagogies and affective learning environments**

A number of pedagogical approaches are proponents towards learner orientation, rather than teaching orientation. Students' learning objectives are given more importance than teaching themes. Gonzalez et al. (2004), among other authors, link the creation of effective learning environments to the success of learning-oriented pedagogies. According to Chism (2006), spaces designed with learning in mind facilitate deeper and richer learning. Eickmann et al., (2004) argued that integrated learning environments might develop creative abilities and problem solving strategies. The above views highlight an important link between the physical space where learning takes place and the learning process. Nonetheless, many times space and place are not given the adequate importance in learning programmes as will be the case of, for example, content and activities (Eickmann et al., 2004). From my personal experience at my workplace, space-related issues interfered with the teachers' plans, ideas and their actuation. On several occasions, I was compelled to give lessons in barren and unattractive places, one of which has become my permanent art room. However, various projects led by the students themselves helped to re-imagine and redesign their learning environment. The 're-learning' of place is a core part of the new work in pedagogy which is important for schools and schooling (Cormack et al., 2008).

According to Wenger (1998) all places in which people have performed a task or carried out an activity could be considered as learning environments, including a degree

of learning from both formal and informal skills. This goes in hand with the theory proposed by Dewey (1938, 1916) that children learn best by 'doing through experience'. Doing is not only associated with formal practices, which take place in schools, but it is also represented in activities taking place at home and in other social situations.

Lippmann (2015) argues that the learning environment combines physical and social aspects. Heron and Heward (1988) assert that, apart from physical characteristics such as light, sound, and spatial support for movement amongst others, students are influenced by the social relationships and cultural values. This ties up with the previous ideas that learning spaces take many different forms and are present on different levels. Lippmann (2015) bases his theories on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and the zone of proximal development where, he believes, students acquire their knowledge faster when they are working with peers who have more experience and knowledge. This theory supports the idea that there is a transformational quality in the way learners interact with their social and physical environments.

Lippmann further suggests that for learning environments to be flowing, fluid and flexible these must be directed at individual, one-to-one, small-group and large-group type of audiences. He also maintains that spatial design influences how students engage with one another, and whether the space permits participation in various activities. Hence, learning environments must encourage collaboration. Usually, in this scenario, collaboration means that a group of students work together on a task and are able to communicate and cooperate. However, at different points in carrying out a task, students are likely to feel the need to move away and work on their own for a while. Therefore, collaborative spaces should also cater for individual work. Collaborative spaces could include all spaces in schools, thus maximising the potential of the whole building. Lippmann goes on to elaborate that technology serves as a catalyst for learning in terms of support, but advocates against single use of technology, since this has its limitations. This is especially so if it is used as a focal point, which makes it a teacher-directed approach. Collaborative spaces should also be reflected in the arrangement and layout of the furniture available, which in turn accommodates easier teamwork. Lippmann (2015) also discusses a number of break-out spaces that could also support collaboration. These take form of different open areas, be they small or larger, that reflect flexibility and offer the possibility of quiet and private places.

In following the direction to which teaching and learning are moving, it is presupposed that the design of learning environments should reflect this development (Lippmann, 2015; Oblinger, 2006). Chism (2006) adds that the physical environment has a key role by which school systems manage to engage their students. Recent literature on learning and school environments points towards an understanding of what affects the physical learning environments, and considers ways of linking spaces with their activity in an attempt to shed light on the social and spatial practices of learning (Boys, 2011). Boys, drawing on architectural practice and education, discusses ways in which stakeholders analyse the relationship between physical spaces and learning. What is particularly relevant for this study is the way she advocates for an interdisciplinary approach to the development of learning spaces, and the discussions focus on the need to have collaboration and shared understandings between people designing the space, educationists, and school management teams.

The literature presented in this sub-section concerning spaces in schools has highlighted the significance of the environment as an integral part of schooling. There is a transformational quality in the way learners interact with their social and physical environment (Lippmann, 2015). Moreover, students learn from all spaces where they experience some kind of transaction with that space (Wenger, 1998). The two alternative approaches to education discussed above, namely the Reggio Emilia approach and the Montessori method, present descriptions of enabling environments that are pedagogical tools in their own right. A number of elements that seem to have a positive effect on students are discussed for both environments. This has provided me with a lens to understand affective environments and, although these are essentially related to younger students, it would still be beneficial to explore to what extent the participating art students would resonate these conclusions.

2.2.3 The studio space

When working in shared spaces sometimes I notice individuals who, where possible, tend to find corners or small areas that they could make their own, even if temporarily. This reflects the need to have a particular area that artists could call 'personal', and which offers a sense of having their personal storage area for their materials, and which would afford a space that supports art making (Sjöholm, 2013). Furthermore, the European and American model of the studio have an important role in how artists perceive a studio, and ultimately what makes and validates an artist. The European

model is usually a cluttered space with a high ceiling, and which is naturally lit. The American model usually comprises of a renovated warehouse with large windows, wooden flooring, white walls and a system of good artificial lighting (Buren, 1983). This latter model is commonly emulated, as is seen in London, where studios are characterised by converted warehouses, altered spaces such as lofts, old schools and factories (Sjöholm, 2013). This echoes the concept of appropriation as suggested by Lefebvre (1991). Many artists emulate one of the models in the planning of their studio space and this process gives them more validation (Bain, 2005, 2004; Buren, 1983). However, this also depends on various factors such as financial means and real estate, which might not be readily available to all artists. On the other hand, these models of the studio do not reflect the way all artists work. For example, many British artists work outside the gallery or in different locations that are not related to a studio.

The studio as a space for creation has recently gained particular attention (Amirsadeghi, 2012; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Davidts & Paice, 2009). Not much has been written about studios in terms of individual work processes that combine forms of resources, knowledge, skills, materialities and artists' experiences. The process of visiting studios gives insights into how artists work and how they create knowledge. Backing the work of artists are complex knowledge practices that are integrated with spatial knowledge properties. The physical space of the studio is an important aspect that brings these practices together. Studios are generally used as a space for making and displaying art, for research, for reflection and for storing (Sjöholm, 2013; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Buren, 2007; Bain, 2005, 2004). In this view, art studios are places that could be compared to a scientific laboratory, wherein ideas take shape through experimentation. Within such places, the artists sometimes also develop a sense of attachment to the objects of the studio. This is expressed through their collections, stored objects and through the way they care for certain artefacts. Sjöholm (2013) also writes that essential to artistic practice are knowledge and skills. In this sense, the studio could be approached as a workplace.

A shared practice of many contemporary artists is that studio based work is the process of working through an idea as a method of thinking, as well as making (Wainright, 2010). Sjöholm (2013), represents the making of art from a perspective of artists and their everyday and studio-related knowledge practices. Drawing on the work of O'Doherty (2007), Sjöholm maintains that:

> the materialities of the studio spaces are partly active and ever-changing evidence, traces, and archives, that allow insights into creative individuals' work, creativity and methodologies; the potentialities as well as challenges that this space offers to the artists and their studio based practice. In short, the studio can be read as text, and being as "revelatory as art works themselves". (Sjöholm, 2013, p.12, original emphasis)

Sjöholm continues to describe studio practice as that action which:

> through reflexive practices such as observation and contemplation, experiences, ideas and collected material will start to be made intellectual, intelligible and therefore eventually communicable. (Sjöholm, 2013, p.16)

The research of Brandt et al. (2011) is positioned in the field of higher education and it presents the development of a theoretical framework focussing on the basic elements of the design studio and, moreover, how specific features impact learning and experience when compared to conventional classrooms at universities. Brandt et al. used ethnographic research methods to portray how students and faculty use the space of the studio, and also to capture the social interactions of the individuals participating in their study. Their work stemmed from the intention to understand how the studio could be adapted across different disciplinary domains; it had the further aim of clarifying the relationship between social and physical context, and ultimately its influence on learning.

Brandt et al. (2011) determine a particular position for the studio, namely as that place that bridges both the academic community and the professional community of practice. By seeking to provide what they call a 'studio bridge' elements from both practices are taken into account and could be made to work together. The data of their study that was collected over a period of two years was analysed reflecting a number of theories that supported and framed their work. They view learning as a social activity, through which process meaning is negotiated in the social context of others (Vygotsky, 1978). The authors also subscribe to the notion that the situated element of learning as an everyday practice relies heavily on the interactions of individuals in the design studio as a learning community (Brown et al., 1989). They also draw on practice theory (Lave, 1997; 1993) which focuses on the ways in which individuals, through their everyday events, create meaning, echoing the interrelations of larger social structures.

These theories, which give meaning to learning within practice, have been very useful as they have provided me with ways towards understanding aspects of situated learning underpinning the studio method of learning. Interweaving the principles discussed

above, I also identify an implied reference to the concept of scaffolding. In this particular environment, the students were offered scaffolding by the instructors, professional community and also their peers during the iterative feedback cycles that inform their design process.

2.2.3.1 **Artists' meanings of the studio**

In the following section I discuss a number of interviews with artists, which are to be found in two recent publications. These interviews are specifically related to the meanings that artists make of their studios. Given that this thesis is grounded in practice in that it elicits meaning from experience and practice, these interviews would further validate the voice of the artists (participants) in making meaning through a process of reflection on their own practice. Each artist in these two publications gives different insights on what the studio means and how it is viewed as a constituent part of practice. I have selected these particular artists since they specifically and directly discuss their meanings of the studio. This is related to the research question **"What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?" (RQ2)**

In, *The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists*, edited by Jacob and Grabner (2010), a number of appealing discussions of various aspects of the studio take place. These are particularly relevant for this study since they put forward different ways of viewing the studio. The studio space is viewed as a physical space and also as a set of conditions where artworks are produced and, moreover, where the artistic process with all its complexity takes place. From the various discussions with different artists it transpired that the studio is viewed, amongst others, as a 'resource' and as a 'set and setting'. These specific modes of the studio are elicited through conversations with artists as they reflect on their practice.

Amongst the featured artists (Jacob & Grabner, 2010), some spoke about their studio as a resource that includes all the materials they want to work with, and also additional bits and pieces that they save over the years. In this view, a studio is the place where all the necessary and interesting objects are kept under one roof. Some of the artists interviewed by the authors also mentioned that they have more than one studio and, usually, at least one of them is a place where they seek to be on their own (Jacob & Grabner, 2010). One of the artists, John Baldessari, an American conceptual artist who works on photography and appropriated images, stated that he enjoys having objects

around him and he keeps piles of magazines close at hand for reference purposes. Additionally, another conceptual artist described the studio as a resource, as follows:

> My studio is full of things – things found, things made, things that may help make more things. I have all the *New York Times* from 2003 to the present, currently stored in seventy-six white file boxes lining the walls. I also have about fourteen hundred pink straws in blue boxes, dozens of lampshades, beach balls with different kinds of stripes, over four hundred pig figurines, a few brass scales, a box of empty water bottles, thousands of gold doilies, at least six gallons of Elmer's glue, an eighty-foot wide stage curtain that once belonged to the magician Doug Henning, hundreds of books presenting points of view that have since been proven wrong, and a file drawer filled with printouts from the Internet of images of or related to Freud. (Shana Lutker, interviewed in Jacob and Grabner, 2010, p.23)

Howard Singerman, an art academic and historian, also interviewed in Jacob & Grabner (2010) discusses the studio in terms of set and setting. He talks about the desire that exists for an artist to work with other artists, and also to work individually in a private space. It seems that both circumstances take place in practice (Bain, 2005) and artists often choose to work in proximity with one another to prevent working in isolation. However, according to Bain (2005) artists tend to look for both circumstances at different points during their practice. Moreover, as another mode of presenting the studio as a set and setting, the artist and writer Frances Stark also discusses how the studio is "often expected to be a site of display offering, at the very least, some captivating evidence of a process" (Frances Stark, interviewed in Jacob and Grabner, 2010, p.48). Nonetheless, she also thinks that, at times, her studio says little about her work where parts of the process are not clearly illustrated.

Sanctuary: Britain's Artists and their Studios (edited by Hossein Amirsadeghi, 2012) gives 120 accounts of the working process of different contemporary artists working in Britain, and these range from well-known to upcoming artists. This publication gives an insight into the modern art world and also contemporary art practice, with an opportunity to glimpse at the process behind the scenes of the private practice of artists. These descriptions suggest that the studio has the affordance to enable reverie and to provide the possibility for artists to be absorbed in their own art making practices. During these interviews, grounded in their personal experience, the artists speak about many different elements that become part of their artistic process, and in the process of exploring their ideas they regularly refer to the studio. The importance of the studio ranges from being extremely important to being useful but not necessarily crucial to

the artistic process. The setting for these interviews is very similar to that which grounded the study with the participating artists (see Section 3.5.2) carried out for this thesis. The following excerpts from the interviews with the British artists reinforce what is articulated by the participants of this thesis. This frames the reference to these interviews as they contribute to shed light on the research question **"What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?" (RQ2)**

One artist, Cecily Brown, a British artist working predominantly in figuration and abstraction, whose energetic work bears a suggestion of Willem de Kooning (1904-1997) and Francis Bacon (1909-1992), talks about the concept of spending time in the studio. The more time she spent in it, the deeper she could delve into her reflections on the artistic process. Here, the studio is a place for reflection and a possibility to be around the artworks in a process of inspection. This reflection informs future work, and thus the studio becomes a place that informs upcoming work. It is interesting to note how this artist finds that the more she experiences the studio the more she delves into her work and the more she comes out of the process feeling knowledgeable.

> I know a lot of people now don't need a studio. But it's my favourite place. I think it's partly because of the medium. You're compelled to be around the paintings a lot more than you are with some other mediums. The more time you spend, the richer – the deeper – it becomes, and the more you look at what you've done, the more it's going to help you with the next painting. You can never spend enough time in the studio. (Cecily Brown, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.34)

Another aspect that featured in these interviews is the idea of the studio as a laboratory of ideas. Here the focus is not just on the process of making art but it becomes a place where ideas are experimented upon. In a way, the studio becomes an extension of the mind so the physical space enables the processes of the mind to materialise.

> [The studio is more] like a laboratory of ideas. Recently I've been more and more intrigued by how one can open up the studio even more, or the practice perhaps. How do you separate the studio and this particular building, but I've never really seen that as the studio. The studio is in the mind and in the world. (Shezad Dawood, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.43)

> [The studio] can be a laboratory of ideas […]. (Jenny Saville, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.517)

This idea of the studio as a laboratory recalls what Dewey (1934) wrote when he argued that experimentation is not solely related to the sciences but it equally takes place in

the practice and progress of making art. This experimentation opens new fields of experience.

The British artist Adam Neate, who has become particularly known for his multi-dimensional urban art, which is left in the streets for people to take, talks about his experience of working in a studio but not depending on it for ideas. He claims that most of the ideas come from everyday experiences, and he just keeps these visuals in his mind or, at most, sketches them. It is then in the studio that the artist works and develops his ideas, which ideas are predominantly inspired from experiencing life.

> I don't need a massive studio. It's all within: the ideas and the thinking and the feeling. It's the environment I'm exposed to when the art comes out. You could have the biggest studio, I don't know, the South of France, and you could be in this big studio drinking red wine all afternoon, painting pictures of whatever, but 80 per cent of that creativity is you going out into the world and experiencing things. Be it going to a chip shop and seeing somebody having a fight outside or going to a car-boot sale and seeing a load of crazy people standing in front of their crazy personal objects. You don't need a big studio for that. It all just goes into your head and you maybe keep a sketch of it…You absorb it if you're sensitive to the environment. While you are there drawing a rusty padlock, what's important is its meaning to you, your connection to it – the symbolism of the object. (Adam Neate, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.49)

Liam Gillick, a British conceptual artist who has been associated with relational art, discusses the idea of extending the studio to other locations. This view of the studio is not limited to the actual physical space of the studio. The artist toys with the idea of having no studio, thus implying a sense of freedom and an array of possibilities. This idea is very illuminating. It positions the studio as an important, but not crucial, place. What the artist brings with him is from the world outside his studio.

> The geography of my studio is like this: when I'm in a good mood and everything is going well, it's enormous, because it is not restricted to one location. In many different places there are different things happening and I know they are being done or worked on or talked about or discussed. So it is literally this expanded geography. In another way it means there is potential, there are always possibilities […] it is interesting to talk about the freedom of no studio and the studio of the mind […]. (Liam Gillick, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, pp.62-63)

Jonathan Wateridge talks about the idea of control over the studio space. His hyper-realist style and large-scale work echoes the tradition of classical masters, and to prepare for his work he stages scenes with models and actors, and takes many photographs from which to work on. He is accustomed to a fluid, perhaps paradoxical, relationship between having control over the studio and on the other hand accepting a

degree of disorderliness. According to Wateridge this affords different possibilities presenting themselves. Negotiating between having complete control and allowing some form of freedom allows for interesting things to happen.

> I want complete control over my working environment. But I'm also quite happy to then let things screw up because that's where interesting things happen. I like the fact that I've now reached a point where I want to direct it. That has slowly allowed me to build the confidence to set up these scenarios, build these sets and then bring people in and just allow them to behave. That tension between control and accident is something I enjoy. (Jonathan Wateridge, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.69)

Some artists feel that they are tied to their studio and would not work in other places. Other artists, such as Mona Hatoum, a Palestinian artist living in London who works predominantly on video work and installations, find that working in different places is part of the inspiration for their work. Different places in which to work offer different contexts to work with, and these inform the art process and end result.

> I don't see the studio as the centre of my activities as an artist. I like to work in many different locations and often turn an invitation for an exhibition abroad into a kind of residency. Instead of shipping a lot of work created in my studio, I prefer to go to the place and make work in the location itself. For instance, I was asked to do a solo show at the Beirut Art Center. I was inspired by the space itself but also by the situation in Beirut which is where I was born. I spent a week going around looking for things in flea markets and searched for possible fabricators and then went back a few months later and spent a month putting the work together. I tend to do at least one residency of this kind each year. I feel more creative when I am on the move and working in different contexts. (Mona Hatoum, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.94)

Chantal Joffe's interview sheds light on the element of 'sanctuary'. It is that place where she goes to when she needs to be quiet, and when she needs to think and reflect. She stresses how important it is to have a place that is her own, and which no one else could use. This view of the studio gives it an additional sense of retreat and escape to a world that is very personal. Joffe's work consists of expressive large-scale portraits, which generally feature women and children.

> It's somewhere that I always find incredibly peaceful to come to. I sometimes come in for half an hour and look at books or just think. It's an oasis, I suppose. I have models come in, and sometimes that's quite useful, but I'm really glad when they go. I find it quite hard to have other people in this space. It taints it. All the work feels looked at when you start; everything in it feels exposed. It feels ruined. I know it's a filthy, messy space, but it's my filthy, messy space. It's the one place in the world where nobody else can do anything. My home is quite messy, but it's not mine. There is nothing worse than people going, 'Do you fancy a cup of coffee? all the time! Then anything you've had in your head

is immediately dispersed. You absolutely have to have your own private, door lockable studio. (Chantal Joffe, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.174)

Keith Tyson, who works with a wide range of media, and whose work questions conventional methods of constructing realities, compares the studio to a large three-dimensional diary when he explains that he keeps a diary of ideas on the walls of the studio. Recording ideas in a system that uses the studio itself gives him the possibility to rediscover these ideas from time to time.

> […] creativity doesn't happen in a linear way. You have forty ideas simultaneously, and then there is a huge drought. So you want to keep them all on coat hangers, as it were. Or you just want to record the moment. I am not a control freak; it is more of a Taoist approach. I believe there is a system, that I am a conduit through which art can come out. I am a discoverer as much as an inventor. (Keith Tyson, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.236)

Jenny Saville, a British artist who paints large-scale works depicting the female figure, and focusing particularly on painting flesh, in her interview summarised the different features that a studio could have according to what an artist needs at a particular point in time. She explains how the meaning of a studio changes according to what she needs. Saville does not feel that the studio affects her core element but agrees that it does affect her work. In addition, she claims that she learns diverse things from different spaces.

> A studio changes depending on what you need at a particular time […] it can be a safe haven; it can be somewhere you don't want to go because the work's not going right. If I'm not in the studio, I feel a magnetic pull back to it. It's been like that since I was quite young […]. My studio does affect my work but not the core element. When I get in there, I find my feet quite quickly. I learn different things from different spaces. (Jenny Saville, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012, p.517)

Through these interesting and unique interviews, the studio has been presented in a number of ways. The meaning of the studio takes on different layers and these interviews have presented this space as one which offers different modes of operation for the artist to perform. One of these is that of the studio as a resource, housing all the elements that are important for the artist and which in the process of making art could act as an inspiration. Collecting resources and having the necessary place to store these materials seem to be important parts of practice, to which a number of artists seem to give priority. It has been discussed that creativity does not happen in a linear way and the process of recording ideas becomes valuable. One way of doing so is by using the studio as a three-dimensional diary and using its physical elements,

such as walls, to accumulate different ideas for the artist to rediscover later. In this scenario, the materiality of the studio has the affordance to bring together the ideas and resources that are meaningful to the artist.

These interviews also shed light on the contradictory aspect of using the studio to work with other artists or to work individually. According to these interviews artists tend to look for both circumstances at different points during their practice, and this also concurs with the work of Bain (2005). This reflects the different needs of artists. In making the choice of working in solitude, the studio is likely to be viewed as a private and personal space – a sanctuary, where the artist could retreat and spend time thinking and reflecting. This has also been referenced in the literature on spaces in schools (Lippmann, 2015; Clark, 2010) where young students seem to desire the possibility to work privately and to have some quiet time for reflection. It has also been discussed that the more the artists experience, the studio the more knowledgeable they become and the more they would be prepared for the next work.

The issue of whether the studio is crucial to the artistic process was also discussed, and this ranges from being extremely important to being useful but not necessarily crucial to the artistic process. In this case, the studio does affect the work but not the core element. From these interviews, it seems that what it affects is the physicality of the work rather than fundamental elements, such as the concept and feelings. A number of artists have also discussed that having no studio gives them freedom and presents an array of possibilities since the artist is not restricted to one location. In this process the studio is extended to other locations, which is a process that offers different contexts to work from. In certain cases, working in different places is part of the inspiration and it becomes part of the process of learning from these different spaces.

An appealing way of looking at the studio is to view this space as a laboratory of ideas. The ideas that some to the artist's mind are reflected upon and put into work in the studio. Drawing on these interviews, it seems that the artists are likely to get ideas from outside the studio and from everyday experiences, and put these ideas to experimentation in the studio. It has also been discussed that the studio also becomes a site of display by showing evidence of process. However, this is not always possible as it depends on the phases of work through which the artist passes. Furthermore, having complete control over the studio space versus allowing some form of freedom

allows for interesting things happen by juggling the tension between control and accident. This positions the studio as a space with possibilities (Craft, 2001).

2.2.3.2 Understanding artists through their studio spaces

Learning about artists' different ways of working is a means of understanding a complex and multi-layered process. This could be achieved through direct communication with the artists, through notes, journals, diaries and personal correspondence, or else through the actual spaces in which these artists work or live. The culture of preserving artists' workspaces gives the opportunity to reveal so much evidence surrounding the work and personalities of artists. This idea also echoes what has been discussed previously about the notion of place (Cresswell, 2004). People become attached to spaces and transform them into meaningful places. They attain this through their activities within these spaces. Thus, attempting to understand these activities in situ would reveal many different layers of meanings. Any little object within a space could reveal important stories imbued with many relevant meanings.

The approach to understand the practice of artists through a study of the studio space is becoming common practice, such as in the case of the artist Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) amongst others. A multidisciplinary research team led by the Van Gogh Museum, Shell and the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency has worked on a project to examine Van Gogh's studio practice (Van Gogh's Studio Practice, 2005). The aim of the research, which at the time of writing is still ongoing, is to deepen an understanding of the artist's working methods in the context of his times. As in this case, understanding studio practice allows for a better understanding of what it has been like, or what it is like, to live and work in these sites. Studying physical studio spaces offers insights into the elements which make up the entire physical context for an artist's studio practice (in addition, glimpses of the mental context in the form of diaries and personal writings are sometimes available).

Ellen G. Landau (2005) an art historian, particularly researching the work of Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) and Lee Krasner (1908-1984) gives an account of what it means to physically walk and experience being in the home and studio of the artists. She recounts her experience by stating that:

> First-hand experience of Pollock and Krasner's home and studio allows
> extraordinary insight into the visceral role geography can play in stimulating
> creativity. For example, when I walked the short distance from house to studio

in the early morning, hearing the staccato sounds and observing the natural motions in their weed-choked meadow, I finally understood why Krasner's suggested title *Sounds in the Grass* characterizes to perfection the charged intensity of so many of the canvases Pollock painted early on in his new environment. (Landau, 2005, p.30, original italics)

Similarly, Wanda M. Corn (2005), an American art historian, talks about the studio of the artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986). Her description and account of O'Keeffe's studio offers an insight into how modernist artists have attached importance to place, and how this has affected their work. The physical environment surrounding the artist when she was producing her work was part of what inspired her to relate to her particular painting style.

> The minimalist decoration of her home at Abiquiu, her views, and her organic gardens reorder the relationship of the artist to nature. With O'Keeffe we feel close to Emerson and Thoreau, in that their home exudes a desire to live in peaceful coexistence with the land around it. It is not the wealth of accumulation but her Zen-like absences that impress us. Indeed, we marvel at the discipline she brought to her environment, refusing as she did to fill her spaces with man-made goods. Her environments also seem pointedly anti-consumer, though this, too, is cultural artifice. Simplicity and naturalness were religion in her household. (Corn, 2005, p.8)

These two accounts exemplify the approach to understand the practice of artists through the study of the studio space. Here, the studio becomes a site for research and learning about the ways artists work in. This approach could inform different disciplines such as art education, arts practice, history of art, anthropology and psychology, amongst others. It positions the studio as a multi-layered resource.

2.2.3.3 The studio at home and the female identity

The studio has the role of a strong identity maker, especially for females. Alison Bain (2004), a social and cultural geographer, discusses the process of negotiating studio space with particular emphasis on female visual artists, and the struggles they face. Bain's argument centres on the idea that the studio is a place where artistic identity is constructed. This stems from fieldwork research conducted over a ten-month period with 80 visual artists in Toronto (Canada), half of whom were female artists. Building on the work of Garfunkel (1984) Bain argues that "the studio space has a crucial role to play for women in reinforcing artistic identity" (Bain, 2004, p.173). She illustrates how artists locate the studio as that place that forms their daily lives and affects the way they see themselves as artists. For some, it is a "necessary prop" (p.177) to sustain their personal identity as professional artists.

One of the artists Bain (2004) interviewed found it difficult to categorise herself as a studio-based artist. However, having a studio is still part of what others define as being an artist. Here, a studio is a requirement of artistic practice and also reinforces artistic identity. This all relates to a commitment to the profession of being an artist and again it gives more validation. Moreover, it becomes a private territory that sets boundaries that enable artists to spend time alone, and in privacy. However, female artists with families do not necessarily have this privilege. In relation to this, Bain (2004) discusses the notion of 'pieces of space' when she talks about the struggles that many female artists face in their everyday lives. This supports the idea that many women with families also work with fragmented, or 'pieces of' time. This setting locates domestic responsibilities and difficulties before being artists, and many times this causes much frustration.

Working at home for female artists could be somewhat problematic, in the sense that at different points throughout the day children, family members and chores would interrupt their work. For this reason, the boundaries of privacy and personal working time are not always easily respected. In certain families, this could be even interpreted as "evasion of family duty" (Bain, 2004, p.186).

> Whether it be smells, demands for meals, doing laundry or shopping, a woman artist is never completely insulated in her studio when it is part of her home for she is repeatedly interrupted by the varied demands of domesticity. (Bain, 2004, p.186)

As a result, women artists with families whose art practice is home based usually teach themselves to adapt their studio space for different activities that are not necessarily related to art. In order to 'survive', they must get used to disruptions by other family members and try to retain an effortless balance between work and personal life. The above perspective is useful for this study since it acknowledges the different lived experiences of artists and their relationship with the studio space.

2.3 Section B: Creativity

2.3.1 Understanding creativity

In the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) an initial discussion on creativity was presented. This section delves into a more detailed discussion on this complex notion. Since the dawn of civilisation, human beings strived to understand the meaning of creativity (Albert & Runco, 1999). Research on creativity, especially within the field of

psychology, has increased markedly from 1950 onwards (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). It was the influential American Psychological Association (APA) Presidential Address by the psychologist J. P. Guilford, in 1950 that challenged other psychologists to give attention to creativity, and which ultimately paved the way for the development of the study of creativity. Although this move in the study of creativity was triggered within the psychology domain, it was similarly followed in other fields of research.

Irrespective of the field of study, defining the term 'creativity' has involved a number of different implications, since it was viewed from a number of different lenses depending on the disciplines concerned (Fisher, 2004). Due to this shortcoming, creativity was seen as either very elusive or trivial. Different perceptions of creativity that flow from different disciplines may have had an effect on research. For example, there was the common belief that some people are more creative than others. Such outlooks within creativity research in education made fostering creativity rather difficult. For instance, creativity has been associated with a lack of discipline. Another common perception is that creativity pertains to only a few gifted individuals. It has also been argued that creativity is a mysterious element, about which little is known (Cropley, 2001; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Such a scenario pinpoints the need to understand the concept of creativity in a broad way by using a range of theories, and not simply relying on a narrow use of the term.

Ken Robinson, a leading author on the development of creativity and innovation in education, business and the cultural sector writes about the importance of creativity in today's climate (Robinson, 2011). Robinson advocates that education is an organic system and not a mechanical one. The central argument in his work around creativity is that, since humans are living in times of global revolution, if people aim to flourish in these conditions they need to look at their talents and abilities from a different perspective, and attempt to use them as best they can. Moreover, he suggests that for this to happen people need to adopt different approaches in the way their education systems are managed. Through this argument, he positions creativity as an important ingredient that education systems should foster and support. He also maintains that "creativity is possible in every discipline and should be promoted throughout the whole of education" (Robinson, 2011, p.258). The work of Robinson particularly helps me to understand how the role of creativity in education is a crucial element. The way he highlights the importance of creativity in different spheres and how it equips

individuals to be prepared for their future, positions this notion as an element that merits awareness and observation. This is in line with the overarching research question (RQ1) that frames this study: "**What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?**" It is also in line with the aim of this study, which is to understand the relationship between the physical space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practices, based on the premise that creativity is viewed as an important ingredient in different fields and research areas.

2.3.2 Defining creativity

It is difficult to hone in on one simple definition of creativity, due to a wide variety of theories and understandings surrounding the term. This is compounded by the fact that a common framework in the literature seeking to address creativity is difficult to come by. The terms used to describe this concept vary across different fields and periods and, as a result, disagreement and criticism prevailed whenever an attempt to formalise the concept was made (Albert & Runco, 1999). For this reason, creativity research is presented as a delicate endeavour. Nonetheless, working with creativity requires an attempt to define the concept and guide the research effort on the basis of a common understanding. However, although in this section I will be presenting my own definition of the concept, I will not argue for an impermeable definition of the term. Instead, my aim is to develop a sensitivity to a number of assumptions that underpin the term and its uses, and to try making sense of how different standpoints could affect different understandings, especially in work on creativity with different people and from different backgrounds.

Compiling a list of qualities that make up a creative product or outlining key features underlining the creative process is a difficult endeavour. This is especially so when trying to generalise such qualities or features.

As argued above, various perspectives have been applied in exploring creativity, and different emphases were made on different aspects of the definitions provided. As illustrated in the following discussions on creativity (see Section 2.3.3) these definitions tend to be constructed following the various theoretical and philosophical frameworks used across the different areas of studies. In view of this, collaborating with people from different domains and backgrounds might present conflict, due to the

different understandings that are attached to creativity. (Banaji et al., 2010). This is because creativity is a contested term on which people locate their own perceptions and values.

Definitions of creativity are usually presented in terms of the thought processes, the person or the creative product, all of which are features that characterise creativity (Amabile, 1996). The person and the creative product are considered to be the most common terms used to define the term (Boden, 2004; Mayer 1999; Nickerson, 1999). Novelty and appropriateness are two of the characteristics used to define creativity related to the creative product or outcome. Amabile (1996) has further developed this idea by arguing that for something to be creative one should maintain its original insight, evaluate it, elaborate upon it and develop it fully.

Despite the efforts to define creativity it still a highly contested concept. Although a consensus on the definition of creativity is difficult to reach, I believe that a researcher should still be made aware of the important distinctions and aspects of the creative process arising from previous studies. This is necessary to help the researcher adapt effectively within any research effort concerning creativity.

2.3.2.1 A working definition

The following is a definition of the term 'creativity' as used in this study, followed by an explanation of the different elements and how this was inspired by various literature.

> Creativity is the ability to question what is already known or what seems obvious at a given point, enabling an individual to consider unfamiliar perspectives and options. The outcome could be manifested in products (e.g. physical things, practices, concepts) and/or it may result in sensory responses by observers. An outcome requires some degree of novelty and positive value (e.g. solves a problem). In hindsight, the distinctive thinking that led to the outcome appears simple and demonstrates a progression in an individual's own performance.

This definition starts by talking about the function of questioning, which I believe is the essence of creativity. This links up with the idea of possibility thinking, asking questions and not being satisfied with the answers at hand. Craft (2001, 2000) proposed that possibility thinking is at the core of creative learning comprising of both the finding and solving of problems. This was investigated through studies based within a school context (Craft & Jeffrey, 2004). However, it could be applied to many other contexts. It places creativity at a position where boundaries are pushed, and unknown paths are pursued.

Consequently, this way of thinking may lead to the creation of some type of tangible product, but could also lead to new ways of using existing products, ideas for new systems, new practices, concepts and new perspectives in arguments. Furthermore, a reaction caused in other people, such as surprise, awe and admiration could be an outcome in itself. Jackson and Messick (1965) propose that creative products may bring out a particular set of responses from observers such as "surprise" (Jackson & Messick, 1965, p.317), "satisfaction", "stimulation" and "savouring" (Jackson & Messick, p.318). Similarly, Bruner (1962) examined the responses from observers towards creative products. Bruner perceived the creative product as something that causes an element of surprise in the observer, and also a realisation that the outcome of the product or response is novel and at the same time appropriate.

A product, be it tangible or intangible, is considered creative if it is original; and this could either mean that the product is either new from a historical perspective or it is new to the individual or individuals concerned. This also extends to products that add some positive value, such as solving a problem, improve something or bring out new perspectives. The notion of originality and appropriateness is studied by a number of authors (Runco et al., 2005; Boden, 2004; Runco, 2004; Mayer, 1999; Nickerson, 1999; Amabile, 1996).

My working definition also denotes a belief that creative outcomes are the result of a simple idea, which eventually develops into a final product. I consider simplicity in thought as the affordance of that additional edge to an idea resulting from a relatively simple shift in perspective or in the way things are examined. This arises from my observations of people demonstrating astonishment at the realisation of how simple a successful product or idea is. This is particularly illustrated in lateral thinking approaches proposed by Edward de Bono (1999), a leading figure in the research of pragmatic thinking tools for creativity and lateral thinking approaches. De Bono argues that simplicity is a core value of the creative process in view of an increasingly complex world. The author emphasises that creativity and simplicity are closely related.

Finally, the definition addresses my perspective on the idea of an 'ipsative' assessment (that is, of the self) for creativity. This is explained by Amabile (1996) who argues that a product should be assessed against one's own previous work. Here, I introduce the concept of ordinary creativity (as opposed to high creativity), whereby all individuals

have the potential to be creative even if assessed against their own work (Robinson, 2011; Boden, 2004; Craft, 2001).

In sum, my working definition of creativity is framed around the function of questioning and of possibility thinking. Boundaries are pushed and unknown paths are pursued. It is also framed around the idea of ordinary creativity, which positions the term as something which is within reach of everyone. This perspective is particularly beneficial when applied to educational settings, since it gives each student the opportunity to be creative and to make full use of this skill.

2.3.3 Creativity – a socially constructed notion

A creative learning programme, called *Creative Partnerships*, was active for some years (2002-2011) in the UK, where it aimed to work on the development of a number of skills with children and young people across the UK. This programme focused on the partnerships between schools and creative professionals, through which they worked together to challenge existing ways of working, and also to experiment with new ideas. The core principles behind this programme reflected the beliefs that creativity should be at the heart of education, and that young people should be given an active role in their own education. A guiding premise of this project was the importance for schools to help students develop their innate talents and skills, such as imagination and divergent thinking, which are generally very strong during the early years. This project encouraged creativity and the development of skills that would help children and young people cope with change, a skill which would have continuous benefits in their future. As already indicated earlier, this scenario locates creativity as an important ingredient in education, and in life in general. A further significant outcome of this project was the production of a number of research reports, which further reinforced the understanding of various aspects throughout the programme (http://www.creative-partnerships.com). One particular report attempts to unravel the different understandings of creativity that make it eclectic in nature. Working with creativity demands an understanding of the term since it could encompass a broad range of conceptions and considerations. I find it particularly useful to discuss this report, since it supports an eclectic notion of creativity and illustrates the concept of creativity as constructed and also as a series of discourses stemming from different contexts.

In the above-mentioned report, *The Rhetorics of Creativity: A Review of the Literature*, Banaji et al. (2010) identify a set of nine discourses concerning creativity. They look at how the term can be viewed from different analytical positions and what each position maintains about the concept of creativity. This review discusses these positions as rhetorical standpoints. The authors explore the term 'creativity' through the lens of learning and education. The review is based on the hypothesis that people make different claims about creativity, and these claims originate from a wide array of contexts and traditions. The work of Banaji et al. addresses two particular difficulties encountered when defining creativity. Firstly, stakeholders may hold different opinions on what constitutes creativity; secondly members within the same team might have different ideas and understandings, which may influence the way they approach a common goal. To move towards a complete picture of creativity, one should consider the different discourses, stakeholder positions, interests, traditions and contexts, and how all of this relates to their experience of learning. Banaji et al. present creativity as a term that could be contested. They explore this through presenting the different discourses that draw on different contexts and traditions.

Throughout their review, Banaji et al. (2010, pp.15-67), refer to the following nine rhetorics:

Table 2.2 *Rhetorics of Creativity*, Banaji et al., 2010, pp.15-67.

1. Creative genius
2. Democratic and political creativity
3. Ubiquitous creativity
4. Creativity as a social good
5. Creativity as economic imperative
6. Play and creativity
7. Creativity and cognition
8. The creative affordances of technology
9. The Creative Classroom

Table 2.2 lists various discourses, which have complex histories and are framed within different traditions. Their histories derive from different disciplinary strands of creativity: from traditions of educational theory and practice, as well as forms of artistic practice. In the subsequent sections of this review I will discuss a number of these, which are mostly related to this study, in an attempt to develop a sensitivity to particular aspects of the term which might be assumed, or unclear. Related literature will also be reviewed to arrive at a more informed understanding of the term. Chapter 6 will discuss

the theme of creativity in light of the findings from the study, and this literature will be used to make sense of the data.

2.3.3.1 **Creative genius**

This first rhetoric talks about the idea of creative genius. This idea has influenced people's thinking throughout the centuries and was originally linked to mystical powers and good fortune. In the eighteenth century, this changed and creative genius started to be associated with artists' inspiration and personality traits (Banaji et al., 2010). Although these ideas were already present in the Renaissance period, and even in earlier times (Albert & Runco, 1999), it was only during the eighteenth century that aspects such as feeling, sentiment, intuition and imagination were seen to guide the artist's work (Banaji et al., 2010). Immanuel Kant's view of genius as a skill for the production of fine art, distinguished between originality and imitation, and demanded that art could never be an imitation of what was previously produced. This account of genius, together with the importance of imagination in aesthetics, was one of the core ideas of Romanticism and, interestingly, it is still strong in contemporary notions of creativity and in academic views ingrained in tradition (Negus & Pickering, 2004; Scruton, 2000). These discourses, being focused on tradition and skill, keep alive a number of stereotypes where aspects of modernity and novelty may be considered as something undesirable. In a way, they are interpreted as a sense of loss of tradition and skill. In this romantic and post-romantic discourse, culture is viewed from an elitist perspective. This same conservative perspective could be reflected in creativity in education, where democratic creativity (see Section 2.3.3.2) is sometimes criticised.

There is still an existing tension around the idea of what could be labelled 'art' or 'creative', and some of the modern and contemporary writings on the subject have their basis in the more traditional early work of authors who were concerned with aspects of genius, conventions, rules, and tradition in relation to discussions on art and creativity. In the review by Banaji et al. (2010), this perspective is also followed by a similar discussion on the debasement of art through ways that discard training, rules and traditions. This particular view of art favours the teaching of traditional art through discipline and the learning of skills rooted in tradition. Hence, from this standpoint self-expression, to give an example, may be considered as a loss of skill and, additionally, a craft-based view of the arts is considered inferior. These views on creative genius as discussed within this particular discourse claim that it is an exceptional quality of a

small group of elite individuals, attributing to them a high level of education and discipline (Banaji et al., 2010). Thus, this rhetoric presents creativity as a distinctive quality pertaining only to a few individuals and discusses culture through discourses about aesthetic judgement and value, manners and civilisation. In conclusion, this discourse is really helpful to identify views on art and creativity that are still present in contemporary discourses on the subject. This discussion uncovers the tension between an exclusive conception of creativity against a more democratic form of the notion. Furthermore, as discussed above, this view is sometimes familiar with people who differentiate between 'superior' and 'inferior' artwork and creative work. It is useful to understand how this rhetoric of creativity might feature in the discourses of artists and art students participating in this study.

2.3.3.2 **Democratic and political creativity**

In the second rhetoric Banaji et al. (2010) examine the role of a democratic nature of creativity in how it relates to cultural politics, and also its function in the construction of identities by young people. The authors start their discussion by citing the work of Paul Willis (1990) who argued in favour of recognising a form of creativity that is present in the everyday life of young people. The authors argue that Willis puts forward the idea of a common culture in contrast with a more elitist high culture (Banaji et al., 2010). They also discuss policy discourse and note that educational practice is often located at different points between two polarities, these being the elite and democratic views of creativity. These then move in different directions due to different policy obligations. Banaji et al., also agree that, when it comes to policy, creativity is constructed in conflicting ways where, on one hand, it is presented as highly important yet, on the other hand, where practical aspects such as time and resources are concerned it is given marginal importance. The authors also give examples of policies in education in the UK, where priorities for creativity seem to focus on the future of the economy and society, and combine these with an element of little 'c' creativity (explained in Section 2.3.3.3), rather than referring to creativity in relation to culture. This discourse positions creativity as an intrinsic quality in the simple and commonplace culture and symbolic practices of people.

This idea of ordinary creativity also echoes the work of Raymond Williams (1958), a seminal author associated with the development of cultural studies. In his writing,

"Culture is Ordinary", found in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, he claims that:

> […] every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, and its own meanings […]

and that

> […] the making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact and discovery […]. (Williams, (1958), p.93)

Williams considers two facets of culture: "a whole way of life" (Williams, p.93), synonymous with everyday life, and "the arts and learning – the special process of discovery and creative effort" (Williams, p.93). He argues that these two meanings of culture could coexist, and further states that culture is made up of static aspects, like traditions, as well as dynamic and ever-changing aspects such as developments in the art world. In essence, Williams conveys the idea that culture is not restricted to one specific group of people but is available to everyone – hence being characterised as 'ordinary'. Bearing in mind when his work was written, which was a time when distinction was made between the masses and the elite (although not exclusively) this is considered to be a very democratic definition of culture.

This notion of 'ordinary' or democratic creativity is especially relevant in an educational context, suggesting that all students could be creative. Creativity in education is seen as a skill that could be fostered and used across the activities teachers and learners engage in. It also makes the term look less remote and more accessible. This view is very significant for this study since it frames the inquiry within the belief that (1) anyone could be creative and that (2) anyone could benefit from increased knowledge on what affects creativity and the individual's creative processes. This is also reflected in the research questions that underpin this study.

2.3.3.3 Ubiquitous creativity

This discourse on creativity is also democratic and, furthermore, connects with everyday life. Banaji et al. (2010), start with a pro-social account of creativity by presenting the work of Anna Craft (2005; 2001; 2000), an author on creativity-in-education research. Banaji et al. present Craft's argument, in which she states that in the last few decades the most popular definitions of creativity were those that brought together creativity and imagination, and those proposing that everyone has the potential

for being creative, since this is an essential characteristic of human nature. Craft, in fact, describes creativity as ubiquitous (Craft, 2001). Reflecting on this position, a good number of educational policies situate creativity as a notion that should be fostered. However, Craft argues against the way this ideology features in curricula, especially since the UK national curriculum defines creativity as a 'cross-curricular thinking skill'. Unfortunately, this definition associates creativity with just one skill. Craft has written extensively on what she labels as 'little 'c' creativity'. This refers to the ability to cope and adapt to change in life in contemporary times. For Craft, creativity that refers to world-renowned accomplishments is very different from 'little 'c' creativity', and she also distinguishes the latter from creativity in the arts. Her notion of creativity revolves around the idea of 'possibility thinking', which is a concern to find creative yet practical solutions to problems and obstacles in all domains of life. The 'little 'c' creativity' has been critiqued by those who believe that there ought to be a link between creativity, and the arts and culture. In addition to this view, Banaji et al. present a critique by Negus and Pickering (2004), who argue that not all everyday experiences involve creativity. In their argument, Negus and Pickering use the discourse of creative genius to identify creativity as that endeavour which couples two distinct presences, these being 'mundane reality' and 'exceptional experience'. This discourse gives a very interesting perspective on creativity, as it moves away from the mere production or consumption of artistic products. It gives a different view of creativity as a skill that helps individuals take action in light of problems and changes in their life.

My position in this argument supports the notion that creativity revolves around the idea of possibility thinking (Craft, 2001; 2000), which allows for a very practical side to creativity. This is also reflected in the research questions of this study, in that they explore practical processes involving creativity. I do not think that creativity is related only to certain subjects or particular instances. It is an all-encompassing capacity to define problems and find practical solutions for these problems, and this could take place in simple yet varied situations and circumstances.

2.3.3.4 Creativity as economic imperative

This rhetoric is about creativity as an essential ingredient for economic expansion through the production of a flexible workforce. Banaji et al. (2010) draw on the work of Seltzer and Bentley (1999), who claim that, in the current economic setting, knowledge has become a crucial resource. Seltzer and Bentley argue that in a constantly

fluctuating economic climate, workers must resort to their entire arsenal of skills and repurpose them. Seltzer and Bentley offer an alternative view on the subject of creativity, and see it as a way to repurpose knowledge and skills to reach a particular goal with added value. The skills that they discuss revolve around solving problems, a transfer of knowledge, incremental learning and goal-oriented work. This view contrasts significantly with other views of creativity encompassing an arts-based component. Banaji et al. argue that this use of the term 'creativity' shifts away from the distinguishing characteristics of creativity and simply focus on effectiveness. Agreeing with Banaji et al., I believe that simply focusing on effectiveness might not be a complete way of looking at the complex notion of creativity. However, viewing creativity as a way to repurpose knowledge and skills might bring about interesting new aspects of re-appropriated knowledge. This is yet another standpoint of how to look at creativity in the process of answering the research questions related to the creative process.

2.3.3.5 Creativity and cognition

A number of research efforts on creativity and cognition stem, although not entirely, from a quantitative paradigm. Banaji et al. (2010) discuss the work of Arthur Cropley (2001), who has been involved in studies related to 'ordinary creativity'. His approach endorses the cognitive theories of creativity and relies on creativity assessments and personality tests. Moreover, Cropley argues that something termed as creative needs to have an element of novelty and effectiveness. With this in mind, Banaji et al. criticise this discourse when it comes to children, since it is very rarely the case that children's products would exhibit elements of novelty and effectiveness in the sense understood by adults. The authors insist in favour of an effort to see any degree of novelty and effectiveness in the work of children, even if it is only represented in their own world.

Robinson (2011), Boden (2004) and Craft (2001) make an important distinction between 'high' and 'ordinary' creativity. Boden (2004) speaks about 'H-creativity' (historical) and 'P-creativity' (personal), while Robinson (2011) distinguishes between 'high' and 'democratic' creativity. This distinction highlights the difference between creativity, which eventually transforms public knowledge as opposed to creativity that is more centred on the idea that ordinary people have the potential to be creative. The latter "guides choices and route-finding in everyday life" (Craft, 2000, p.3). High creativity revolves around excellence and a break from past understandings and

perspectives, while ordinary creativity relates to a personal can-do attitude. The latter involves the notion of 'possibility thinking', whereby one asks what-if questions in diverse ways (Burnard et al., 2006; Craft, 2001).

Banaji et al. (2010) also discuss the issue of intelligence by drawing on the work of Howard Gardner (1993), who claims that people can be explained in terms of a set of different types of intelligence. Gardner's view on creativity states that completely new or unique activities only occur when a person excels in a specific field or endeavour. This is again an idea that for new and original ideas to occur the person needs to work hard and master the discipline involved.

A longstanding debate exists on whether creativity is domain-specific or generic (Sternberg, 1999). However, research on creativity has recognised the importance of the domain being studied. Nonetheless, research focusing on the generality of creativity is still common. I believe that both approaches have their merits whereby certain components may be more relevant to specific domains, while aspects such as 'possibility thinking' (Burnard et al., 2006; Craft, 2001) could be transferable across domains.

In education, the idea of fostering creativity by placing it at the core of curricula aims at equipping students with a more generic sense of creativity. This presents the notion of transfer (Weisberg, 1999), enabling students to apply learnt skills to other situations – not only where creativity is concerned, but also in relation to all subjects within a school's curriculum.

The points discussed within this discourse again locate creativity as a skill that could be used by everyone, and which could be domain-specific and general at the same time. Certain components of the notion could be transferred across different domains. This is a way of looking at creativity as a generic skill that could be transferred across different school subjects and situations.

2.3.4 Imagination and innovation

A deserving caesura is required to define creativity in terms of imagination and innovation. The terms 'creativity' and 'innovation' are often used interchangeably. Also, imagination is commonly used to refer to creativity despite the fact that imagination may well be the source of creativity (Robinson, 2011). Imagination lets a

person (1) move away from reality; (2) review and replay the past; (3) take on different views of the present; and (4) anticipate the future. Imagination could be a private process that could have no effect on reality, whereas creativity is attributed to the act of doing or producing something (Annarella, 1999). This idea positions creativity as 'applied imagination'. Finally, innovation is the process of putting applied ideas into practice. Robinson (2011) agrees with the above argument by defining innovation as 'applied creativity'.

Apart from distinguishing between the three terms, it would be beneficial to further elaborate on the notion of imagination, with particular emphasis on imagination and the arts. Maxine Greene (1995) defines the role of imagination in different contexts and illustrates how it is concerned with "unpredictabilites" and the "unexpected" (Greene, 1995, p.124). Moreover, when applied to the arts, being involved in the different forms of art could enable us to become more conscious of our experiences, which everyday routines tend to mask. Imagination and participatory involvement in the arts help individuals see into, and listen more to, personal experiences and become more conscious of the things that are concealed by tradition (Greene, 1995). Greene also stipulates that "when we hold an image of what is objectively 'the fact', it has the effect of reifying what we experience, making our experience resistant to re-evaluation and change rather than open to imagination" (p.126-7). More so,

> […] made aware of ourselves as questioners, as meaning makers, as persons engaged in constructing and reconstructing realities with those around us, we may communicate to students the notion that reality is multiple perspectives and that the construction of it is never complete, that there is always more. (Greene, 1995, p.131)

Greene's argument is in line with theories of creativity that situate it as generative of possibilities. Imagination enables people to create possibilities and to see the world around them as more than mere facts set in stone. This argument seems to mirror what many artists are faced with in their practice. Although not exclusively, artists are likely to base their work on either reflection, thinking and/or imagination, all of which provide them with different views of the world.

2.3.5 Creative flow and motivation

A very significant contribution to the study on creativity was made by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) when he introduced the concept of 'flow'. This concept is the experience whereby an individual is fully absorbed in the present moment. Flow research and

theory originated in an attempt to understand the idea of being intrinsically motivated. Csikszentmihalyi's long years of research on the nature and particular conditions of enjoyment stemmed from studies with people such as chess players, rock climbers and dancers who, in their pursuit, have witnessed the sense of enjoyment as their main driving force. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) argue that:

> Being "in flow" is the way that some interviewees described the subjective experience of engaging just manageable challenges by tackling a series of goals, continually processing feedback about progress, and adjusting action based on this feedback. Under these conditions, experience seamlessly unfolds from moment to moment, and one enters a subjective state with the following characteristics:
>
> - Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment
> - Merging of action and awareness
> - Loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e., loss of awareness of oneself as a social actor)
> - A sense that one can control one's actions; that is, a sense that one can in principle deal with the situation because one knows how to respond to whatever happens next
> - Distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal)
> - Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process. (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002 p.90)

Comparable to Amabile's (1998) concept of intrinsic motivation, flow assists creative persons to feel motivated in their domain, affecting their experience during a creative activity. Hennessey and Amabile propose an "intrinsic motivation principle of creativity" (Hennessey & Amabile, 1987, p.69), stating that intrinsic motivation leads to creativity, whereas extrinsic motivation hampers creativity. They believe that a systems view of creativity helps researchers understand that creativity is present through a system of interrelated forces which function at many levels.

2.3.6 Inspiration and encountering

The *Oxford Dictionary of English* (*ODE*) defines 'inspiration' as "the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative" (*ODE*, 2014). As this definition illustrates, inspiration is a process. Many times, people may think that inspiration is merely a eureka moment, when a proverbial bulb lights up to welcome an idea that has just materialised. However, individuals could work towards inspiration by understanding their personal inclinations and which factors work for them. Sources of inspiration tend to be extremely varied, and these may range from

personal experiences, to tangible objects as well as abstract realities like dreams, to mention a few (Hemmig, 2009). By reflecting on one's experiences, common factors acting as inspiration could be identified so as to be subsequently re-applied in other settings and circumstances.

Inspiration motivates and prompts artists to seek information. Viewing sources of inspiration in this manner points me to view them as prods that are translated into information. Any long list of sources of inspiration could ultimately be transformed to some kind of information. For example, if an artist is inspired by part of a song that he or she had just listened to on the radio, it is likely that the artist would try to look for some information about the song, such as the title or the name of the singer. By seeking this information, this artist would be able to find the song and listen to it again and perhaps continue to develop some ideas around it.

To illustrate this with a more abstract example, an artist might be inspired by a personal experience, for example meeting an old friend. Although an experience is not something tangible the artist might still think about it at length, and perhaps even replay some of the memories and extracts from the meeting. This is another kind of information, and is perhaps a more abstract way of working with information. This argument claims that artists may be searching for inspiration in both conventional and abstract ways. The latter relates to the idea that artists are inspired by things that occur around them, everyday life, and things that they come across. This points to the concept of 'encountering', which relates to unintentional and accidental discoveries (Erdelez, 2005). This is associated with passive and flexible information acquisition. Artists might encounter information during daily activities that are not essentially intended that way. This line of thought also directs me to the fact that such a positive experience of 'encountering' may reinforce this practice to be repeated again in the future, and the persons concerned would be more likely to follow the same inspiration patterns. Consequently, following these patterns might lead to more 'encountering' experiences. Reframing the concept of encountering to apply it to the inspiration processes of artists becomes a relevant approach in tapping into the potential of understanding the patterns of inspiration. This is relevant for this study because inspiration and idea development are a core part of the artistic practice of artists.

2.3.7 A look at the creative process

In 1983, Teresa Amabile came up with the "componential theory of creativity". This theory describes the creative process and its various influences as well as outcomes. Amabile based her arguments on two specific assumptions, these being that (1) creative endeavours vary from ordinary levels of creativity found in everyday life to higher examples of historical creativity, and (2) there are different levels of creativity in the work of an individual, even within the same domain. She concludes that "the level of creativity that a person produces at any given point in time is a function of the creativity components operating, at that time, within and around that person" (Amabile, 2012, para. 2). Amabile's theory requires a combination of four components acting and working together in order to maximise creativity. Three of these components relate to the individual, and these are: (1) domain-relevant skills; (2) creativity-relevant skills; and (3) task motivation. The last component relates to the social environment. To sum up this theory, Amabile states that:

> Creativity requires a confluence of all components; creativity should be highest when an intrinsically motivated person with high domain expertise and high skill in creative thinking works in an environment high in supports for creativity. (Amabile, 2012, para. 4)

Another seminal and widely used model is Wallas's (1926, p.10) model of the creative process. This model proposes four stages, namely:

(1) preparation

(2) incubation

(3) illumination

(4) verification.

The model suggests that, during a creative activity, the person moves from one stage to the next in a systematic manner. Preparation is when the problem is formulated and then consciously analysed. The next stage of incubation is set in motion when no solution or way forward is evident. This stage is not a conscious process and relies on one's subconscious to keep processing the problem. The incubation process may last from a few minutes to weeks or years. The illumination stage is the outcome of the incubation period when a person experiences a eureka moment. The last stage, that is, the verification stage is when one actively works on the problem, analyses the solutions and works on how one should progress. Although for some artists this model is

reflected in their practice, it might not be applicable in every situation, since different artists experience different processes during their work and they work in different traditions.

Creativity consists of a number of interwoven processes. The generative and the evaluative processes are of significant importance. With respect to generative processes, Robinson (2011) suggests that people tend to explore new possibilities, draw on current skills, evolve such skills to fit future needs and work demands while pushing the boundaries of their knowledge. On the other hand, making judgements about previously generated ideas constitutes evaluative processes whereby initial ideas are elaborated, refined and chosen over others. From practical experience, I have noticed that some people make minor revisions on an initial idea while the creative work of others is more tentative and exploratory. Both processing modes are important to the creative process, and one needs to be aware of how these two modes of thinking interact. Critical evaluation is important but if carried out at an early stage it may hold back emerging ideas. Each phase should, therefore, be allowed enough time to flourish (Robinson, 2011; Sternberg, 1999).

This is a useful look at the creative process. According to these theories artists are likely to undergo generative and evaluative processes during their art practice so this positions their creative process as one that also reflects on, and makes judgements about, the ideas generated.

2.3.8 The physical context of creativity

Tore Kristensen (2004) presents the idea of embodied cognition and creativity, whereby "cognition and emotion integrate body and mind, apart from the physical reality and body of the thinking and feeling subject" and that "much cognitive activity is 'situated'" (Kristensen, 2004, p.91). Since one of the most basic understandings of creativity is that it brings about new knowledge, according to Kristensen, this process has other sub-processes, which are infused into each other in different ways. The author mentions the value of creation processes; scaffolding; imagination processes; and materialisation processes (Kristensen, 2004). Particularly interesting from this model is scaffolding. This indicates that the creative process is experienced within a context of space, tools, people and information. Generally, this occurs at the start of the process where the person is preparing for the other stages to occur. A person moves around the

space and, through the process, 'perceptual rehearsal' takes place. This supports imagination and it is here that changes in concepts are allowed, and new ones are adopted.

This theory locates the creative process as something that is experienced within different contexts, each of which playing a part in the whole process. This is a relevant way to look at the creative process as an experience stemming from different layers.

Given that creative activity happens in a space, in a physical context, it is therefore important to explore to what extent the physical space affects the creativity of individuals. Kristensen (2004) discusses the link between physical space, creativity and the creative process. Drawing on the work of Wallas (1926) (see Section 2.3.7), the author describes the preparation stage in terms of space and states that "space for organizing the information and easy retrieval is essential […] the spatial arrangement must support as much information flow and absorption as possible" (Kristensen, 2004, p.90). The space and its adequate resources are ideally used and prepared in a way to facilitate the initial preparation stage of the creative process. Kristensen believes that a communal space is important for groups of people to work together. However, a private space is also essential for analysis purposes for both individuals and groups. This confirms what other authors (Lippmann, 2015; Clark, 2010; Bain, 2005) have claimed about working in collaboration with others and also working individually.

Kristensen (2004) also discusses the incubation stage, which is the second stage in Wallas's model of the creative process. Incubation is a rather private process that could also happen during different activities, which are generally distinct from the initial activity that sparked the process in the first place. This stage might take place at individual or group level. However, it is not particularly attached to one specific physical space. Nonetheless, Kristensen asserts that:

> Incubation is an implicit cognitive process, but perceptual clues may facilitate the process. Staying in the room where all the information from the preparation stage is kept may facilitate such implicit perception as a process of 'priming'. (Kristensen, 2004, p.90)

In practice, being close to the related resources and materials help the incubation stage. However, this stage could continue to develop anywhere.

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Kristensen then argues that the illumination stage is not really dependant on a particular space. The author asserted that, "Accounts of insights are often reported as idiosyncratic, and may not matter much where it takes place" (Kristensen, 2004, p.90).

In discussing the final stage from Wallas's model, namely verification (also referred to as 'evaluation'), Kristensen explains how this stage is operationally similar to the preparation stage. The preparation stage starts with briefing followed by the collection of information, while the verification stage ends with an examination and a plan for a way forward. Kristensen also adds that, although people might assume that a particular space would improve this stage, this has not been established theoretically.

2.4 Section C: Artistic practice and making

2.4.1 The legitimacy of art

What is art? Defining art is another difficult endeavour. Many different definitions exist and it is challenging to find one that could be applied to every situation. In my opinion, the definition of art according to Elliot Eisner (2002) encompasses a view that is very similar to mine, in that it focuses on art as: 1) an initial idea; 2) including creative imagination; 3) requiring skills to work with materials; and 4) involving critical reflection.

> Artistry consists in having an idea worth expressing, the imaginative ability needed to conceive of how, the technical skills needed to work effectively with some material, and the sensibilities needed to make the delicate adjustments that will give the forms the moving qualities that the best of them possess. (Eisner, 2002, p.81).

In a time frame of a little more than a decade, art has gone through major transformations that represented a key break from centuries of old traditions. This was stirred by a number of 'art scandals' that blemished the art scene in the last century. The reasons for such a change stem from historical events that conditioned the way art is perceived (Molyneux, 1998).

The changes in society and the economy have affected the way people live. This does not only refer to transformations in the lifestyle of people but an important change is also mirrored in thought and experience (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007). In an attempt to apply Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice to fields like paintings, museums, and photography, Grenfell and Hardy (2007) address visual arts in today's artworld. In their work, they highlight the importance of art and the way it permeates different aspects of

our lives, society and culture. Bourdieu questioned what makes an artwork and one of the responses he presents is that it is set apart as such only in the way it is accepted within the institution of art. Building on Bourdieu's ideas, Grenfell and Hardy (2007) assert that:

> […] in order to understand a work of art, first, we need to do a field analysis in terms of habitus, field and so on; second, as part of this, we must analyse the initial perception of the art as a practice at the time; third, we must apply the same principles of analysis to ourselves as researchers in 'objectifying the knowing subjects'; and fourth, in order to fully comprehend art, we must do all these things simultaneously [...]. (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007, p.190)

Another reason for such a change in art is the reality that the art world and market are controlled by a few rich and powerful individuals who collect and invest in art. The artistic value of works is established in terms of their financial worth. As Molyneux (1998, para. 9) asserts, "the question of money pollutes the art world and undermines its public legitimacy". The author also attributes a lack of popular art culture to the crisis of legitimacy.

For the question 'but is it art?' it is difficult to find a precise definition of art which could be used to establish whether a particular work could be considered as art. One common assumption is that art should consist of some form of representation or imitation of real objects. Other assumptions would be that art needs to be beautiful, it needs to be executed using particular media such as oils or watercolours, it needs to employ certain techniques such as perspective, and others. These assumptions, as well as others, are not particularly effective since they tend to reflect the practice of art from Renaissance to the early 1900s. Hence, they are not very representative of modern and contemporary visual art (Molyneux, 1998).

A criterion which is used many times is that of skill. Art is variable in this regard. Skill is generally referred to as 'traditional skill' but one needs to be careful to also include different unconventional skills. For example, the skill of handling of paint by Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) is different from Johannes Vermeer's (1632-1675) skill of rendering realistic interior scenes. Furthermore, skills could take form of intellectual skills to envisage the works. Thus, these assumptions might attempt to answer some of the claims whether a work is considered as art or not.

A claim that is often made about art, particularly modern art, is that it is difficult to understand. It is a common perception that modern art needs specialist knowledge in

order to be understood, and this makes it less accessible to the public at large. Sometimes this difficulty is seen as a positive value, since it has to be difficult to deal with complex and challenging issues. As Molyneux, 1998, para. 63 puts it:

> The obstacle to the popular appreciation of modern art is often neither the art itself nor the inherent incapacity of the public but the elitist social ambience and construction of the art world combined with dogmatic but outdated conceptions of what art should look like.

In *Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place and the Everyday*, Papastergiadis (2010) seeks to address the place of art in today's world. He explores this question in terms of art practices that fall outside of the traditional sites associated with art such as the studio or the gallery:

> Art is no longer solely produced in messy studios and then presented in the contemplative white cubed space of the modernist gallery. The traditional boundaries that regulated the flows from studio-based art to the institutions of display have been either bypassed or redefined. These shifts have also challenged the representation of the place of art in the everyday. (Papastergiadis, 2010, p.15)

The above view placed his work within the growing literature related to the everyday life, and to concepts of place that do not depend solely on traditional geographical sites. He also maintains that the way the place of art changes in society must be reflected in a change in culture as well, and observes the effect of the discourses of the everyday and their place in everyday spaces and practices:

> It is important to rethink the relationship between contemporary art, place and the everyday in ways that go beyond the parameters of causal influence. Place and the everyday need to be understood as being constitutive in the production of contemporary art. The place in which contemporary art is displayed, and the material from which it is produced, are intertwined with the process of its production and reception. We need to develop new models for discussing art that are made from the materials that are available in the place of its encounter. (Papastergiadis, 2010, p.15)

Papastergiadis (2010) also talks about the destination of the artworks and distinguishes between contemporary work and other works from history which were specifically made to be displayed in particular sites. He adds that the life of modern artwork is generally not limited to a particular location. Usually artists intend to see the work outside of their studio and this is many times central to the idea of the work, thus making it essential to consider following the journey from conception to the places of display. In considering site-specific works he adds that:

> When the artist is not making art in a studio but on a specific site, and when this work has no substantial presence beyond this location, the conventional art historian is placed in a difficult position … There is no belated response, for the only time in which the art exists is the time in which it is made and displayed within a specific place. To understand the meaning of this art, historians and critics need to recognize the significance of spatial elements. The art historian is now compelled to track not just the history, but also the geography of the artwork (Papastergiadis, 1990, p.90).

This standpoint positions art as being socially engaged and not materialised. It presents the different traditions of art, and identifies the different ways in which artists relate to urban space and engage different people with the potential of transformations at individual levels and also within broader structures.

2.4.2 Art as research: practice-based research

As already discussed, in this study I am interested in the process of making art and not only in art objects as a final result of the process. According to Dewey (1934) artistic objects cannot be separated from the conditions of origin and the fact they were produced as part of an experience. By doing so, these objects are cut off from the context in which they were produced, and from the links and associations with other aspects such as materials and human effort that were used throughout the production of that object. This recalls the work of Kristensen (2004) who asserted that the creative process is experienced within a context of space, tools, people and information.

A backbone of Estelle Barrett's work (2007) is the argument that the limitations of traditional ways of representing the world have located a need to seek alternative ways of understanding and making sense of the lived experiences of people. Methods that are grounded in science-based knowledge might not be the most appropriate approaches to understand particular realms of experience. One way of extending the boundaries of research is through practice-based inquiries. Barrett (2007) draws strongly on the work of Eisner (1997), in claiming that focusing only on the type of inquiries that measure things exactly would signify losing out on the many values of other alternative approaches. Barrett argues that an important aspect of creative-arts research is that it is also concerned with tacit knowledge, since it is often driven by emotional, personal and subjective concerns. Moreover, drawing on materialist perspectives, Barrett's work explores arts research as a mode to derive knowledge from the action of doing and from the senses. Barrett further argues that:

> […] the innovative and critical potential of practice-based research lies in its capacity to generate personally situated knowledge and new ways of modelling and externalising such knowledge while at the same time, revealing philosophical, social and cultural contexts for the critical intervention and application of knowledge outcomes. (Barrett, 2007, p.2)

Barrett argues that creative-arts research is an approach that produces some kind of knowledge as a result of interacting with the environment, both material and social, and then positioning this knowledge within existing theories and domains of knowledge (Barrett, 2007; Barrett & Bolt, 2007). In her work, she argues that "creative arts practice as research is an intensification of everyday experiences from which new knowledge and knowing emerges" (Barrett, 2007, p.115). Barrett positions practice as research as having a "generative capacity" stemming from the "*subjective*, *emergent* and *interdisciplinary* approaches" that it employs (Barrett, 2007, p.3, original italics). This argument does not make one approach better than the other but encourages a plurality of perspectives.

I also would like to draw on the work of Eisner (1997), which situates new and unconventional methods of research as a necessary extension within the research realm. Coming from a context that concurred with the view that art could benefit student learning and educational practice in general, he maintained that art-based methods coupled with other unconventional methods of research could be more suitable ways to learn about people and practices, in education and other domains. Since his writing on the emergence and importance of new qualitative methods of research, the field has advanced in bringing forward new approaches to research aimed at securing and broadening an understanding of people. This perspective positions these new methods as complementing traditional ways of doing research. In fact, the emergence of such approaches, on one part, comes from the concern that traditional ways of doing research, which focus particularly on the element of measurement, could be, as Eisner puts it, "extremely reductive" (1997, p.260). This means that in many cases an accurate measurement of an aspect might not be the best way to understand and describe that same aspect. Becoming aware of the need to represent and describe deeper details of the world, researchers sought to use methods that focus on meaning and values.

Eisner continues to model his ideas on the work of Schwab (1970) in discussing a different view of knowledge which focuses on "practical knowledge in the context of

action" (Eisner, 1997, p.260). This type of knowledge depends on certain circumstances for it to occur, so context is central to practical knowledge. This again creates a distinction between what is being studied, that is, it differentiates between studying an object and studying human activity, as an example. This awareness instigated an interest in the particular. Eisner puts forward the benefits of these non-traditional approaches to research and he highlights the importance of the use and exploration of narrative. Narrative focuses on the sharing of experiences, and this is the most natural way by which humans communicate. As Eisner puts it, "narratives "get at" what can neither be said in number nor disclosed in literal text" (Eisner, 1997, p.264).

When dealing with art practice it is also meaningful to understand its position along an objective-subjective divide. How people look at social reality affects most of their actions and it depends on a number of assumptions framed by ontological viewpoints. Amongst the opposing perspectives for viewing the world are the realist and relativist views. The former acknowledges that a single particular reality exists, while the latter view is based on the idea that reality is socially constructed and may exist in many shapes and forms. Sullivan (2010) claims that viewing objectivity and subjectivity simply as two distinct opposites is not very productive because, in doing so, we fail to make use of the spaces in between, which encapsulate more informed versions of reality. When different experiences and layers of meaning are taken into account they generate intersubjective understandings and agreements. Referring to how Michael Parsons defines intersubjectivity as having "shared symbolically-mediated meanings supporting individual and community understanding" (Parsons, 1995, p.12), Sullivan maintains that what people interpret is affected by contexts and relationships, and not just by their personal views. He points out that, "intersubjectivity reflects a sense of consensus that characterizes how individuals and cultures construct meanings that are consistent and understood by all" (Sullivan, 2010, p.39). Sullivan also draws on the work of Eisner (1991) in emphasising that people find meaningful spaces within the objective-subjective polarities. Within these spaces human experience is transformed into knowledge. He explains this as follows:

> Since what we can know about the world is always a result of inquiry, it is mediated by mind. Since it is mediated by mind, the world cannot be known in its ontologically objective state. An objective world is postulated both as a general and as a particular entity. Since what we know about the world is a

product of the transaction of our subjective life *and* a postulated objective world, these worlds cannot be separated. (Eisner, 1991, p.52, emphasis in original)

In dealing with the shortcomings of traditional methods of research, Sullivan (2010) asserts that combining different approaches and mixed methods of inquiry through the use of art contributes in a positive way. Drawing on the work of Barone and Eisner (1997), Sullivan notes that the term arts-based research had its first formal reference in the 1990s. Barone (2008) views arts-based research as "a socially engaged process of reflection and action that discloses new meanings and possibilities". Sullivan (2010, p.56) states that:

> […] arts-based educational research is an example of practitioner-based inquiry whose aim is to bridge perceived disconnects between quantitative and qualitative traditions of research using the capacity of the arts to deal critically, socially, and creatively with problems facing education…problems and issues are investigated using strategies of inquiry that are grounded in the arts, yet their methodological cue from the social sciences.

Sullivan also discusses an interesting conception put forward by Shaun McNiff (2008) who claims that art and science are two ways of knowing that complement each other. He warns against an attempt to reduce one to the other. According to Sullivan, McNiff's argument proposes that:

> […] learning directly from artists and through one's own art practice imbues the research process with a creative tension that is no less rigorous or relevant than more traditional inquiry processes. This trust in making methods of inquiry that are responsive to particular issues not only deals with personal concerns but also has the potential to reveal new insights that can have community appeal. (Sullivan, 2010, p.57)

The use of arts practice and creative forms of inquiry that are applied in arts-based research give new meaning to the potential of the arts. The arts are located as "powerful forms of human knowing and educational practice that is absolutely crucial in a world of uncertainty and change" (Sullivan, 2010, p.57). Furthermore, John Baldacchino explains that:

> Art *practice* is, in and of itself, a specific and special form of *research*. In the arts the very idea of a qualitative-quantitative divide becomes irrelevant because by its distinct nature arts research calls for a different set of categories where the arts do not *search* for stuff or facts, but they *generate* it. (Baldacchino, 2009, p.4, emphases in original)

Barrett and Bolt (2007) talk about the way practice becomes theory-generating by asserting that:

> […] the realisations generated by and through this encounter have offered an alternative conception of the work of art. Thus rather than operating as solipsistic reflection on one's own practice, the particular situated knowledge that emerges through the research process has the potential to be generalized so that it sets wobbling the existing paradigms operating in a discipline. In other words, through the vehicle of the exegesis, practice becomes theory generating. (Barrett & Bolt, 2007, p.33)

I consider the above quote as a core outlook on practice in the way it presents practice as a theory-generating activity that adds another dimension to the role of reflection in and on practice.

2.4.3 Art as conversation: dialogical aesthetics

Kester (2004) uses the term 'dialogical' to describe a form of art that is centred on communication and conversation. He points out that the term comes from the Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, who stated that "the work of art can be viewed as a kind of conversation; a locus of differing meanings, interpretations and points of view" (Kester, 2004, p.10). Kester also gives other examples of how the same concept is denoted in diverse ways. For example, Nicolas Bourriaud came up with the term "relational aesthetics" (Kester, p.10), Homi K. Bhabha talks about "conversational art" (Kester, p.10) and Tom Finkelpearl refers to the same concept as "dialogue-based public art" (Kester, p.10). Bourriaud (2002) explains the term as

> […] a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical points of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space (Bourriaud, 2002, p.113).

Such practices depart from the conventional ways of making art, whereby the physical and social space of the art gallery or the artist's studio are central to the work, as in the case of pre-modern movements. Contrarily, the idea of the lived life and the dynamic social environment are the subjects surrounding relational aesthetics events. This contrasts with the traditional way of representing an object removed from daily life (Kester, 2004). The act of listening is very important in dialogical works of art, and this is evidenced by in-depth discussions supporting this work. Bishop (2004) also talks about the way of "considering the work of art as a potential trigger for participation" (Bishop, 2004, p.61) and "the desire to activate the viewer" (Bishop, p.62). Dialogic art practices enable artists to move away from the idea of making objects, but rather to provide context through the way artists collaborate and socialise.

The basis of art is human interaction and its social context. Bourriaud (2002) explains this concept by saying that "it is no longer possible to regard the contemporary work as a space to be walked through", but "[…] a period of time to be lived through, like an opening to an unlimited discussion". This kind of work affords immediate discussion in a particular space and time. The nature of this kind of art:

> […] creates free areas, and time spans whose rhythm contrasts with those structuring everyday life, and it encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the 'communication zones' that are imposed upon us. (Bourriaud, 2002, p.6)

In dialogical aesthetics, a significant element of the artwork is the discursive role of the viewer or spectator. Kester (2005, p.84) explains that these practices based on dialogue require what he labels as a "common discursive matrix", through which the spectator participates by sharing insights and being part of a group.

In these approaches to art, traditional ways of making objects are put aside and the artists rely on a 'performative process-based approach'. In more traditional forms of art it is common for dialogue to occur, but this is usually stimulated in reaction to a finished art product or object. In this less traditional art form, dialogue becomes a core part of the work itself. As Kester (2005, p.78) states, art "is re-framed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities and official discourse".

The process for this art form invites and activates the viewer to be part of the same process. Through this method, knowledge is shared and generated. Upon reflection, this form of art might be useful to emulate in educational contexts with students. Since in this form of art the discursive role of the viewer or spectator becomes a significant element, it could be useful to provide contexts through which students could collaborate and socialise and, in the experience of the process, generate knowledge together.

2.4.4 Art and the body

The body is an important and valuable aspect of our humanity. It is considered a rudimentary tool of all human functioning, "a necessity for all our perception, action and even thought" (Shusterman, 2006, p.2). Shusterman works on an interdisciplinary field called 'somaesthetics', whose roots are in philosophical theory, which "concerns the body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-

fashioning" (Shusterman, 2006, p.2). His main concern is that philosophy as a discipline needs to focus on the body to help lead better and more meaningful lives. Discourses on somaesthetics recognise that body, mind and culture are intensely co-dependent. People think and feel with their bodies. Their bodies are affected by their mental life. The body-mind connection is very strong and it feels confusing to speak about the two as different units.

> The living body – a sensing, sentient soma rather than a mere mechanical corpse – embodies the fundamental ambiguity of human being in several ways. (Shusterman, 2006, p.3)

Painting is a tool for self-investigation and a way to explore the emotional self through active awareness of the body and the media being used. Painting and drawing are modes of thinking and awareness that are intensely rooted in the body (Shusterman, 2006).

Shusterman's own practice of martial arts, for example, enhanced his awareness not only of his body's range of possibilities but has increased his capacity to feel the bodies of his models psychosomatically as he paints and draws. He goes on to say that physical demonstration in say, a drawing or painting class, is required. Students would learn first and well by watching and somatically internalising the physical behaviour of others. This enables students to instinctively practice the skills before even picking up a pencil.

> Our experiences of ourselves and our world is always embodied and involves somatic responses and feelings that are typically unnoticed though they are unavoidable and indispensable for our proficient functioning. (Shusterman, 2006, p.5)

The work of Shusterman (2006) has been useful in acknowledging the role of the body, denoting its importance in the process of art making. This awareness of embodiment was also discussed by Tuan (1977), when he talked about the way a space is turned into a place through kinaesthetic experience. The familiarity with a place and the way people can move around without much thinking is part of the process of this transformation. This is another mode of spatial practice, where the body has an inherent role in this experience.

2.4.5 Experiential learning and making

An area of research that is relevant to my argument in that it positions learning as situated, and which concerns the notion of action-based research, is that of action-

based learning. Certain characteristics of research that are shared in this area of study are also relevant to the area of creative-arts research. Knowledge is generated through action and reflection. David Kolb (1984) talks about the experiential approach, which starts from an individual's experience and how he or she reacts to it. In this particular pedagogy, learning occurs through action and deliberate thought on that action. This makes learning as situated, and therefore emphasises an accord between the initial problem, the context for the problem and the outcome or solution.

Kolb's theory of experiential learning exposed the idea that a person learns through discovery and experience (Kolb, 1984, p.30). He proposed that a person goes through the process of four stages by starting with immediate experience, which stage leads to the second stage of observation and reflection on the same experience. Furthermore, during the third stage those reflections are then linked to previous knowledge, and through this process abstract concepts or theories are formed. This presents new ways of looking at the experience, and enables the person to experiment with and adjust that same experience. As illustrated in Table 2.3, this four-stage cycle uses a spiralling process of: 1) feeling; 2) watching; 3) thinking; and 4) doing.

<div align="center">Table 2.3 Four-stage cycle of learning</div>

Feeling	Concrete experience (CE)	Includes involvement with people in everyday situations, learning by experience, being open minded and adaptable to change, perceptive of your feelings and those of others
Watching	Reflective observation (RO)	Includes watching and learning, viewing issues form different standpoints, discovering significance in the learning material
Thinking	Abstract conceptualisation (AC)	Includes the use of thought and logic to the setting; parts of this stage would be analysing, planning, and developing theories
Doing	Active experimentation (AE)	Apply theories in decision making and problem resolution

Schön (1983) describes two types of reflection, namely: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The significance of reflection on one's practice as part of the learning process is an important step is highlighted in the work of Kolb and also in the work of Schön. The latter states that:

> When a practitioner reflects in and on his practice, the possible objects of his reflection are as varied as the kinds of phenomena before him and the systems of knowing-in-practice that he brings to them. He may reflect on the tacit norms and appreciation that underlie a judgment, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behaviour. He may reflect on the feelings for a situation that has led him to adopt a particular course of action, on the way in which he framed the problem he is trying to solve, or on the role he has constructed for himself with a larger institutional context. (Schön, 1983, p.62)

This quote from Schön (1983) gives examples of the different types of consideration that a practitioner might go through when reflecting in and on his practice. It touches different levels of reflection that focus on the nuanced actions of practice.

2.4.6 Materiality

The concept of materiality, and the notion that the process of handling materials during practice results in forms of knowing, is a useful lens for this particular research, since artists and students engage with materiality as part of their practice. Barrett and Bolt (2007) argue that the particular experience and context of a person shapes the approach to research, the methodology used and the forms of realisations that emerge from an inquiry. Practice-led research is driven by personal understandings and experience; focuses on particularity; and moreover, it is based on what they define as "the double articulation between theory and practice, whereby theory emerges from a reflexive practice at the same time that practice is informed by theory" (Barrett & Bolt, 2007, p.29). This brings us to a specific type of knowing, that of tacit knowledge, which results from the process of handling materials during practice. As Barrett and Bolt contend, the main concept grounded in material thinking is the idea that materials have their own intelligence, which also interacts with that of the artists' creative intelligence (p.30). Paul Carter (2004) coins the term 'material thinking'. Barret and Bolt's work differs from the work of Carter in the way it privileges the collaboration between artists and materials in relation to the materials and processes of practice. Carter, on the other hand, situates this collaboration as something which occurs when artists talk about what they do.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger proposed an interesting perspective through which to look at things and objects. In his work, Heidegger asks numerous questions to instil a sense of awareness on things and objects, and their related meaning. In his seminal work, *Being and Time* (1926, translated in 1996), he talks about the meaning of our being and how this slips away because of all the things

happening around us in everyday life. I am here drawing on the work of Heidegger, since it has been useful to rethink the meaning of being an artist and specifically what it means to work with tools and materials in the process of producing art. Using his philosophy and reasoning as a lens for art practice it places the artist in a collaborative play with materials and tools throughout the process of making art. Heidegger suggested that this disconnects the artist from being the sole maker of an object. The artist is "co-responsible" with all the other elements that work together during the artistic process. Moreover, Heidegger claimed that knowing the world does not come from simply consciously looking at things and contemplating them, but that we understand it through handling. The emergence of something new is seen to be the result our interacting with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice. This handling uncovers its own particular tacit knowledge, and he further extends the idea that handling things should not become habitual and a means to an end. Handling as care reveals possibility. Moreover, he claimed that this process becomes the actual work of art and not merely the final physical art product.

Biljana Fredriksen's study (2012) on the teacher's responsibilities to provide materials and spaces for the negotiation of meaning with young children, aged 3-5, is an interesting way of looking at how, in a visual arts context, both physical and social factors influence possibilities for children's learning. Her arts-based qualitative inquiry in a Norwegian preschool was developed towards understanding the processes through which young children negotiate meaning. She draws on the work of Eisner (2002) wherein he argues that, through the process of selecting materials for use in students' activities, an art teacher could enable specific types of learning to occur. He adds that art materials, having specific distinct qualities, would result in certain types of learning. In this context, the teacher will not decide on what the learning outcome would be. Here, learning is assumed as a process that includes mutual constructions of meaning between teachers, students, and also materials. The possibilities for learning depend on a relationship between various students' capacities, the qualities of materials and the teacher's role. The contribution of children and young people as "active co-constructors of knowledge" (Fredriksen, 2012, p.336) within such a context would influence the development of learning. Fredriksen's study concludes that, if teachers allow a necessary open-ended exploration of materials, children are highly encouraged to negotiate personal meanings. In the process of various embodied activities children draw from their own experiences and add to the new experiences to learn and form new

knowledge (Fredriksen, 2012). Although the study of Fredriksen was developed for preschool children it would be highly relevant to appropriate the same idea at different levels of schooling.

Eisner's (2002) important arguments on art education explore various aspects of learning within an art-education context. He distinguishes between art rooms and traditional academic classrooms, in that the former enable students to direct their activities in a way that would afford personal initiative. An element of improvisation is also tagged to visual arts. In many cases, the outcome of a process of drawing or painting cannot be predicted, and when this is found to be appealing the individual engaged in the process could easily take the lead and follow the unplanned path. As Eisner (2002, p.78) puts it:

> […] part of the joy of painting consists in the microdiscoveries that the work in progress makes possible…these microdiscoveries provide for surprise, and surprise is one of the rewards of work in the arts.

Eisner also discusses materials in a learning context whereby, he argues, each material and each art form entails its own possibilities. What a person is able to achieve in an art form very much depends on what he or she is able to do with a material. According to Eisner, this process transforms a material into a medium, "a material becomes a medium when it conveys what the artist or student intended or discovered and chose to leave" (Eisner, 2002, p.80).

Eisner (2002) also talks about 'situated learning'. Children are situated in a social and material context and, in this setting, learning takes place in terms of "social norms; models for behaviour" and "opportunities to converse and share one's work with others" (Eisner, 2002, p.93). These are all opportunities through which children could learn, making learning and culture inseparable. Eisner builds on the work of Dewey (1910) when he talked about the way experience is constructed. Dewey highlighted the importance for children to work together in an attempt to learn from each other. A similar setting of situated learning which Eisner and Dewey talk about could be seen in the Reggio Emilia programme for preschool children in Italy (see Section 2.2.2.1). The activity that occurs in this group dynamic is multisensory. There is diversity and vitality in the actions going on at one point in time. This echoes more realistically what happens in real-life scenarios, since different activities and multiple tasks are juggled as part of the day-to-day events. Eisner (2002, p.97) also suggests a good use of time

over a period of sustained work to enable students to develop skills and get the 'feel' required to work with materials in an intelligent manner.

2.5 Conclusion

The concept of space and its meaning was discussed primarily in terms of the idea postulated by Henri Lefebvre (1991), who claimed that space is socially produced. Lefebvre emphasises the involvement of people in the creation of space within which they model their own lives. Here, space is seen as a product; moreover, the way it shapes how people interact with that space also makes it a producer. Thus, space is both a product and a producer because it affects and limits which activities take place in that space. Another useful way of looking at spaces is that of appropriation (Lefebvre, 1991). It was also relevant to discuss Lefebvre's attention to the gap between lived experience and expertise, as it acts as a reminder that the way professionals represent spaces might not be on the same lines as to how people actually experience and attach meanings to such places. Furthermore, the review has presented how, according to Lefebvre, social space takes three principal forms – conceived, lived, and perceived spaces.

The idea of engaging in place-making activities is discussed through the work of Cresswell (2004). He presents an interesting argument about the meaning of place, and how a place is that space which has transformed into something meaningful. What is beneficial in Cresswell's perspective is that he acknowledges the physical side of space (location), its material composition (environment) together with its sense of place (meaningful place). He also maintained that there are many forms and sizes of space. This also led to discourses around the idea of placelessness (Augé, 2008; Cresswell, 2004; Relph, 1976). Cresswell (2004) and Tuan (1974) also discuss little spaces, such as corners in a room. This has offered a constructive lens that helps towards positioning the physicality and the materiality of spaces as a fundamental aspect of the making of places.

Thrift (2003) talks about a relational view of space. He presents different modes, which focus on how new technological developments locate a new reality for discussing space and place. The review also discussed a number of collections that evaluated different works on space and their influence on the development of human geography (Hubbard & Kitchin, 2011; Hubbard, Kitchin & Valentine, 2008; Gulson & Symes, 2007a/b).

The review also explored the notion of in-between spaces and examined transitional spaces as part of everyday life. This also led to issues of mobility and lived spaces.

Place was also explored by Massey (2005; 1994) who claimed that what gives place its specificity are the constructions that people make through the way they interact and relate to the space socially. Similar to other authors, she has presented spaces as being alive and not static. They consist of multiple layers as a result of different stories taking place at different points in time. This has been very important to this study as it has allowed me to view space as an entity that makes it possible for different things to happen at the same time. This look at spaces secures a way of looking at actual processes in action and also at the potential for different activities to take place within the same spaces. Massey's work also deals with the potential of appropriation. Furthermore, the review also discussed issues of space and globalisation, together with dimensions of multiplicity, and the notion of time-space compression.

The review also discussed the value of enabling environments in schools, with particular reference to the Reggio Emilia approach and the Montessori method of education. Different meaning for different spaces of learning were discussed drawing on the work of Clark (2010) and her various studies with school children, where she talks about the spaces that are not very obvious and are more abstract. Some of the features that the students preferred seem to agree with those proposed by the Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies. Similar insights were given by Burke and Grosvenor (2003). The students in these studies showed that they were against rigid, ordinary layouts. Moreover, in the review it was argued that by changing one's understanding of the new directions of teaching and learning, it is a given that the design of learning environments should reflect this development (Oblinger, 2006). There is a transformational quality in the way learners interact with their social and physical environments (Lippmann, 2015). School spaces must encourage both collaboration and individual work. A strong belief expressed in this literature was that students care about what their spaces look like, and are ready to share their outlooks and opinions on the spaces they inhabit.

A studio could give an artist a sense of validation and makes practice a more professional activity (Bain 2005, 2004; Buren, 1983). A number of interviews with different artists were discussed in view of practice and how reflections on practice could elicit meaning on the different modes of studios. Artists could be better

understood by getting to know more about their studio practice. These interviews presented space as offering different modes of operation by which the artist could perform. There seems to be a need for artists to work together, but also to have a private space where they could reflect and be absorbed in the process of making art (Sjöholm, 2013). The physical space of the studio is an important aspect that brings different practices together like making art, displaying art, research, reflections, and storage (Sjöholm, 2013; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Buren, 2007; Bain, 2005, 2004). This section also explored the studio at home in terms of the female identity and the challenges for female artists with a family so as to validate their practice. This first section also delved into an understanding of proxemics, in terms of how man uses space, and how this is a culturally conditioned practice. Meanings attached to spaces are culturally and socially contested. This is a useful look at space, since it takes the social context as a guide for unravelling the meanings of spaces.

The second section of this review dealt with the understanding of creativity. Defining creativity has been a challenging endeavour. It has been researched within different fields of study and, along the years, a number of negative connotations have come to be attributed to the term. These myths or misunderstandings make it difficult to get a more realistic view of the term. Creativity is considered to be an important ingredient in education and, ideally, it should be fostered and nurtured in educational programmes and curricula (Robinson, 2011). To further bring out the contested meanings of the term, this review has drawn on a body of discourses on creativity, which highlight what claims and assumptions are being made within each and every standpoint. This approach elucidates the different perspectives on creativity, and which theories and beliefs support these views.

The section on creativity also presented a working definition for creativity which, at, its core has the concept of possibility thinking. It places creativity at a position where boundaries are pushed and unknown paths are pursued to identify and solve problems. This reflects a curious and inquisitive nature and, in this thesis, it is believed that both artists and students tend to have such qualities. The working definition is also framed around the idea of ordinary creativity, which is the kind of everyday creativity that is accessible by everyone.

The section on creativity also considered the role of 'flow', which is the experience whereby an individual is fully absorbed in the present moment. This concept has

similarities with Amabile's (1998) notion of intrinsic motivation, since flow keeps individuals motivated in their domain. The section also reflected on inspiration as a process that motivates and prompts artists to seek information. This process points to the concept of encountering, which relates to unintentional and accidental discoveries (Erdelez, 2005).

Wallas's (1926) model of the creative process, which involves the stages of preparation, incubation, illumination and verification, is examined and drawing on this model Kristensen (2004) discusses the physical context of the creative process. The author maintains that the space and its adequate resources are ideally used and prepared in such a way as to facilitate the initial preparation stage of the creative process. The incubation stage is not directly linked to the physical space. However, being close to the space might help this stage. The illumination stage could take place anywhere. Kristensen also maintains that the verification stage benefits from being in the same space as the preparation stage, although this has not been established theoretically. The review also presents a discussion on the interaction between generative and evaluative modes of thought, which take place during the creative process.

The third and last section of the literature review discussed issues related to art practice and art making. Art is difficult to define, and in this thesis a definition that encapsulates the essence of my vision is that put forward by Eisner (2002) who attributes four elements to the making of art, namely: (1) an initial idea; (2) creative imagination; (3) skills to work with materials; and (4) critical reflection. A number of reasons stemming from history condition the way people look at art, especially modern and contemporary art. This section discussed a number of points linked to the idea of legitimacy of art, in an attempt to unravel a number of claims that are assumed in the process of understanding art, with specific reference to modern art. Also, the work of Papastergiadis (2010) was discussed in terms of the place of art in today's world.

This section also delved into the notion presented by Barrett (2007) who argues that creative-arts research is an approach that produces some kind of knowledge as a result of interacting with the environment, both material and social, and then positioning this knowledge within existing theories and domains of knowledge. As Dewey (1934) postulates, artistic objects cannot be separated from the conditions of origin and the fact they were produced as part of an experience. This provides an alternative way of understanding and making sense of the lived experiences of people. This idea coincides

with my interest in the process of making art and, drawing on materialist perspectives, it is concerned with tacit knowledge since it is motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns. As Eisner (1997) points out, the benefits of non-traditional approaches to research direct an interest in the particular. An advantage of taking into account different experiences and layers of meaning along an objective and subjective divide generates new intersubjective understandings (Sullivan, 2010). The review also discussed dialogical aesthetics. Using this idea in educational contexts, since in this form of art the discursive role of the viewer or spectator becomes a significant element, it could be useful to provide contexts through which students could collaborate and socialise and, in the experience of the process, generate knowledge together.

Also discussed in this review is the concept of art and the body. Drawing on somaesthetics, it is recognised that body, mind and culture are intensely co-dependent. Painting and drawing are modes of thinking and awareness that are intensely rooted in the body (Shusterman, 2006).

This significance of reflection on one's practice as part of the learning process is an important concept that is underlined in the work of Kolb (1984) and Schön (1983). This ideology is based on the theory that knowledge is generated through action and reflection. Here, learning occurs through action and deliberate thinking on that action, and this makes learning as situated.

The third section also delved into a discussion on material thinking. Barrett and Bolt (2007) and Carter (2004) contend that the main concept grounded in material thinking is the idea that materials have their own intelligence, which also interacts with the artists' creative intelligence. The artist is in a collaborative play between materials and tools throughout the process of making art (Heidegger, 1996). The artist is 'co-responsible' with all the other elements that work together during the artistic process. The emergence of something new is seen to be the result of interacting with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice. This handling uncovers its own particular tacit knowledge. Moreover, what an individual is able to accomplish with an art form very much depends on what he or she is able to do with a material. According to Eisner (2002) this process transforms a material into a medium.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research process adopted in this thesis. I describe the research design and the data collection methods employed in the study. The analysis of the study is discussed in detail in the next chapter (Chapter 4). I start off the methodology chapter by recapping my research interest and I go on to discuss in detail the strategy implemented to address the concerns of the study. The research process is examined across the three distinct stages of the study, namely:

Part 1: In-depth interviews with artists.

Part 2A: Observations and informal conversations with art students.

Part 2B: The students' plan drawings.

This is followed by discussions of ethical issues and the study's limitations, which are presented at the end of this chapter.

3.2 The research interest and approach

As discussed previously, in the introductory chapter the research questions had been formulated in an attempt to address the gap that exists in the literature that explores the relationship between physical spaces and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice (art-production triad). Although there exists substantial literature on space, creativity, and also on artistic practice, there is not much literature that brings together and investigates the three spheres and their mutual relationship. As has been observed in the literature review (Chapter 2), it is significant to explore this area of research in order to understand more clearly how people engaging in artistic practice make sense of the physical space they work in as part of the multi-layered process of their practice. In artistic practices and the distinctive activities of making art, physical spaces become an integral part of the fluid and dynamic interplay that takes place. Therefore, understanding this relationship in the context of art education and also in that of artists' practice contributes to both fields. In addition, on a more personal note, my own interest in the subject stemming from my background as an art teacher and a practicing artist has been a motivational force supporting this research.

The overarching research question that underpins the core idea for this study is (RQ1):

What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

This study addresses the creative process of people making art, rather than the output. Nonetheless, by investigating the creative process it is presumed that the creative output will also be directly or indirectly concerned in the study. However, the creative output was not the main concern. It was only considered where it was related to looking at the process.

As mentioned earlier, in order to further investigate the main idea, a set of sub-questions have been formulated. The following questions form the basis of this inquiry and the research design was set in a way to address these questions:

RQ2 – What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?

RQ3 – How do art students relate to the space or environment around them in the art room?

RQ4 – How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?

3.3 The research processes and rationale

Various methods might be considered to approach a research study, each of which may contribute to answer the research questions posed while guiding the inquiry to produce the best possible outcomes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Seale et al., 2004; Sproull, 2002). Several research approaches have been carefully considered for this thesis. The first section will discuss the epistemological stance, followed by a discussion of the research design and methods used.

3.4 Epistemology: a qualitative and interpretive approach

After initially looking at this inquiry from different perspectives, and after considering different possibilities, it had become evident that in order to answer the research questions it would be most beneficial to principally focus on people's experiences and perceptions. My study centres on how individuals experience space, and how this experience impacts their creative process during their artistic practice. Therefore, since the research questions are grounded in human experience, I have chosen to focus on the unique and lived experiences of people. This positioned my inquiry as taking an

interpretivist stance based on the belief that people interpret, experience and construct the world through a process of social interaction with each other, and within broad social systems (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The province of qualitative research centres on the lived experience, which brings together individual belief, action and culture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Although some complexity around terms, concepts and assumptions surrounds qualitative research, given the way it traverses different disciplines, subjects and fields, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) provide a general definition of the term:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.3)

Interpretivism sees people as beings who create meaning to make sense of the world in which they. An interpretative or emic approach poses theories that are sensitive to the context in which they are researched. Such theories are in turn constructed from more than one reality. Here emic accounts refer to descriptions that come directly from the people involved, that is, directly from the culture being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, 1994; Neuman, 1997). Using this strategy positions my research as an exploration of experiences situated within the context within which they occur.

3.5 The research design

The methodology for this study includes three distinct parts. Each part will be discussed further in the following sections. The data collection process for this thesis spanned over five months, between January and May 2013. During this period, I have interviewed artists and also observed and spent time with a group of art students. The three data-collection methods used in the study are as follows:

Part 1: In-depth interviews with artists.
Part 2A: Observations and informal conversation with art students.
Part 2B: The students' plan drawings.

3.5.1 Art-based research

Due to the nature of the subject of this study, in that it brings together space, artistic practice, and creativity, I have reflected upon an art-based research approach in my methodological stance. Using arts as instruments for inquiry provides alternative approaches in addition to traditional modes of research. The arts contribute to research in an important way, and this could be established through different approaches and experiences (Theron et al., 2011; Sullivan, 2010). For a discussion on art as research see Section 2.4.2.

Art-based research centres on the notion of using the artistic process systematically, that is, the actual process of making art (which may include different art forms), as a way of exploring and understanding the experience of the people involved in the research (McNiff, 2008). 'Art-based research' (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2009; Liamputtong & Rumbold, 2008; McNiff, 2008; McNiff & Speiser, 2004) as a general term incorporates other variants of the term that are found in the literature, such as arts-informed research (Knowles & Cole, 2008), and artistic enquiry (McNiff, 1999; Wadsworth Hervey, 2000). There has been an increase in studies that explore the nature of the art experience, and it has been shown that the art could be used as a mode of inquiry with the potential of understanding the process of making art itself. These methods generate important information through creative approaches and ways of communicating (Sullivan, 2010; McNiff, 2008). Using artistic aptitudes to unravel difficulties and understand experience proposes numerous possibilities.

There are various art-based methods that could have been implemented for this research. As for the part of the study that involves the artists, elements from their practice could have been drawn on as a way to reflect upon their art-making methods, and how their practice transforms and develops. To give an example of this model, project-based inquiries invite artists to work on a project that would act as a catalyst to reflect upon and make sense of their practice. Although this has its particular benefits, on the other hand it also presents a number of challenges. One such challenge is the fact that participants would need to commit, for extensive periods of time, to participating in such projects and this might be difficult to manage when coupled with their routine practice, exhibition deadlines and commissioned work. After carefully considering this position in light of how these methods explore experiences, by using art practice as a principal method of knowledge building, it was decided to focus more

on the artists' experiences through methods that directly give rich descriptions of the meanings surrounding the subject of this study. Therefore, I have not engaged with practice as research, as my own work and that of the artists taking part in this study draws on materialised art.

In the second part of the study, which was carried out with the art students, the research was visual and multimodal in the tradition of the work of Christensen and James (2000) and Alison Clark (2010) on involving children in research. (see Sections 3.5.3.1 and 3.5.4). Students were invited to make drawings of their ideal art room as a way of enabling them to visualise the concepts being addressed, and to mull over them. This part of the study enabled them to think on how they related to their present art room. It also encouraged them think about, and envisage, the changes they would like to see in this specific school space, through ways they were familiar with, particularly given how their everyday life revolves around images and visuals.

3.5.2 Part 1: In-depth interviews with artists

The main reason for conducting in-depth interviews with the artists was the possibility to use an approach that prompts participants to talk in depth about their experiences and issues related to the research topic (Cook, 2008). Given that the study's fundamental aim was to explore the interplay of the art-production triad, in-depth interviews were considered to be a useful method for exploring perceptions and to understand the needs of the participants, while identifying positive and problematic issues surrounding the research topic. In-depth interviews give voice to the participants' own ideas and main concerns, thus assisting in highlighting the meanings attached to the spaces of artists (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Cook, 2008).

The in-depth interviews with the artists were conducted in April 2013, and the pilot study took place in January of the same year. The interviews, which were conducted with seven artists, were selected through snowball sampling. Guest et al. (2006) argue that their research has shown that, beyond six interviews, the data reaches a saturation point and the occurrence of new codes decreases drastically. This supported the decision to interview six artists. Furthermore, since ethical approval had been granted before the initial pilot interview was conducted I had decided to include it together with the other six interviews. This decision was strengthened by acknowledging that each interview is a unique and original personal contribution to the study and, hence, the

pilot interview was also deemed to be very valuable. The artists were not chosen to represent any particular age group, gender or ethnicity. Initially, I had considered to divide the participants according to their respective ages. However, this did not seem feasible since artists of the same age could be at very different stages in their artistic career. Hence, it was deemed more beneficial to select the participants according to the stage of their artistic career. I was particularly interested to study a mixture of both early-career and established artists, but this was only aimed at having artists with diverse artistic experiences. Through snowball sampling, I was presented with three early-career artists and four established artists – five male and two female – with their ages ranging from 25 to 69, (see Table 3.1). I was also very open to different art styles and genres of work. The sample of artists in this study is made up of a sculptor, four painters, a conceptual/video artist, and a painter/actress/musician.

Table 3.1 Artists' details

Artist	Male/female	Type of art	Age (at the time of the interview)	Studio type
Henry	M	Wood sculpture	57	Interconnected garage
Jack	M	Abstract painting and mixed media	59	Interconnected studio and separate gallery
Brigitte	F	Painting	69	Interconnected room on second floor – later addition
Gabriel	M	Video, installation and painting	56	One of the rooms in the house changed into a studio
Daniel	M	Painting	25	A whole floor (maisonette)
Adrian	M	Painting and printing	37	Warehouse
Maya	F	Painting, piano playing, acting	37	Kitchen corner

The seven interviews were conducted in person. All interviews but one took place in-situ, that is at the artists' personal studio, and all of the artists allowed me to move around the place; they also provided me with a tour of the different areas of their studio.

I had the opportunity to see and observe the artists in their workspace and to see a number of their work, both completed and in progress. The interviews were semi-structured because I wanted the artists to speak about what mattered most to them. Each artist is unique, and each and every one of them was free to talk about their particular stories and their particular perspectives. This gave them control and agency to present their space as they wished. They were interested in being an active part of the research, and not simply passively answering some questions. Furthermore, the space itself offered the possibility for our discussions to flow better because the artists tended to frequently refer to artefacts, areas and corners in the studio. In order to aid conversation, especially in the beginning, I formulated a few guiding questions that I planned to ask each artist. These questions led to other issues, and each interview developed along nuanced routes. I asked the following guiding questions during the seven interviews:

 a. Could you describe your ideal studio?

 b. Do you imagine yourself working in a different place?

 c. Where do you get ideas/inspiration for your work?

 d. Could you describe the different stages of your work process?

 e. Which stage is the most creative?

 f. Does your work follow the same process when you are working for someone else, that is, on commissioned work?

Latching onto the above discussion, this first part of the study is based on dialogue and on the idea of being present with the artists in the space where their art practice is situated. Although I had pre-planned ideas of what to ask the respondents, I wanted each interview to be flexible and fluid in nature. I wanted each artist to take control of what he or she wished to display and communicate. This reflects the idea that participants are treated as active agents, rather than passive subjects (Heron & Reason, 2006). Furthermore, a respondent is likely to pin-point and talk about the most significant and salient elements that matter to him or her, and this would naturally form part of the dialogue that develops. This understanding acted as an impetus to give the participants the adequate space to talk about the different meanings they make of the things around them. The participants used their own preferred language and their own stories to recount their experiences and to articulate complex thoughts and opinions. Heron and Reason stipulate that:

> Ordinary people are quite capable of developing their own ideas and can work together in a co-operative inquiry group to see if these ideas make sense of their world and work in practice. (Heron & Reason, 2006, p.144)

This reduces the distinction between researchers and participants, whereby the latter are active as opposed to passive subjects. This involves sharing their own experiences as input to the generation of relevant knowledge.

My study also takes an approach that draws on elements from ethnography. An ethnographic perspective lets in culture and a more situated account, drawing on ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interviews (Green & Bloome, 1997). I met and interviewed the artists in their work environments but I did not spend additional time with them at their studios and places where they work. I focused on rich descriptions of their processes of work within their practice. These descriptions were generated through dialogue and conversation. Dialogue enables research participants to construct a social space through which they could create common meanings and actions by sharing their experiences. As Park (2001) postulates:

> Dialogue, in particular looms large as an important methodological link among the activities pursued because of its existential significance for human life. More than a technical means to an end, it is an expression of the human condition that impels people to come together as thinking and feeling beings to form a common entity that is larger than its constituent parts […] (Park, 2001, p.84)

During the in-depth interviews, I was particularly interested in the relationship between the studio space and the work artists produce, and each artist expressed this through their own voice while reflecting on their practice. Moreover, focusing on elements from ethnography provides the researcher with the opportunity to engage in observations and conversations with the artists. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Photos of the studios, materials and some of the works were taken and used only for reference purposes and, although it would have been extremely interesting to present them, this was not possible as not all the artists gave permission to do so (for further details see Section 3.7.1).

3.5.3 Part 2A: Observations and informal conversations with art students

The second part of the study involves a case study approach, whereby one group of art students was chosen to take part in the study. According to Creswell (2002, p.61):

> A case study is a problem to be studied, which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a "case" or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.

Case studies aim at giving contextual detail of instances in action by disentangling its particularities and nuanced experiences of the people involved. Such approaches enable studies of situations in their natural settings (Yin, 2003). They also provide descriptions of the temporal and spatial boundaries within which the study is set. This was particularly suitable for this study, since this approach enabled me to study a group of students in their typical lesson routine situated in an art room context, and how they negotiated this space within their time and space allocation. Moreover, this approach offers the possibility to use multiple sources of data. In this study this was achieved through observations, conversations with students, and also the creation of plan drawings by the art students.

The same ethnographic tradition of 'hanging around' (Ellis, 2004, p.26) was a characteristic in the sessions with the art students at school. The sessions consisted of being with the students for an hour and a half, once a week for one month. The school was selected through convenience sampling. Given that I also worked during school hours I had to locate a school having slightly longer hours. I was interested in a secondary school where students take up art in one of their form years. Initially I had considered carrying out the study in my own school. However, this was not ideal since I wanted to be present during the actual art lessons and my time-table did not allow for the possibility of working with the other colleague teaching art. Hence, I decided to select another school and drew up a list of potential schools. I had no particular preference whether it would be an all-boys, an all-girls or a co-educational secondary school, and I was not tied to any specific sector of education. The first school I contacted from the list was, in fact, interested in participating in the study. I met the senior management team to try to find a particular art group with lesson periods that matched my time-table. This was successful and after distributing the information sheets (see Appendices B, C and D) and the consent forms (see Appendix A) whilst explaining the details of the study, they were pleased to accept. The group that was selected for the study met every Thursday for a double period. This was a particular session, to which students from different forms could attend. The group was small and manageable; it was a group of seven students out of eight, as one of the students in the group had opted not to take part in the study (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Art students' details

Name of student	Form	Age (years)
Keith	1	11
Jake	1	11
Aaron	2	12
Peter	2	12
Craig	3	13
Dean	3	14
Ethan	4	14

The students were very open to sharing what happens in their art room, and took pride in sharing and talking about their sense of 'ownership' of this particular space in their school. Moreover, there was also a focus on the idea that, to be able to make meaning at any moment, it is important to be attentive to the body and its gestures – as is reflected in the work of Goodwin (2000). Drawing on ethnographic principles of observation and participation, the researcher would be in a position to be attentive to gestures and non-verbal information.

3.5.3.1 Young people

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) includes two articles that emphasise the right of all children and young people to express their views in the matters that affect them, an entitlement to free-expression, and a right to all kinds of information and ideas. These are:

Article 12: Every child and young person has the right to express his or her views freely in all matters affecting them.

Article 13: Every child and young person has the right to freedom of expression, including the right to all kinds of information and ideas.

The concept of children as social agents and producers of culture has, in recent years, reshaped and re-informed research methods in various fields, including anthropology, sociology and education. Giving voice to young children has shifted the perspective of how researchers view the actual role of children in research. This role has repositioned itself to one that is more active, more inclined to meaning-making and more

contributive. This shift in perspective has also highlighted the need for adequate research techniques, which give children a 'better voice' to their input. Before delving into research, one must be aware of relationship imbalances between adults and children, and address such tensions in the process of research planning. With this in mind, the approaches and techniques selected for the collection of data should be well-suited to working with children in such a way that enables them to become active participants rather than subjects.

In an issue of the journal *Children, Youth and Environment* (2006, Vol. 16, 2), Alison Clark and Barry Percy-Smith discuss different participation aspects as they review the works of authors who discussed this notion. Through an analysis of these works, Clark and Percy-Smith attempt to answer a number of questions related to participation with young people and, amongst others, they ask, "To what extent is participation bringing about benefits in young people's lives?" (Clark & Percy-Smith, 2006, p.2). In an attempt to understand the different tensions that participation could give rise to, they suggest proceeding with caution and reflecting on whether participation endeavours are, in reality, stemming from adult priorities. Hence, the role of adults in the participation of young people is to be carefully reflected upon. Secondly, critical reflections on participation position it as a notion that could be limited to consumer views or service user involvement (Cockburn, 2005). It could be argued that the latter might only provide a voice to young people but, at the same time, retain control of the organisations and agencies concerned and their aims. The authors advocate the multi-layered nature of participation. In their work, Clark and Percy-Smith also discuss the environment and the everyday. This view makes it possible to look at participation as a concept that is relational and experiential. Viewing participation through such a lens locates it as a concept that is rooted in everyday life. As a guide for unravelling some of the tensions around young people's participation, the authors present questions such as: how do adults view children? What is the relationship between adults and children? How does an organisation view itself? What assumptions are being made about young people and adults? These could serve to clear any suppositions made about young people, adults and the organisations concerned. Clark and Percy-Smith (2006) move their arguments in the direction of establishing forms of participation that make a difference in the everyday lives of young people. This would bring about more autonomous models of participation.

Children and young people are capable of expressing their views about what concerns them. Thomson (2008) adds that it is also their right to talk about their views in matters that affect them. According to Thomson these two beliefs make up the notion of 'voice'. Voice depends a lot on social context and this is also affected by power relations. This should make researchers aware that the voices they come across are a product of a particular time, context and situation. Thomson's work (2008) focuses on research with children and young people, and is not research about, or on, the participants. She also goes on to give reasons for doing visual research, which are primarily that children and young people are interested in images, particularly given the fact that their world is surrounded by images. Moreover, images have the advantage of communicating in more ways than words afford.

Alison Clark's development of the research framework identified as the "Mosaic Approach" (2010) explores the concept of listening to children in an attempt to generate documentation with them. The approach focuses on key elements such as participation, reflexivity, the lived experience and the value of practice.

> It is designed to be an active research process where meanings are constructed from a variety of sources and by different individuals in order to compile a picture or series of pictures. (Clark, 2010, p.31)

This approach uses a number of methods, which include observation, interviews, photography by the children themselves, tours and mapmaking. Clark's work promotes the idea that children are active subjects who are worth listening to. Moreover, it reinforces methods that give voice to people with less power. Clark's method recognises the varied ways in which children represent, communicate and express their thoughts, an ideology exercised at the acclaimed schools of Reggio Emilia in Italy (see Section 2.2.2.1). This approach supports the right of children to express their ideas on the things that will affect them.

The model that Clark (2010) proposes encompasses both the verbal and visual methods of communication. In order for these approaches to work. they have to be reachable to a diverse group of individuals. Her method is based on an ethnographic framework. Ethnography infuses both the voice of the researcher, as well as the voice of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is achieved through reflecting on experience, which in turn shapes and constructs authentic and subjective identities.

In this study, I pick up on an aspect of the arguments proposed by Clark (2010). Apart from involving the participants in conversation, I also invited them to point out areas that are important to them and I took photographs of these spaces. due to limitations of resources it was not possible, to give each student a camera. However, they took me on a tour of areas that were important to them.

Photography offers the possibility to explore experience and space (Pink, 2006). These images could either be taken by the researcher or else by the children themselves. A number of authors encourage the latter (Burke & Ribeiro de Castro, 2007; Noland, 2006; Collier & Collier, 1986). Photography as a visual medium enables a revelation of individual perspectives. It is a tool for reflection and interpretation; "They are tools about meaning making and not fact finding" (Clark, 2010, p.30). It is more about "knowledge construction rather than knowledge extraction" (Clark, 2010, p.30).

Observation also enables a researcher to become immersed in a new environment or to view a familiar context in a different way. Observation could take the form of either non-participant or participant activity. The former may be encouraged at the initial stages of research.; participant observation affords an effective way of learning more about the participants and it may even allow the researcher to ask better questions and interpret what meaning children make. I have written down field notes throughout the observation stage. The sessions were a mixture of observation and note-taking, conversation, and spending time with the students. Latching onto the above discussion of doing research with young people, I recognise and acknowledge that my study was not participatory, but that it focused on a process that elicited responses from young people.

3.5.4 Part 2B: The students' plan drawings

Various authors in childhood studies suggest that research should be carried out with children and not on children (Bland et al., 2009; Carrington, 2007; Christensen & James, 2000). Working with the voice and agency of students is becoming a more common practice and this is also practiced, although not always, in the planning and design of schools (Woolner et al., 2007).

Visual methods have been widely used in research with children (Hackett, 2014; Yamada-Rice, 2014; Procter, 2013; Rose, 2012; Thomson, 2008) and besides other considerations, they have been viewed as a way to diminish the power imbalance

between adults and children, since these afford activities that are more in tune with what children do. Drawing activities may provide a more interesting way for exploring ideas with children, rather than depending only on formal methods of collecting data (Walker, 2007; Pink, 2007). Their drawings could act as pre-texts for further conversation about the issues and concerns being discussed. This ties with Kress and van Leeuwen's views (2006, p.113) who state that the verbal and the visual modes have "a defined and equal role to play". Furthermore, through the use of drawings, children could attract attention to details and to their relation with a particular concern, which might have been hitherto invisible or uncovered by adults.

In a study by Mitchell (2006) there is a strong indication of the usefulness of using drawing as a visual research approach with children. The process also enables easier communication between children and researchers and, on occasion, provides a tangible focal point for discussions to take place. Through the use of drawings, children may highlight details that would have not been perceived by adults (Mitchell, 2006). The drawings may also afford knowledge and understandings that cannot be accessed through verbal means.

The drawings that I gathered as part of the data collection process take the form of floor plans. The secondary school students, who are used to drawing as a mode of engagement, were asked to draw or paint a plan of their ideal art room using any medium they preferred. They could have submitted their drawings at any point during the sessions that we had together. These drawings served as texts to enable further discussion, which shaped our one-to-one informal conversations. Thus, the drawings offered a physical space for the students' perspectives to be seen and heard, and they served as a basic reference for our conversations.

The students who took part in the study were left free to decide as to whether to work on the task at home or during the art lesson. The majority of the students completed the task at home. This gave them the time to think about the concept, and it also enabled them to work away from adult supervision. This minimised the occurrences of working to please the teacher or the researcher. It is not uncommon that students try to draw what the teacher might want or like. Working on the plans at home enabled the students to think about the task in their own time and to make it something personal (Rose, 2012).

These drawings were also discussed against personal accounts of what goes on beyond their school hours, and how their artistic practice extends to their homes and to other places.

3.6 Unknowing as a stance

Coinciding with the choice of methods considered appropriate for the nature of this study, it has also been deemed important to reflect on my position as the researcher in this study, as well as on the position of the research participants. How am I to identify from which standpoint I am to approach my research? How are the participants of the study approaching the subject? How are each of our 'realities' going to be translated in the process proffered by the methods used? A unique perception of a person is animated through filters that are constructed through the experiences and interactions of that person, and which ultimately become that person's reality. The relationship of the art-production triad is looked at through human activities and experiences, which take place in unique realities. Artists and students live, enact and experience their art practice, thus making this activity far from being definite and fixed.

Vasudevan (2011) proposes 'unknowing' as a stance to enable more response and engagement to a changing world. Through this lens, educational and research practices are re-imagined in such a way as to be more open with the unexpected and new ways of knowing. In her work, she invites the reader to enter into a dialogue in an attempt to consider an 'unknowing' stance to approach research, pedagogy and scholarship. She states that

> Unknowing is an act of dwelling in the imaginative space between declarative acts of knowing and not knowing; an invitation to wrest our modes of inquiry and our beings away from the clutches of finite definitions of knowledge and instead rest our endeavours in the beauty of myriad ways of knowing. (Vasudevan, 2011, p.1157)

In approaching research, it is important to undo part of what we claim to know. This outlook would enable a researcher to be open to different ways of knowing. It would make it possible to reframe our questions differently and see situations from different perspectives.

Vasudevan (2011) states that when we are faced with texts, which can take different forms, we engage with them such that we attach personal meanings to them, as opposed to seeing them merely as words, images and so on. We try to make sense of them

according to the world we live in, and thus we connect personally to these texts. Similarly, in this study my position as an artist influenced the interpretation of this research. According to Rosenblatt (1978) people have "efferent" and "aesthetic" responses to texts, the latter being what makes the 'reading' of texts a personal action. This stance, however, acknowledges that in the face of research these personal perceptions are to be highlighted and put forward to ensure a position that is open to the unknown, and having a sense of understanding others from their point of view.

3.7 Further considerations

The following sections will discuss ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

3.7.1 Ethical considerations

The ethical review process ensures appropriate conduct on the part of researchers in an attempt to safeguard and protect participants. It also ensures that both parties are unharmed during the process of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Given, 2008). Diener and Crandall (1978) summarise ethical issues into four main areas and suggest that researchers should ensure a careful approach with these issues in the process of their research. They propose the anticipation and prevention of:

1. harm to participants
2. lack of informed consent
3. invasion of privacy
4. deception.

For this study, the principal ethical considerations were informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Here, I will elaborate upon each of these in relation to the artists, and also to the young people involved in the study. This research has been approved by the University of Sheffield (see Appendix E).

The artists

In the case of the artists, with the exception of one all the interviews were held in their respective private studios. As far as possible, the meetings were scheduled when other family members were present at home. In the process of contacting the artists and conducting the interviews, it was ensured that it would cause the least inconvenience possible. After being provided with a copy of the information sheet, in explaining the

nature of the research it was also ensured that the artists understood the consent form well and that, at any stage of the study, they were free to withdraw from the research without giving any reason. Informed consent ensures that the participants know about their right to be informed about the nature of the study, and that their acceptance to take part was totally voluntary (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

From time to time, the artists were reminded that they could clarify any queries that they might have, while assessing whether they were understanding each step of the process. During the process of data collection, due care was given in treating the artists with respect. In addition, the artists were assured privacy and confidentiality through a process that protects their identity and their research locations. Anonymity was observed through the use of pseudonyms in order for the artists not to be identified. The use of photographs also required signed consent, which was not given by all the seven artists (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Although, on one hand, it would have been extremely interesting to display some photos of the artists' studios and materials related to their practice, it was agreed not to present any photographs at all so that in a way the data was presented on a level playing field. Moreover, although some of the artists gave their consent to use the photographs, anonymity has been further safeguarded by not presenting any photographs, since artworks could eventually be identified due to style recognition or familiarity with the works. This is especially so in the Maltese art context, where artists could be more easily identified in view of the small population.

The recordings, transcripts, photographs, and notes have been stored in a private place and they will be destroyed once the work on the research has been completed (Given, 2008). This was also clarified with the participants. Ethical consideration was also given to the accuracy in the data and the integrity of the research, in that it is honest and open, and candidly reveals the strengths and limitations of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Given, 2008).

Students and the school

In the case of the young people, observations and formal conversations took place within the provided location of the school – in the art room. It was ensured that my presence during the students' art lessons caused the least disruption possible. Additionally, it was also made clear that if any participant appeared distressed or was keen to stop a conversation, he could do so without giving any reason. This was

thoroughly explained when the students were issued with the information sheet. Given that the students were under age, their guardians were also informed about the research and they were also asked to give their consent allowing the students to take part in the research. The students were also given all the information about the nature of the study, and they were left free to decide whether they would be interested in taking part in the research. This was to ensure voluntary acceptance and that they could stop at any point of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The school administration was also kept informed about the entire process. Additionally, the students were given time to reflect and ask questions so that all queries could be duly clarified. It was also ensured that the young people were understanding what was happening during each step of the process. Furthermore, this also helped to build a safe environment wherein the participants could feel that their opinions mattered. At the commencement of the study, I also met the teacher to discuss the whole process so that she could be aware of what was going to take place during the sessions. The recordings, transcripts, photographs, and notes have been stored in a private place and will be destroyed once the work on the research has been completed. This was also clarified with the participants.

As discussed above, throughout the thesis the names and identities of the stakeholders involved were safeguarded. The students were also given a pseudonym to disclose their identity. Moreover, the name of the school was not used in order to further protect the identity of the students. To further safeguard anonymity, photographs were only used for personal reference. As mentioned already, ethical consideration was also given to the accuracy in the data and the integrity of the research, in that it is honest and open, and candidly reveals the strengths and limitations of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Given, 2008).

3.7.2 Limitations of the study

The current study has a number of limitations that need to be taken into account. The first limitation of this study is my own familiarity with the research setting as an artist. This has affected the way I interpreted the responses from the participants. As far as possible, I have tried to focus on presenting the unique voices of the participants, while trying to move away from my own. 'Unknowing' as a stance has helped me to approach the studies looking for fresh perspectives (Vasudevan, 2011).

A second limitation of this study was the sample size. Given the small sample for this study, the findings cannot be generalised. However, it was not the aim of this study to generalise findings. Moreover, the sample selection through snowball and convenience sampling could not be taken as a reflection of the whole population. At the same time, small samples and case studies produce context-dependent knowledge, and these certainly contribute to the cumulative development of knowledge in the field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Notwithstanding the limitation of the small sample size, the findings still provided significant implications for artists and art students about their practice. In effect, this study has contributed to the literature on space, creativity and artistic practice, particularly by connecting these three spheres.

Another limitation of this study is that although arts-based methods were carefully considered, it was decided to focus more on the artists' experiences through methods that directly give rich descriptions of the meanings surrounding the subject of this study. Therefore, I have not engaged with practice as research, as my own work and that of the artists taking part in this study draws on materialised art.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the rationale for the methodology selected for this thesis in view of the research interest and approach, and also in view of the research questions that are the backbone of this study. The methods and approaches selected stem from a qualitative and interpretive paradigm. The methods bring together different approaches, which complement each other and utilise specialised insights from each of the approaches. A discussion on 'unknowing' as a stance for research was also presented. Further considerations, such as ethical issues and the limitations of this study, were also explored.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the analytic processes adopted in this thesis. In the previous chapter, the research design and the data collection methods were discussed in detail. This chapter will cover the analysis process, which is illustrated by actual examples from the data. The analytic processes are examined across the three distinct stages of the study, as follows:

Part 1: In-depth interviews with artists.

Part 2A: Observations and informal conversations with art students.

Part 2B: The students' plan drawings.

4.2 Part 1: In-depth interviews with artists

The first stage of the study, that is, the in-depth interviews with artists, was designed to shed light on the meanings that artists attach to the space or environment in which they work. This stage of this study concerns the sub-research question (RQ2) which asks:

What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?

After deciding to include the pilot study, given that ethical approval was granted by the University of Sheffield before conducting the interview, the seven interviews were analysed using the method explained in, *Thematic Analysis* (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method was chosen because the authors offer a step-by-step rigorous method of analysing data that could be easily followed and, given the nature of qualitative data, it ensures consistency and rigour. At the same time, this method also provides an element of flexibility. Taking into consideration the data generated from this study, this method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) seemed to be a fitting approach, which would lead to the generation of codes and theme families. At an earlier stage, the pilot study was analysed using the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti. However, later on I decided to analyse all seven interviews manually. According to Graue and Walsh (1998, p.145), handling the data in a traditional manner allows one to "touch the data".

The idea of inductive coding, derived bottom-up from the data (Boyatzis, 1998) underpins the analysis process employed for the seven interviews.

All but one interview took place in-situ, that is at the artists' respective personal studios. In the process of the interviews, the artists allowed me to go around their studios and they also provided me with an assisted tour of the different areas of the place. This gave me the opportunity to see and observe the artists in their workspace, and to take a look at their work, both completed or in progress. The interviews were semi-structured and were designed this way, since I wanted the artists to speak about what mattered most to them. Given the uniqueness of each artist, every one of them could talk about their particular stories and perspectives. These questions led to other issues and each interview developed along nuanced routes.

4.2.1 The analysis process

The analysis process followed six steps, which Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) have presented as a framework for performing thematic analysis (see Table 4.1). The analysis was data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and this form of inductive coding uses a process of coding the data without attempting to fit it in a pre-existing coding frame. However, it is also important to clarify that researchers cannot code data by freeing themselves completely from their epistemological position.

Table 4.1 Braun and Clarke's analysis process

An analysis process as presented by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87)
Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data
Phase 2: Generating initial coding
Phase 3: Searching for themes
Phase 4: Reviewing the themes
Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes
Phase 6: Producing the report

4.2.1.1 Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data

The first step of the analysis process was to transcribe verbatim all of the audio recordings. Since all the interviews but one were conducted in Maltese, given that this was the participants' preferred language, these were first translated into English. This

was a lengthy process and I went through the transcripts more than once to ensure that the translation was very close to the meaning the artists expressed in Maltese (Temple & Young, 2004). I focused on maintain my ethical obligation towards the artists, and being faithful and truthful to their narratives. The transcription of all the interviews generated a document of around 58,000 words, collectively. I read through the data set a number of times to familiarise myself with the content, and I worked on pre-coding as well as code jottings to get an initial sense of the data. This generated an initial list of ideas about what would interesting in the data. This process was done by marking and encircling parts of the data on a hardcopy version of the transcripts.

4.2.1.2 **Phase 2: Generating initial codes**

The second phase involved the process of producing initial codes for the data. This open-ended process allowed me to note down my first impressions of codes and apply them to the different data extracts that were selected. Bauer (2000) advises against adopting a purely inductive approach, by which one codes whatever one observes in the text. Codes should reflect the questions that underpin the research. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) advise to code for as many potential themes and patterns as possible, and also to keep part of the context available so that meanings are not lost. I have worked systematically through the entire data set (the seven interviews) and identified particular aspects of the data. I also looked for items that might form patterns across the data set. I have done this manually by marking and highlighting a hardcopy of the transcripts. This process was repeated and copied using Microsoft Word in order to have a soft copy version of this phase. Braun and Clarke (2006) also advise to keep a degree of surrounding data so that the context is not lost. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 show two data extracts with codes applied, taken from this second phase of initial coding. The reference after each quote follows a particular system. For example, (Brigitte, 3:12) translates to 'Brigitte' – the pseudonym given to the artist, 3 – referring to the third interview, 12 – referring to quote number 12.

Table 4.2 Extract from data – Example 1

Extract from data	Applied coding
Once I bought the house, after a while I had bought this garage and then I had them interconnect. I wanted it to be something close to me, rather than having to stay going outside to come here like we did ourselves just now. I use the interconnecting part more, it is more handy. (Henry, 1:1)	1. His studio is a garage. 2. His studio is interconnected to the main house. 3. Values easy access to studio.

Table 4.3 Extract from data – Example 2

Extract from data	Applied coding
But books are essential. For me they're important as much as paint. Even the fact that I would take a book and I leaf through it, helps me, helps me a lot and it calms my heart. (Daniel, 5:15)	1. He needs books in his studio. 2. Books take an important role. 3. Using books as a way to calm down.

4.2.1.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes

The initial coding phase is followed by a process that refocuses the codes and sorts them into potential themes, thus moving to a broader level of themes. I went through the codes several times to analyse them and consider what general themes may be formed. I started this process by using separate sheets of paper and organising codes into piles of the same theme. These were then copied into tables in order that they are neatly presented. To illustrate this step, I will present some examples of codes related to the 'studio space' theme (see Figure 4.1). Following this, Figure 4.2 shows an initial attempt at understanding the outcomes from organising all the codes into sub-themes and general themes. These are illustrated using a thematic map.

Types of Studios	Relationship with the Studio	Space as Influence	Mess vs. Order
Balancing living and working - warehouses	Defining the studio as a personal space	Workspace is not crucial	Being organized is compared to a machine
Utilizing roof space	Inability to work in someone else's home	The studio as an ephemeral temporary passage	Having things around for immediate use
Gallery space as an extension of the studio	Feeling lost when changing studio	Studio as a space of performance	Particular work needs order and cleanliness
Utilizing cupboards and corner in the kitchen	Having personal things in the studio	Studios as spaces of convenience	Mess is subjective – inspiration for some and deterrent for others
Changing a chapel into a studio	Difficulty to adapt to new studios	Space affords possibility for work	
Using a garage for a studio	Experiencing a sense of meditation in the studio	Space affects what is done within it	

Easy Access	Resources in the Studio	Ideal Studio
Valuing interconnected spaces	Valuing being surrounded by the right tools	Comfortable
Valuing living near studio	Having things handy avoids frustration	Spacious space
Travelling to a studio is a burden	Using music as part of the artistic process	Having ample lighting
Giving value to portable studio materials to use in other nearby spaces	Giving importance to books for reference	Having different areas allocated for different activities
	Giving value to an internet connection	Having an outside connection
		Having free space to move around

Figure 4.1 Codes for theme – studio space
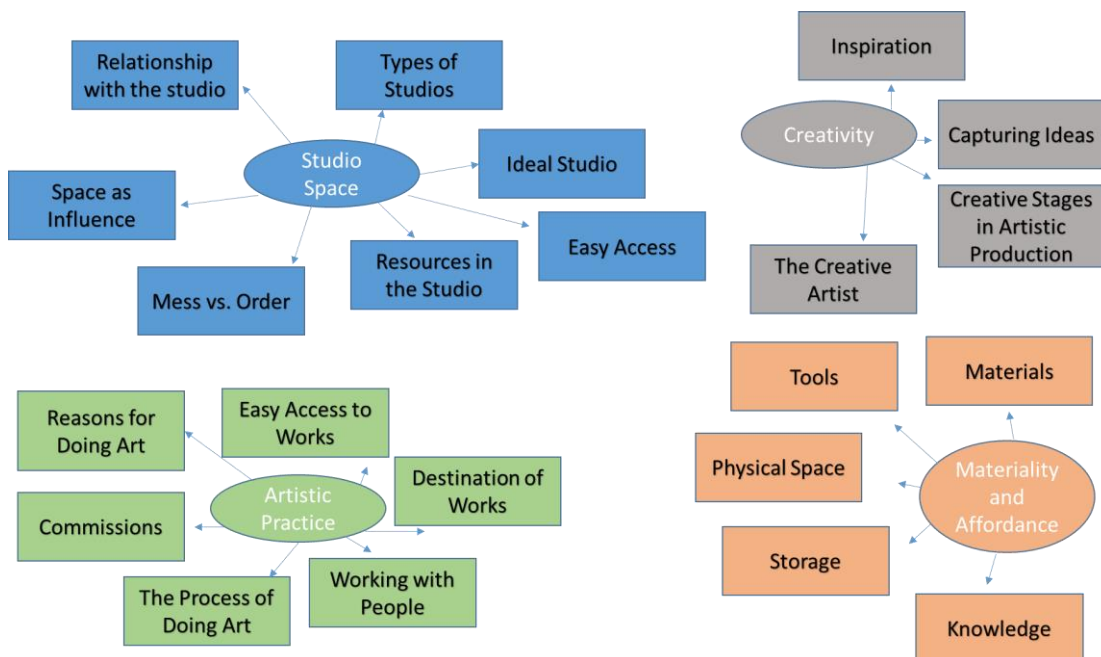
Figure 4.2 Initial map of themes and sub-themes – artists

4.2.1.4 **Phase 4: Reviewing the themes**

The fourth phase involves the refinement and refocusing of the themes that were established in Phase 3. This step ensures more meaningful coherence between the data within the themes, and also that the themes are distinct. This phase consists of two

levels of reviewing and refining the themes. At the first level, the coded data extracts are reviewed in order to check whether they form patterns. The second level consists of a similar process: this time the validity of each theme is considered in relation to the entire data set. At this stage, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that, when the researcher feels that the refinements are not enhancing the themes, this process of fine-tuning should be ended. Figure 4.3 shows a developed thematic map.
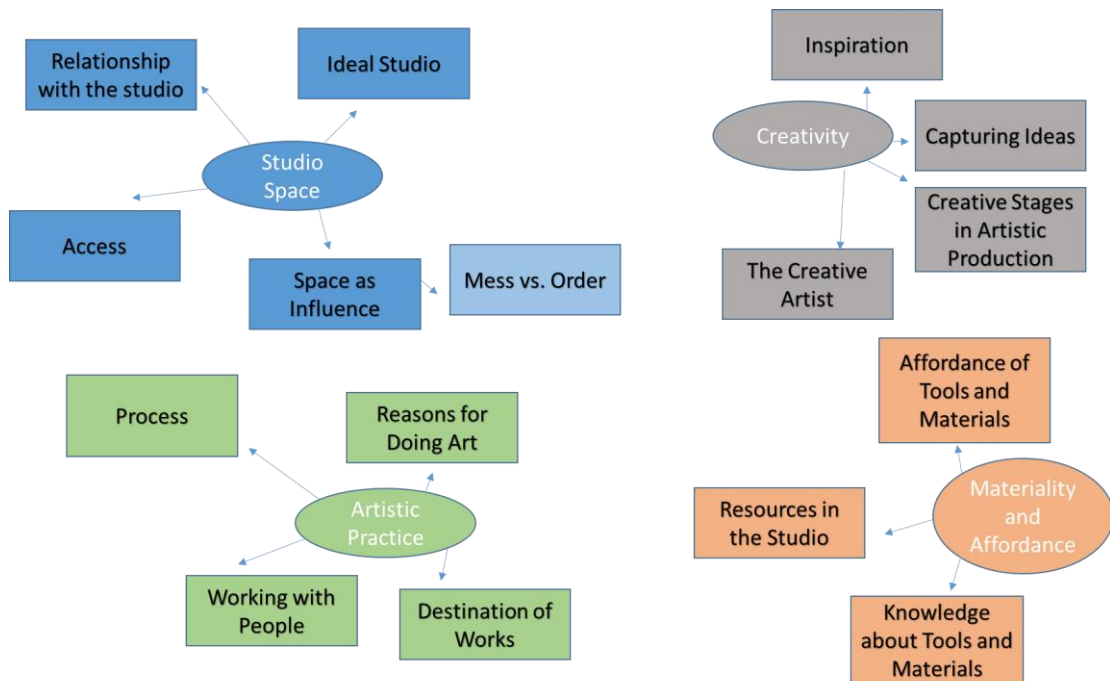
Figure 4.3 Refined themes – artists

4.2.1.5 Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes

At the initial stages of the fifth phase the researcher should have a suitable thematic map of the data (see Figure 4.4). This then enables her to define and refine the themes further and then analyse the data within them. In this process, the spirit of each theme is identified. Any elements of interest within each theme and its respective data extracts is also identified at this stage. For each theme, the researcher is to write a detailed analysis and the particular story of each theme is illustrated. Moreover, it is important that the themes be also viewed in a broader perspective, that is, in how they relate to the research questions. The themes are considered on their own and in relation to others. During this phase, the names are also refined in order that they could be more concise and direct.
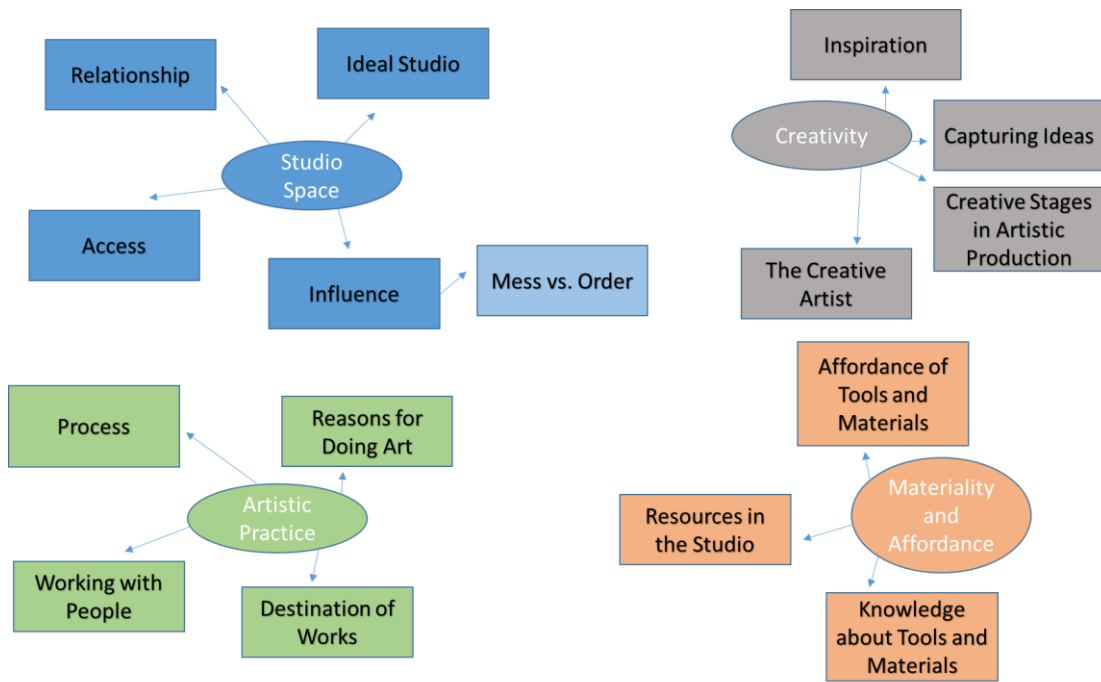
Figure 4.4 Final thematic map showing five main themes and their relative sub-themes – artists

4.2.1.6 **Phase 6: Producing the report**

The last phase proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) involves the final analysis and the actual drafting of the report. In this process, a researcher tells the story of the data with its complex linkages and connections. Using data extracts to illustrate particular and specific points within the data also provides a detailed account of the story the data tell within each of the themes, and also across the links between the themes. These themes are linked to the literature review. This is presented in the discussions in Chapters 5 to 8.

4.3 **Part 2A: Observation and informal conversations with art students**

4.3.1 Introduction

As explained previously (see Section 3.5.3) I am very interested in how students of art relate to their art room space in their school. Drawing on my years of teaching experience, I have always wondered how students might relate to this space. What are their common ideas about their art room? How is this particular space affecting their creative performance? Do the students think about this concept of space? These are

some of the questions that have always intrigued me. This case study aims to shed light on these issues.

This part of the study is built on the premise that children and young people could be viewed as social agents and producers of culture. The role of children in having an active voice in research contributes to valuable active participation, thus moving away from the notion that children and young people are merely subjects in research. As mentioned earlier, part of this study draws on the ethnographic practice of 'hanging around' (Ellis, 2004, p.26). The sessions consisted of meeting the students for an hour and a half during their art lessons, for four consecutive weeks. For the participant sampling rationale see Section 3.5.3.

This part of the study focuses on the ethnographic principles of observation and participation and being attentive to gestures and non-verbal information. Observation enables a researcher to become immersed in a new environment or to view a familiar context in a different way. Throughout the observation stage I've taken down field notes, and excerpts from these notes will be used to highlight points and arguments. The sessions were a mixture of observation and note-taking; conversation; mingling with the students; and participating in the lessons.

4.3.2 The context

This section will present excerpts from the field notes taken from observation. These excerpts have been taken from the four sessions carried out with the students. The aim of this section is to give a context and background to support this part of this study. Figure 4.5 shows the plan of the existing art room used by the art students.
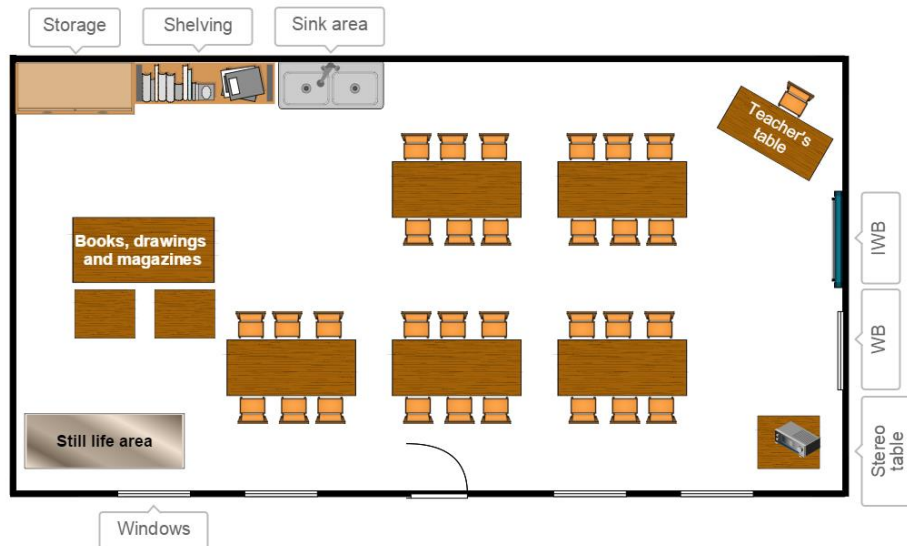
Figure 4.5 Plan of existing art room used by the art students

4.3.2.1 **Session 1**

Being a boys' school, upon my arrival I was expecting a very noisy environment. Perhaps balls being shot around the playground, and groups of students running swiftly down the corridors of the school. On the contrary, I was welcomed by a quiet and still ambience; just empty walkways, parts of which were in the sun, parts in the tranquil shade. I had discovered the location of the art room on a separate visit because the school is made up of a number of blocks, some of which are old and some of which are more recent additions. I knew where to head directly. A colourful glass plaque indicated the art room door, which could be reached via a ramp. I arrived at the door and was immediately greeted by the teacher. The class was very quiet and I was facing a group of boys who had just settled down to start the lesson. They were now looking at me and listening attentively. The boys were expecting my visit since their parents were given the consent forms to sign and, moreover, their teacher had prepared them and explained how my visits were going to take place in the weeks to follow.

(Field notes, Session 1, 2nd May, 2013)

At my first session, the teacher introduced me and I greeted the boys and talked very briefly about myself and my research. I settled down and brought out my notebook, my recorder and my camera. My first reaction was to go around the art room to take a look at 'stuff'. My first feelings of the room were very pleasant ones.

The art room is a spacious rectangular room with a number of 'areas' (see Figure 4.5). It has brightly coloured curtains and whitewashed walls. The ceiling fans were on, producing a pleasant cool breeze, while a portable stereo was tuned to one of the local stations, which was playing a song. The volume was kept to an agreeable low level. My first impressions in the first few minutes of my visit were that of a very calm and serene environment. Instantly, I felt that I would enjoy being in this room.

(Field notes, Session 1, 2nd May, 2013)

During the first session, I observed the layout of the room in more detail (see Figure 4.5). The long rectangular layout was apportioned in different sections. The door to the room stands almost midway along one of the longest sides and, as soon as you go in, to the right you will find the interactive whiteboard, a traditional whiteboard, the teacher's desk, the stereo and the tables of the students, which occupied half of the room. There are also two large tables, one with drawings and one with books and magazines. Almost at the far back of the room there is an area with a sink and shelves, where supplies could be stored. There was another table with still life set-ups, and many areas for hanging drawings. Across the width of the room, a number of nylon lines served the purpose of drying lines for drawings. I noticed that the desks and chairs of the students were colour coded, for example: a table with red legs had red chairs around it.

(Field notes, Session 1, 2nd May, 2013)

The students occupied spaces at the tables. Each table had six chairs around it but not more than two boys sat at each table. There were eight boys in this particular class. One of them chose not to participate in the research. The other seven boys came from different form years: two in Form 1 (average age of 11), two in Form 2 (average age of 12), two in Form 3 (average age of 13) and one in Form 4 (average age of 14). This particular class is an extra-curricular class, and this is the reason for having students of different age groups in the same class. In this particular school, art is only studied during the first two years (Form 1 and Form 2) and for just a term per year. The students who are interested in art could choose the extra-curricular sessions, which take place once a week. Usually this extra-curricular session is chosen by students who wish to sit for their art O Level exam, so that they could get guidance and support from the teacher.

(Field notes, Session 1, 2nd May 2013)

4.3.2.2 Session 2

The same students from the first session were present for the second session a week later. They were expecting my visit and when I arrived they were settling down and preparing for their lesson to start. The theme that day was still life drawing, and the teacher explained how they had started with this theme at the beginning of the year and how they planned to take it up again, now that the scholastic year was drawing to a close.

The students started with a presentation on still life drawing and painting, and they were working from a painting of a still life that was projected on the interactive whiteboard. The teacher had told me that in the following scholastic year they were going to build on this theme, but for the time being they were covering the basic principles. The teacher also explained that the approach she adopts for her lesson was very flexible. The students were given ample time to finish their work and, in fact, some of the work which they were doing the week before was still to be completed.

(Field notes, Session 2, 9th May 2013)

The students asked some questions while the teacher was explaining. Following the informative part of the lesson, the students started their practical work and during this time I started to go around the tables to see what they were doing, and to discuss some

ideas as we went along. We talked about which type of exercises they had enjoyed during the past scholastic year.

They covered different topics and they mentioned different types of exercises. They enjoy both traditional and modern work. Still life drawing was mentioned as one of the preferred exercises. Still life drawing forms a core part of the O level exam so, at their level, they would require practising this type of art. The students enjoyed different art forms and it was interesting to note that they were intrigued to go on site and paint from life. They gave importance to studying objects from nature.

During the second session, I also started to hold the one-to-one conversations to discuss the plans they drew. Two students completed the plans at home and we could discuss them in more detail. The other students were planning to work on their drawings over the following weeks.

(Field notes, Session 2, 9th May 2013)

4.3.2.3 Session 3

I arrived a little bit early and the students had not yet arrived. I had some time to talk to the teacher as she was preparing some things for the lesson and organising some drawings that had been used for an open-day event. The students started coming in and they began to settle down. I noticed that, as usual, they sat two or, at most, three per table. They worked while leaving some space around them and also used the extra chairs at their tables for their supplies, bags and extra papers.

(Field notes, Session 3, 16th May 2013)

This lesson was planned as a continuation of the still life lesson a week before. One of the seven students was missing and the rest continued their work on the still life. Later on, one of the students switched to another exercise and worked on a drawing that was required for a project he needed to submit for his art exam.

There was a feeling of flexibility in the class because the students took control of their tasks. They decided when to continue a task or start a new one. They seemed to approach their work in a calm way. The teacher also explains calmly and takes all the time necessary to explain something. This seemed to be reflected in the calm responses of the boys.

Most of this session was dedicated to discussing the plan drawings made by the students. Four students discussed their drawings with me in detail. Two of the students drew their plans at school. Apart from these one-to-one conversations, we also discussed some other ideas in groups as I was going around the tables. The students talked about the difference between working at school and working at home, and some issues on creativity were also explored.

(Field notes, Session 3, 16th May 2013)

4.3.2.4 Session 4

The fourth and last session followed a similar approach to the previous sessions. The students continued working on different tasks, each depending on which stage they had arrived at. Some completed the last few touches on their still life drawing, some carried

out work on their abstracts and one student continued his work on a project. There was also the sense that they wished to finish any incomplete drawings, since the scholastic year was nearing its end.

I had the last one-to-one conversation with the student who was not present the week before. We discussed his plan, which he worked on at school and then, as a group, we continued to discuss their work and some other interesting ideas while they worked. We discussed ideas around resources and supplies and also ideas around flexibility.

The sessions with this particular class have been a very positive experience with many insights and ideas to reflect upon. It was an opportunity for me to be present and observe them within an art room setting while the students interacted with the space and reflected on their space. It was a positive experience because the students and teacher welcomed me as a researcher and fully embraced the idea of being part of this research. I also hope that, through this experience, the students have become more aware of the physical space around them, their interaction with it and how this might affect the way they work or the way they think about their work.

(Field notes, Session 4, 23rd May 2013)

4.3.3 The analysis process

To focus on gaining rich and in-depth data, I have chosen to conduct research with one particular art class within a secondary school. Carla Willig (2008) argues that such an approach enables a researcher to focus "on a particular unit of analysis" (p.74). According to Pink (2009) "creating an analysis is not an activity that is itself isolated from experience or from the researcher's embodied knowing. To some extent this is a process of re-insertion through memory and imagination work" (p.120).

The second stage of the study, that is, the study with secondary school art students was designed to shed light on the meanings that students attach to their art room and space where they work. This stage of this study concerns the sub-research question (RQ3) which asks:

How do art students relate to the space or environment around them in the art room?

The subsequent study, related to the children's own drawings, which is discussed in the next section is also related to this sub-research question.

The process to analyse the conversations with the students, as well as my field notes from the sessions, also followed the six steps which Braun and Clarke (2006) have presented as a framework for performing thematic analysis (see Section 4.2.1). The analysis was data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and this form of inductive coding

uses a process of coding the data without attempting to fit it in a pre-existing coding frame. Again, it is also important to clarify that a researcher cannot code data by freeing themselves completely from their epistemological position.

4.3.3.1 **Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with your data**

As seen in the previous section of this chapter, the first step of the analysis process is concerned with familiarising oneself with the data. The initial step was to transcribe verbatim all of the audio recordings, and the ethnographic field notes were also typed and included in the data set. Since all the conversations were conducted in Maltese, given that this was the participants' preferred language, these were first translated into English. I went through the transcripts repeatedly to ensure that the translation was very close to the meaning the students expressed in Maltese (Temple & Young, 2004). I read through data set a number of times to familiarise myself with the content, and I worked on pre-coding as well as code jottings to get an initial sense of the data. This generated an initial list of ideas about what is interesting in the data. This process was carried out by marking and encircling parts of the data on a hardcopy version of the transcripts.

4.3.3.2 **Phase 2: Generating initial codes**

The second phase involves the process of producing initial codes for the data. Different data extracts were selected to enable me reflect and note down my first impressions of the codes in a very open-ended process. Bauer (2000) warns against adopting a purely inductive approach, whereby a researcher codes whatever he or she observes in the text, as codes should reflect the questions that underpin the research. As discussed already, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest to code for as many potential themes and patterns as possible, and also to keep part of the context available so that meanings are not lost. I have worked systematically through the entire data set, which included my own field notes and conversations with the students, while I identified particular aspects of the data and looked for patterns across the data set. Initially, I did this manually by marking and highlighting a hardcopy of the transcripts. In order to have a soft copy version of this second phase, the process was repeated and copied using Microsoft Word. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show two data extracts with codes applied, which are taken from this second phase of initial coding. The reference after each quote follows a particular system, similar to that described in the previous section. For example, (Jake, 1:12) translates

into 'Jake' – the pseudonym given to the student, 1 – referring to the form the student is in, 12 – referring to quote number 12.

Table 4.4 Extract from data – Example 3

Extract from data	Applied coding
It is important to research your topic in books or on a computer. It is important to change whatever you have in the picture. (Keith, 1:9)	1. Researching a topic is given value. 2. Books and computers are important resources. 3. Originality and personal interpretation is given value.

Table 4.5 Extract from data – Example 4

Extract from data	Applied coding
Well, I was thinking of paints, for example, even if you wanted water paints and you forgot them at home, or an apron, there would be a store which has everything, even pencils, for example, so that you can have everything organised and not waste time looking for stuff. (Jake, 1:33)	1. It is important to have storage space for materials. 2. An organised system saves time.

4.3.3.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes

The initial coding of Phase 2 is followed by a process that refocuses the codes and sorts them into potential themes, thus moving to a broader level of themes. I went through the codes a number of times to analyse them and consider what general themes may be formed. This process consisted in using several sheets of paper with different codes, and organising them into piles under the same theme. This was followed by a process of copying the codes in tables, in order to have them neatly presented. To illustrate this step, I will present some examples of codes related to the theme 'art room space' (see Figure 4.6). Following this, Figure 4.7 shows an initial attempt at understanding the relationship between codes and themes at different levels. In the diagram these are illustrated using a thematic map.

Relationship with the Art Room Environment
Enjoying a spacious layout
Giving value to large windows and lots of light
Feeling positive when colourful
Circular layout of desks promotes group work
Flexibility is given importance

Relaxation Area
Comfort given value
To include resources like books and magazines
Soft furnishings to add comfort
Sofa area to promote discussions

Exhibition Space
A dynamic art wall to showcase students' work
Value was given to opportunities to exhibit work for others

Art Spaces in the Home
Quiet spaces preferred over chaotic spaces
Personal spaces are given value
Having a space with all the personal supplies
Working alone is given value

Resources in the Art Room
Books for research
Computer with internet connection
Pictures for reference are given importance
Table for still life given importance
Valuing enough supplies and materials

Ideal Art Room
Spacious layout
Ample light – large windows
White background walls reduce distractions
Enough storage is given value

Figure 4.6 Codes for theme – art room space
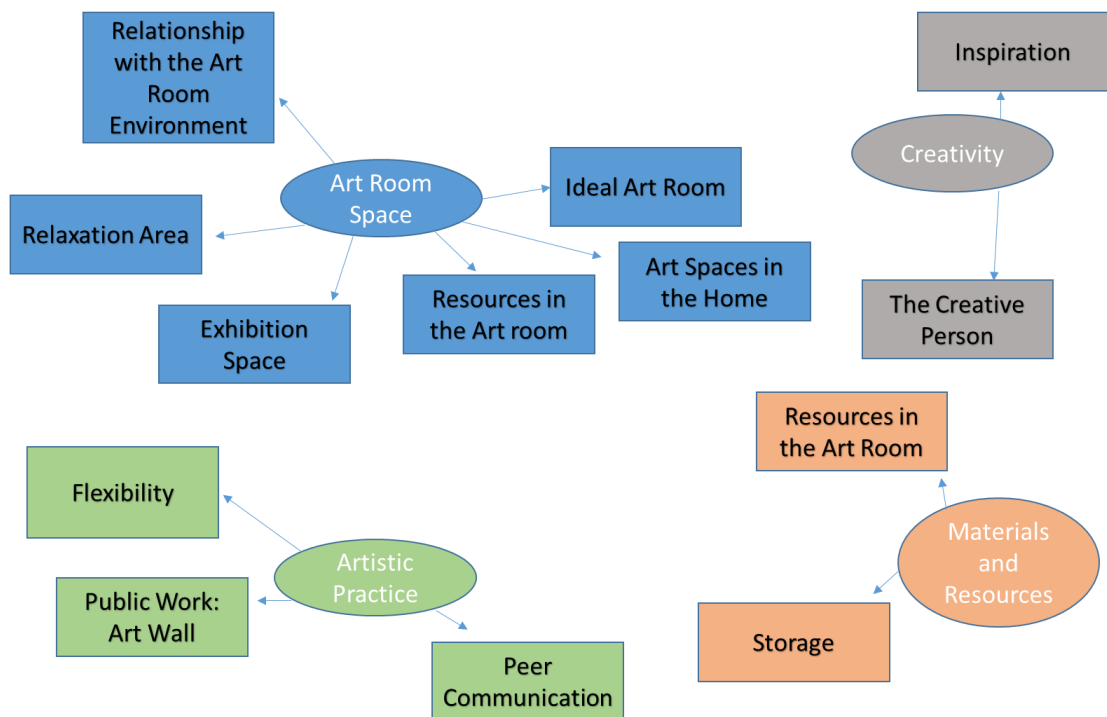
Figure 4.7 Initial map of themes and sub-themes – students

4.3.3.4 **Phase 4: Reviewing the themes**

The fourth phase involves the refinement and refocusing of the themes that were established during the third phase. This process ensures more meaningful coherence between the data within the themes and moreover that the themes are clearly distinguished. This phase consists of two levels of reviewing and refining the themes. At first level, the coded data extracts are reviewed in order to check whether they form patterns. The second level consists of a similar process. This time, the validity of each theme is considered in relation to the entire data set. At this stage, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that, when the researcher feels that the refinements are not enhancing the themes, this process of fine-tuning should be ended. Figure 4.8 shows a developed thematic map.
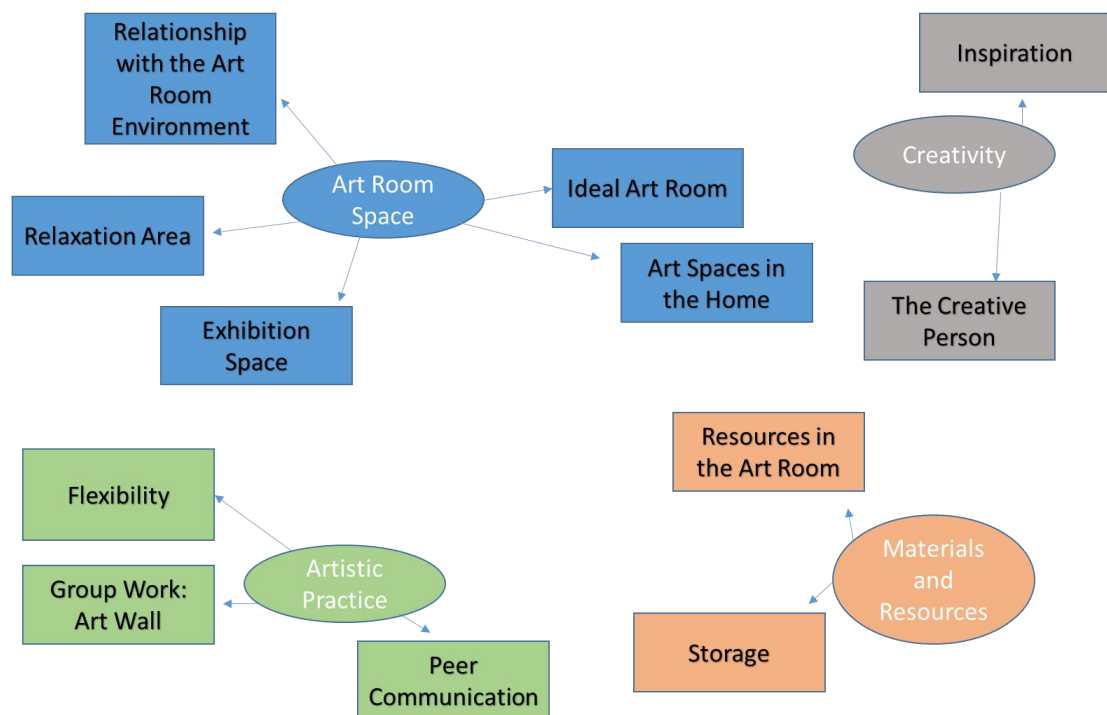
Figure 4.8 Refined themes – students

4.3.3.5 **Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes**

As explained earlier, at the initial stages of the fifth phase the researcher should have an agreeable thematic map of the data. This then enables a definition and refinement of the themes and then the data is analysed within them. In this process, the spirit of each theme is identified. What is interesting within each theme and its respective data extracts is also identified. For each theme the researcher is to write a detailed analysis

and the particular story of each theme is illustrated. Moreover, it is important that the themes are also viewed through a broader perspective, that is, in how they are related to the research questions. The themes are considered on their own and in relation to others. During this phase the theme names are also fine-tuned towards being more concise and direct (see Figure 4.9).
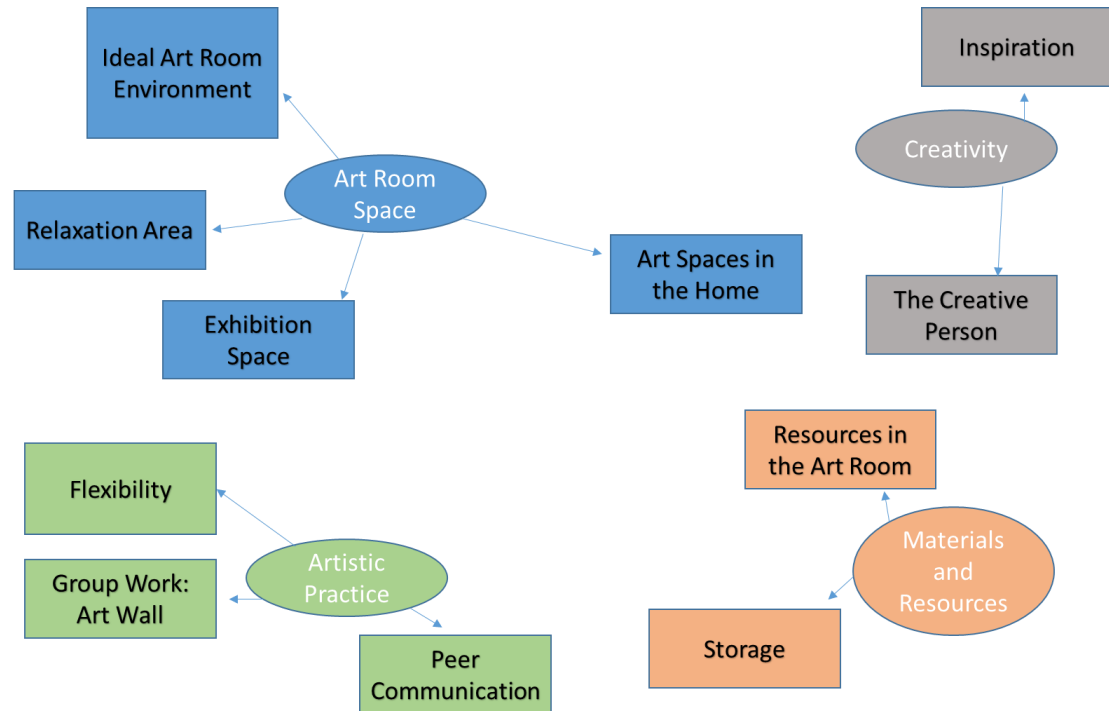
Figure 4.9 Final thematic map showing five main themes and their relative sub-themes – students Final Thematic Map Showing Five Main Themes and their Relative Sub-Themes – Students

4.3.3.6   Phase 6: Producing the report

The last phase proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) involves the final analysis and the actual drafting of the report. In this process, a researcher tells the story of the data with its complex linkages and connections. Using data extracts to illustrate particular and specific points within the data also provides a detailed account of the story the data tell within each of the themes and also across the links between the themes. These themes are then linked to the literature review. This is presented in the discussions of Chapters 5 to 8.

4.4 **Part 2B: The students' plan drawings**

As argued already, the use of visual methods in research with children and young people has gained importance in recent years (Hackett, 2014; Yamada-Rice, 2014; Procter, 2013; Rose, 2012; Thomson, 2008). It has also been considered as a way to diminish the power imbalance between adults and children, since visual methods afford activities with which children are familiar. They provide a more interesting way for exploring ideas with children, and which does not rely on formal methods of collecting data. The role of drawing uses children's own 'language' to express personal concerns and issues, enabling them to be involved in matters that are their own. Their drawings enable further conversation to take place, making it possible to go deeper into the issues and concerns that are being researched.

The drawings (see Figures 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15 and 4.16) are 'images' made as part of the research project. As Rose (2012) stipulates, these images are "used actively in the research process" (p.298). Children's drawings are used to access their views and experiences through the activity that they perform, and through their interpretations and discussion of these same drawings (Clark, 2005; Veale, 2005). I was interested in analysing the students' drawings in terms of the meaning constructed by the students rather than in terms of their aesthetic or stylistic elements. However, the drawings in their entirety are essential in communicating the meanings the students want to express.

Prosser (2007) writes about the idea of "talk and draw", which is a helpful process to elicit the meaning students make through their drawings. Apart from the drawings as primary data, I have also used texts based on conversations, which are used as secondary data to confirm and assist my interpretation of the drawings.

The drawings were analysed using the ATLAS.ti software program, and the images were coded by content using categories that stemmed from the images directly, and in keeping the research questions as a guide for the analyses. This has permitted me to consider the content and relational aspects of the visual data, and allowed for comparisons to be made. When visual data is treated as text, analytic techniques can be borrowed from more traditional research (Galman, 2009; Horn, 1998). The emergent categories were also compared to what was discussed with the students to corroborate

the interpretation; this enabled more sub-categories to emerge, which were developed from ideas as to how students related to their ideal art room.
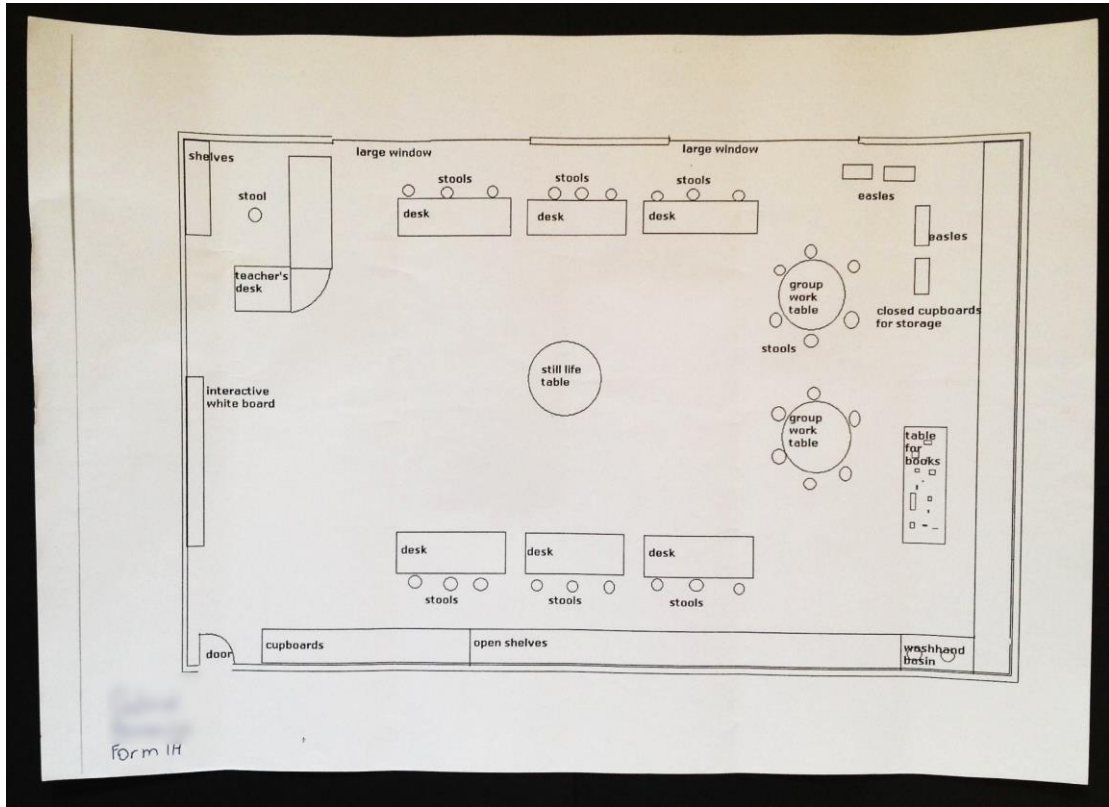
Figure 4.10 Plan drawing – Keith
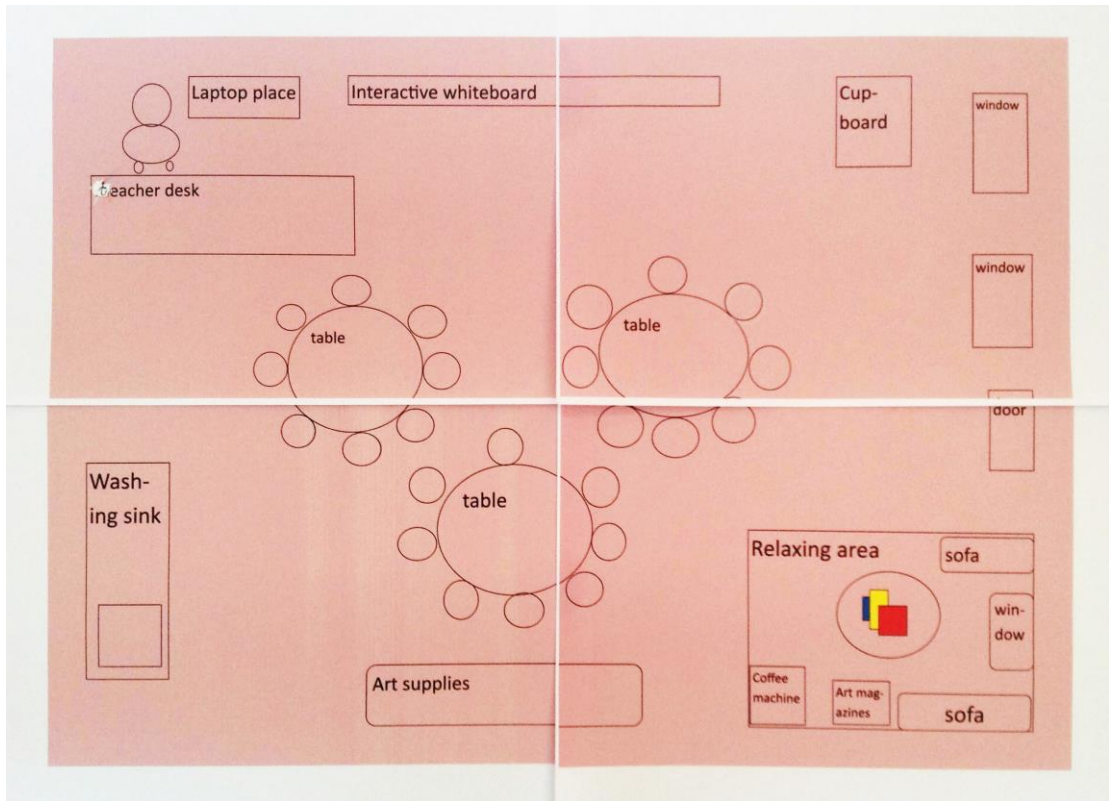
Figure 4.11 Plan drawing – Jake
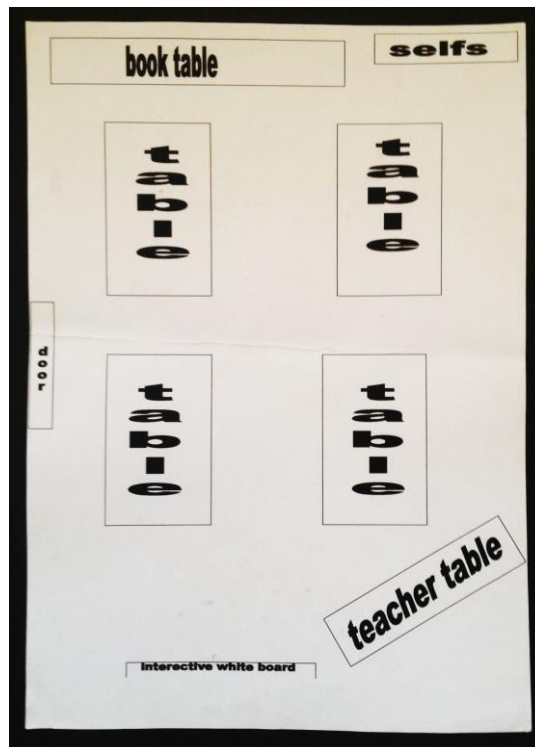
Figure 4.12 Plan drawing – Aaron
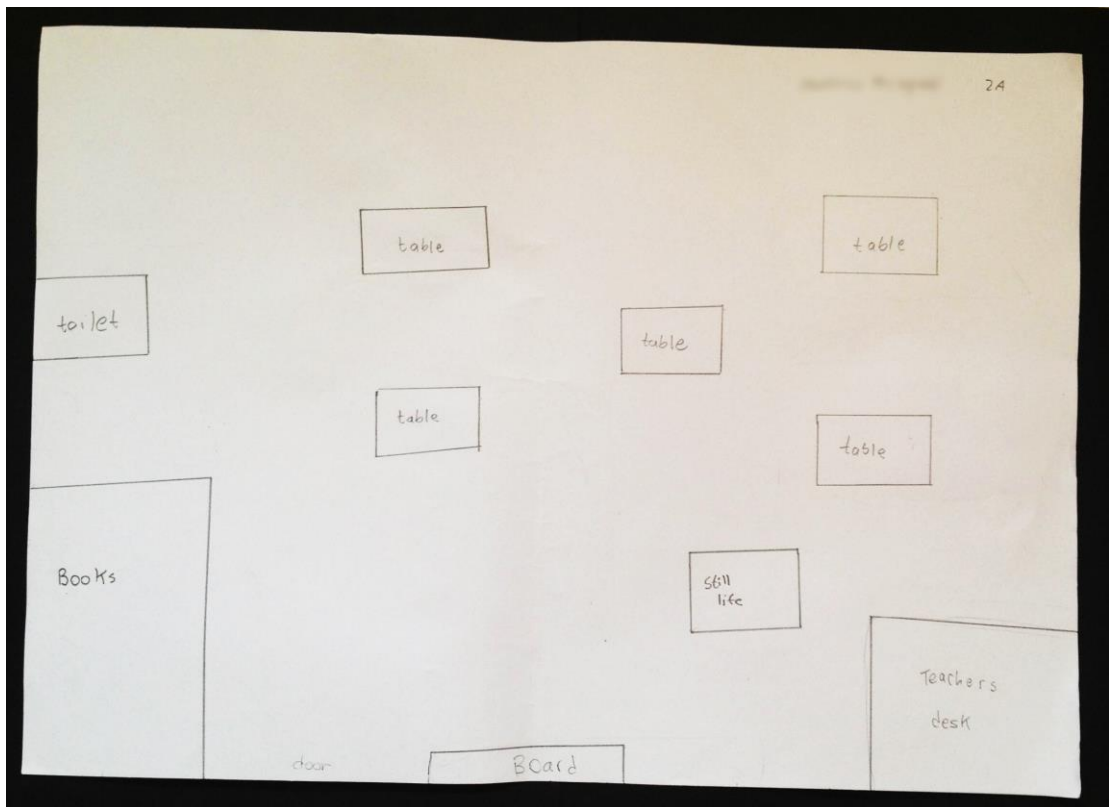
Figure 4.13 Plan drawing – Peter
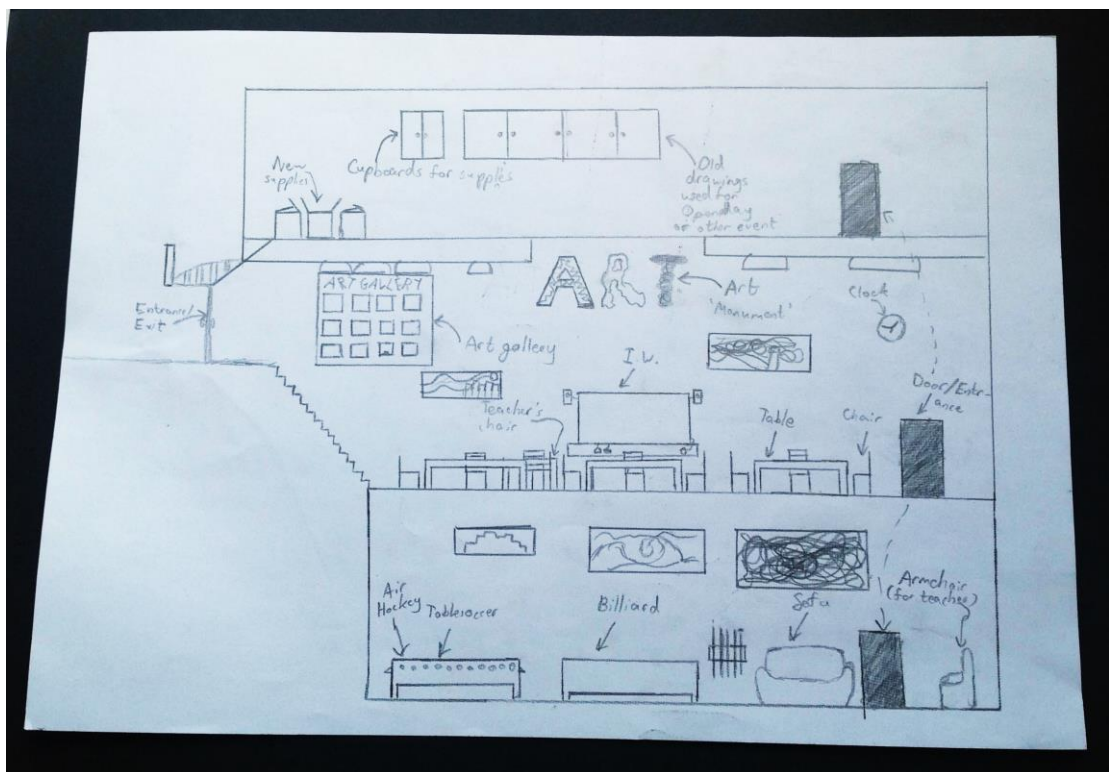
Figure 4.14 Plan drawing – Craig
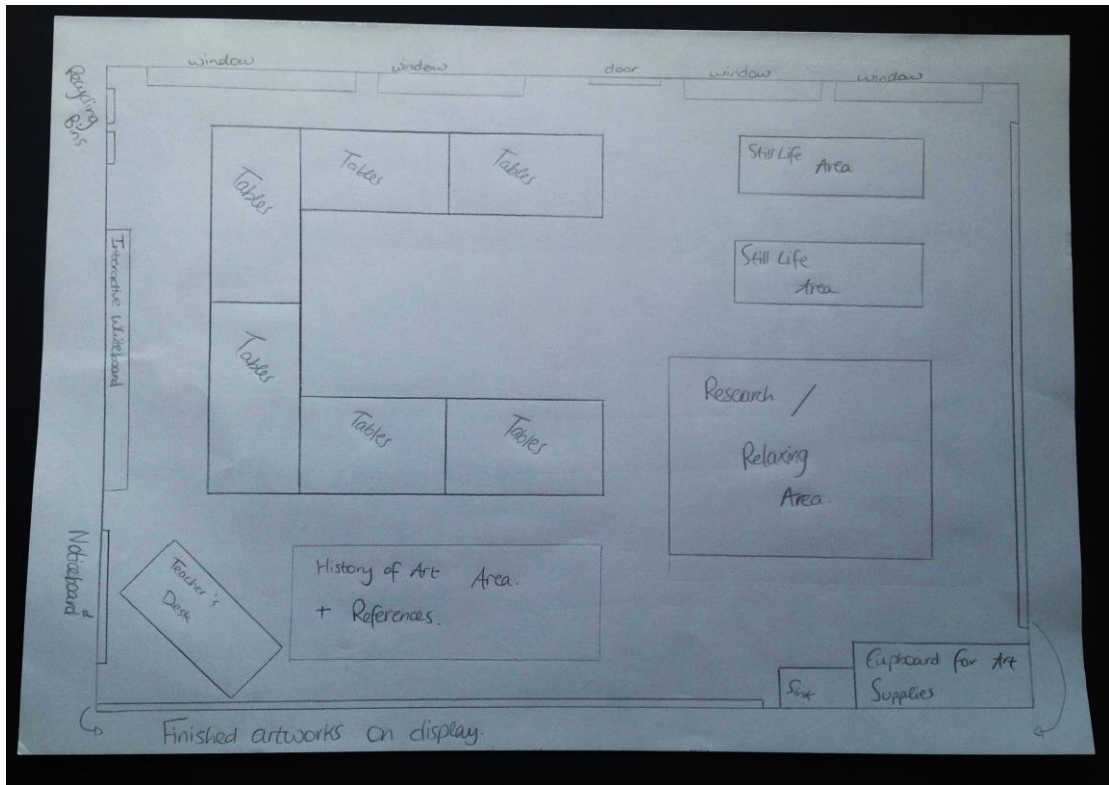
Figure 4.15 Plan drawing – Dean
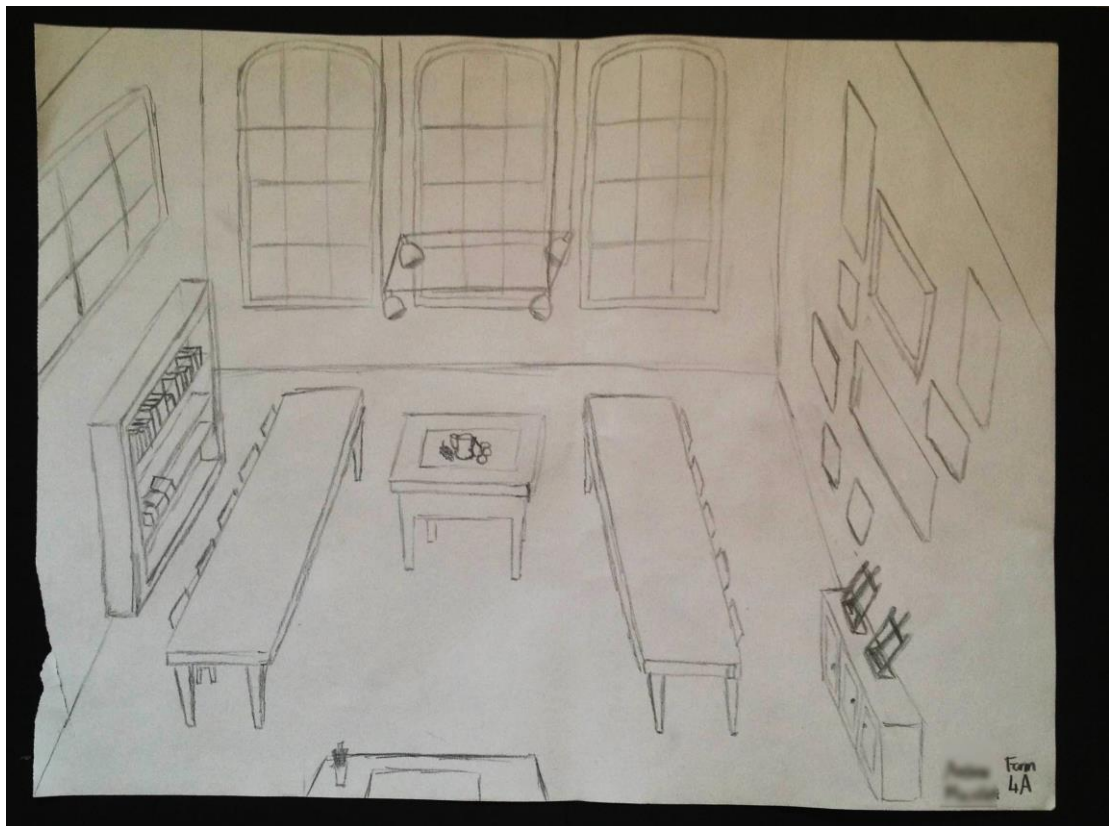
Figure 4.16 Plan drawing – Ethan

Table 4.6 Information on students' drawings

Student	Medium used for drawing the plan	Drawing size	Worked on plan at home or at school	2D or 3D view	Building on existing art room layout
Keith	Microsoft Paint	A3	Home	2D/top	No
Jake	Microsoft Publisher	A2	Home	2D/top	Yes
Aaron	Microsoft Word	A4	Home	2D/top	Yes
Peter	Pencil	A3	School	2D/top	No
Craig	Pencil	A4	School	2D/side	No
Dean	Pencil	A4	Home	2D/top	Yes
Ethan	Pencil	A3	School	3D	No

Table 4.6 displays the basic information relating to the drawings that the students produced. The seven drawings were collected over different points throughout our meetings. Discussing the drawings on a one-to-one basis was also carried out at different times over the four sessions. The drawings were analysed using qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti) and common codes across the images have emerged. The discussion will be presented in the following section.

4.4.1 Analysing drawings using the qualitative data analysis software

The drawings were analysed using ATLAS.ti and a list of codes has been identified across the seven drawings. Figure 4.17 shows the occurrence of each code within the visual data. The images were coded according to the content drawn.

Figure 4.17 Code cloud for students' drawings generated via ATLAS.ti

Three out of the seven drawings were based on the existing art room layout. The other four students drew their ideal art room with a different layout. It is interesting to note that, although the students were free to draw whichever art room they thought would be ideal, three of them still used the same layout and improved upon it. Perhaps this could either mean that the present art room satisfies most of the criteria they need with regards to space and layout, or else it could be the case that these students did not feel empowered enough to rethink their art room space as regards structure, layout and format.

At a glance, it is evident from the responses that a quality considered to be of particular importance is communication between peers. A need for storage is also viewed as an important quality of the ideal art room. A number of other qualities like the use of the interactive whiteboard and books for reference were also considered desirable. An interpretation of these outcomes will be discussed in the following chapters (Chapters 5 to 8), according to the relevant theme discussed.

The selected approach for analysing the drawings was that of examining them by content. This method has been used by researchers to study human behaviour by

studying their communication (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Other approaches were also potentially valuable for this study. One of these was to employ a multimodal analysis. However, given that the drawings make up a small section of the study, it was deemed more feasible to focus only on content, in response to the research question RQ3 relating to the respective meanings that student attached to art rooms.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the analysis employed in making sense of the data collected for the three parts of the study. The analysis process was illustrated by examples from the data, and with the way codes and themes were developed.

Chapter 5

STUDIO SPACES AND ART ROOMS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) discussed the analysis process for the different stages of this study. The next chapters (5-8) will be presenting an interpretation and discussion of the findings, and their implications according to the main themes that were elicited from the data. Each theme will be discussed about the two groups of participants in this study. Each chapter will be presenting the theme in terms of the in-depth interviews with the artists. This will be followed by a discussion shadowing the analysis of the observations and conversations with the students, as well as an analysis of the plan drawings. For a detailed discussion on the interviews and the participating artists see Section 3.5.2 while for the analysis approach and the development of codes and themes see Section 4.2.

One of the main common themes that featured in the data for this study, is that relating to the various types of spaces that artists and students relate to during their artistic production. Different people experience space differently, and the spaces they use take different forms.

The research questions related to this chapter are reproduced below. This chapter attempts to answer these questions through an interpretation and discussion of the data, in light of the literature reviewed.

RQ2 – What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?

RQ3 – How do art students relate to the space or environment around them in their art room?

5.2 Studio spaces and artists

Figure 5.1 represents a thematic map of the main themes of space and its relevant sub-themes, which will be discussed in this section. This map relates to the interviews carried out with the artists.
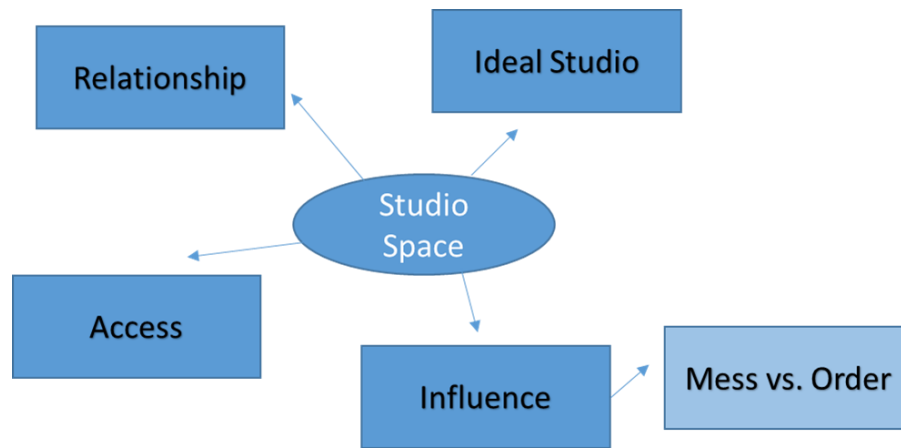
Figure 5.1 Theme: space – artists

5.2.1 Space – the relationship with the studio

5.2.1.1 Studios as personal and private spaces

During the interviews with the artists (see Section 3.5.2) it has been very enlightening to examine the different relationships that artists have with their studio space. All seven artists have changed their studio over time, even for the young upcoming artists the present studio is not their first. The way they relate to their studio adds a richer account of their artistic practice. It is indispensable to understand the meaning these artists attach to the space they work in.

An interesting aspect that emerges from the data is the concept of the studio as a personal and private space. In the literature reviewed, it has been discussed that although it is positive to work in collaboration with other artists, some of them also look for a time and space to work individually. This idea of having a private space has featured in a number of arguments (Lippmann, 2015; Sjöholm, 2013; Bain, 2005) and centres on the idea that the studio is a particular physical space that is not used by other relatives or friends:

> This is mine, mine personally. (Henry, 1:5)

> But here only myself. No one touches anything. (Brigitte, 3:1)

It seems that having this personal space is an important step to ensure that supplies and materials are left as they are, without being removed or used by someone else. An additional benefit of having this personal space is that is allows the flexibility to keep the materials handy in order to use right away without the trouble of having to prepare

everything each time the artist wishes to work. This is illustrated in the following extracts from the data:

> I'm that type of person who has to leave the palette running around, paints running around, so that when I go up I find all the things ready…like that, I'm that type…I just start mixing and start right away. (Daniel, 5:5)

> I leave everything here, I clean my brushes a bit, and you go down. Sometimes I left them even for a week, and then I continue. (Brigitte, 3:14)

In the data, there were references to the artists' viewing the studio as that physical space, which may take different forms, that is very personal and which is not frequented by other people or family members:

> A studio is something very personal… and you have to make it yours. You need to have the right ingredients in it. Your kind of music, the books that you'd want, the light that you would need, I find it really important. (Gabriel, 4:32)

Here, it is being contended that the studio space as a personal and private space is a factor that is sought after. As has been discussed earlier (see Section 2.2.3) personal and individual studios arise from the need to have a place that would reflect the idiosyncrasies of an artist. Additionally, it also provides a space for personal reflection and development, which might be difficult to achieve in studios set up for groups of artists to work together. The artists interviewed seem to value having a personal space that is their own, and this echoes the views expressed by other artists (Amirsadeghi, 2012; Jacob & Grabner, 2010). They also attribute a positive value to the possibility of leaving materials untouched to be used right away the next time they visit the studio. I see this as a possibility to work cumulatively on a particular work, and to develop it as needed without any disturbances and with the least disruption possible. Sometimes, this necessity for a personal space appears also within shared spaces when artists tend to look for small areas that they could make their own, even if for a temporary period. It is also relevant to point out that the process of planning a personal studio in any form and model gives the artist a sense of validation (Bain, 2005, 2004; Buren, 1983). Having a personal studio seems to be conducive to a professional and serious practice. This space is where artistic identity is constructed (Bain, 2005, 2004) (see Section 2.2.3). This also recalls Cresswell's (2004) notion of meaningful location and a sense of place. Through the process of experiencing spaces and living within them, people may attribute particular feelings to a space and this becomes meaningful to them.

5.2.1.2 **Adapting to new studios**

Sometimes, it may take time for an artist to adapt to a new space, and he or she may experience a sense of feeling lost until fully adapting to the studio to feel more at home in it. The findings also suggest that artists may need some time to familiarise themselves with a place, and for some it could be quite difficult to work in another person's home, for example. To be able to make full use of the space they would need to feel comfortable and at home:

> I don't know how to work in another person's home. In the sense…well over there I spend most of my day. I cannot live in a place where I don't feel comfortable. (Daniel, 5:64)

> I remember when I changed to the studio which I have now I had spent around six months feeling lost. And this studio is much larger than the one I had before. And I still felt lost. Well the quality of the light, the room in itself, sometimes even a certain energy, then you'll get used to it. You adapt to it. (Gabriel, 4:31)

> I worked [in other places] but with regard to comfort [I choose] here, because I know where everything is and I have a lot of things. (Henry, 1:60)

> I found myself for instance in a studio, a private studio for myself where one was allowed to do whatever one needed. But it was not the studio that I know and it was not equipped with the materials that I am normally, [which] are normally available to me. (Jack, 2:16)

Reflecting on the above excerpts leads me to wonder how working in a studio space that does not feel yours might ultimately pose some difficulties. Producing art is in itself a very personal and intimate activity. It might be the case that such a delicate and sensitive endeavour requires the support of a physical surrounding with which the artist can identify. Hence, working in a space that feels foreign and unfamiliar might make the artistic process feel more rigid. According to Massey (2005) what gives a place its specificity are the constructions that people make through the way they interact and relate to the space. This lens presents places as processes. In my view, this scenario cannot be negated, as it is undeniably the case for a large group of artists who need their familiar surroundings in order to feel at home and be able to work. This recalls the concept of 'outsideness' (Relph, 1976) which contrasts with that of 'insideness'. In Relph's work, both these concepts are presented as a central dialectic in human life and feature a mixture of intensities. Similar views were presented by Cresswell (2004) and Augé (2008) who provide a language that describes how spaces are not experienced in the same way by different people. Continuing on the point discussed above, this is not the only picture: there are other artists who are not tied to their studio and would easily

work in other places. As described earlier, working in different places could be part of the inspiration (Mona Hatoum, interviewed in Amirsadeghi, 2012).

One of the artists, Maya, who ultimately finds it easy to work in different places, expressed that she is able to work everywhere. Interestingly, while describing her ideal studio she still perceives a personal space that she would use either on her own or occasionally with other artists:

> Well, I'm an 'everywhere' person. (Maya, 7:6)

> Somehow, in my fantasy I used to be alone. Then I would open it for friends and for family. Well, I think it will be more for other artists. (Maya, 7:40)

At the time of the interview, this particular ideal space was not available, so she adapted and juggles different roles at home, adjusting according to necessity:

> Juggling is part of the fun anyway. This is how I ended up with my place in the kitchen. (Maya, 7:16)

Even though Maya could work in different places, she has also talked about her ideal studio and visualises a personal space that would support her practice. This desire to have the studio space might be brought about by a drive to reinforce her artistic identity. Given that she is a young female artist raising young children, she is faced with particular difficulties in managing all her tasks in a balanced way. The boundaries of privacy and personal working-time are not always easily respected and guaranteed. Bain (2004) postulates that, in such a setting, female artists with families, who work from home, usually teach themselves to adapt their studio space for different activities, which are not necessarily related to art. This is done as a way of survival by maintaining a fluid boundary between their practice and their personal life (Garfunkel, 1984). Here Maya's practice seems to concur with this view. She found her place in the kitchen where she could work on her art and tend to her children simultaneously. She has adapted to working in this way and, as she pointed out, juggling these two worlds has become part of the fun.

5.2.1.3 **Transformation of studios informed by practice**

The artists also discussed how reflecting upon one's experience helps in improving the studio according to personal needs. Improving upon it seems to become an ongoing activity that is an integral part of the artistic journey. It is also a fact that the artists change and adapt their studio according to their work demands:

> In fact, over there I will be opening a door, I have a yard there, and [I will] have a gallery over there. I've been saying this for a long time. (Henry, 1:65)

> I had to manipulate my workspace as I went along, which consists basically of this space. (Jack, 2:29)

> The dimensions of the works increased, and I can't think of different terms other than the ones I'm living in right now. In fact, my aim is to expand. (Daniel, 5:68)

These excerpts from the data may reverberate the ideas proposed by Henri Lefebvre (1991) when he asserted that space is more than just a setting where activity occurs. Space itself is both the product and producer, since it shapes the way people interact with that space. The way people engage with space supports or gives precedence to which activities could happen in that space, and which activities might be discouraged. Spaces are changed and appropriated over time. This activity of appropriation is, in itself, a practice embodied in the transformations of space. The above data extracts resonate what is proposed by Lefebvre (1991) since, through reflection on their practice, the artists appropriate their studios according to the changing demands of their practice. Places are appropriated and changed according to the needs of people (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991). It also recalls the point made by Massey (2005) that a place is always under construction and, as a result of experiencing space, people keep adapting it and changing it according to their needs at a given point in time.

It has been interesting to note that the same goes for how the studio is maintained and organised. The way in which artists take care of the studio oscillates according to what stages they are working at. For example, Adrian mentioned that organising his studio is desirable when starting new work on prints, since this activity requires a high level of cleanliness:

> For my kind of work, especially for prints, it requires a level of cleanliness which otherwise, if not present, it would affect them. I cannot work that way so it is important that the storage would be on its own so that, when I scatter everything in order to work, it would be neat, without stains. (Adrian, 6:10)

> If you come in where I work at the moment, well it might be a phase, you might come in a month's time, in two months' time and you'll find it completely organised, really tidy – it depends on what I'd be doing. (Daniel, 5:21)

Moreover, the studio enables the artist to make a distinction between the world outside and that of the studio. One of the artists, Adrian, expounded that for him it is important to experience a sense of oneness with the work and the space. Here the work becomes,

in a way, a meditative process where connections with the outside world are suspended, and one where the artist focuses on the more spiritual, meditative element of his work:

> Over here, even internet, not in my dreams – and even my mobile – I wish I would not bring it here. For me, it is a space where I come and try not to lose [focus], like the scales, it is like I start practising the scales all on my own. You try as much as possible a certain meditation and not to leave things passing. (Adrian, 6:23)

5.2.2 Space – the ideal studio

That which constitutes a studio space is very subjective. The actual physical design, layout and decor of a studio very much depends on the person using it, and also on the resources available. In fact, the artists who participated in this study expressed ideas about their ideal studio space. Reflecting upon their experience has helped them form a particular picture of an ideal studio. Although such a space differs from one artist to another two particular physical attributes were common across all interviews. Having a large space and a lot of light are considered to be the basis of an ideal art studio.

5.2.2.1 Large spaces and adequate lighting

A large space enables an artist to have adequate space where to store material and works, and all seven artists find this criterion to be imperative. A large space also enables the artist to view his or her work from a distance, and this is also an important element in the artistic process. It might also offer enough free space in which to move about. Large spaces and lots of light seem to echo both the European and American models of a studio. The two models seem to give artists more validation in their profession (Bain, 2005, 2004; Buren, 1983). Perhaps, it could be the case that artists might have an imagined picture of what a studio should be like. The European and American models are often seen on television, in magazines and books, and this might have contributed to their ideal picture of what an artist's studio should look like. Moreover, since art practice is mostly concerned with the visual image, proper lighting supports the process. In addition, large spaces enable artists to work flexibly rather than being faced with space restrictions on a daily basis. Therefore, this forms part of their ideal setting for their practice.

Large apertures, such as large windows and doors, as well as skylights were considered to be important physical attributes for the artists. This also echoes some of the literature

regarding spaces in schools (Clark, 2010; Montessori & Gutek, 2004; Malaguzzi, 1996). These physical components allow for adequate light which, although often well imitated by artificial lighting, natural light is still considered to be the prime option:

> I need light, especially morning light. That good, white light. (Daniel, 5:16)

> I do compensate because the light I have in the studio, I have two white halogen and one warm light, so I try to replicate sunlight but it is not the same – that is why I mentioned that sunlight is important. And the studio that I will be building upstairs, God permitting always, I would have two large skylights and large open windows, so that I have as much light as possible. (Daniel, 5:28)

Direct sunlight and natural diffused lighting were common preferences. A connection to the outside is also important for direct light, and also in order to work with particular materials in a completely ventilated space. A connection with an outside area, or simply a view, is perceived to extend the studio and, if not physically, it gives the artist a sense of larger dimensions, even to relax the eyes. This, again, recalls some of the literature concerning school spaces (Montessori & Gutek, 2004; Malaguzzi, 1996).

> It would be more squarish, more space in the middle, that's what I would imagine, and with a view. (Henry, 1:67)

> I have here another space with a terrace, which would allow me as well to have another outside connection. For me, it is important because I could move in and out if I need to do certain work. (Jack, 2:92)

A recurrent perception across four interviews was that of having different areas allocated for different activities. Separating these different areas allows for a more focused activity, especially when it comes to materials and supplies. This, in a way, echoes an element of multiplicity (Massey, 2005), where space allows different activities to take place, in this case, within smaller areas of the main space. It was also highlighted that the work space should be separated from the storage space. This idea of separate areas was also highlighted with respect to working and living areas, in particular spaces such as warehouses, where these two would form part of the open space available. Ideally, these two areas be designed to be separate from each other. Overall, these reflections on the layout and lighting in studios indicate that physical elements, as modes of spatial practice, are very important and contribute to the process of space production.

5.2.2.2 Studio as sanctuary

When discussing their ideal studio, there was also the interesting concept of the studio as a "sanctuary" [Maya, 7: 40]. This was defined as a space that would have different

and distinct areas pertaining to different personal interests, such as music playing, library, computer area and TV area, amongst others. The idea of a sanctuary is that it incorporates the different meaningful activities of an individual, and that it offers all that is needed for such activities to be carried out comfortably. This idea of a sanctuary echoes the work of other artists, who discussed this in *Sanctuary: Britain's Artists and Their Studios* (Amisadeghi, 2012). In such a personal space, the artists felt that they should have things and objects that are meaningful to them, including their preferred music, books for reference, internet connection, particular artefacts to which they are attached, texts and cuttings. This recalls what Chantal Joffe expressed in this same publication. The studio is that place where she goes to when she needs to be quiet, and when she needs to think and reflect. Her view of the studio resonates with the views of the participants of this study and gives the studio an additional sense of retreat and escape to a world which is very personal. Latching onto this point, the majority of the artists expressed that, ideally, they would need to have things handy to avoid frustration, so planning in anticipation for what the artist might need is considered to be helpful. Although not all the artists have used the term 'sanctuary' to communicate this idea, it is felt that all of them talk about a place within which they could retreat to think about and/or do their work. It is a place of reflection and a place of performance, which contains many objects that have a particular important meaning or sentimental value:

> I have an armchair, which is very important to me in my studio. It is something I had bought it from a tea shop, I had really liked its shape. And these quirks, I have a lot of these things… Yes, it is there and I use it when I have to read and so on, small things, but you become attached to that. (Gabriel, 4:44)

> Although I am not necessarily painting in here but now I come to sit here, and it is also a place of reflection a space where you think more clearly. (Jack, 2:94)

> A lot of thinking, as we said, takes place, [it] is beneficial for you to do that, more like a temple, sort of, where you contemplate, where you think, where you manage to create certain order because, also, that is important. (Jack, 2:95)

> I had that easel which my father had made. I kept it in his memory. And I painted it. I painted everything in blue. Everything, everything. (Brigitte, 3: 12)

> I have a store – a store for materials and a store for paintings. They call me a hoarder – it is our tendency, eh, to keep interesting material, carpets, wood, beds, and stuff, props. So, whenever I come across something interesting, I put it in that store. (Daniel, 5:9)

This echoes the discussion in the literature reviewed that, although it is positive to work in collaboration with other artists, artists also seek time to work individually. The idea

of a sanctuary provides this possibility (Lippmann, 2015; Sjöholm, 2013; Bain, 2005). It also reaffirms the literature by Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (2005), in that places are re-appropriated to reflect the personal meanings of who is experiencing them.

5.2.2.3 Flexibility

Apart from the standard necessary requirements, such as shelves for storage and availability of water, amongst others, it was also pointed out that flexibility is crucial in the layout of studios. Further to changing and improving studios over time, it is also beneficial to have physical flexibility that allows freedom and movement.

> What I find important as a studio, a detail, is that as much as possible all the furniture which I do, because I produce everything as well, are on wheels, so that nothing is at a fixed point. Things have to have wheels for me, everything, because like this I can shift, I can shift, even furniture pieces have wheels. (Jack, 2:88)

Flexibilty diminishes substantial inconveniences. Places that are flexible, where nothing is mounted on walls or is fixed, makes it a fluid space that could be tuned to reflect particular and specific activities. Moreover, flexibility allows for the re-appropriation of places (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991) to occur with little difficulty. One-storey studio spaces are also preferred even if the space for two storeys is available,

> It was a bit inconvenient to go up and down, up and down, and I didn't use it anymore. (Jack, 2:90)

5.2.2.4 Studios as three-dimensional journals

An interesting concept, which is highlighted in the data, is the studio as a space with drawers and cupboards. Apart from being actual containers of supplies and objects, here drawers and cupboards take on a slightly different and metaphoric meaning. The artists talked about drawers and cupboards as small spaces where they store written ideas, notes, pictures, texts, and similar items that they rediscover now and again. Things in drawers remind them of several phases from their life.

> I put everything in drawers, I have drawers and so on, and I rediscover them every now and again. I open the drawers and have a look at them. (Gabriel, 4: 46)

This kind of storage might have a deeper meaning. The artists seem to need to store and save items that are an inspiration, or which simply represent their ideas. In this

view, studios become like physical journals – bringing to mind 'three-dimensional journals'. From time to time, the artists go back to these drawers and cupboards and are in touch again with past concerns or matters to which they would have attached particular meanings. Within the same place of practice, the artist encloses parts of her to be retrieved again from time to time. This reaffirms the ideas of Keith Tyson in Amirsadeghi (2012), who compares the studio to a large three-dimensional diary when he explains that he keeps a diary on the walls of the studio. His system of recording ideas uses the studio itself as its foundation. This gives him the possibility to rediscover these ideas from time to time, while being physically surrounded amidst these ideas. Being physically immersed in a place with ideas and information recalls the work of Kristensen (2004), which states that this practice might be helpful for the preparation and incubation stage of the creative process.

5.2.3 Space – an influential factor

Artists do not work in a vacuum. Irrespective of the form of art that defines their practice, they are all likely to have some kind of contact with their surroundings, be it a personal enclosed space or an open public space. The way they relate to the space they experience during their practice is indeed very personal. The seven artists expressed their individual understanding of how the space they work in conditions and shapes their practice. The commonly held view was that the studio space is very important but not crucial, reflecting also contemporary discourses on artists and studios (Papastergiadis, 2010). This implies that it does influence the artist because he or she is bound to work with what is available to him or her, but it is ultimately a means to an end and it does not directly influence the work itself with regard to the concept and ideas. The majority of the artists agreed that the set-up of the studio influences some of the choices that are made towards the final work, but it does not necessarily influence the work itself. This recalls what Lefebvre (1991) claimed when he asserted that space is a producer because it shapes the way people interact with that space. For example, in some of the interviews, the issue of dimensions was selected in order to clarify this point. If an artist is working in a small studio, it is physically impossible for him or her to work on very large canvases. In this scenario, as a final result, the size of the work is limited to one that is comfortable to work with in such a restricted space. More so, if the same artist were to work on the same piece, in the exact same size but elsewhere, there should not be a difference in the outcome of the work. Thinking about studio

spaces through this lens places them as spaces of performance. This echoes the representations of space involving embodiment. The body becomes part of a process that is complex, and Thrift (2003) compares it to a spatial dance with other aspects. The expressive quality of people has led to the emphasis of performance in geography. This is also highlighted by Tuan (1977), when he discussed a specific interdependence between space and the performance of people during activity. A person's performance may be restricted by physical boundaries, but ideas and concepts are not necessarily affected by that particular place. The space determines the choices that an artist makes with respect to what is available to him or her within that space, and to what extent it permits him or her to work in it.

[The studio] is just a little bubble where you have to operate. (Jack, 2:59)

Moreover, the same artist claimed that:

Spaces are very ephemeral, are very temporary, because they are a passage. They are a passage where you are delivering something, and then once that is delivered nothing else is important, what is the past of it is not important. Then the work is intended to be elsewhere. (Jack, 2:36)

It was also discussed that, apart from the size of the studio, the physical structure and layout of the space might also have the same influential effect on the work in terms of limitations and boundaries. Nevertheless, the studio was still considered to be a fundamental space to have, and some of the artists also discussed that some people still need this space, irrespective of what constitutes this space. "Without the area where I can work, nowadays I can't work" (Daniel, 5:67). Maya claimed that, "If you are tied down to a place it is because you are that type of character and you need your roots. You need your base" (Maya, 7:51). It seems to me that, here, the artists are ascribing to the studio the meaning of a convenient space and also a place to refer to. This is also elaborated further by one of the artists (Jack, 2:33) where he spoke about the idea that, having a set space that is readily available for you to practice, gives you the possibility of working on something. It has the potential for artistic activity to take place and it affords this possibility. Thus, previously set up spaces housing all the necessary materials and supplies give rise to potential artistic activity.

5.2.3.1 Mess versus order

This leads me to another interesting viewpoint that emerged from the data, and this concerns the idea of mess and clutter as opposed to order. This is again a very subjective

topic because, in a sense, it reflects the character and disposition of the individual. What is worthy of mention is that, for some individuals, mess itself is a form of influence. Some artists are not able to work in a completely bare and clinical environment; they need to be surrounded by works and by different items, objects and artefacts. This idea recalls the concept of the studio as a three-dimensional journal. In an actual physical journal or sketchbook, this is represented by a blank page. Sometimes a blank page is too much like an island, in isolation. Occasionally, an artist might need prior page entries to feel immersed in a particular work or line of thought. Similarly, an artist might sometimes feel the need to be surrounded by other works and objects in the studio. This could also assist the preparation stage of the creative process (Kristensen, 2004). Contrastingly, there comes a time where a blank slate is very much sought after. This enables the artist to view the work detached from the surrounding distractions:

> I bring them here detached from all the clutter and all the distractions of a working space, which become an obstacle, and I want to see the work in a clean space… because it has less distractions and I can see better and I can start reasoning better. (Jack, 2:86)

Within mess, it requires a mental effort to organise one's thoughts and pick up the things that we perceive as having an important quality. Viewing this from the other end of the spectrum, that is, in favour of order, it is interesting to note that order itself becomes an influencing factor. Sometimes, it is important to keep the walls bare to avoid background noise. Therefore, both mess, or clutter, and order could play a crucial role in the way they affect the artistic process of artists. For instance, it has been discussed already that it is very significant to some of the artists to leave things handy, so that the materials and tools are arranged and laid out for immediate use. This might appear to be part of the mess but, undeniably, it has an important role in practice.

This way of interacting with the space concurs with what Cresswell (2004) defines as a sense of place. Cresswell is deeply committed to the position that a sense of place refers to the outcome derived from the relationship with a space, and the feelings and emotions are attached to that space. As exemplified above, the artists are affected by their studio space but, in reality, they are affected by the limitations or possibilities that their space affords. This affects the choices they make during their artistic performance but it does not directly influence their thoughts and ideas. The studio was perceived as a fundamental space to have, despite what limitations it presents. Over time, the artists develop a relationship with their space and different meanings are attached to the space.

The sense of place that comes into play is that of a convenient space and a space for reference. This is the result of the relationship that the artists build with their space. Even the subjective perspectives on mess and order continue to layer on different meanings that affect the artists' respective performances. Mess itself becomes part of the multi-layered story, which influences the artists and, at times, order might also have the same effect.

In a similar manner, the physical studio space was also discussed in contrast with the mental space of the artist. It has been highlighted that the space for an artist is not the actual physical one. "An artist's space is in his head, mainly. And you'll see the physical attributes according to the character of the artist" (Maya, 7:53). This ties up with the idea mentioned earlier that the physical space imposes some restriction on the artist with respect to physical elements and resources. Nevertheless, the artist has access to an 'unlimited' space that is more abstract, and which enables her to go to limitless places without actually depending on a physical structure. This echoes the work of Cresswell (2004) and Agnew (1987) who discuss the locale, a concept that deals with physical, as well as mental, spaces.

5.2.4 The studio – physical access

Another interesting discussion presented in the data revolves around the idea of spaces and proximity. All of the artists made reference to how important it had become to them to have their studio space close to their homes or living areas. Some of the artists also stated that they prefer short physical distances for comfort and convenience. Having to travel to a studio could be a burden, especially if the person practices every day. Thus, comfortable access was an attributed value. Additionally, the artists also claimed that having an interconnected space, either a garage or a room in the house, would add further value to their experience, both for the sake of convenience and, more particularly, for financial benefits. Furthermore, apart from the advantageous position of having easy access to a studio, the artists also discussed the importance of having the works within easy reach, so that they would be able to inspect them from time to time during the production process. Being physically close to artworks that are in progress permits arts practice to permeate other activities, in the sense that the artists could easily go back to review and examine the work during other unrelated activities. In the literature reviewed, this is particularly evident in the case of female artists who

tend to have multiple activities going on within the same space (Bain, 2005; Buren, 1983).

5.2.4.1 **Space – access to outdoor locations**

Intriguingly, for some of the artists the studios are not limited to the perimeter of the space available to them, but they strongly believe that outdoor locations become an extension of the studio. An interesting aspect that has been brought forward is the idea of locations and outside spaces. The way the artists related strongly to locations and to the outdoors sheds light on how these outside spaces sometimes become an annex of the physical studio space even if, in reality, they are not connected. These locations affect the artists in different ways, either by acting as direct inspiration, as an impetus to engage in artistic production, as a reference for place, or as something to record.

First and foremost, all artists agreed that outdoor locations are an essential part of their inspiration. Locations could inspire artists to produce art as seen in the cases of Jackson Pollock, and Lee Krasner (Landau, 2005) as well as Georgia O'Keefe (Corn, 2005). As a result, their inspired work could be either directly associated to the mentioned location, or else artists are moved to engage in artistic practices which are completely unrelated to the location. Here, it is being contended that a location acts as a stimulus to produce art, to engage in some form of expression. The aesthetic quality of locations instils a need to produce art. This is similarly experienced by artists who visit other countries and who are exposed to a change of scenery. Spaces are producers and at the same time products (Lefebvre, 1991). The new aesthetic experience gives artists a sense of resurging energy and motivation to produce art, even if unrelated to the actual location. In this light, locations become points of departure:

> When I go somewhere in the countryside I get inspired; not inspired to draw whatever I am looking at – I can take photos. Something inspires me to go and work. (Henry, 1:39)

> And the thing that motivates me most, to come to work, is when I go abroad. (Henry, 1:40)

> I come so motivated to work and I enjoy it when I don't have any pending work. Because if I have a work half done I would either speed up my pace to finish it… Because I always come back inspired by different things. (Henry, 1:42)

> I do care about locations. Locations are very important – fundamental in my opinion. (Jack, 2:57)

> For example, sometimes you look at fields when we're going around. They inspire me. I notice how beautiful they are. Their patterns. They have different shapes, sloped or going up or the colours, or the hills. (Brigitte, 3:64)

> When we went to Austria, when I came back the first thing I had done was a painting from imagination showing the mountains because I was impressed by nature. (Brigitte, 3:65)

> I use the studio more for painting, drawing, and so on. Then, when it is video I film, I rent studios if I need to, it all depends on the work. Or else I go on location. (Gabriel, 4:9)

> I start with what I take with me on the location. (Adrian, 6:51)

> Well, I used to paint everywhere. For example, even on the pavement in a street…and I used to feel alive. And I was outside, in the street, on the pavement. (Maya, 7:48)

Contrastingly, Daniel (5:80) expressed that his experience abroad made him feel somewhat stiff, rather than feeling the urge and motivation to work. The reason he gives is that of culture shock. He recounted how confused he felt when he experienced the Moroccan culture for the first time. The fact that he had never lived life in Casablanca made it hard for him to fully understand the works of other artists in this place. This reflects some elements of placelessness (Augé, 2008; Cresswell, 2004) and outsideness (Relph, 1976). He argued that this experience made him realise that there cannot be a 'universal work' understood by all:

> I see it as very strange how a person can create a universal work. How can a person declare that his work can be seen anywhere in the world? Aren't you sculpted from that earth, from that soil of that country where you have lived? And whether you like it or not, wouldn't you always carry your baggage with you? You can expect yourself of being a world citizen. I do expect myself to be a world citizen, nowadays, but I'm not. I'm Maltese after all. (Daniel, 5:81)

However, Daniel compensates for this by his tendency to adapt to new cultures quickly. He doesn't need a long time to shift his mindset and adjust to a new place.

The above arguments, which support the idea that outdoor locations and visiting other countries become an inspiring part of the artistic process, reaffirms the experiences of Mona Hatoum (Amirsadeghi, 2012) who expressed the view that working in different places is part of the inspiration for her work. The rationale she gives is that different places to work in offer different contexts to work with, and these inform the art process and result. This, again, brings to mind the extended version of a sense of place proposed by Massey (2005) who stated that places have multiple identities, depending on the different people who interact with them. Thus, the meanings attached to places are

different for different people. In this view, when artists are exposed to different outdoor locations and different countries they embark on a personal journey to construct meaning about the spaces they encounter. According to the participating artists, this transaction with unfamiliar places and/or outdoor locations has a culminating effect that pushes them to engage in arts practice and, somehow, it acts as an impetus to initiate in them the need to work.

Consistent with this view is that an artist could be inspired by an outside space as he registers and recalls from this space. What a person brings from an outside world and from locations similarly has the role to encourage artistic production. At different instances in the data, this was emphasised as having more fundamental importance than the actual studio space itself because the studio is a place where an artist 'performs' while what she brings with her is actually from an outside world.

> We can be inspired, that we can recall, that we can register from the outside space, too, which often we ignore… [It] becomes full of references which become part of our entire being of how we think and how we are influenced by those experiences and how we therefore eventually evolve over time. (Jack, 2:43)

> What you actually bring with you is from the outside world and not from the inside of the studio. (Jack, 2:58)

The idea that outdoor locations become places, again echoes what takes place within studio settings. Attaching particular meaning to an anonymous space transforms it into a place. Places are spaces that have become meaningful for a person (Cresswell, 2004). Unlike spaces, places are not anonymous but may have different meanings for an individual, and may correspondingly provide a sense of belonging. With the same argument, outdoor locations could also progress to places in this sense, since they would remind the artist of something personal, something meaningful, something that was lived and experienced. 'Visions' and 'snapshots' of a place are sometimes brought to mind by experiencing new spaces, or by experiencing a lack of attachment to a place (Augé, 2008; Cresswell, 2004; Relph, 1976), thus reminding you of other places that are meaningful to you:

> A location becomes a reminder, becomes a very, very strong reference that constantly brings to your mind these clear visions or snapshots or images. (Jack, 2:39)

In addition, sometimes an artist could feel alien to a particular space without being able to understand the causes for such a feeling. This could happen when experiencing a new place and culture in another country, for example. As suggested earlier, through

Daniel's example, there is an understanding that there cannot be something universal and understood by all, since trying to assimilate a place without experiencing it may lead to lack of understanding, and a sense of blockage.

Outdoor locations, as an extension of studios, sometimes also become temporary territories. When people experience outside spaces they sometimes wish to record a particular moment by leaving a personal mark. Through such a process, anonymous spaces are transformed into meaningful places, and this drives individuals to 'mark their territory' by, for example, engraving their names or scribbling graffiti on rocks, trees, and other natural formations. Through this activity, they show the desire to be reminded of their experience when time passes. This becomes a personal territory, even if for a temporary period. Later on, artists might use these experiences of other people in their own work. It seems to me that drawing from these marked locations offers the possibility to include multi-layered meanings of the same place. Therefore, on certain occasions, when the artists 'get involved with' these temporary territories, they change and become something new. The findings put forward the concept of building upon and changing other meanings attached by other people, through practices of attaching new meanings (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991). Additionally, something particular to art is that, through the work of artists, locations are 'frozen in time'. Although imbued with personal interpretations, the work inspired by locations presents them as they are at a point in time. Through their work artists record elements that would be captured permanently.

In the discussion of locations as studios, it was also important to bring out the sensory, emplaced, and embodied nature of being in the outdoors. The findings highlight the idea of being emplaced in the space. Experiencing the physical space is a unique encounter that differs from one person to another (Thrift, 2003; Tuan, 1977). A person's unique experience provides factors that strike him or her. Hence, a person is not just looking at a location, unlike with a landscape (Cresswell, 2004), but is living and experiencing it. Locations thus provide a sense of being emplaced in a particular space. To give an example, sketching what you are experiencing on location enables you to be subject to a 'raw experience', and not an interpretation of something by someone else, as in the case of photographs. Painting and drawing are modes of thinking and awareness that are intensely rooted in the body (Shusterman, 2006).

Finally, for an artist locations may also become metaphors. Visual experiences of locations remain stored and alive in the subconscious. Through other unrelated experiences they could resurface and the visual experience becomes a metaphor. "Experiences that seem to be almost insignificant, resurface; they come back and you polish them and give them a new meaning – a new life as well" (Jack, 2:66). Experiences are translated and new images that have been personalised over time are brought to the fore. They are given a new meaning and are not simply reproduced in their original form.

5.3 Art room space and art students
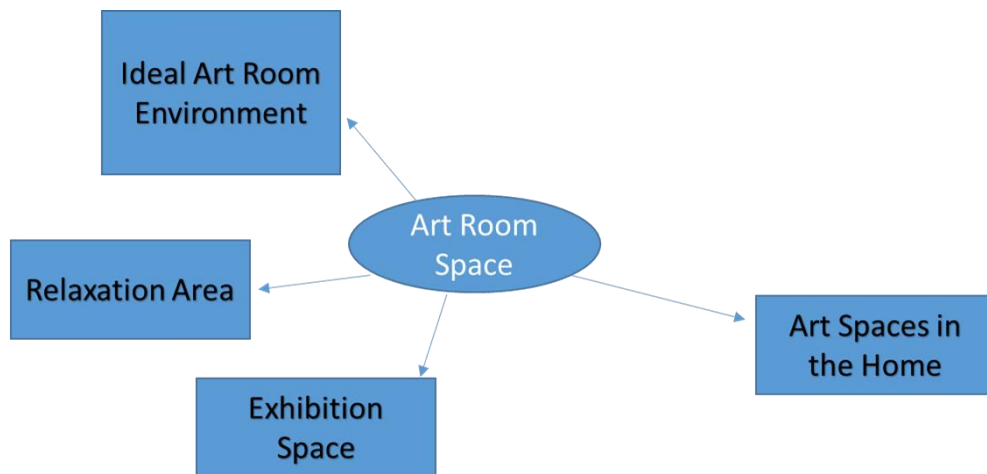
Figure 5.2 Theme: space – students

Figure 5.2 represents a thematic map of the main theme of space and its relevant sub-themes. The first theme that emerged from the data collected during the four sessions, through methods of observation, note taking and conversation with art students, is the notion of space, particularly school spaces as contrasted with home spaces. The students have discussed the idea of how they relate to their space at school (with reference to their art room) in contrast with the space they use to make art, at home. The way their art lessons are structured allows them to work both at school and at home, since part of the work has to be carried out or completed at home. Thus, the students could reflect on both spaces and how their work may be affected by both. This section draws from the conversations and observations with the students, and also from the plan drawings.

5.3.1 Art room environment – spacious layout and adequate lighting

While discussing the space they use at school, the students talked about different physical elements that they find positive, and also some elements that they would like to improve. It is important to note that the present art room (see Figure 4.5, Section 4.3.2) is an improvement over an older art room, so the students (apart from two who are new to the school) could also compare the present room to the one they used in previous years. Three of the students also worked on improving their existing space when drawing their ideal art room (see Figures 4.11, 4.12 and 4.15, Section 4.4) rather than thinking about a completely new space. Overall, the students seemed very happy with their present art room and, amongst the elements that they find appealing: are the dimensions of the room; the colours of the curtains (which are colourful and permit a warm colourful light to enter the room); and large windows allowing in much natural light. This echoes the work of Clark (2010) (see Section 2.2.2.4).

> With regard to tables, I would have them white so that, when students are painting, there aren't a lot of colours. As regards the wall, I think it is fine as it is. Even the curtains: it is good to have colourful curtains, so I would leave them as they are… They change the colour of the room. Well, the rest I would leave it as it is, as there are no problems. Even the whiteboard area is white, you wouldn't want to have it, let's say, red. (Keith, 1:18)

The data also shows that the students give value to storage and to having enough space to store materials and resources. One particular student explained how he removed the existing whiteboard from his plan, since they do not use it much, and replaced it with more storage cabinets (see Figure 4.11, Section 4.4). Space was also discussed in terms of how full it is. Although the students do prefer having resources and things around, it was also highlighted that the more space there is around the room the better. Ideally, extra chairs would be removed to avoid clutter.

The physical elements of having a spacious room and adequate lighting have been favoured by both artists and students. It may seem that these two elements form the basis of spaces that are used for making art. A large and spacious layout offers the possibility for individuals to engage in art making, without having to struggle with issues of limitations and restrictions of space. Enough space caters for the necessary needs of an artist or student by allowing enough room for storage, areas for different activities, a chance to move around freely and areas where to display work. Having adequate lighting also seems to be beneficial to the artistic process, and both artists and

students view this element as a must. Since the artistic process is framed around the visual, adequate lighting seems to be an essential attribute of studio spaces and art rooms.

Craig, one of the students, also explained how, apart from natural light, a system of good lighting is crucial both for the gallery space but also for the areas where the work will be carried out.

> I think having enough light is very important, because you need to see what you are doing. Even if you mix two colours which are contrasting they would look different in a well-lit room. They will oppose each other, but in a dark room they would not appear to be different. (Craig, 3:52)

Four out of the seven students incorporated the idea of large windows in their respective plans (see Figures 4.10, 4.11, 4.15 and 4.16, Section 4.4). Those who have expressed this idea included from two to four large windows as part of their drawing. The issue of light seems to be important for these students. It is also worthwhile pointing out that the present art room has four large windows and the room is very well lit with natural light. This implies that the students are used to working in very good lighting conditions. During one of the sessions they have talked about their old art room, which was very poorly lit and, on many occasions, the students had to take their work outside, weather permitting, to be able to work better. These students have experienced both situations of having poor and very good natural lighting and, hence, this might explain why four of them felt the need to include these windows in their drawings.

5.3.2 Art spaces in the home

The students also discussed the making of art at home. The spaces they use vary from a desk in their bedroom, to a washroom or an area in the yard. This reflects the different types of spaces that could exist (Tuan, 1977). What was interesting to note is that the students seemed to associate different activities with both their homes and school. For example, at school it is generally noisier and they argued that, should they need to focus on a particular task or think about ideas for new drawings, working at home would be considered ideal. However, they stated that they would still manage to work at school. Some students have indicated that at home they would encounter less distractions. This might also reflect the need for a quiet place to relax and, in a broader sense, to work in a quieter environment. Additionally, this might affirm that children need different places and not just those set out for them by adults (Rasmussen, 2004). This concept is

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also linked to the idea that children are actors and co-producers of their lives (Christensen & James, 2000; James et al., 1998).

> At home I enjoy it more, even when I go out and paint on my own on the cliffs. You find peace and quiet and nothing can distract you or disturb you. Well, you can have all the time in the world when you are alone. (Jake, 1:89)

One of the students also discussed how it doesn't make a difference for him to work at school or at home, as long as there are no distractions. An important factor is a quiet place. A quiet environment is considered to be a good environment irrespective of the location. The student added that sometimes it depends on the subject and the level of difficulty, since this would make it a task that needs more focus. However, according to the students, one of the disadvantages of working at home is that, if they feel stuck, they wouldn't be able to ask for help. At school they could ask for help and discuss their queries. Only one of the students preferred working in the art room, rather than at home. He explained that, at home, he has far more distractions, whereas in the art room there aren't many people, meaning that he could focus on his work better. Nonetheless, he also added that if he were to work on something messy, or which entailed carrying many supplies, he would prefer to work at home. He also mentioned an element of inspiration, which he finds at home:

> Somehow at home I am inspired more quickly. It might be because I'll have a lot of things around me and, although I prefer to work here at school, at home I feel I am more inspired. (Ethan, 4:119)

The idea above also recalls what the artists discussed in terms of being inspired from what is around them. Having access to items such as a computer, books, and so on, is a means of inspiration. However, it is not clear whether the students drew inspiration from things outside the art room. This is not mentioned directly. It is evident, however, that they are inspired by what is around them in the space where they work.

5.3.2.1 Working with peers and relaxation area

An aspect that was pinpointed as requiring improvement was the way the students relate to one another during the lesson. Overall, the students preferred to work in groups, that the layout of the tables was in such a way that they would be facing each other and able to communicate.

Another suggested improvement upon the existing art room layout was a relaxation area that would enable students to relax, browse art magazines, use a sofa and think about their work and ideas.

> Well, I planned this storey for relaxation purposes. Where you can rest and relax. For example, you can come here during breaktime and play games; you can relax a bit on the sofa or armchair… Well, the armchair would be just for the teacher. The sofa would be an ideal area to have discussions. Then there would be a billiard table, perhaps, table soccer, and that air hockey at the back. (Craig, 3:59)

This idea featured more than once in the drawings (see Figures 4.11, 4.14, and 4.15, Section 4.4). This visualised area included sofas, armchairs, coffee machines, and games such as a snooker table, amongst others. The students specifically planned an area for time-out and for thinking, while at the same time to relax. A student also associated this space with research, thus seemingly preferred to think of research as an activity to be carried out in a quiet space while relaxing. Art magazines were included for browsing in the relaxation area. It is interesting to note that the students visualised separate areas for group work and areas for research and relaxation. This implied that, to them, these two activities might be distinct. It is also interesting to note that research is associated with relaxation. In a way, they viewed quiet and calmer spaces as places to mull over ideas and to explore different ideas and concepts. This might also imply that they would need some time away from supervision. However, one particular student included an armchair for the teacher in the relaxation area. These ideas echo the work of Burke and Grosvenor (2003) who talk about different spaces in school having the potential for formal and informal learning to take place. In their studies, there was a similar link to comfortable, private, colourful and softly textured interiors as spaces for social activity and rest. In one of her studies, Clark (2010) also concluded that students should have access to private spaces for quiet time and spaces for thinking and reflection. The concept of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), which is the experience whereby an individual is fully absorbed in the present moment, also seems to fit in with this finding, in that such places for relaxation and reflection seem to be essential conditions for this process to occur.

The above two points highlight the need felt by these students to have a place that would offer them a sense of time-out and also to communicate with their peers. This could be linked to the work of Wenger (1998), where he stated that all places in which people have performed a task or carried out activities could be considered as learning

environments. Also, Dewey (1938, 1916) maintains that children learn best by doing through experiences, and that learning should not be associated only with formal practices. This idea moves away from rigidity and formality, and provides them with an environment for reflection. This echoes the environments promoted by the Reggio Emilia approach and the Montessori method, and reflects the work of Clark (2010), Rasmussen (2004) and Burke and Grosvenor (2003).

5.3.3 Space to display artwork

Three students also included the idea to have a space particularly reserved for exhibiting or displaying their drawings (see Figures 4.14, 4.15, and 4.16, Section 4.4). These ranged from a wall, to display works that would be rotated from time to time, to an area at the entrance of an art building where exhibitions could be held from time to time, and where parents and other guests could be invited for viewing. This is very illuminating because it shows that the students think about the destination of their work (Papastergiadis, 2010). They show their desire to communicate their work with others. They do not simply do their work for the sake of completing a task for assessment, but they would want to extend the meaning of their work beyond the easel. The students also seem to take pride in what they do, and they would want to share it with other students, teachers and relatives. In one of our discussions, the students explained how they wanted to organise a fund-raising event featuring their work, so that they could collect money to buy more easels for their art room. One of the students also included in his plan the concept of handmade decorations to embellish the art room (see Figure 4.14). This also shows that, as a student, he was willing to take ownership of what he does during the art lesson and, in a way, be self-sufficient.

5.4 Summary of findings – studio spaces and artists

Reflecting back on the research questions related to this chapter, the findings have answered these questions and shed light on the meaning that artists and art students attach to the space or environment they work in.

The discussion of the data with the artists related to the theme of space has presented a number of points which, upon reflection, could also offer positive considerations for art education. As explained earlier, it has been envisaged that exploring the perspectives of artists and students, would add valuable insights to this particular

investigation. Although both groups were influenced and affected by different experiences and motivations, it was still deemed useful to look at both groups.

Space – a personal relationship

Through the findings, it has been clearly illustrated that the concept of the studio as a personal and private space is a central component of practice. It is likely that artists would choose to have a space that they can call their own, and which houses their material belongings related to their practice. This personal space would allow them to organise their materials in a such a way as to permit instantaneous use. As a physical space, it also reflects the idiosyncrasies of the artist (Lippmann, 2015; Sjöholm, 2013). It allows them to work on their personal reflection and development (Amirsadeghi, 2012; Jacob & Grabner; 2010). These intimate spaces are sometimes pursued in collaborative studio spaces where artists tend to have their own private area, even if only temporarily. It has been interesting to note that a private studio, almost invariably, gives a sense of validation since it classifies practice as more professional (Bain, 2005, 2004; Buren, 1983). This has been particularly observed in cases of young female artists with families, who might need the space to reinforce their artistic identity (Bain, 2005, 2004; Garfunkel, 1984). However, in many cases, their studios become spaces that house parallel activities related to the home and family.

It also transpired from the data that an artist would need time to adapt to a new space which is not his or hers. Some individuals do find it extremely difficult to work in other people's spaces, due to the fact that art is a very personal and intimate activity, and ideally reinforced by a familiar place with which an artist could identify. Interestingly, there are two sides of the same coin. Although a large group of artists would need their personal base to 'perform', there are other artists who do not feel tied to their studio (Amirsadeghi, 2010). This seems to be determined by the personality and disposition of the individual.

The relationship with a studio is dynamic and ongoing. Studios are changed, maintained, organised and improved upon personal reflection and experience. By keenly examining his or her artistic process, an artist continuously discovers what the studio means to him or her. This recalls the idea of appropriation (Lefebvre, 1991), whereby spaces are appropriated and cultivated over time. Moreover, a sense of oneness with the work and the space results in an almost spiritual and meditative process, and

meaningful understandings are made when spaces are given personal meaning (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004).

Space – the ideal studio

The making and setting-up of a studio is the product of subjective and personal decisions. Particular attributes may relate to specific characteristics of artists. Through a process of reflection on their practice, artists could form a picture of their ideal space. Two particular factors, which were also reflected in the data with the students and which featured across all the interviews with the artists, are that studio spaces should ideally consist of a large space and, when possible, they should have a lot of light. These two qualities seem to resonate ideas associated with the European and American models of studios. Since these examples are commonly presented to artists in the media, artists may have an implicit image of what an ideal studio should look like. A large space would enable adequate space for storage and enough space to move around, thus enabling more movement, while also having enough distance to move back and inspect the work. Adequate lighting seems to support the visual quality of artistic practice. There also seems to be a desire to have a connection to the outside, either by having an actual outside area connected to the studio or by having access to a view.

The two physical qualities that have emerged as ideal components of a studio space, namely large spaces and adequate lighting, might be a contribution to employ in art rooms. Similarly, an element of flexibility, for instance whereby physical elements such as furniture are not fixed, could be useful to adopt in art rooms. These allow for appropriation to take place (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991). It is also interesting to think about the notion of using the physical space as a way to store ideas and using its materiality, such as resources and physical elements, to maximize the process of inspiration. In terms of art rooms, students could perhaps come up with ways to use their own art room (Rasmussen, 2004) as a way to record and store ideas, concerns, concepts, questions and reflections. This is, in a way, making the art room more like a laboratory for experimentation.

Another important point highlighted in the findings is the idea of having different areas allocated to different activities. These smaller spaces emulate different stations where one could perform different tasks using the related and appropriate tools and materials. This echoes in part the idea of multiplicity of spaces (Massey, 2005).

An equally interesting concept underlined in the data is that of studios becoming three-dimensional journals. Cupboards and drawers are given a new meaning - a way to 'store' concerns to be revisited at a later point. This concept constructs spaces as three-dimensional journals and gives the idea that artists are emplaced within a physical reflective journal (Amirsadeghi, 2012). Being physically immersed in a place with ideas and information recalls the work of Kristensen (2004), where she states that his practice might be helpful for the preparation and incubation stage of the creative process. Additionally, the findings also presented the notion of space as a 'sanctuary', which is a private space including components that pertain to the diverse interests of the artist concerned. This becomes a meditative place of reflection and performance.

Space – an influential factor

The way artists relate to the space they experience during their practice is very subjective. The findings suggest that, although the use of a studio is very important, it is not crucial. In the process of their work, artists make choices depending on the restrictions posed by the studio. Here, the studio is both a product and a producer (Lefebvre, 1991). It does influence the artist because he or she is bound to work with what is available within the space, but it does not influence the concepts and ideas of the work. It was also suggested that the layout of a space has the same influential effects. Through this lens, studios are viewed as spaces of performance – convenient spaces to which one could refer. Thus, the sense of place (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004) that is ascribed is that of a convenient space and a space for reference.

Additionally, the issue of handy set-ups suggests possibility and potential artistic activity. Thus, previously set up spaces housing all the necessary materials, supplies and tools tend to lead to artistic activity. This directs me to the concepts of mess and order. The findings situate mess and order as two influential elements of a studio. Being surrounded by works, materials and objects might become an important condition for some artists, while others might prefer a blank slate in order to focus on the work with minimal distractions. The physical studio space was also discussed in terms of the mental space of the artist, where it was suggested that the space of an artist might not be an actual physical one but a mental space with significantly fewer boundaries and restrictions. This reflects the notion of locale (Cresswell, 2004; Agnew, 1987).

Space – physical access, working with others and access to outdoor locations

The types of spaces used for artistic production take many forms. Some spaces are built specifically to be used as art studios, while others are changed and adapted into new forms. Moreover, some spaces combine the living and practice elements of an artist's life while other spaces are shared between individuals. One of the main findings within the theme of space is this notion of proximity. It has been highlighted that the artists prefer to have the studio close to where they live or, even better, to have the studio as part of the home. Easy access minimises the inconvenience of having to travel to the studio and adds the value of comfort. Moreover, being physically close to the artworks that are in progress permits arts practice to permeate other activities in the sense that artists could switch between arts practice and other activities. In this sense, the artists could easily go back to review and examine the work while carrying out other unrelated activities (Kristensen, 2004).

The findings also illuminate the notion of proximity as reflected in the idea of working with other people. This provides a motivational push that could have a positive effect on practice. On a critical note, artists could benefit from working on their own, since they have to rely on themselves and push their potential further. However, working with others may have more benefits overall, such as motivation, encouragement, an opportunity to discuss difficulties, and an opportunity to challenge each other. Nonetheless, working alone and having time to reflect has its own set of benefits.

It was highlighted that, apart from encouraging a collaborative spirit, art spaces would ideally offer the possibility to work individually in a private space. This is also mirrored in the work of Clark (2010) and others (Lippmann, 2015, Sjöholm, 2013) who recommend this view. It was also found that it may take time to familiarise oneself with the studio space while, over time, this is appropriated and changed reflecting on the practice itself. This is a useful outcome with regard to students and art rooms, since these could be allocated time and space to appropriate their art rooms according to their practice and their reflections upon the work they do.

The findings situate outdoor locations as extensions of studios. The way the artists related strongly to locations sheds light on how these outside spaces sometimes become an annex of the physical studio space, even if the two are not tangibly connected. The artists claimed that locations are essential parts of their inspiration. Locations become points of departure, as they act as a stimulus to produce art and to engage in some form

of expression. In part, the aesthetic quality of locations instils a need to produce art. Similarly, when artists visit other countries or are exposed to a change in scenery and new surroundings, they experience a compulsion to produce art, which wouldn't be necessarily related to the space itself. When artists are exposed to different outdoor locations and different countries they embark on a personal journey to construct meanings about the spaces they encounter.

An interesting finding from the data is the idea that, what artists bring to their work is from an outside world and not directly from the studio. Moreover, outdoor locations could also become places, since they could remind the artist of something personal, meaningful and which was lived and experienced. Therefore, like studios, locations could progress to meaningful places.

Locations may also become temporary territories when anonymous places become meaningful places, and this drives individuals to 'mark their territory' in order to be reminded of experiences when time passes. These places are 'worked upon' by artists, and change and become something new. Additionally, through the work of artists, locations are captured permanently and thus 'frozen in time'. The findings also suggested that experiencing the physical space is a unique encounter particular to each person. In this regard, locations provide a sense of being emplaced in a particular space. Finally, the idea of locations becoming metaphors was also highlighted in the findings. Experiences are stored in the subconscious and, through other unrelated experiences, they could resurface and become personalised into metaphors over time.

The points related to accessing outdoor locations and other places outside the studio seem to point towards the fact that experiencing places other than one's studio is a positive motivating factor in instilling the need to practice art. Following an understanding of what the artists expressed about this issue, the conclusion reached was that, through the process of experiencing these spaces, a transition is made that changes them from spaces to places. When experiencing a new country or outside location new meanings are made, and this gives spaces a new sense of place. This link to the outdoors could possibly be considered in terms of education as a practice of extending fixed school spaces. Although these points are discussed by artists, young people studying art might also benefit from these points being taken into consideration in the planning of their teaching and learning.

The research questions relating to the meanings about space (RQ2, RQ3) were answered through the findings that emerged, which were presented and discussed in this chapter. Given that this theme concerns many elements related to space, a further synthesising discussion of the research questions is presented in the final chapter – Chapter 9.

Chapter 6

CREATIVITY

6.1 Introduction

One of the main common themes featuring in the data for this study is the various meanings of creativity that artists and students relate to during their artistic production. Different people relate to creativity in a different way. This chapter also sheds light on the creative process and sources of inspiration. The following research questions are partly related to this theme, and answers for these questions will be explored in the discussions of this chapter.

RQ1 – What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

RQ4 – How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?

6.2 Creativity and artists

Figure 6.1 represents a thematic map of the main theme of creativity and its relevant sub-themes, which will be discussed in this section. The map is related to the interviews carried out with the artists.
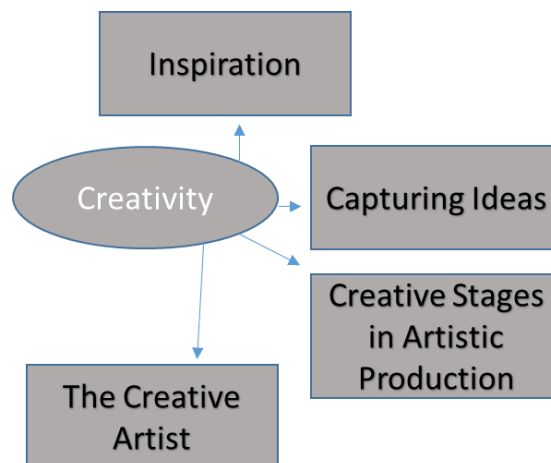
Figure 6.1 Theme: creativity – artists

6.3 **The creative artist**

6.3.1   **A subjective meaning of creativity**

During the interviews carried out with the participants of this study, some aspects of creativity were discussed especially in relation to the process that each artist undergoes to produce art. Some of the artists also expressed what creativity means to them and which qualities they attribute to such a term. Amongst the responses, the creative artist was viewed as someone who is self-disciplined and who is able to work with what is available to him or her, be it resources, space, and/or time. The idea of self-discipline and persistence was stressed more than once during the interviews, and this sheds light on the fact that artists still need to push themselves to work in order to overcome other feelings, such as procrastination and a lack of inspiration, amongst others. This moves away from the romantic idea that the artist is always in tune with the muse and stimulus (Banaji et al., 2010). Some of the artists also added that, once they push themselves to persist, overcome deferment and start the actual work, they are able to zone out what goes on around them and are not affected by time, tiredness, and lack of motivation. Here, the artists seem to enter a state of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), a state where they are very motivated and fully absorbed in the activity they are engaged in.

> Yes, [self-discipline] is very important. Because, for example, when I used to paint, we used to meet up, a few friends, and we used to go and paint and so on. Initially, we used to buy the best brushes, the best this and the best that…But if there isn't that drive which will make you paint, what is the use of having the best things? (Henry, 1:70)

> But I have to force myself because, once I'm up here, I forget everything – tiredness, everything – and you go on. (Brigitte, 3:20)

> But if you want to do something, you do it. The end. Yes, I really believe in it. You have to be careful what you wish for because you will do that. I always tell this to my students. If you want something, if you really, really want it, you will get it because in your mind you are always going to move towards it, and in the end you will arrive. (Maya, 7:37)

The idea of imagination was also a common attribute that the artists ascribed to a creative artist. Imagination makes it possible for things to be thought upon, envisaged, and brought to life before actually taking artistic form. It is this unique way of seeing things that is labelled as creative (Robinson, 2011; Annarella, 1999). New possibilities and new connections are made possible through imagination. As argued in the literature reviewed, imagination is considered to be the source of creativity yet it is commonly

used to refer to creativity (Robinson, 2011). The uniqueness, and perhaps the new way of perceiving things, ideas, and concepts, is what defines it as creativity. The idea that in hindsight such imaginative and creative works are labelled thus, echoes some of the definitions of creativity explaining that, in hindsight, the products of creativity are defined as original and unique. In the data, the idea of imagination is taken a step further when creativity was linked with exploration. Here exploration is discussed in terms of answering the questions the artist is concerned with:

> I think creativity itself has to do with exploration in the first place, in the sense that you are exploring because you have very, very… You have made up some form of questions which you wish to answer. Therefore, you are in search of answering these questions and you have to delve into an unknown space, possibly without any, again, definition of what this space consists of. (Jack, 2:46)

Here creativity does not deal with the obvious:

> If creativity in any way reveals the known, then I don't think it has anything to do with creativity; if it is dealing with the very obvious, with the subjects that are already revealed, I don't think that you can speak of creativity there. You are still speaking of reproducing the known. Creativity, I think, is either: there is this process of revelation, that is revealing something through the experiences that you latch onto and with the means of a medium… In my case, I have to speak of a medium, it being glass, metal, paper, painting or whatever. I am hoping that by the time I go through this whole process, I end up answering some form of questions as I said about the purpose of doing the object in the first place. (Jack, 2:47)

Jack also came up with an interesting analogy for creativity, where he compares an artist to a scientist. He explained that what an artist and a scientist have in common is that both start out exploring, out of nothing, what obviously concerns them and what has become their passion. They both persist in some direction, often with many failures. This is linked to the notion of the art studio being a laboratory of ideas (Amirsadeghi, 2012). Creativity, in this case,

> […] is the possible discovery of something, or at least if not the discovery in itself, but at least the understanding of my own behaviour, my own being, how my life evolves. (Jack, 2:51)

What has been discussed here recalls the work of Maxine Greene (1995) who defined the role of imagination in different contexts and illustrates how it is concerned with "unpredictabilites" and the "unexpected" (Greene, 1995, p.124). Moreover, when applied to the arts, being involved in the different forms of art could enable people to become more conscious of their experiences, which everyday routines tend to mask. Imagination and participatory involvement in the arts help individuals see and listen

more into personal experiences, and become more conscious of the things that are concealed by tradition (Greene, 1995). This also has a link with the concept of 'possibility thinking' (Burnard et al., 2006; Craft & Jeffrey, 2004; Craft, 2001, 2000).

The data pointed towards another interesting idea. This is connected to creativity and it is the idea of being creative with time and space. Viewing creativity in this way moves it away from a description of the process of making art and takes it to other dimensions, where the artist needs to make good use of her resources. Time and space are perhaps the greatest hindrance for artists and, in the artistic practice, being able to use time and space to their maximum is also associated with being creative. Overall, the artists echo what is presented by a number of authors, namely that creativity is of utmost importance in today's climate (Robinson, 2011; Craft & Jeffrey, 2004; Craft, 2001; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

6.3.2 Creativity and inspiration

In view of the fact that creativity is associated with idea generation and development, the term was also discussed in light of inspiration. Ideas and concepts are an integral part of art making and inspiration is key to such practice. When discussing different forms of inspiration with the artists, it was very interesting to observe that this provided a wide range of stimuli across the seven interviews. This ranged from very personal and intimate activities, such as outings with the family, reading something in a newspaper, and life experiences, to other external influences such as philosophical references, going abroad or physical surroundings. This is in agreement with Hemmig's (2009) claims when he said that inspiration takes many different forms and tends to be wide-ranging. Table 6.1 groups the different forms of inspiration mentioned during the interviews into three types, these being: personal encounters and experiences; physical spaces/locations/landscapes; and other influences.

Table 6.1 Sources of inspiration

Personal encounters and experiences	Physical spaces/ locations/landscapes	Other influences
children	the sea	music
enthusiasm	being outside	reading the newspaper
news	churches and chapels	books
ballet shows	rock formations	a colour scheme
motherhood	tree branches	background noise
family	a messy studio	total silence
family outings	the studio	patterns of leaves
something that strikes you	morning light	evening stillness
visiting museums	windows	philosophical references
watching TV	physical surroundings	mythology
life experiences	physical locations	other works by different artists
life events	landscapes	other works by the same artist
the human figure	floor tiles	the internet
working on recurrent themes	clouds	things from the studio that are thrown away
going abroad	the outdoors	text
	fields	religion
		sex and society
		an interesting angle

It is interesting to note that, apart from being wide-ranging, the different sources of inspiration reflect the experiences of artists both during their day-to-day activities with other people, and also as individuals experiencing a physical world. There is an emphasis on the simple everyday things, which become important references to artists. The simple and ordinary elements of everyday life have a central role in arts practice. The outdoors as inspiration is also an interesting notion and was conveyed by most of the artists. The outdoors as an extension of the studio has already been discussed in the previous chapter (see Section 5.2.4.1). Outdoor locations can inspire artists to produce

art. Their inspired work could be directly associated with the type of location, or else artists are moved to engage in artistic practices that are completely unrelated to the location. Here, a location acts as a stimulus to produce art, that is, to engage in some form of expression. The aesthetic quality of locations instils a need to produce art. At times, this is also experienced by artists who visit other countries and who are exposed to a change of scenery. The new aesthetic experience could give artists a sense of resurging energy and the motivation to produce art.

The findings also indicate that artists draw on ordinary everyday activities during their art practice. Within the 'everyday' tasks are the makings of transformations (Craft, 2001). Art enables the artist to find something meaningful (and interesting) within repetitive sameness. Life lived by human beings becomes an inspiration, where life experiences are an influence. Many of the works revolve around something relative, relevant and which matters. Here, art is related to specific experiences that an artist wishes to record, make use of or utilise to inspire himself. Henry, one of the artists participating in my study, stated that his work is usually about emotions and simple things, such as sweetness and humour. Getting inspiration from family events and outings is also a common practice. Everyday narratives are also sources that artists work with. Another artist, Adrian, stated that his work has changed from abstract concepts to ideas grounded in everyday life. His work is now more representative – works that have stories. Maya also discussed how her art has become more applied and it involves work that is carried out as a family activity. Her work sometimes becomes an extension of everyday family life, whereby her family members help out as a family activity. Daniel also described how his work explores the idea of the everyday conflicts between religion and contemporary society, and his work adopts his cultural context and uses it to criticise the foundations.

These two types of sources of inspiration, that is, the simple and ordinary elements of everyday life and the outdoors, also reflect the idea of encountering (Erdelez, 2005). Artists sometimes encounter different information during activities that were not intended as such. For example, normal and ordinary activities such as doing the laundry could stimulate a surge of inspiration and give ideas for unrelated work. As discussed before, this also happens when artists experience the outdoors.

The artists also discussed the ambience around them with regard to sound and how this is related to their inspiration. Some of the artists preferred to work while listening to

music, and some like to relate it to the kind of work that is being produced. Hence, the choice of music changes according to the work being carried out. The right music puts the artist in the right frame of mind, and generates motivation and energy. Interestingly, the artists prefer to listen to music while they are actually doing the work, and not during the thinking phase or when they are reading about the work.

> A lot, a lot. I really relate music to the nature of work I'm doing. I listen to all types of music – from rock, to classical music – while I'm working, while I'm working on a painting. While I am working on a video, I don't listen to music. Most of the time because I am using a soundtrack or sound so, there, no. However, when I am working on a drawing or a painting I listen to music all the time. I find it really important because it puts me in the right frame of mind. (Gabriel, 4:29)

> I would need classical music. I love Vivaldi, for example, and he inspires me a lot. Vivaldi is immediate. Perhaps if you compare him to other musicians, Vivaldi is more immediate. If he wants to hit you with a violin, tum, right away, and I would need that because it will help me work, you understand. It gives me that push, so Vivaldi is a good friend of mine especially when I paint. I would need that kind of music. (Daniel, 5:17)

> Many times before, I used to work while I listen to music, but nowadays nothing. Because that moment when you can hear the drawing, you hear the carbon on the canvas or on the paper it is, well, there is no other way how to concentrate better on what you are doing. (Adrian, 6:21)

The last excerpt above suggests that the absence of sound as music allows for another source of sound to come into play – the artwork-in-progress itself, like for example the sound of a charcoal stick marking a canvas. Moreover, whether it is complete silence or some choice of music, essentially it is considered an important part of the physical environment because it helps to set the atmosphere which the artist aims to have while working.

The artists also reflected upon the occurrence of their inspiration. They did not point out any particular time when they tended to feel more inspired. Inspiration comes at different times of the day and it seems to be a result of the different experiences and activities that the artists go through on a daily basis. One of the artists, Henry (1:36), also speaks about feeling inspired upon waking up. This is the only instance where a particular time was indicated. This scenario echoes the concept of incubation, expounded by Wallas (1926) which forms part of the stages of the creative process.

> And sometimes as soon as I wake up something crops up – tlink! – and I say, "Well, this is good!" Without thinking about it or dreaming about it, and it was

not once, well I say the mind keeps working, it must be like that, because it can't be that as soon as I wake up, this idea just comes to mind. (Henry, 1:36)

As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, artists could benefit from reflecting on their artistic experience and what inspires the process. Through an understanding of what works for him or her, an artist could notice patterns of inspiration that could be emulated at will when in need of inspiration (Erdelez, 2005). Since the inspiration stage does not seem to be connected to a particular time, this might make it easier for the artist to remain open to the right ingredients that are likely to inspire her.

Inspiration also occurs during the artistic process itself. Sometimes, ongoing work inspires other new work. Some of the artists have expressed how they prefer to work in series, rather than working on fragmented pieces in isolation. This creates an opportunity to explore and develop a theme better because, while the artist is working on a piece, she may get other related ideas that could be explored for a new, linked piece. Sometimes an artist also goes back to concerns that had been previously investigated and, through this process, art pieces become extensions of other work:

> Because I normally work, I have a thought and I need to get it out. So, while I am working on a piece of work – I always have some work in progress – I start to think and sketch ideas for the next work. (Henry, 1:8)

> Usually, one work would be connected to another. One would be an extension of the other. (Gabriel, 4:8)

> So, I taught myself to try to think in series – at least six works, at least 6 related works. (Daniel, 5:35)

> Most times, if you have six pieces you will enter an element of investigation and that investigation will lead you to a professional approach in your work. I trained myself [to work] in a sequence. (Daniel, 5:37)

6.3.2.1   Capturing ideas

The concept of capturing ideas was also discussed by the artists. As postulated by Erdelez (2005), being in control of their ideas and thoughts seemed to be an important step of their artistic process. The most basic form of noting down ideas is by drawing very quick sketches, which could be in the form of scribbles or even written words. Some artists prefer to use a journal to organise their ideas. Others prefer to have some papers handy in order to write down any ideas that come to mind. This is an important point, which featured across the interviews. Having things handy, even simple paper and pencil, was considered important to avoid feeling blocked. If an artist got an idea,

and he or she would have to look for paper or postpone writing down the idea for a later stage, he or she might risk forgetting the idea or missing out on important reflections. Hence, preparing the right setting is considered an advantage.

> No, I sketch. And I sketch for the reason that while I'm working I might get another idea so I'll end up with around three ideas while I'm still working, and then I start to forget so I'll make a sketch, a light sketch, or a name, because sometimes the idea is a name. (Henry, 1:14)

> Many times, ideas come while I am working, yes, and sometimes when I am on break at work, for example, I always have some papers or something. I always have and I scribble, and sometimes I came up with ideas like that, but very minimal, most times while I'm working. (Henry, 1:16)

> Sometimes I write but, when I write, I write ideas, yes, I mean, if you go along here you'll find bits of paper with notes which I wanted, and on my computer, but of specific observations that I come across during the day. (Jack, 2:72)

> I record them. I sketch them sometimes, as well. Because I always carry a sketchbook around and I take some photos, as well. But I feel that you work more when you draw a sketch. I always carry a sketchbook and a camera because I say, "You might never know what you will come across." I'll be prepared. (Brigitte, 3:63)

> Yes. If I need to sketch something quickly and I wouldn't find a paper, that would block me. (Gabriel, 4:35)

> I like to keep a journal, well my aim is to bring all the things I do together and there are a couple of projects in my head, and I will do them. (Maya, 7:19)

The idea of the immediate was further elaborated by one artist who expressed the following:

> I get frustrated. In fact, I have drawers… I prepare myself and plan for what I might need… I have drawers on purpose, where I would find rough paper; here, paper with that particular weight, here those particular materials. (Daniel, 5:22)

> Sort of lately, I have spent some time, and they're still there, I have inks, I put them in my bedroom because ink is immediate, so that it is next to me so that, because, you'll be amazed, you'll get an idea but if you keep it too long in your mind you kill it – in the sense that when you think about it for a long time it starts to bother you. (Daniel, 5:23)

> I try to prepare for it because I know how I am, but I am a person who stays thinking and thinking about it. It keeps frustrating me and chasing me, a piece of work. I have projects that have been on my mind for years and they tire you. (Daniel, 5:24)

Being prepared for this part of the artistic process is essential. In one of the excerpts above, Brigitte shared how being prepared for this stage is an important step for her artistic process. This strengthens the argument that, knowing what works for your

inspiration, ensures that you are sufficiently prepared and organised to maximise the potential of the experience of encountering (Erdelez, 2005).

The importance of sketches is also highlighted, especially for artists who base their work on primary sources. In this case, spontaneous sketches on site are given great importance:

> The more you are close to reality the better. Well, it is not always easy to work with models, but working from reality really helps me. Because your information would be complete. (Adrian, 6:52)

6.3.3 Creativity and the artistic process

Creativity was also discussed in terms of the process that each artist follows during practice. Given that the artists have different styles of working, and that they produce different forms of art as their resultant product, they each undertake slightly dissimilar processes when making their art. These processes are illustrated in subsequent diagrams in this chapter. Each diagram reviews the steps each artist follows during the art production process, and the point at which he or she positions creativity to be the highest. These processes where discussed during the interviews and the diagrams are merely a visual representation of each description as explained by each artist.

Figure 6.2 shows the process Henry follows to produce his work. Ideas are first sketched very briefly, and then he actually starts working directly, using the chosen material/s. The ideas themselves are elaborated upon while the work is being carried out, thus the artist allows an element of flexibility to shape the work. The work itself inspires other ideas and the process is repeated for new work, which is done in parallel. This cyclical process continues until the artist feels that he has exhausted his ideas on a particular subject or topic. Henry also added that, as his sculptures progress, the work becomes more technical and less creative. He further adds that the initial stages of his work are what he considers to be the most conducive to creativity.

Creativity Highest

Ideas developed while the work evolves.

Flexibility and material guiding development

Initial Ideas

Sketching, Scribbling, Writing Words

Technical Process

1. Blocking – Using a chainsaw
2. Removing material – Using large tools
3. Bringing out detail – Using small tools
4. Sanding
5. Wood preserver
6. Coats of oil

New Ideas and thoughts about new work

Working on multiple works in parallel

Exhausts ideas on the same theme until no ideas are sparked off. Getting ideas using the notion of association. Getting ideas and solutions through incubation as he wakes up.

Figure 6.2 Artistic process – Henry

Figure 6.3 illustrates the artistic process for Jack. The central framework that forms his work is the idea of delving into the unknown. His work follows a journey of parting from the intangible and arriving back at the intangible, since he hopes that his work would act as a stimulus to generate conversation, reflection and questions. The artist considers the initial stages of his work to be the most closely related to creativity. It is the idea of looking into the unknown that he considers most creative and, in the type of work he does, this takes place at the beginning of his artistic process.
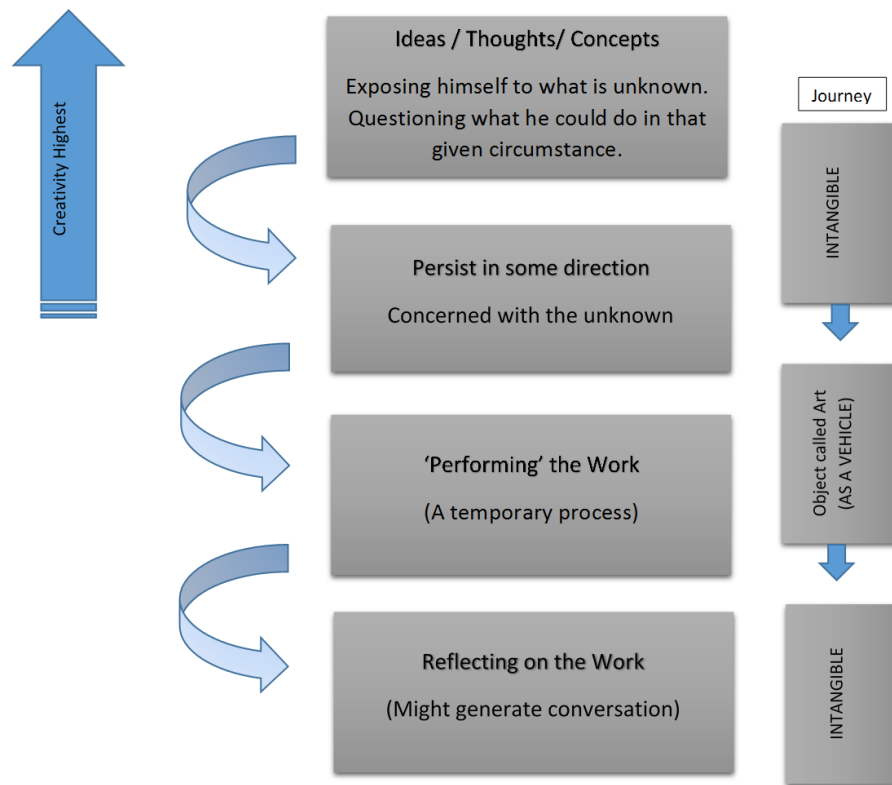
Figure 6.3 Artistic process – Jack

Figure 6.4 illustrates another art process, which is founded on flexibility as a guide for the development of the work. Brigitte, attaches a lot of value to being prepared with a handy sketchbook or a camera in order to capture and record her ideas. During the research stage, she uses these sources together with research from books, and it is this stage to which she most attributes the creativity elements. This step also involves imagination and, in her opinion, this is an essential ingredient for creative work. She considers the subsequent step of actually colouring the sketches to be the most monotonous part of the process because she would prefer to start the actual work rather than spend time colouring in a small drawing in preparation for the final work. In addition, the artist explained that her final work is always an improvement on the sketch, which indicates that this gets reworked and improved upon.
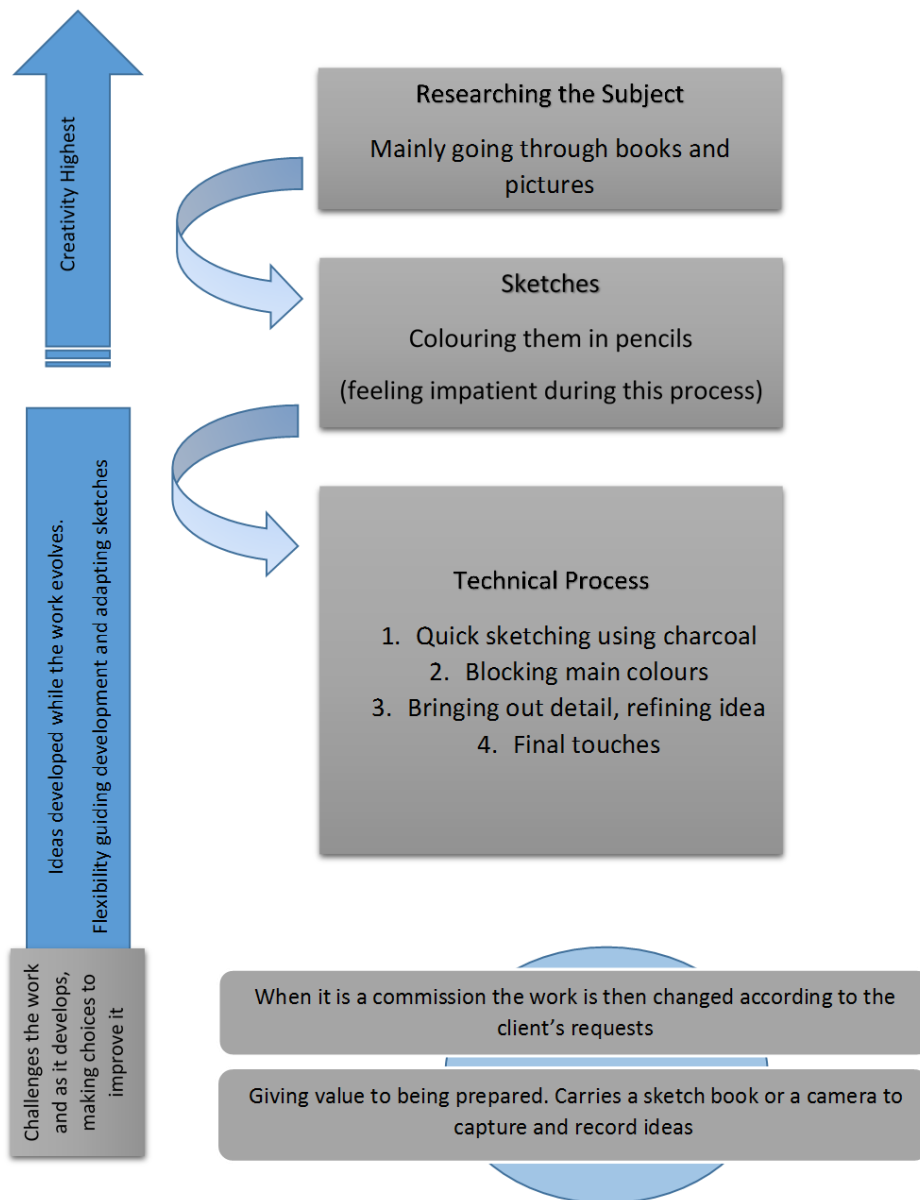
Figure 6.4 Artistic process – Brigitte

Figure 6.5 illustrates a process whereby the artist bases his work mostly on text. The point of departure or initial concept is, on most occasions, a philosophical or mythological text. For Gabriel, this step is labelled as the 'unknowing' path and he allows this to inform other later steps, which take him to 'knowing' paths. The 'research', 'reflection' and 'doing' stage are experienced in a cyclical approach, allowing each stage to inform the next in the process. He explains that the research phase is the most exciting part:

> I let the research phase take me wherever it wants. Imagine you are doing a Google search of a word. It could take you anywhere, really. And during this research phase, I've applied this type of methodology. I let it take me wherever

it wants. Because, many times, imagine, you are deconstructing a word, then you take a piece from here, another piece from here, another piece from here and you put them together, and you see what symbiosis they have together. That is what I think is the most interesting phase. Many times, it is the most time consuming. Because the doing phase is short… The thinking phase, the research phase, the writing phase take much more time than the work itself. (Gabriel, 4:15)
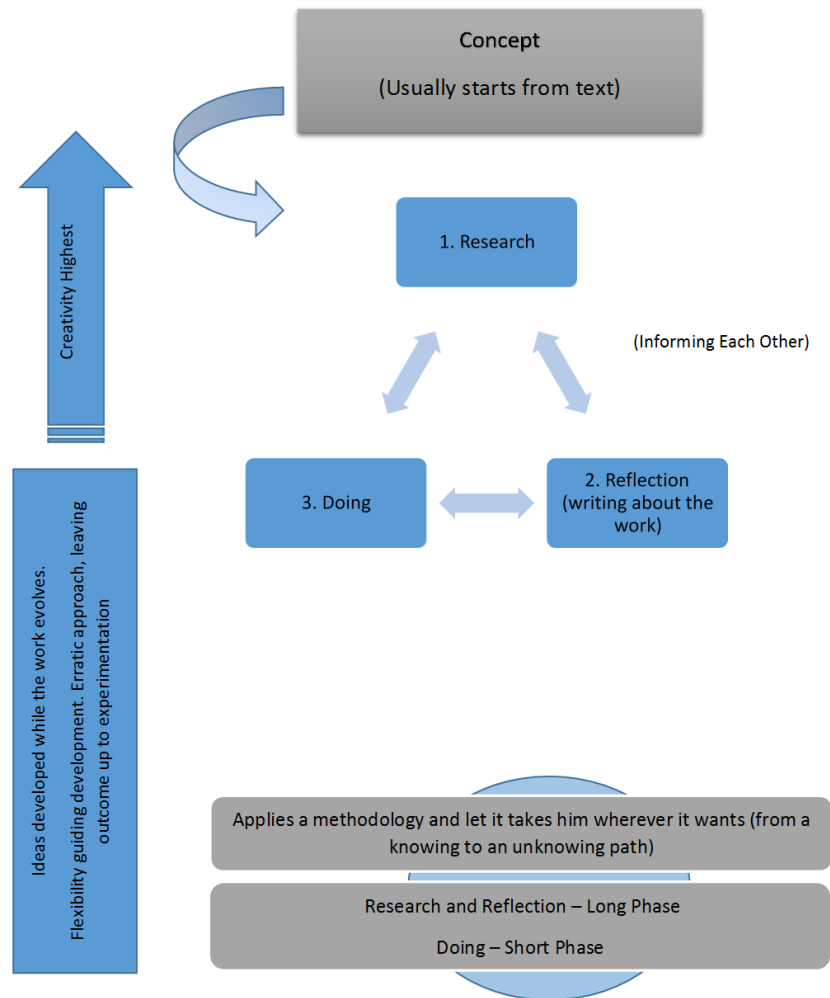
Figure 6.5 Artistic process – Gabriel
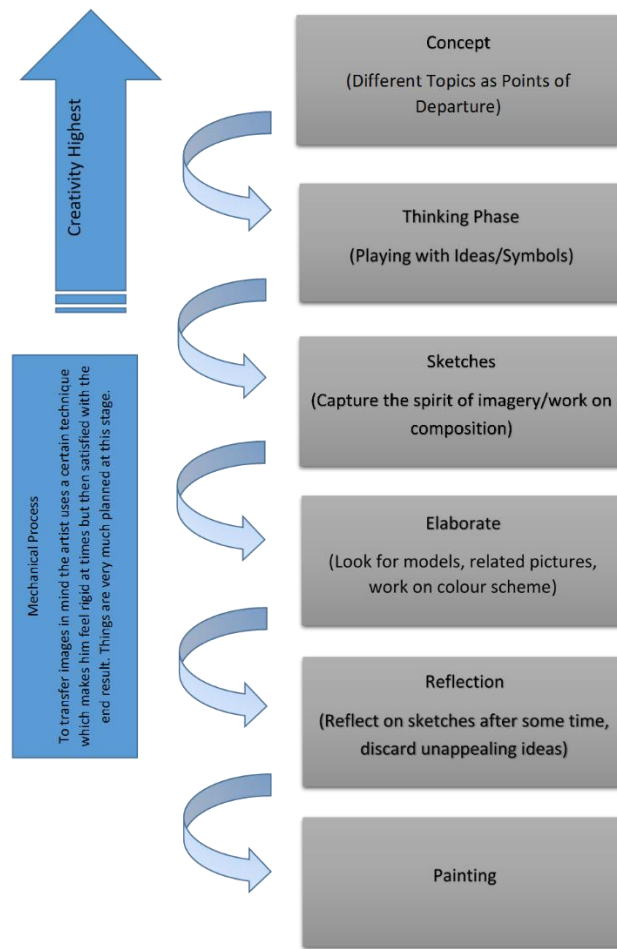
Figure 6.6 Artistic process – Daniel

Daniel, views his process (Figure 6.6) as requiring a high degree of creativity at the initial stage, where he explores and thinks about the concept. He uses a lot of symbolism and plays with ideas, thus calling for much original thinking. He feels that creativity is strongest at the beginning of the work, and what follows are routine practice and processes that are more mechanical. This artist uses techniques that make him feel very rigid during the doing and completion process, because his final aim is to achieve a particular result that could only be obtained through this specific technique. In this particular case, creativity is again associated with the initial stages of the work but each stage has its validity and significance.
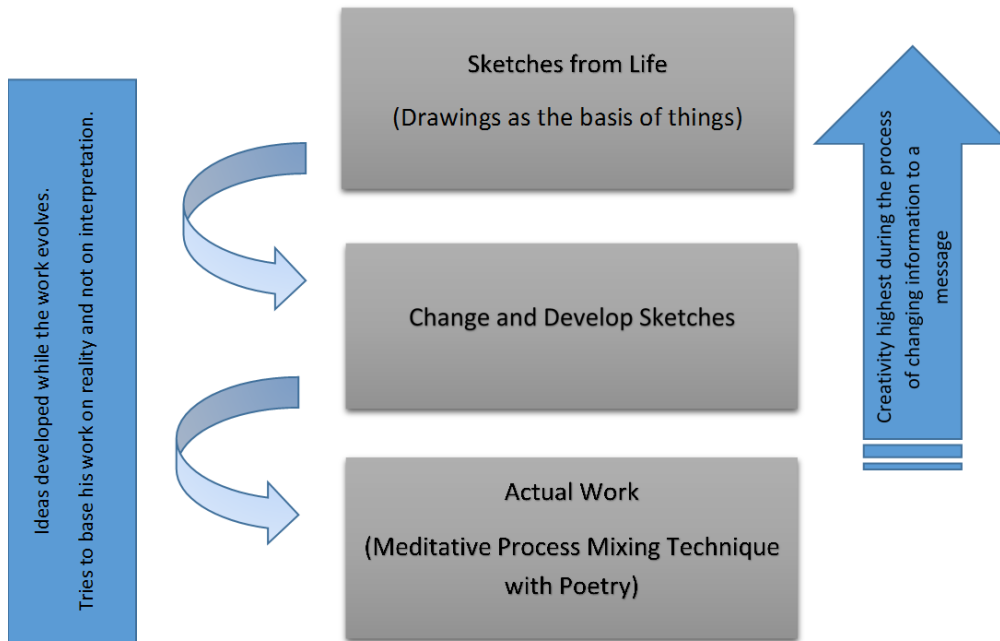
Figure 6.7 Artistic process – Adrian

The artistic process for Adrian (Figure 6.7) is built on the idea of drawing from life as the basis of his practice. The artist tries to base his work on reality and not on already interpreted images. He changes and develops his initial sketches and improves upon his initial ideas as the work evolves. The process of doing the actual work either on canvas or for prints becomes a meditative process because, during this activity, he mixes an element of technique with an element of poetry and expression. For this artist, the most creative stage in his work process is at the point where he changes information to a message, and this takes place at the early stages of his work.
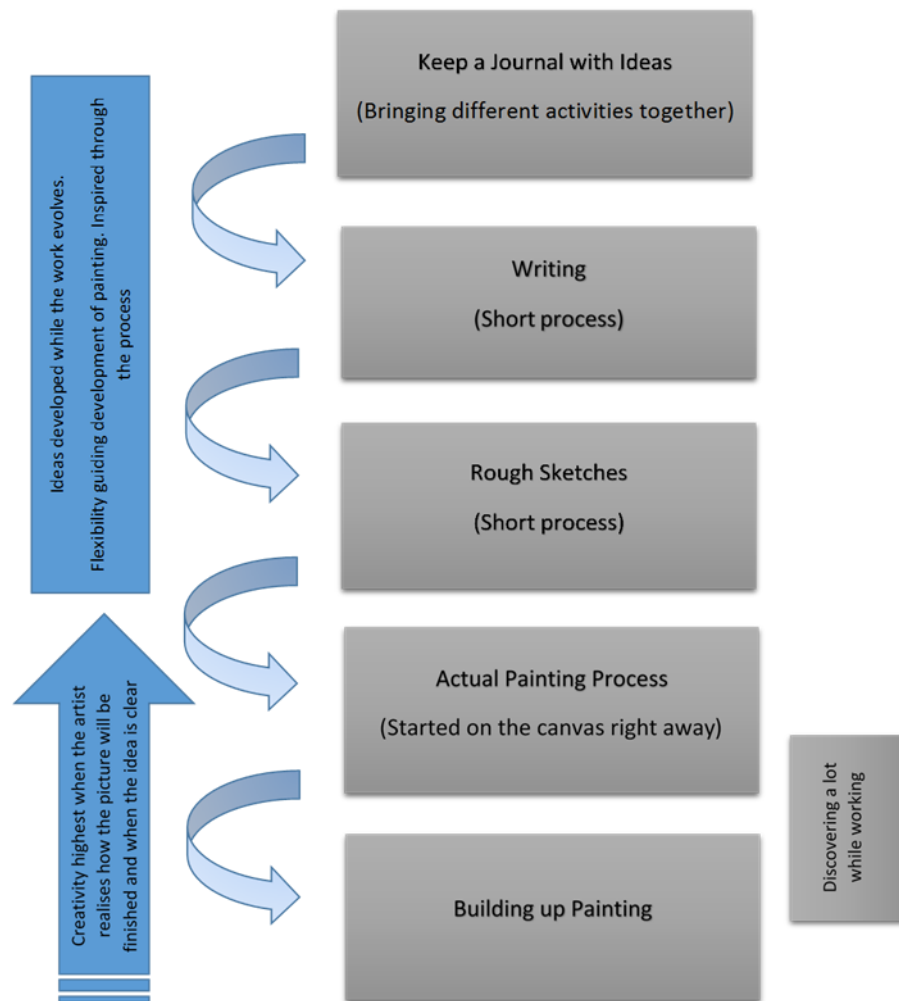
Figure 6.8 Artistic process – Maya

The last artist interviewed, Maya, described her artistic process (Figure 6.8) as very spontaneous because she discovers a lot while working. The artist pointed out that one factor that really impedes her work is time restriction. Therefore, she makes a conscious decision to minimise the preparation time and reserves her available time to building up the painting. She explores her ideas using a journal, but the writing and sketching phases are fairly short. Her ideas continue to develop on canvas. The artist explained that her level of creativity is at its highest when she comes of visualise clearly of how a painting will turn out while doing the work:

> At some point, I would be in front of my canvas searching, lost in the tunnel. Then, all of a sudden, it clicks and I just know how I will finish my work. (Maya, 7:28)

This echoes the illumination stage, which is the third stage of the model of the creative process presented by Wallas (1926). As discussed before, although this theory might

not be reflected in the practice of all artists, it seems that the specific group of artists participating in this research, who work within a particular tradition concerning materialised art, tend to follow the stages proposed by this model. In this case, although creativity is linked to a later stage of the artistic process, it is still concerned with idea generation since, for this artist, inspiration and discovery take place after starting the work itself. This could still be considered as an initial stage of her work, since she does not allocate a particular time for preparation and starts her work directly on the canvas.

Although the respective artists follow slightly different methods and approaches to make art the processes could, is simple terms, be divided into the 'thinking' and 'doing' phases. The thinking part of the process is associated with the exploration and development of ideas, while the doing part is more related to technique. The findings illustrate that the artists consider the thinking phase, rather than the doing phase, to be the more conducive to creativity. In all the cases, creativity is linked to ideas and exploration of concepts, and this is likely to take place in the beginning – at the very initial stages of artistic production.

The model discussed above suggests that, during a creative activity, a person moves through the stages of (1) preparation, (2) incubation, (3) illumination, and (4) verification. The artists touch upon these stages during the initial part of their artistic process. During the thinking phase, they undertake varying levels of preparation and research. The artists continue to think about their ideas even unconsciously, and this refers to the incubation stage – the second stage of the model. At some point, the artists get answers and concrete ideas that will inform their work. This recalls the illumination stage of Wallas's model of the creative process. The last stage, that is the verification stage, is when the artists actively work on the problem, analyse the ideas and solutions and decide on what would work for them. This reflective stage is the last stage of the thinking phase. The thinking phase is then followed by the doing phase, which is more hands-on and focuses more on technique and skill.

The above also leads me to think about the role of the physical studio space within this model of the creative process. According to the artists, and as has been discussed in the previous chapter, the physical studio space is considered to be very important, but not crucial. The artists have also pointed out that the studio is important as a space of performance. Upon reflection, this means that the artists are most likely to use the studio in the actual doing phase. Although some artists tend to use their studio during

their thinking phase as well, this latter phase could be carried out anywhere. At least parts of these steps could be carried out outside the studio. In fact, as it has been discussed already, what inspires artists comes from very varied objects, experiences and locations. Therefore, it could be argued that the occurrence of the four stages of Wallas's model of creativity are not directly related to the physical element of the studio space. It is more likely that parts of these stages happen outside the studio. Then, once the process has been completed to make way for the doing phase, this tends to be linked more to the studio. The studio with all the materials and tools becomes a place of performance and a place for making. This reflection might not be the case with all artists. I acknowledge that there are artists who would need the studio also during their thinking phase. However, this finding seems to be applicable to the participants of the study, who seem to prefer the said approach.

6.4 Creativity and art students
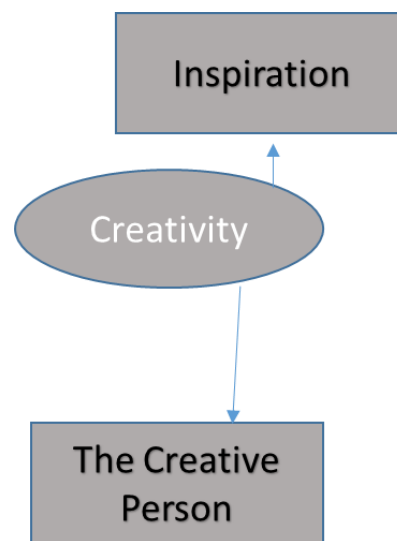
Figure 6.9 Theme: creativity – students

6.4.1 Meanings of creativity – the creative art student

Another emerging theme from the data collected with the students (conversations and observations) is the meaning of creativity. During my conversations with some of the students, we discussed what is meant by creativity and what would be some characteristics of a creative student. As part of the definition of creativity, originality was chosen to reflect this concept. According to one student, someone who is original

and who interprets things in his or her own way could be labelled as creative. Another student associated having an open mind with the notion of creativity.

> I have to open my mind to get ideas, make it original, and make it mine. And ideas start coming. That is a creative person. (Jake, 1:96)

Experimentation has also been associated with creativity. There is the idea of trying things out. When a person explores different ideas and variations of the same work. He or she is working with creativity. Exploring different ideas and different media is given value in a creative realm.

> You build on your successes and, in the end, you will have good results. Always. Well, then you would try out different things. (Keith, 1:88)

Being open to different ideas and possibilities is also a characteristic of creativity. Here, there is a link to the concept of possibility thinking (Burnard et al., 2006; Craft & Jeffrey, 2004; Craft, 2001, 2000). In an education scenario, individual students question their work and ask themselves how it could be done differently; they contemplate how they could approach the subject differently, and so on. According to some of the students, this approach is conducive to creativity.

Another element of creativity was mentioned in terms of flexibility of expression. One of the students talked about the wish to include an 'art wall' within the art room, on which anyone could draw directly and the work would then be changed from time to time. Drawings could be drawn directly on the wall or even on paper or on boards. This idea included is an element of comfort and freedom, since the student also suggested to have a carpeted area to make the activity more comfortable and spontaneous. Activities allowing the students to use their imagination and come up with whatever they like and what they find meaningful, were considered as types of work that they would really enjoy. They could also get ideas from around them in the process of developing their own.

The concept of coming up with ideas and being inspired was also associated with the environment in relation to noise. One student mentioned how, usually, the art room would be full of noise from raised voicesbut he still manages to think about his work. The idea of working in a quiet place also came up in several conversations. Lack of distractions and disruptions were favoured over noisy environments, and it seems that the majority of the students worked better in a quieter setting. This also depends on the type of artwork being produced. Certain work requires more attention and focus, so the

students opt to work in those spaces presenting the least distractions. For example, exercises that are considered to be messy and which need many materials would be easier to do at home, especially to avoid carrying around many supplies. Interestingly, one student explained how, when at home, he is inspired more.

> It might be because I'll have a lot of things around me and, although I prefer to work here at school, at home I feel I am more inspired – even a book you're reading for example. All of a sudden you can get this idea to explore. (Ethan, 4:120)

Some of the students also suggested different colour schemes for the walls of the room, and the use of colours, light natural colours, which aid focus, concentration and inspiration. This confirms the point that the environment has an important role in the process of inspiration.

Ethan also claimed that to enhance his creative process he prepares things around him in order not to stop the flow of ideas. He organises himself ensuring to have handy papers next to him in his bedroom, so that whenever he gets an idea that he would like to explore he would be able to grab a paper and scribble down references right away. He explained that if he would have to look for supplies he might lose his feel, and the idea might not come out as good. This also reflects some of the practices which the artists have exemplified during their interviews (see Section 6.3.2).

6.4.2 Creativity and the students' plan drawings

The plan drawings that the art students have drawn were not linked directly to creativity. The plans offered insights into their ideal art room and the discussions we had about these plans were directly linked to elements and features related go the structure, layout and environment of the art room. This meant that the students did not give any personal insights on creativity through the making of the plans. Links to creativity were provided through conversations as discussed above.

6.5 Summary of findings – creativity

The creative artist

This chapter has highlighted some of the aspects that describe a creative person with particular reference to artists. The first trait that was described is that of self-discipline. In this view, a creative person exercises the notion of persistence and self-discipline in order to reach a particular aim. Some of the artists have shared that a self-disciplined

artist is someone who works regularly and consistently, and who persists to achieve his or her goals. A self-disciplined artist is able to work with the resources, space and time that are obtainable. This positions the artists as individuals who need to push themselves to overcome other barriers such as procrastination, tiredness and lack of motivation. Additionally, this idea positions artists away from romantic notions that perceive them as working with an endless muse and without any difficulties (Banaji et al., 2010). The idea of consistency was also discussed in light of concept and argument. Being consistent and working in series is associated with significant and professional work. This enables artists to adopt a more integral approach in their work and argument. Sometimes standalone works could result in the fragmentation of ideas, so adopting a focused and consistent method of practice is considered essential.

The concept of imagination was also utilised to describe a creative person. Imagination empowers an artist to see things in a unique and original way. New possibilities and connections are made possible through imagination. Things that have not yet materialised could take virtual form through imagination (Robinson, 2011; Annarella, 1999; Greene, 1995). The concept of imagination as a constituent part of creativity was linked to exploration, reminiscent of a laboratory setting. This was also connected with possibility thinking (Burnard et al., 2006; Craft & Jeffrey, 2004; Craft, 2011, 2000). From the data, another three emerging associations with creativity were: an open mind, experimentation and expression. This was particularly linked to the young people's responses.

Creativity and inspiration

Ideas and concepts are an integral part of art making, and inspiration is key to such practice. Artists are inspired by countless things and experiences, and the findings have illustrated that the respondents are inspired by a wide-range of sources. These vary from simple everyday objects and experiences, to outdoor locations and external references such as philosophical literature. This diversity in sources of inspiration also agrees with what was found in the literature (Hemmig, 2009).

Being outdoors and in other countries have been highlighted as two central sources of inspirations. These activities appear to act as stimuli for producing art and engaging in some form of artistic expression. The concept of 'encountering' (Erdelez, 2005) was also examined in terms of the serendipitous way in which artists come across new or

varied information during activities that are not necessarily related to their artistic practice. Not knowing the precise outcome of some activity offers the possibility for new conclusions.

The occurrence of inspiration also varies from one artist to another, and no specified time was discussed. Therefore, this places inspiration as something that could happen at any moment. Nonetheless, it was suggested that if artists reflect on their practice they are likely to observe their patterns of inspiration, and these observations could be utilised to prepare them for future happenings (Erdelez, 2005).

The artists have also discussed their ambience in terms of music or its absence, as a further source of inspiration, and how this ambience could inspire their work. Some of the artists closely related music to their work and felt that they could not work without it. Then again, other artists preferred silence, to emulate a more meditative process. The discussion on inspiration developed to include the activity of working in series. Some of the artists use work in progress to inspire their new work. Through this activity one work becomes an extension of another, and themes and concepts could be deeply studied and examined.

Capturing ideas

In the data, it was emphasised that being in control of ideas and thoughts is a central part of the artistic process. The key methods for capturing ideas, as shared by the artists, were: drawing quick sketches, writing words or phrases, and using a journal. Drawing sketches becomes all the more essential when artists base their work on studies from life.

Amongst the emergent findings, the issue of having things handy was discussed. Value seems to be attached to having things planned in advance; being prepared to support the activity of capturing ideas seems to be valued. This preparedness was also discussed in terms of the immediate, which was shared by some of the students. To mention an example, certain materials that are easy and quick to use are preferred over others, since they would allow artists to work quickly and to capture their ideas with the least possible delay. This preparation seems to validate the idea of encountering (Erdelez, 2005). Knowing what works towards one's inspiration ensures that the individual would prepare and organise him/herself sufficiently to maximise the potential of the experience of encountering.

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Creativity and the artistic process

Artists each have their own unique and different style of working. Their artistic process varies depending on the nature of the work they do, and how they approach it. This chapter presented diagrams reviewing the steps that each artist follows during the art production process, and where he or she positions creativity to be the highest point. In all the seven processes (one for each artist) creativity was located at the initial stages of artistic production. To simplify, the processes where basically divided into the thinking and the doing phases. The thinking phase is more concerned with the exploration of ideas, whereas the doing phase is related to technique and skills. The former seems to be the most conducive to creativity and, as mentioned above, it is likely to take place at the initial stages of artistic production.

The thinking phase sustaining the artistic process of the artists seems to follow Wallas's (1926) model of the creative process. The artists in this study, who follow a particular tradition of art making, touch upon the four stages proposed by Wallas, which are: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. The creative process takes place before the actual doing phase is carried out. This model of the creative process was also examined against the physical space. The thinking phase could take place in spaces other than the studio. However, as regards the doing phase, artists tended to prefer engaging in this phase at their studio, where they could refer to all the materials, objects and tools as needed. This finding reaffirms the idea that studios are spaces of performance. However, since it reflects the particular group of artists participating in this research, there could be other artists who would interact more with their studio during their thinking phase.

Referring back to the research questions that were related to the theme of creativity, the findings that emerged have answered parts of these questions.

RQ1 – What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

The relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice is complex, as it involves many layers of meaning. From the findings, in this chapter it was suggested that the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice is not dependent on the physical studio space; it is related to the thinking phase of the work and this could take place in different settings. The actual doing phase, which follows the thinking phase, is more hands-on and it is likely

to be linked to the studio since, in this setting, the studio becomes a place of performance.

RQ4 – How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?

As has been illustrated in these last two chapters (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) space, as a multi-layered notion, has a number of affordances for arts practice and art education. Since the creative process of artists and art students forms part of the multifaceted relationship between space, creativity and art practice, it has been useful to look at how such affordance contributes to their creative process. The way that space assists the experience of art making shapes and guides the creative process. From the findings, space was seen to impact the thinking phase of artistic practice but this was not directly linked to the studio. Space, as in outdoor locations and external areas, seems to have the strongest impact on the creativity of artists. Nonetheless, the space of the studio also influences the experience of the artists because the process of their art making is shaped by the full experience taking place within this space. This was also reflected in the findings with the young people, since their work draws a lot from the space around them in the art room. The activity of making art incorporates many aspects, such as: the individuals and the way they work, the limitation and possibilities of the space, the materials and tools, the way individuals change and develop the space, the way they physically move within their studio, and so on. This situates art practice as that experience that depends on a number of factors working together. Hence, the affordance of a space contributes to the creative process of artists and students, since it accommodates this interplay between many aspects taking place simultaneously. Furthermore, when the artists or art students are working with others within same space, the way they work in the space also depends on their social relations with their peers, and together they construct and mould their practice.

Chapter 7

ARTISTIC PRACTICE

7.1 Introduction

Artistic production is not an activity that is unrelated to other experiences. Art is carried out in some kind of space, be it an enclosed space or an open space, and the artwork itself stems from some kind of idea or concept, or thought or feeling. This places art as an embodied activity with additional factors influencing the process. Throughout the interviews with the artists, it was interesting to listen to the different perspectives and reasons for making art. The following diagram (Figure 7.1) illustrates the theme of artistic practice, together with its related sub-themes.
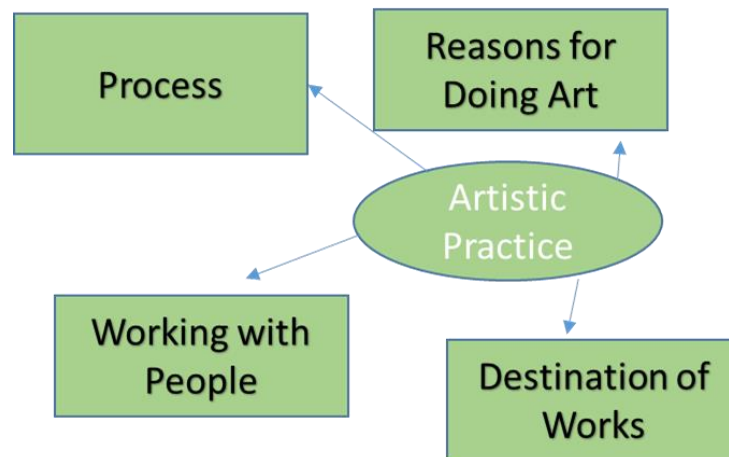
Figure 7.1 Theme: artistic practice – artists

7.2 Artistic practice and artists

7.2.1 The meaning of art

Before delving into an analysis of the main sub-themes related to artistic practice, it would be beneficial to give a brief overview on the position of the artists with respect to the meaning of art. Seeking to find an all-encompassing definition of art is a difficult and perhaps futile task, since it is a very complex term. Defining what falls under the wide umbrella labelled as art could be overwhelming. This view was also shared by the participating artists, since they all agreed that this subject is complex and somewhat elusive, in addition, very subjective. The first strong belief that was highlighted in the

findings is the distinction between art and craftsmanship. There is always the debate about whether certain work that is more akin to craftsmanship could be labelled as art. This relates to the concept of legitimacy of art (Molyneux, 1998) and it produces a number of differing opinions about the subject, thus making the definition of art more difficult to pin down. Also of interest is that the artists seem to attribute technique and skill to craftsmanship, whereas engagement with feelings, ideas and concepts are more linked to art. The general feeling expounded by the respondents is that art without the thinking element is not considered as art but as a craft, where the person doing the work is more focused on the labour of skill and technique. One of the artists explained how he once had a commissioned work which, in his opinion, in the end felt more like craftwork, since it was not based on a concept or idea he was intrigued about.

> It was like a piece of furniture but I didn't sign it. It was a good piece of work, a lot of people liked it, but, well, I was happy that I could do it technically but I didn't consider it as art; it is as though I worked on a front door for someone, or a piece of furniture for my daughter. That is how I took it. (Henry, 1:90)

Initially, the artist did not even sign the piece but the client insisted on having his signature.

> I told her, "Wasn't this your idea? You came up with the idea. I sign work that bears my idea, my work… Technically it is more of a piece of furniture, rather than a sculpture." (Henry, 1:91)

This might perhaps suggest that art is informed and moved by ideas, concepts, feelings, reactions and reflections originating from the artists themselves. When these are not present, what is left is the skill and technique which are often associated with crafts. Related to this notion, another artist stated that:

> To be skilful I think it is important because being an artist is also being a craftsman. It is not exclusively about ideas, because if it is only about ideas then you should be writing about ideas, in my opinion. (Jack, 2:80)

This suggests that ideas are associated with art, whereas craftsmanship is more associated with skills. Nevertheless, art is ideally a mixture of both.

Another view that was emphasised in the data is that art is very personal and very subjective, and different individuals experience it in different and distinct ways. Some of the artists also discussed the idea of uselessness, in the sense that art does not serve but it helps people live a better life in a more spiritual and non-physical way. In a sense, it is a constant reflection about life in general. Moreover, through the process of

producing art, a person could express unique interpretations especially reflecting his or her upbringing and background.

7.2.2 Reasons for doing art

Artists may have very different reasons for doing the work they do. Through visuals, they could express thoughts that words cannot and therefore, through art, messages are communicated to other people. The process of creating their end-product may follow a combination of a number of different modes that complement each other and work together. The artists participating in this study gave their reasons for why they do art. In summarising their reasons, the following sources of motivation have emerged:

(1) Self-expression

(2) Answering questions

(3) Challenging notions and conveying a message

(4) Producing something that is pleasurable to look at

(5) Commissions

(6) Compulsion to engage in artistic activity

(7) Personal enjoyment

As seen through the literature review, Barrett (2007) argues that from the practice of making art and reflections upon it, knowledge is derived. It has a generative capacity. Eisner (1997) also maintained that art could benefit student learning and educational practice in general. Sullivan (2010) also draws on the work of Eisner (1991), in emphasising that people find meaningful spaces within the objective-subjective polarities. Within these spaces human experience is transformed into knowledge.

The artists are likely to display one or more of the above points at different instances of their artistic activity. The above-listed reasons are not mutually exclusive and could co-exist. For example, an artist might be working on a commission, he or she might delve into the work in an attempt to answer a number of personal questions, and he or she would consider the process as enjoyable. The following excerpts by the same artist exemplify the consolidation of three different points – self-expression, personal enjoyment and conveying a message:

> But my language… What intrigues me? The figure intrigues me. And I feel it is important. So, I will express myself through the figure and it excites me. (Daniel, 5:42)

> After all, I paint to enjoy it myself. When I see the figure (I like the female figure very much) – those curves – the body is a world in its own right. The man – that anatomy – I like it and I use it to convey a message. (Daniel, 5:43)

With a view to unravelling a few of the above points, they will be discussed in light of the data collected. According to the artists participating in this study, one of the main reasons for doing art is the idea of delving into an unknown space in search of answering a question or a set of questions (Point 2). Art takes form of an exploration of something out of nothing and, in doing so, artists "persist in some direction" (Jack, 2:49). An artist challenges existing ideas and thoughts, seeks new perspectives and the work he or she produces acts as a reflection on subjects, topic, concepts, and so on. Artists are renowned for questioning and contesting the status quo. Such a practice sheds new light on existing issues and problems, and also betters the understanding of our own behaviour as humans. Many questions about art revolve around our being.

Adrian explained how his idea for making art has moved away from such a setting (Point 4). He has come to advocate simple subjects with less conceptualism, and he has a unique way of explaining what art means to him. He associates a positive value to the kind of art that he would want to see again. If an art piece is emotive, and if it gives him the pleasure to look at visually, he concludes that the work is meaningful to him. He also suggested that for someone to understand what art means to him, individuals should ask what kind of art they would like to have for themselves. This might suggest a way of reflecting what value a particular art work has for an individual, and may guide the person to understand his personal subjective opinion.

Part of the work of some artists includes the issue of commissions (Point 5). Artists who sell their work could either sell during exhibitions and from galleries, or else they could be commissioned work. The latter might sometimes cause some struggle and tension, especially if clients try to convince the artist to manipulate the style according to their needs and tastes. The artists participating in this study, who tend to sell their work as part of their practice, have agreed that commissions are more stressful than personal work, and some even turn down commissioned work, especially when clients request something that is completely different from the artists' respective styles. However, many times artists try to reach a compromise by giving clients what they want, while at the same time producing something that would be within the stylistic boundaries of the artists.

> I try to limit how much I 'prostitute' myself, he, he! Do you understand it? I try to keep my dignity. I will give you what you want, but let me produce what I want as well. Let us try to reach a compromise. (Daniel, 5:47)

On the other hand, interactions between client and artist could be enjoyable, and sometimes commissions of this kind are viewed as creative opportunities. A general feeling that featured in the data was that of giving value to remaining true to yourself and retaining personal style when working on commissions. The ideas of an artist and the way he or she perceives and interprets the world around him or her are unique, and should be given their due importance. Artists must be loyal towards what they do. Detachment was also discussed in relation to commissions because, many times, the artist does not build the same relationship with a work when it is done for someone else. Some artists have encountered difficulty in developing a relationship with the work when it was commissioned.

> But, then, if I get to know that Mr X wants this, and I really like it, even the kids they tell me to keep it for myself. No, my heart would have already detached itself – I would know that it is not mine to keep. So, you do not develop a relationship with it. (Brigitte, 3:35)

7.2.3 Art practice and the destination of works

The findings also presented the belief that works of art are not made to stay within the four walls of the studio and they are likely to move out of the studio. It has a message and it has to go out to communicate that message. Works of art could shift considerably, and some of the artists also showed their concern about the works that had left their studio. They feel a strong connection to certain works, even when they are sold. And they think about them long after they have been purchased. When a work of art leaves the studio, it continues to bear the artist's name and style, thus many artists see this as being a part of them 'out there'. Sometimes, it feels hard not to know where a work of art has ended, especially in the case of silent bidding auctions, for example. Artists may worry about their pieces because they would have become part of them. The artist would have invested time and thought in his or her work. Although not every artist produces work in this way, this finding seems to be relevant according to the methods and approaches sought by the respondents.

> All that work that you would have done, it would have left and then you see it after some time. I really like that. Sometimes, I sell a work and I would be passing by and I say, "Yes, that person has my work." And if I visit and I see the work

again, it is as if I saw, I will not say my children so as not to exaggerate, but it would be an experience. (Henry, 1:30)

But then, I wished to know who bought them (my paintings). But they wouldn't tell me, so I decided not to give any more. They won't tell you because of data protection. Well, I don't see any harm in telling you who bought them. but anyway… Because I told them, "Even if you have exhibitions you could invite them." But they still said no. (Brigitte, 3:51)

Many times, if I give away a piece of work I would try to see where it will be put, because I worry about it. It becomes like a baby, eh? You would have invested all that time and all your thought in it. It would be part of you. (Daniel, 5:52)

The overall feeling among the respondents was that the destination of an artwork is not permanent, and an artist should focus on and enjoy the process, rather than focus on the end destination. The works shift a lot and eventually find their respective 'paths'.

What is the past of it is not important… So they [the works] are like vagabonds, in a way – they just move from place to place. (Jack, 2:37)

Another artist stated that:

[Art] is not made to stay within the four walls where it was born. It is intended to end up with people who love it, and who can live with it, care for it and take good care of it. (Adrian, 6:36)

7.2.4 Working with other artists

The findings also shed light on the view that the artistic process could be a process shared with other people. Artists are likely to work on their own or also as part of a group (Lippmann, 2015; Sjöholm, 2013, Jacob & Grabner, 2010). This section will explore the different dynamics this reality might present.

The artists have expressed their views on proximity in relation to working with other artists. In the data, there are different accounts wherein the artists discussed how they enjoyed working with other people and how working in the company of others is given value. For example, losing connection with artist friends due to changing life circumstances, such as raising a family, could be difficult for some artists who prefer to work in teams and groups. Working with other people also constitutes a means for avoiding procrastination since, as a group, artists could work towards a goal, such as an exhibition, and challenge each other in the process. These claims are illustrated in the following data extracts:

> Well, that was heaven for me, because I am with other people. I hate it when I'm alone. Well, I don't know a lot of artists nowadays. I lost the connection with my friends. It happens to women a lot. They don't manage to meet with their friends, artist friends, especially as some do not have children. I ended up being friends with people who have kids and they are not artists. (Maya, 7:9)

> I crave for other artists to work with me. I really want it like any artist would want it. (Maya, 7:41)

> I used to feel fantastic. The fact that you go and meet someone and you work together… It is the pulse of life around you. I enjoy a lot, a lot! (Maya, 7:43)

> I started mingling with, and talking to, sculptors. (Henry, 1:78)

> [Anton Agius] was one of those with whom I spoke a lot about sculpture in wood. (Henry, 1:81)

> When I work with other people I feel that I have an aim – I have to meet with them and not procrastinate. So, it serves another purpose. (Brigitte, 3:73)

Singerman, as cited in Jacob and Grabner (2010), talks about the contradiction that exists in the need for an artist to work with other peers and also to work individually. This line of thought resembles the ideas put forward by the artists during their interviews. While being aware of the benefits of working on their own in their studio, they also value communicating and working with other artists. This generates a number of benefits such as motivation, working towards an aim, and having the possibility to discuss difficulties. This also recalls the way spaces are produced socially through the interactions with other people.

This latter view is contradicted when Brigitte expressed that, when she works alone, she has no one to rely on, so the end result might be better:

> But then, when I am on my own I am more careful, somehow. It may be because I cannot rely on anyone. (Brigitte, 3:72)

Whether to work alone or to work in a group might depend on the personality of the artist. This same artist had shared that, at time, certain criticism would put her down rather than serving to improve her, so this might be the reason why working on her own would give her a chance to challenge herself without being exposed to criticism.

7.2.5 The artistic process

In Section 6.3.3, I presented seven diagrams that illustrate the artistic process of the participating artists. These were used to point out the instances in the artists' respective processes where creativity seemed to be strong. These diagrams which, as suggested earlier, are a means of visually representing what the artists have described as their

artistic process, demonstrate that the artists follow different processes depending on the nature of the work they do, and also depending on how they approach their work. Nonetheless, it was possible to single out two main phases along the process that each of the artists seemed to follow, these being the thinking and the doing phases. During the thinking phase the artists would be concerned with ideas, concepts and reflections, whereas the doing phase is related to the hands-on and technical side of the work. It has been observed that the artists make more use of their studio during the doing phase. This is perhaps due to the fact that all the materials and tools they would need are housed within that one space – the studio. The thinking phase is less dependent on a space and it consists of a process that could take place anywhere. As the majority of the artists pointed out, the ideas and inspirations they brought into the studio came from outside this space. So, at least in part, the thinking phase could occur in different spaces.

This reminds me of the view of Eisner (2002) where he focuses on art as (1) an initial idea; (2) including creative imagination, (3) requiring skills to work with materials, and (4) involving critical reflection. These four diverse stages of art practice could be grouped into thinking and doing activities. The third point could reflect the doing phase, whereas the other three points involve thought and reflection.

The artistic process itself also reminds me of its validity as a developmental practice, rather than as a final output. It is a complex process from which the final product could not be detached. According to Dewey (1934), artistic objects cannot be separated from the conditions of origin and the fact that they were produced as part of an experience. If these were to be separated from each other, they would be cut off from the context within which they were produced, and from the links and associations with other aspects such as materials and human effort that were used throughout the production of that object.

This leads me to recall the seminal work of Heidegger (1996), who proposed an interesting perspective through which to look at things and objects. His work is useful in rethinking the meaning of being an artist, and what it means to work with materials and tools in the process of making art. By echoing his work and using his reasoning as a lens for art practice, it places the artist in a collaborative play with materials and tools throughout the process of art making. Viewing art making through this lens disconnects it from the idea that the artist is the sole maker of an object. On the contrary, the artist becomes 'co-responsible' with all the other elements working together during the

artistic process. In addition, Heidegger makes a salient point when he argues that knowing something does not come simply from observing it, but that people understand things through handling, which is a process that unfolds its own particular tacit knowledge. Heidegger stretches the art process to mean the actual work of art itself.

7.3 Artistic practice and art students
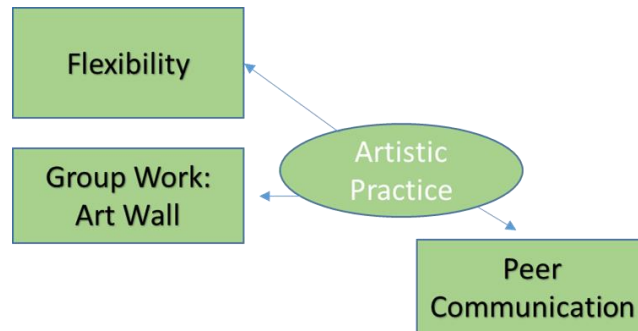
Figure 7.2 Theme: artistic practice – students

7.3.1 Flexibility

An emerging theme in the data concerning the students was that of flexibility. Flexibility was discussed both as something physical and also as a way of doing things. The art room provided a physical space for students to work in. However, more intangible ways of working also have a role in artistic production.

As discussed earlier, students talked about flexibility in relation to having a relaxing area. This area would be used to carry out research and to think about new projects or ongoing work. The place would offer an alternative space with a more comfortable setting and which, ideally, would be quieter. This is an environment in which the students could reflect and think, or quietly discuss some ideas. One student also put forward the idea of having a billiard table and other games.

> Some students may have a free lesson but they wouldn't be able to enter their classroom because, perhaps, the maids would be doing their cleaning. In that case, they could come here to play a bit. Even if they would want to relax and have a discussion, they could use the sofa. Even if the teacher gives us something to work on, you can think about it while you are relaxing a bit or playing a bit, as well. (Craig, 3:62)

Therefore, here the students talk about a type of flexibility that the space itself would allow during their artistic process. Having access to such a space would make it easier for them to decide at some point to spend time in this quiet area in order to stop, think and reflect. This echoes the way offices at Google operate. The premises are built in such a way that there are different rooms for time-out activities. Staff members could play music, do sports, and have meetings in very unusual set-ups, to mention a few examples. This sense of freedom enables the staff to take control over the way they work and allows time for ideas to incubate while doing activities that may be unrelated to the task at hand. Additionally, this might affirm that children and young people need different places and not just those set out for them by adults (Rasmussen, 2004). This is also linked to the concept postulated by James et al. (1998) as well as Christensen and James (2000), who state that children are actors and co-producers of their lives.

Another form of flexibility was highlighted when the students talked about using their own artwork to embellish their art room. This would be changed from time to time, allowing for new works to be exhibited. One student also mentioned an 'art wall', which would be a space that is constantly changing, dynamic and flexible. At any point students, could choose to spend some time drawing or painting directly on it; or they could produce a work that could be exhibited on this wall. From time to time, this would change to make space for new work. The wall itself could be a space that inspires ideas and generates dialogue between students.

This particular class is also built around the idea of flexibility, in terms of the exercises and activities that the students selected for this study follow during the lessons. The students seemed to take control over their work and go back and forth through different activities depending on what they prefer to work on. This gives the students a sense of ownership of their own learning. This was somehow resonated in the way the class was being managed. There was a feeling of flexibility and the students seemed to approach their work in a very calm way. As long as by the end of the year their tasks would be finished, they could take the initiative to work on various personal ideas and projects. This also echoes the work in schools following unconventional approaches to learning, such as the Reggio Emilia and Montessori approaches and philosophies.

Physical flexibility was an element that was important to the students. When they discussed their floor plan drawings the students talked about having a dynamic environment where things could be changed around according to the needs and to their

activities. Moving furniture around and moving freely around the room are two important ingredients of a flexible environment. Removing extra furniture that was not being used would create more space in the centre, which they considered advantageous.

7.3.2 Peer communication

At first glance, in the code cloud (see Figure 4.17, Section 4.4.1) generated from the content analysis of the drawings, a prevailing code is that of peer communication. All the seven drawings (see Figures 4.10 – 4.16, Section 4.4) have shown that, in their plan of an art room, the students included a space where they could work in groups. This was not an additional space, which some have also included, but refers to the set-up of the main desks and chairs where they normally work. It was interesting to note that the layout of the desks and chairs in all the plans promoted communication with one another, either as a whole class or at least in small groups. The present layout of the art room (see Figure 4.5) already makes this possible. However, some of the students also used a different layout, such as a U-shaped format. It was also interesting to note that this idea, that is, to work together or to be able to communicate while working, seemed to be important to the students. None of the students included individual seating. Two of the students also added an extra area with individual easels, but still retained the group layout for the main seating area.

This finding suggests that students look for sociopetal set-ups that enable them to communicate with others (Osmond, 1957). It seems that at their age they haven't yet cultivated the idea of working within their personal place but depend on working in spaces with others. Nonetheless, for particular exercises some of the students find that working at home would be ideal and a quieter option was given value.

7.4 Summary of findings – artistic practice

This chapter has discussed issues around art practice, and how the participating artists and art students engage in their practice and making of art. It was useful to primarily understand what meanings they each attached to art, and there seemed to be a consensus pointing towards a distinction between craftsmanship and art. This is still very debatable since craftsmanship is generally related to skill and technique, whereas art is informed by ideas, concepts and feeling while retaining an element of thinking. This is reflected in studies on the legitimacy of art (Molyneux, 1998). This distinction makes it a delicate endeavour to draw a line between what is considered art and what is

considered crafts. I do tend to agree with the idea that art requires both elements of skill and thought, whereas the crafts often depend highly on technique alone. In the findings, the view that art is very subjective and personal has been highlighted.

Reasons for doing art

Throughout the interviews, the artists also discussed a number of reasons that drive them to engage in art practice. These were summarised as follows: (1) self-expression, (2) answering questions, (3) challenging notions and conveying a message, (4) producing something that is pleasurable to look at, (5) commissions, (6) compulsion to engage in artistic activity, and (7) personal enjoyment. It is likely that an artist incorporates one or more of these points at any instance during his or her artistic production. The reasons for making art vary from one person to another; they may vary from time to time even within the same person. Reflecting Barrett's (2007) work, knowledge is derived from the practice of making art and reflections upon it. Seen through this lens it has a generative capacity.

Art practice and destination of works

The findings suggest that art is not necessarily created to remain in the studio, but for artists who would like their work to communicate something it is likely to leave the studio. It has a message to communicate, so art pieces are likely to be 'out there' in order to reveal or convey something. The artists also discussed their attachment to the works. Having invested much time on producing an art piece, artists often tend to build a relationship with that work and are likely to feel attached to it, long after the piece is not in their possession any more. This was reflected in terms of artists who work on commissions as part of their practice.

Working with other people

The findings also shed light on the notion of artists working in groups. As Singermann (Jacob & Grabner, 2010) has postulated, there are a number of positive sides to working with others. Artists are likely to overcome procrastination when working with other peers, they are likely to be more motivated to work towards a set goal, and they have the opportunity to discuss difficulties when facing challenges. There are still advantages for an artist to work on his or her own. However, it was deemed preferable not to withdraw completely but seek the company of like-minded people. In terms of the art students, the findings suggest that students look for set-ups that enable them to

communicate with others. It seems that, at their age, they have not yet cultivated the idea of working within their own personal place but depend on working in spaces with others. However, some of the students found spaces at their home to be ideal for particular art activities and also showed an interest in spaces for quiet reflection.

The artistic process

From the findings, it was possible to single out two main phases that each of the artists seemed to follow: the thinking and the doing phases. During the thinking phase the artists would be concerned with ideas, concepts and reflections, whereas the doing phase is related to the hands-on and technical side of the work. It has been observed that the artists make more use of their studio during the doing phase. This is perhaps due to the fact that all the necessary materials and tools are housed within the studio. The thinking phase is less dependent on a specific space and consists in a process that could take place anywhere. As the majority of the artists pointed out, the ideas and inspirations they took with them to the studio came from outside this space. So, at least in part, the thinking phase could occur in different spaces.

It was also important to link these findings to Dewey's (1934) important claims that artistic objects cannot be separated from the conditions of origin and the fact that they were produced as part of an experience. Moreover, the artist is in a collaborative play with materials and tools throughout the process of making (Heidegger, 1996). In addition, fully understanding something is not achieved simply by observing it, but through handling it.

The students discussed the concept of flexibility in terms of physical space, and also in terms of the way their learning was structured. They seemed to require peer communication, and in their drawings they featured spaces conducive to group work and communication.

In the literature (Lippmann, 2015; Sjöholm, 2013) it has been suggested that, ideally, artistic practice makes use of both settings were artists work in collaboration with others or individually. This practice seems to tap into the advantages of both scenarios. This was also reflected in the study with the students, who seemed to give value to both. Group work and communication is features significantly in the findings. It seems that, at their age, the students still rely on working with others. As part of the process of doing their work they seem to require a close connection with others, while at the

same time knowing that there is the opportunity to use individual spaces for quieter reflection. This also recalls the concept of space being produced through social interactions.

Chapter 8

MATERIALITY AND AFFORDANCE

8.1 Introduction

Another theme that emerged from the findings is materiality and affordance. Artwork usually involves some form of materials, the exception to this tendency being work involving a more performative practice. However, most of the artworks are products of a material or other. In this study, the artists have talked about the role of materials as part of their practice. The way in which artists relate to materials also sheds light on their practice because materials are the physical elements that will eventually project their ideas and concerns to other people. It is through materials that ideas take physical shape and form. The participants in this study discussed at length how they relate to particular materials at their disposal, and how certain choices of materials have determined the type and style of work that they do. Figure 8.1 shows the main sub-themes that are related to the main theme of materiality and affordance. Each of these will be analysed in the following sections.
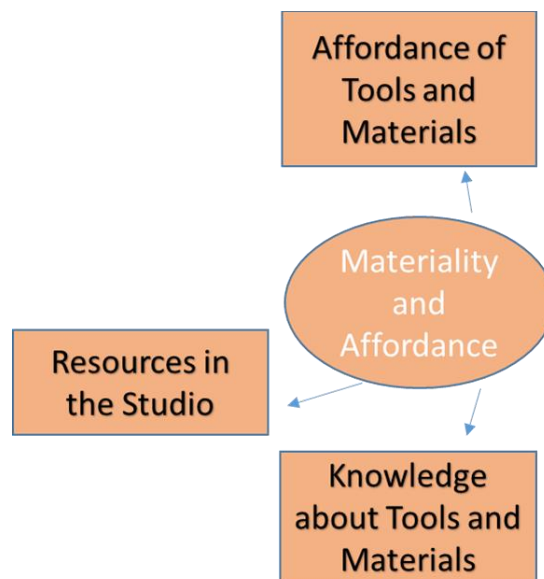

Figure 8.1 Theme: materiality and affordance – artists

8.2 Affordance of tools and materials – the artists

Throughout the interviews the artists talked about different materials, tools, as well as techniques and their relation to them. As part of their respective artistic processes, their

choice of materials, tools and techniques assume an important role, and certain choices they make are also reflected in how the space is used. Reflecting the nuances of their practice, the artists discussed wood, oils, acrylics and paper amongst others.

As a sculptor, Henry describes how working with wood has conditioned him to work with the idea of reduction. Sculpting wood is based on the idea of taking away material and, in the process, always moving closer to the final form.

The way sculptors approach wood also influences their work process, since they have to think in terms of reduction, which is very different when compared to modelling clay, for example. The artist also described how working with wood also predetermines certain choices, since the material itself has a natural grain that his work needs to follow. For example, when he is working with a wood block he has to bear in mind its natural grain, otherwise it would make the work extremely challenging. Hence, here, the artist works hand in hand with the material. He cannot separate his idea from the material he is using but they must work in tandem. Wood in a way also determines an artist's choice as to which variety to use because the natural structure would affect the idea he has in mind. For instance, certain woods are relatively soft compared to others and these would be suitable for some projects but not for others.

> For example, like ballerinas, since I do them on thin legs and so on, I like to use walnut, because it is hard and it is strong. (Henry, 1:59)

The same artist also talked about the spontaneity of working with other media such as paints, in contrast with working with wood. Producing work in wood is not as spontaneous as in making brushstrokes with paint. This also influences the process because the technique entails longer hours of practice.

Some artists also distinguished between different kinds of paint and how they relate to such materials. Oil paints are perceived as a medium of prestige but tend to have a long and slow-drying process. For instance, this could pose difficulty for some artists who have children since they might touch and smudge the work, and also for artists who need to work against tight deadlines. There is also another hindrance, and this is the strong smell that makes the work more difficult in areas that are not well-ventilated, in kitchens, and in spaces shared by children. This is also the case for acids, which have strong and toxic smells. These qualities of oil paints and other media determine certain choices that the artists make. In a way, these difficulties decrease the portability of the medium and, depending on the available spaces and environments that artists work in,

this particular medium might sometimes be avoided. On a more positive note, some artists explain how this medium gives the ability to be manipulated for long stretches of time. It also enables an artist to amend mistakes or rethink certain choices made. In contrast to oil paints, acrylics dry very quickly. This rapidity could match a very fast-paced lifestyle, or a lifestyle where an artist could only work for short periods of time. Acrylics are very portable, as they could be used with water or a gel medium. They could be used on paper, canvas, and on many other substrates.

As a foundation, paper was also considered to be a quick way to put down an idea and scribble something. It is easy to use, given that you do not require very large spaces to store standard-size paper pads and it is also easy to find. Paper are easy to move around and this makes it a very portable support to work on. For a rough and immediate, use paper is a very ordinary and easily available medium be it a simple receipt or a paper napkin. This gives it a very convenient and handy quality to it and makes it a very accessible resource. Related to paper, text could also be seen as a 'material' in itself, since it could be included directly in the work: for example, using torn paper with text or cutting out single letters and adapting them in mixed media pieces. Text could also take the role of backing the work, rather than being part of it and, when used thus, text acts as a stimulus.

> Sometimes, when I am on break at work, for example, I always have some papers or something… I always have and I scribble. (Henry, 1:17)

> I went to an art shop and I found the easiest; easiest, in terms not of a simple answer to a question but what was available, and what I thought I could do something with, and I found paper. Then, I assumed was necessary for me, that I could do, blades and glue, very rudimental basic materials. (Jack, 2:17)

> And I thought I'm gonna do something in my studio, there, which would be possible for me to execute a series of works… And with this coloured paper and all…Some other basic needs. (Jack, 2:18)

> I prepare myself and plan for what I might need. I have drawers on purpose, where I would find rough paper. Here, paper with that particular weight, here those particular materials. (Daniel, 5:22)

> One important thing I find is text. I do a lot of work with text, where the text is in the work itself or backing the work. So, text is very important to me. (Gabriel, 4:49)

The findings also illuminated the idea concerning the strong interest in choosing materials well and in being meticulous about the materials used. This often contrasts with the working style of the artists, since a very meticulous preparation and build-up

is followed by a very spontaneous and quick execution of painting. This contrast could also be seen in the importance given to the choice of materials, and in being meticulous in the care taken for materials, as opposed to working in a messy environment. There seems to be an underlying wish for longevity, unless it is the intention of the artist to produce work that is of an ephemeral nature. This recalls the work of Heidegger (1996), which places objects as valuable components of practice. This might prompt a strong need to understand materials well and to choose the best materials possible for a particular work. This has also been discussed in terms of mixed media artworks. The research about how materials interact and their longevity is an important part of the process. Additionally, it has been hinted at that, in the past artists, were able to build a relationship with the materials they used to produce themselves. This is somehow lost, due to the fact that many of the products that artists use are manufactured elsewhere and/or mass produced.

> What I enjoy most is working with mixed media. Literally: from oils, and acrylics, and drawing material (I use a lot of charcoal) to sand and earth, and this and that. I use everything, sort of. So, most of the time, you have to do research on materials as well: whether they are long-lasting, how one material would react to another… (Gabriel, 4:39)

> The materials that the old masters used to use were organic and alive, and good; they wouldn't be existing until today. Sometimes I am scared of the synthetic because, in a couple of decades, they might start disintegrating because it is not natural. They used to cook materials in a pot, give them the right temperature… Today everything is artificial. (Daniel, 5:74)

> Whereas, before, the artist had a very personal relationship with the paint because he used to make it. He used to feel it. We have lost that today, in the sense [that] before, you used to get the stone, grind it – you make sure the stone is right for you, you break it yourself, you add the amount of oil you prefer. (Daniel, 5:76)

> I have arrived at a stage where I stretch my own canvas. I don't buy pre-stretched canvas anymore. I go to my own carpenter, he knows that he has to make the back of the board, well, because nowadays I want wood, like tulip wood, so that it is exact, so that it is the best wood. I end up spending a lot on materials and on things that are not visible. For example, even when I apply gesso, for example, I use rabbit skin glue, so that it is more permanent. Four coats, you sand it, try to make it fine – you make it as smooth as glass. Well, these things. I'm very meticulous, then. (Daniel, 5:79)

> I stretch all my canvases myself because it makes such a difference. They take quite some time to make, but then there is no comparison. And you can choose the material as well… This was thin canvas for example. If I want something more rough I can do it. (Adrian, 6:25)

An interesting concept which featured in one of the interviews is the idea of using discarded items from another project that were still in the studio. This idea enables the artist to see such items through a different lens. What was once, for a moment, discarded becomes the work itself. It is a way of recycling the materials but it is also a way of *rethinking* materials. Gabriel explains how:

> You will start seeing them through a different lens, from a point of view which is totally different. For example, the tissues that you are using to clean your brushes, if you put it there, and you crop it, it could become a very interesting form. So, like that it is as though I am recycling my own stuff. (Gabriel, 4:48)

Drawing on the work of Bolt (2007), I recall the idea that materiality becomes a core part of practice. She contends that materials have their own intelligence, which actually interacts with the artists' creative intelligence. Similarly, Paul Carter (2004) coins the term 'material thinking'. Different from the work of Carter, what Bolt asserts is that the collaboration between artists and materials, in relation to the materials and processes of practice, takes precedence. The way the artists discussed their relationship with materials also echoes the influential work of Heidegger (1996), which places the artist in a collaborative play with materials and tools throughout the process of making art. The artist is not just the sole maker of an object. Similarly, the artists who were interviewed have expressed how certain materials had a 'say' in their work. The artists were co-responsible with all the other elements that work together during the artistic process. In addition, Heidegger also claimed that the emergence of something new is seen to be the result of interacting with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice. Heidegger stated that knowing the world does not come from simply consciously looking at things, but we understand it through handling. Moreover, this handling uncovers its own particular tacit knowledge.

Interestingly, and possibly unusually, Daniel also talked about a different materiality, perhaps more abstract in nature, which is the result of three-dimensionality. This could refer to the visual materiality of adding texture to a flat painting. However, as in his case, this could also adopt another meaning referring to a third dimension he creates by making an actual three-dimensional image adopting the notion of stereopsis. One of the possibilities of using materials in this way is that the artist is also creating a reality which that has never existed before. He creates a virtual space, which a viewer could actually see, and combines this space with hyper-realistic techniques. As a result, he

produces paintings that are literally coming into the viewers' own space and invading their space. Thus, paintings become very personal, as well as very immersive.

An affordance that was commonly discussed is that of portability. When the material used is portable and easy to move around and work with in different places, the studio takes lesser importance in the sense that the artist is not limited to the studio in order to practice. A sense of mobility is also sought after in cases where artists wish to, or require, to move their work to areas close to their family members, for example in kitchens. Hence, a material that is easy to carry around, and which does not produce strong smells, is preferred over others. The artists mentioned watercolours, poster colours and pastels, amongst the most preferred. Papers and boards, given that they are easy to use and carry around and also not expensive, were amongst the most preferred supports that afford flexibility and ease of use. As mentioned earlier, the idea of the 'immediate' was also discussed. These materials also afford a way for working quickly as well, as on the spot, and this possibility also affected certain choices the artists made. For example, using paper and ink was viewed as an ideal way for jotting down ideas. Moreover, these supplies could be easily prepared and placed close at hand without being cumbersome.

> I would be passing from that [time when I] wouldn't be able to sleep, or would wake up and wouldn't sleep again, so you would need your materials next to you. Sort of, lately, I have spent some time, and they're still there; I have inks, I put them in my bedroom because ink is immediate, so that it is next to me, because – you'll be amazed – you'll get an idea, but if you keep it too long in your mind you kill it. (Daniel, 5:23)

Similarly, certain tools enable the artist to capture ideas quickly because they offer the advantage of speed. Henry illustrated this by recounting how the use of tools that were inadequate for the initial stages of his work process, slowed down his production and hampered his method of working on ideas quickly. Moreover, the artists discussed how they found it important to care for their tools, to be knowledgeable about them, and to search for good-quality tools. Interestingly, surfaces in the studio were also viewed as tools themselves. Having surfaces and table tops where to set up other equipment, or to use directly, are indispensable tools in the studio space.

8.2.1 Other affordances affecting practice

Following the discussion in the section above, it is also given that to be able to follow such practice an artist needs adequate space to store materials. More so, the space of

the studio will determine the size of the tools that could be kept and used. This revolves around the idea that spaces afford certain activities and perhaps not others, depending on the actual nature of the space. Utilising a space is possible according to what it permits. The space conditions a person to perform some activities and not others (Lefebvre, 1991). The artist would have to cope with the space available and do whatever that space allows and permits. A fundamental idea is that space facilitates activity – it makes activity possible. Therefore, once a space is available activity is possible within it. Moreover, the distinction between familiar and unfamiliar spaces illustrates that both afford different opportunities. Familiar spaces provide the artist with the feeling of experience and physical means with which they are used to (Tuan, 1977). On the other hand, unfamiliar spaces afford a feeling of newness of experience and perhaps a newer connection to the space, bearing new potential.

The actual dimensions of a space also determine the size of the work an artist makes. Large spaces also enable the artist to move back and view the artwork, while making it possible to reflect upon it from a distance. Storage of props and objects for future use is made easier and this obviously affords more possibilities to play and experiment with ideas (Amirsadeghi, 2012). Small spaces could be somehow restrictive in this regard. Another aspect that results from working in large spaces is that producing such work makes it possible for the viewer to feel immersed in the work. A viewer could relate more to this work, not only in concept but also in terms of its physicality. In such cases, the visual texture invites you in. For example, a life-size painting makes it easier to relate to, rather than a very small painting would afford.

The climate of a country also lends itself better to a particular kind of work, such as outdoor landscape painting for example. A good climate, such that enjoyed in Malta, makes it possible to extend the studio to outdoors, since light and weather conditions permit it. This might also affect the outcome of the work, since an artist could choose to hone in on these climatic qualities and use them to his or her advantage.

Another component in the production of art is the personality of the artist. The temperament of the individual could be a determining factor with respect to the choices made during the artistic process. The personality and disposition of a person affects the way he or she works. For example, if a person has the ability to work anywhere, this might make it easier for the individual to work in spaces that are not the studio. On the other hand, if the person's personality restricts him or her to look for the luxury and the

intimacy of a personal space, it would perhaps feel harder to work in studio spaces that are not familiar. The character of a person could also determine to what extent he or she would be ready to risk, try out new things, experiment, explore and so on. Depending on the character, artists may or may not be open enough to expose themselves to what they don't know. They might be ready to let the situation take them to a different place, or else they might feel uncomfortable to move beyond familiar patterns of work. Thus, these qualities might also affect artistic practice.

The findings also suggest the significance of the body, both as a subject in itself and also as the physical means to enable free movement. This latter quality affords movement while working – the movement of arms, for example (Shusterman, 2006). An artist could sit down, work on the floor, stand up, stay still, and move around. The body affords movement and the artist could make use of this quality in his or her practice. The relationship between the body and space is also interesting. Space, in a way, restricts or permits the movement of the artist. Moreover, the body as a subject could be a language that intrigues, and which enables the notion of conveying a message. It is instinctive because viewers would be able to understand experiences, since they have experienced living in a body.

> The body is immediate. We do not know our world outside our body. All our experiences are lived through our bodies. So, when I am doing an intervention on the body you cannot not relate to it because you live in a body. So, when I symbolise my thought in a body there is something immediate, something personal in it. Even if it is not your own body, but without wanting you would relate. (Daniel, 5:44)

The actual artworks themselves also afford specific possibilities. Art enables a shift from the status quo. Through a process, it makes it possible to go beyond the obvious. A completed artwork may become a pretext and generate dialogue (Kester, 2005, 2004). In this manner, art becomes purposeful and not static. It makes it possible for discussion to take place and, in itself, aims at making people better beings through methods of observation and reflection. In addition, physical work of art might act as an inspiration for other work, so art pieces sometimes make part of a cycle of conversation and inspiration.

8.2.2 Resources in the studio

The data also presented considerations for objects, other than art-related supplies, which artists use in their studios; these range from computers, to books and cameras.

Computers with an internet connection afford the possibility of instant and limitless information. Other technical aspects, such as the zoom feature, could enable the artist to work in more detail. Similarly, software applications could be used to digitally manipulate images that could be used as part of the artistic process. Nonetheless, the artists discussed the importance of books. There was a consensus amongst the artists that books and print material are essential. Theory or related information are gathered in one place and, through books, an artist could widen his or her knowledge on particular subjects or techniques. Texts in books may enable the formulation of ideas. In sum, books and computers with an internet connection were two of the most commonly sought resources, which should ideally be found in a studio.

> Books… Well, without them I'm nothing. Books are essential. For me, they're important as much as paint. Even the fact that I would take a book, and leaf through the pages, it helps me a lot, and it calms my heart. Even if I am drawing and something is troubling me, I come here; I either stay on the floor or on the sofa, take a book and read, or leaf through books. (Daniel, 5:15)

> I need certain books with me, and I need an internet connection as well. Many times, over here, the fact that I have access to papers online, etc., it helps a lot. You know what I mean. That kind of research I find that it helps me a lot. (Gabriel, 4:27)

> I started getting magazines on sculpture. Because the computer, when you key in 'sculpture' it gives you anything you like, anything you want: videos, YouTube… There is everything there. I do compare my ideas and techniques with those of other sculptors. (Henry, 1:79)

> You have to research the subject from books. I've been through so many books. Then you start the sketches. (Brigitte, 3:28)

Cameras were also recommended as useful items in a studio, either to record the work and capture points in time or to actually take to different places to record ideas. As suggested earlier, not all artists prefer to work from photos since, in some cases, photographs were as an interpretation.

8.2.3 Knowledge of materials and tools

Familiarity and experience with materials, that is, being knowledgeable about the materials you are using was considered to be a very essential part of the artistic process, amongst the responses given by the participants. Being able to select good-quality materials was considered to be very valuable. Although technique and the use of material is often seen as a means to an end, the majority of the artists agreed that practice could not be restricted or limited by the lack of ability to use the materials and

tools. This would only stop an artist short from achieving what he or she has aimed to project. Hence, being knowledgeable about the actual physical materials and tools could determine the level of how the idea would materialise. As mentioned earlier, Daniel also distinguished between past and present-day artists, and how the relation with materials and tools is very different. In the past artists, used to develop a connection with their materials since they used to prepare their own. There is the sense that these artists used to 'feel' the materials, since they were very much integrated within the process of making them. In the data, there was a consensus that, as part of academic training, having a basic knowledge of making certain mixtures, like gesso for example, would be an important step in an artist's formation, as this would determine choices that he or she would make with regard to interacting with the materials. This affirms the concept of material thinking (Carter, 2004), in that materials play a crucial role in practice.

> I used almost all the types, well I like this a lot – *prinjol*, it is Maltese pine; the olive, Maltese walnut – like I had the ballerinas over there… But I work with almost every kind apart from that soft wood that is not good for anything. (Henry, 1:58)

> Many times you have to do research on materials as well. Whether they are lasting, how one material would react to another… (Gabriel, 4:39)

> That kind of technique is really important. Because, at the end of the day, if you are going to do a piece of work you would want it to remain for a number of years. (Gabriel, 4:41)

> I am very conscious about what I'm doing technically. It wouldn't be visible in my work, but I would give it importance. And it comes from an academic background. (Gabriel, 4:42)

> But I know he is a person of good craftsmanship, with a basis of… Well, he is able to do anything, he has good technique, he has knowledge. (Adrian, 6:40)

> If you need, for instance, to handle paint it is fundamental that you have at least a wide knowledge of paint. Because if you do not have it, what you do is not the result of what you know but it is the result of your lack of knowledge of it. (Jack, 2:78)

> Going back to the skills I think one should be… If one is interested in drawing, one should learn anything which has to do with drawing, in my opinion. Then you can become fluid and you can become flexible. (Jack, 2:79)

8.3 **Materials and resources – art students**
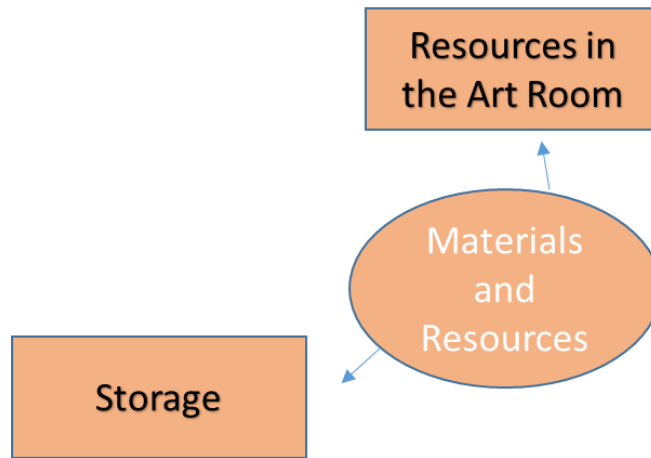
Figure 8.2 Theme: materials and resources – students

8.3.1 Resources and reference materials

An important theme emerging from the data with the art students (conversations, observations and plan drawings) is that of resources and reference material. All the students expressed their ideas about this subject, either through their plan drawing or else during conversation. The exisitng art room (see Figure 4.5, Section 4.3.2) catered for the storage of supplies and used a system of open shelving. In the plans (see Figures 4.10 – 4.16, Section 4.4) the students added shelving, cupboards and cabinets and some additional storage spaces. Furthermore, the term 'organisation' was also used in terms of art supplies. Being organised was viewed as an important way to diminish time-wasting activities. Having the art room equipped with the right and useful supplies also enabled the students to have everything they need around them, and even if they happened to forget something at home they would be able to find extra supplies and still progress with their art work. The students mentioned new supplies and supplies that were being used. Interesting objects and items for their still life activities could also be stored so that they could be used when required. The Reggio Emilia and Montessori examples discussed in the literature review also pinpoint the importance of adequate resources in school (Fredriksen, 2012).

The main examples of reference material that were mentioned are books and computers with an internet connection. During the research process, the students preferred using books or browsing the internet. Books featured in the majority of the drawings. The

students would need pictures for reference in order to be able to imagine and develop the rest. Here, reference material acts as a stimulus and supports the ideation process. One student added that "having no pictures available would be a problem. Even to work on abstract art, I would need to look at pictures to start developing the idea" (Craig, 3:12). Contrastingly, Jake expressed how having no pictures would not be a bad thing: "That is what is beautiful about art. You can imagine and think" (Jake, 1:10). The role of imagination is considered, by some of the students, to be an important element in artistic production. However, it seems that the students would need to feel inspired through the use of books and computers, and would need images as a reference on which to base their works. Books may be of different types, as long as they have pictures, and magazines could be used both as reference and as material for collages and mixed media. Images for reference were an indispensable resource in their idea generation process. This echoes the work of Kristensen (2004) which states that the preparation stage should be supported by references and adequate information. The students seemed to need pictures to work from, and books provide both information and visuals that could inspire their creative ideation. Additionally, one student included an area intended specifically for history of art reference works (see Figure 4.15, Section 4.4).

Moreover, the internet affords unlimited research possibilities:

> The internet is vast for research – books are a bit restricted. You wouldn't have books about everything, so the internet helps and it is faster, as well. So, I would add a corner with the computer, and perhaps an interactive whiteboard. (Ethan, 4:125)

Another type of reference material is that of actual works by others, for example artworks created by the teacher. There was also a mention of having prints of famous works of art:

> They could give us inspiration. It might also be negative because the students might say that they can never reach their level, but if you have a good look at them you can learn. You can even do a replica of their style. (Craig, 3:53)

The idea of being motivated by good works of art takes a vital role in the art making process. This was echoed by another student when he stated that:

> For history of art I would have both books to read and prints for decoration. I would have the books section as separate from the other area. (Dean, 3:72)

A resource, to which the students made reference, was the relaxation area, where thinking and research could be carried out in a comfortable space. The main idea behind this space was comfort, and the use of soft furnishings was discussed. Cushions, a sofa, and coffee tables, amongst others, were recommended to improve the area in order to make it more comfortable and different from the rest of the room. The idea for such a place was to take some time out and work in a more quiet and comfortable space.

Some students also discussed the importance of having the right resources at home. Having the supplies they need even when working at home is an important part of artistic production. At home, although with limitations of space, the majority of the students made sure to organise an area with all the supplies and aim to have the items close at hand. "I like to have everything there without having to remove my stuff. And no one would touch them" (Jake, 1:94).

8.3.2 Storage

The issue of storage also featured in most of the plan drawings. Six out of seven students included some kind of shelving or cupboard for storing supplies. Three of these included more than one area for storage (see Figures 4.10, 4.11, and 4.16, Section 4.4). This shows that the students value having enough space for storage. During our conversations, they spoke about the importance of storage for new materials, and also for their personal materials so that they could leave them there and avoid a lot of carrying of supplies in their school bags. Most of them had other supplies at home to avoid heavy school bags. When they were using the previous small art room, they had experienced difficulties in storing their supplies and felt they could not invest in buying new materials because they could not store them. The students included both open and closed shelving as means of storage. One student also included a storage space for drawings to be used for events such as parents' days, open days and exhibitions.

8.3.3 The use of the interactive whiteboard

Another common code across the drawings is that pertaining to the use of the interactive whiteboard. Five students out of seven included this feature in their drawings. The existing art room included a normal whiteboard, as well as an interactive whiteboard. The teacher used this resource frequently and it seems that the students derived benefit from its use because the majority included it in their drawings. Since art as a subject is very visual, a resource that could facilitate the manipulation of

images, videos, the use of audio, and so on, affords numerous potential benefits, which could be handy for the teacher and also of interest to the students. Apart from a computer, the interactive whiteboard was the only technological resource that they mentioned. One other student also mentioned a laptop to be used by the teacher.

8.3.4 Specific area for still-life drawing

Another element in four of the drawings (see Figures 4.10, 4.13, 4.15, and 4.16, Section 4.4) was a specific area allocated for still-life drawing. Similar to the idea of good natural light the students had discussed that, since their previous art room was very small, there was no space for an area permanently dedicated to still life projects. This created some difficulties, since they did not have a space where they could leave some objects to use during their lessons. They had to set up and dismantle everything, on many occasions, this proved to be difficult. The new, larger room afforded enough space to have a particular area where they could have more than one still-life set-up. The students might have included this as an important element for their 'ideal art room' drawing upon reflecting on their past and present experiences. This might also suggest the need to practise this type of art since it is a core element in their exams.

8.4 Summary of findings – materiality and affordance

Different materials and tools have different affordances (Bolt, 2007; Carter, 2004). Some materials are preferred over others due to their nature and what they permit. A characteristic that is generally sought after is the element of immediacy and portability that a material permits. The findings also highlighted the concern artists have for being knowledgeable about materials, and the keenness to choose materials well. Materiality becomes a core part of practice. Materials have their own intelligence, which interacts with that of the artists (Bolt, 2007). The artist is not the sole maker of an object, but performs with other actors in a complex performance between elements that work together during the artistic process (Heidegger, 1996). The space conditions a person to perform some activities and not others (Lefebvre, 1991). Space facilitates activity and according to the space of studios certain materials, supplies and tools could be used but not others. A consensus was reached that books and print material are essential resources in the studio.

The students also made reference to particular resources that they seemed to require as part of their art room set-up. As was the case with the artists, they mentioned books

and computers with an internet connection as their preferred resources for reference. Images for reference become an indispensable resource during their idea generation process and this mirrors Kristensen's (2004) work on the importance of references, information and resources as part of the creative process. An interesting resource to which the students made reference was a relaxation area with a comfortable setting, in which reflection and research could take place.

The findings that emerged from the study with the students demonstrate that both traditional and modern resources were required as part of their artistic process. Visual images in particular seem to support the art practice of students and, hence, it would be valuable for such rooms to store these resources. Storage becomes valuable, since this was included in their ideal art room set-up, both in our conversations and their plan drawings. There seems to be a reference to storage of personal items in their art room, and this might imply that students desire to have a private and personal space within a more communal space. Access to their own materials could give them the possibility to learn through these materials themselves in the process of making art (Craft, 2001; Montessori & Gutek, 2004; Gandini, 1993; Heidegger, 1996).

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, it may be useful to reflect again on the main outcomes of this study. The main aim of this research was to explore the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice. The following overarching question, together with three other sub-questions, have been posed at the beginning of this study. These questions will be reviewed again and discussed in terms of the conclusions that were reached in this study.

RQ1 – What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

RQ2 – What meaning do artists attach to the space or environment in which they work?

RQ3 – How do art students relate to the space or environment around them in their art room?

RQ4 – How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?

9.2 Meanings attached to space

9.2.1 Meanings that artists attach to their studios

As discussed in Chapter 5, attaching meaning to the studio and environment in which artists work is part of the artistic process. Reflecting on the studio is a practice that gives many insights on the way artists work and what meanings are formulated in the process of making art. A number of different findings have offered a response to the research question that asks about the meanings that artists attach to the space and environment in which they work (RQ2).

Owning a personal and private studio space

The findings imply that developing a relationship with a personal and private studio space leads to a number of benefits. This may explain why artists choose to have a personal and private space that assists their practice. In this study, I have drawn on

Massey's (2005) argument that spaces are not the backdrop of activities but they become an integral part of what people do in everyday life. With particular reference to art spaces, this view would assign spaces the affordance of being an active component partaking in everyday life. In addition, the three main benefits of having studios, as revealed in the findings, are that:

(1) it allows cumulative work to take place – **productivity and potential**

(2) it gives **validation** (especially concerning female identity)

(3) it lends to the **construction of artistic identity.**

As is indicated in the first point, having a set space that is readily available for a person in which to practice presents the possibility to work on something – a potential for artistic activity to take place. The second and third points are in line with the respective studies of Bain (2004, 2005) and Buren (1983), who discuss the processes of validation and the construction of artistic identity as an integral part of spatial practices within studios (see Section 2.2.3).

Transforming studio spaces

Throughout their artistic journeys, artists are likely to change and improve their studios according to their work demands. Studios are improved and appropriated as a result of their reflecting on their practice. In this setting, it could be implied that **practice informs the appropriation of studio spaces.** In the literature review, it was seen that Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (2005) discuss the practices of appropriation within spatial theories, and here it is particularly evident that practice itself informs the appropriation of spaces related to art, namely the studio. What was revealed in the findings echoes what Massey (2005) asserted that people alter spaces through their actions and their material engagement with it. The findings also support the way Massey presents space as being constantly 'under construction'. The idea of **flexibility** is also tied to the idea of appropriation. Physical flexibility in studios diminishes huge inconveniences and makes the process of appropriation easier to accomplish. The concept of flexibility was also discussed in terms of how space is revisited within Reggio Emilia schools.

Adapting to other studios

Given that artistic practice is such a delicate, intimate and personal activity it might require the support of physical surroundings with which the artist could identify. This

is the case for a number of artists who need a specific base. Others may possibly adapt much more quickly to new places. Adapting to a larger studio could also be difficult, if a person is used to working within intimate and personal dimensions. This also brings to light the notion of 'placelessness' or 'non-places', as discussed by Cresswell (2004), Augé (2008) and Relph (1976). When the connectedness with a space is not attained, spaces remain anonymous and the process of making spaces meaningful is not achieved. Augé differs from both Cresswell and Relph in that Augé acknowledges the ever-present experience of non-places and how it may be comforting to many people in certain situations. According to the findings, some of the artists found spatial practice to depend significantly on the space concerned. The combination of their actions, their use of the space, their movements within the space and also their routines, very much depended on the complete setting of the studio and, therefore, they might take time to adapt to new surroundings. This again brings out the distinction in the way different artists work. Therefore, idiosyncratic qualities should be reflected in the making of a studio. The way artists relate and adapt to a studio is the product of situation, context and culture.

The ideal studio

Reflecting upon their experiences has helped the artists to form a particular picture of an ideal studio. Two common physical attributes that were deemed to be at the forefront of ideal studios are:

(1) large and spacious layout, and

(2) adequate light.

These two elements echo both European and American models of studios. Since both these models are often seen on TV, magazines, books, and online, this might provide the artists with an ideal picture of what an artist's studio should look like. This also recalls the idea of validation (Bain, 2005; Buren, 1983). Having a studio that conforms to well-known standards may possibly give artists a sense of validation – a proof that what they are doing has meaning and is justified.

Another important finding transpiring from the data is that studios should ideally be organised in such a way that **different areas are allocated for different activities**. In this setting, a studio space would have 'stations' for different activities, and each activity planned around related materials, tools and resources. The collection of tools,

materials and resources have their own intelligence and potential for activities to take place (Bolt, 2007; Carter, 2004; Heidegger, 1996). This also recalls Massey's (2005) notion of the dimension of multiplicity. For Massey, space is not something universal, in the sense that the way people live is made up of a multiplicity of spaces that are present simultaneously. Moreover, Massey views place through a similar lens that emphasises a dynamic and changing quality to it, and that there are multiple meanings of places endorsed by different social groups. This could perhaps illuminate the idea that different activities within studio spaces provide a sense of multiplicity, since the product of the activities and what happens within these spaces would provide different outcomes depending on the people and contexts involved. Moreover, the emergence of something new is seen to be the result of interacting with materials, methods, tools and ideas which, together, constitute practice. As Massey (2005) explains, people alter spaces through their actions and their material engagement with it. Within this setting, the idea of organising spaces into stations of different activities seems to offer a number of benefits.

A conceptual journal within a sanctuary

Upon reflecting on their personal space the artists felt that, ideally, they should have things and objects at hand that are meaningful to them, including their preferred music, books for reference, internet connection, particular artefacts to which they are attached, texts and cuttings. This makes the studio a place within which they **retreat**, a **place of reflection** and a **place of performance** – **a sanctuary**. Within the same place of practice, the artist encloses parts of him or her to retrieve again from time to time. The studio becomes a conceptual three-dimensional journal. The artist is physically emplaced in the studio around these ideas and concepts, which he or she could draw from. In a way, this seems to reflect the deep need for 'a place called home' or 'a sense of place', which is intrinsic in the everyday life of people (Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2004). Place and home are represented by ideas of security and belonging. Massey's (2005) theories have been very useful towards understanding space in terms of this inherent need to attach special meanings to spaces, and in the process transforming them into places.

Studios – are they indispensable spaces?

A general consensus in the findings is that **the studio space is very important but not crucial for the thinking phase of the work of artists**. It does influence some of the

artist's choices but it does not influence directly the work itself with regards to concepts and ideas. An artist's performance is restricted by the physical boundaries but the ideas and concepts are not necessarily affected by the particular place in which the work is carried out. The space determines the choices that an artist makes with respect to what is available to him or her within that space, and to what extent it permits him or her to work in it. Going back to the thinking and doing phases that form the artistic process, these findings imply that **the studio space possibly affects the doing phase**. Lefebvre's (1991) theories on space illustrate that space is both product and producer, in that it exerts an influence on which activities take place in that space. The findings shed light on the fact that, in the case of studio spaces, they seem to affect the physical and performative kind of activities and not the thinking practices. The thinking phase is not directly linked to the studio, in that it does not depend on the studio to take place. As implied in the findings, the ideas and inspiration are rather reliant on external influences outside the studio. This finding reflects the specific artists that have participated in this study, so it is not excluded that another group of artists who work in different ways might have produced different outcomes.

Access to outdoor locations – an essential part of inspiration

The points related to accessing outdoor locations and other places outside the studio seem to aim towards the fact that **experiencing places other than one's studio constitutes a positive motivating factor towards instilling the need to practice art.** Following an understanding of what the artists expressed about this issue, it seems to point to the fact that, through the process of experiencing these spaces, a transition is made that changes them from anonymous spaces to meaningful places. When experiencing a new country or an outside location new meanings take shape and this gives spaces a new sense of place. The multiplicity of spaces, and the different layers present coming from the way different people engage with that space, could have an influence on artists when they are exposed to new and different spaces.

In response to the research question RQ2, I would conclude that the meanings that the participating artists attached to studios mirror the complexity surrounding the terms of space and place. The artists acknowledged how space becomes an integral part of what they do in everyday life, and the studio has its particular role within their practice. A number of points have been implied and these could contribute to small parts of the larger picture representing the complex relationship between artists and their studios.

A general consensus in the findings brings to light the idea that the studio space is very important but not fundamental. The findings have shown that the studio space possibly affects the doing phase of the artistic process but not the thinking phase directly. The latter has been associated with instances of experiences coming from outside the studio – particularly from outdoor locations. Experiencing other countries and outdoor locations becomes an essential part of inspiration which stimulates, fuels and illuminates the thinking process. Although this might not be the case for all artists, this finding endorses the way spatial practice is the product of interrelations between people, contexts and situations, ranging from the large-scale to smaller instances.

Furthermore, a number of benefits have been ascribed to having a personal and private studio space. It seems that owning such a place ensures more productivity and potential for work to take place, since the combination of space, materials, stored ideas, and so on, have the affordance for potential work to be carried out. Studios also give a sense of validation and artists construct their artistic identity through these places. This might also be the reason why adapting to other studio places that are not their own could be a difficult process for some artists, given that art practice is a very intimate, personal and private activity. Furthermore, studios are not static or complete at any point, and from the findings it was implied that practice informs the appropriation of studio spaces. A factor that aids this process is physical flexibility in studios.

The meanings attached to the ideal studio space highlight two attributes that were deemed to be the basis of what a studio should consist of. A large spacious layout and adequate lighting were two elements that were considered to be ideal components of a studio. Moreover, studios could ideally have different areas for different activities, since this provides the adequate materials, tools and resources for each particular activity in a pre-planned setting. A multiplicity of activities is also mirrored in the notion highlighted in the data, namely that of studios as a sanctuary. This notion accommodates the artist's preferred and required activities under the same roof. In addition, studios may possibly have a deeper metaphoric meaning, in that they become akin to a three-dimensional journal. These retain concepts and ideas that are placed and stored in the studio, and which artists could draw from in the process of art making.

In sum, looking at the above findings through the lens of the literature presented earlier has provided me with the possibility of working with a socio-spatial framework that enables a rich outlook of space uniting together different features, processes and

practices. The findings around the meanings attached to artists' studios have reflected a number of the arguments discussed in the literature.

9.2.2 Meanings that art students attach to their art room

As discussed in Chapter 5, attaching meaning to the studio and environment in which art students, work sheds light on their artistic process. Reflecting on the art room is a practice that gives numerous insights on the way students work and which meanings are assumed in the process of making art. This also gives a voice to students who have much to offer as active agents. A number of different findings have proposed a response to the research question that asks about the meanings that art students attach to the space and environment they work in (RQ3).

Spacious layout and adequate lighting

It was interesting to note that the same two physical elements were also favoured by the art students when they pinpointed **spacious layouts and adequate lighting** as important factors of art room spaces. This positions these two elements as the basis of spaces that are used for making art. A large and spacious layout offers possibilities and reduces limitations and restrictions that hamper the artistic process. Moreover, in the case of art students much emphasis was made on the availability of storage. Spacious layouts afford enough storage spaces, which the students deemed useful to have. This could perhaps mirror their need to be surrounded by a number of resources as part of their creative process. Furthermore, the students emphasised that adequate lighting becomes an essential part of practice. In this case, most of the students have experienced a lack of adequate lighting and this proved to restrict them when working on their art. Their latest art room boasted a lot of natural light and the findings indicate that this has been considered as indispensable.

Art rooms versus art spaces in the home

The students seemed to associate different activities with both their home and their art room at school. Some students have considered that, for tasks that depend significantly on reflection, they would prefer to work at home because at school it may be noisier and more distracting. Nevertheless, the students still conceded that at school they were able to think and reflect on their work. This finding leads me to conclude that the students tend to look for a quiet place where they could reflect. In a broader sense, they

seek to work in a quiet environment and perhaps the existing art room did not particularly cater for this need. This was also evident in the finding that concerns an area for relaxation. The students seem to have pointed towards a need for a place where they could think and reflect, and take time out from the usual lesson routine. This is in line with the work of Clark (2010) where she contends that children seek places for quiet time alone and for reflection. Areas for reflection might also empower students to take control of their own learning, since it encourages independence and personal initiative. Such areas would provide a casual place where students could work on their research to develop their ideas in a quiet environment conducive to their aim. Contrastingly, the students also showed that they prefer to work in groups and to communicate with each other. These two distinct points demonstrate the need to have an art room that would offer them **the possibility of a time-out area, and at the same time a space where they communicate with their peers**. The young people seem to need this flexibility to choose between two different areas according to their requirements. Perhaps the idea of the relaxation area substitutes a personal and private space. As mentioned earlier, with the participating artists, having a private space seemed to offer a number of benefits. In art rooms, students do not have a particular private space, so this time-out area could serve as a replacement.

Another point that was underlined in the data is that **students are inspired by what is around them**. Therefore, the more resources there are around them, the more stimuli are possible. It was not clear from the findings whether this would be most effective at home or at school. It was also not very clear whether students felt inspired from things outside the art room, as this was not mentioned directly. Nonetheless, it is evident that they are inspired by what is around them within the space they work in. For this reason, art rooms should preferably be equipped with relevant resources, materials and tools. Through the experience of making and handling materials, a student generates new knowledge (Eisner, 2002). Teachers and students should ideally make use of this concept to supplement the learning outcomes planned across the syllabus. Art rooms would ideally be viewed as places of research and making.

A further point that has emerged from the data is that the students seek to exhibit their work in different manners. This might also mirror the necessity to be surrounded by different works. Furthermore, a deeper meaning could be that the work they produce is

not just considered as a task for assessment purposes, but it seems that the students wanted to share their work with others to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

In response to the research question RQ3, I would conclude that the meanings that art students attach to their art room also reflect the complexity of space and place, and how they are the product of multiple aspects occurring at the same time. Some points that shed light on the meanings art students attach to their art room are evident. The art room is an important reference point for students. It supports the learning of art and it supports what they do during the lesson. To represent the different needs of the students it has been apparent that both quiet areas for reflection, as well as areas for group work and communication, should ideally be available (Lippmann, 2015). These two areas seem to encapsulate the main practice of art making that concerns the students. Given their age, the students still found their home to be an important place for their art making. It seems that the students required some characteristics of their home to be replicated in the set-up of their art room, especially as regards reflection and contemplation. In this scenario, art rooms act as a hybrid between normal school classrooms and their homes.

9.2.3 Reflecting on the findings concerning the two groups - artists and art students

As has been discussed in the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) that the decision to study both perspectives was intended as a way that would provide opportunities to understand the experiences of both groups. Throughout the research, I have been aware and have acknowledged that both groups were influenced and affected by different experiences, motivations, necessities and priorities. Since this study has considered art practices as spatial, the decision to explore both the studio and the art room as two places where particular modes of spatial practice occur, was believed to present a broader outlook. It has been very useful to look at both groups because the experiences they encountered were very different. Nevertheless, both outcomes from the two parts of the study could potentially provide insights with implications for both art practice and education.

The findings concerning both groups shed more light on the meanings of art spaces as understood by both artists and art students. This reflects the fact that both groups had different imperatives for producing their work. The art students were generally focused on preparation for their examinations, and their work processes were directed towards

this aim. On occasion, there were instances where they emulated how artists work but, predominantly, their work was centred around their lessons at school and their preparation for exams. On the other hand, the artists' intention for doing their work is encouraged by different motivations. Their practice is consolidated through various processes, such as: thinking practices as modes of inquiry, practices supporting their full-time career, working on commissions, and so on. This blend of experiences could help inform the way art spaces are understood, and possibly improved.

9.3 Artistic practice and the creative process

9.3.1 Artistic practice and the creative process of artists

Creative attributes

Understanding creativity could be a complex task, since the term is multifaceted. The participating artists have attributed four particular qualities to creative artists and these are:

(1) Self-discipline
(2) Persistence
(3) Imagination
(4) Exploration.

The findings imply that these attributes benefit the artistic process, in that they overcome procrastination and difficulty. When these attributes are at play artists are likely to enter a state of **flow** (Csikzentmihalyi, 1997) when difficulties are diminished and the artists would work with the least hindrances possible.

Inspiration

When discussing different forms of inspiration with the artists, it was very interesting to observe that this provided a **wide range of stimuli** across the seven interviews (Hemmig, 2009). There is an emphasis on the **simple everyday things**, which become important reference points to artists. The simple and ordinary elements of everyday life have a central role in arts practice. As already discussed, the outdoors as inspiration was also an interesting notion that most of the artists have expressed in common.

These two types of sources of inspiration, that is, the simple and ordinary elements of everyday life, and the outdoors, also reflect the idea of **encountering** (Erdelez, 2005). Encountering occurs through unintentional and accidental discoveries, and is

associated with passive and flexible information acquisition. This reflects the thinking phase and is likely to occur anywhere. This might also be the case with art students. However, the link was not strongly evident in the findings. This could be a lacuna that can be explored through further studies. The way lessons are planned could situate parts of the artistic process to take place in the outdoors, or through experiences happening outside of the art room. In this way, art rooms and studios are extended and are not limited by the actual perimeter of their structure.

In the findings, **no particular time has been associated with the occurrence of inspiration**. One artist recalled the concept of incubation, expounded by Wallas (1926), and argued that in his experience this often happened upon waking up. Through an understanding of what works for him or her, an artist could notice patterns of inspiration that could be emulated at will when he or she is in need of inspiration. Since the inspiration stage does not seem to be linked to a particular time, this might make it easier for the artist to subject him/herself to the right ingredients that would likely inspire him or her. This strengthens the argument that, knowing what works for your inspiration, ensures that you are prepared and organised to maximise the potential of the experience of encountering (Erdelez, 2005).

Capturing ideas

In an attempt to capture ideas, the artists argued that **having things handy**, even simple paper and pencil, was considered important to avoid feeling blocked. If an artist gets an idea and he or she would have to look for paper or postpone writing down the idea to a later stage, he or she might risk forgetting the idea or missing out on important reflections. Hence, preparing the right setting is considered an advantage. This idea in a way reflects the fact that spaces are always under construction, and are adapted and changed according to how people experience them (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991). Once artists reflect on their practice, they are in a position to arrange their space according to their need and, to an extent, that maximises their creative and artistic processes.

The artistic and creative process

Although each artist follows slightly different methods and approaches to make art, the processes can, in simple terms, be divided into the thinking and doing phases. The thinking part of the process is associated with the exploration and development of ideas,

whereas the doing part is more related to technique. The findings illustrate that the artists participating in this study considered the thinking phase to be the period that they associate with creativity. In all the cases creativity, was linked to ideas and exploration of concepts, and this is likely to take place in the beginning – at the very initial stages of artistic production. The thinking phase, as described by each artist, agrees with the seminal model of the creative process presented by Wallas (1926).

In an attempt to link the creative process with the physical role of the studio space, in order to 'tease out' their relationship, I will use the above model of the creative process to unravel what happens in the studio. According to the artists, the physical studio space is considered to be very important, but not crucial, to the thinking phase. The artists have also pointed out that the studio was, to them, important as a space of performance. Upon reflection, this means that the artists are most likely to use the studio in the actual doing phase. Although some artists tend to use their studio during their thinking phase, work that is considered part of the thinking phase could be carried out anywhere; at least, *some* of these steps could be carried out outside the studio. In fact, as has been discussed already, what inspires artists comes from very varied objects, experiences and locations (Hemmig, 2009). Therefore, it could be concluded that the occurrence of the four stages of Wallas's (1926) model of creativity are not directly related to the physical element of the studio space. It is more likely that aspects of these stages happen outside the studio. Once the thinking phase has been finalised, the doing phase comes into play. This latter phase is likely to be linked to the studio, since the artists tend to look for their base during the actual production of their artwork. The studio, with all the materials and tools, becomes a place of performance and a place for making, and it seems that these qualities are what attract the artist to use this space. Although this has been clearly illustrated in the findings, I also acknowledge that there are artists whose first stages of the work are directly linked to the studio. However, it seems that the artists participating in this study were the type of artists who do not rely on the studio as part of the initial stages of their practice.

In an attempt to answer the research question: **How does the affordance of a space contribute to the creative process of art students and artists?** (RQ4).

I would conclude that the creative process is one of the core processes forming part of the spatial practices of artists and art students. It is a mode that combines spatial forms and practices, and their connectedness. From the findings, it has been revealed that the

creative process is influenced by spaces (not necessarily the studio or art room) and also by the experiences that artists encounter. The way space assists the experience of art making shapes and guides the creative process. The space of the studio also influences the experience of the artists because the process of their art making is shaped by the full experience taking place within this space. This was also reflected in the findings with the young people, since their work drew significantly from the space around them in the art room. The activity of making art incorporates diverse actions, such as: the individuals and the way they work; the limitation and possibilities of the space; the materials and tools, the way individuals change and develop the space; the way they physically move within their studio, and so on. This situates art practice as that experience that depends on many different factors working together, and therefore the affordance of a space contributes to the creative process of artists and students since it accommodates this interplay between many aspects taking place simultaneously. This could also be observed when the artists or art students work with others within the same space. The way they work in the space also depends on their social relations with their peers and, together, they construct and mould their practice.

The studios may play an important role in facilitating a positive process through the preparation of materials, resources, personal tangible provisions and so on. In this way spaces are not just a backdrop for activity to take place but take an active role in the way they are produced and become a spatial practice. Furthermore, the findings related to the artists could offer insights on the role of the creative process in art rooms.

9.4 The relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice

This section is a concluding effort to answer the overarching research question:

RQ1 – What is the relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice?

Throughout this study, it has been implied that the relationship between the elements within the art production triad is a complex one, since it is framed around entities that are based in the intangible. Nevertheless, this study has attempted to tease out some of the understandings and meanings with the aim of using the artistic process to its fullest advantage. The two main stakeholders of this study, namely artists and art students, have presented their insights to enlighten some of the processes that occur in parallel

within the activity of artistic practice. The insights that have been presented are not provided as a means of generalisation but as situated knowledge, which emerged from practice itself. These are meant to shed light on the issues at play, and to suggest ways of how practice could be improved and used in the production of new knowledge.

The relationship between the physical studio space and the creative process of people engaging in artistic practice involves a number of points that need to be considered. First and foremost, it could be implied that this relationship encompasses different processes that are at play simultaneously. As has been discussed already, the role of the creative process as a mode of the spatial practice is one that gives many insights on the artistic activities that take place in studios and art rooms. The creative process has been attributed to the thinking phase of art production. This does not automatically imply that the doing phase is strictly detached from creativity. However, the main link with the creative process concerns the thinking and preparation phase of the work. It has also been highlighted that the creative process is not directly linked to the studio space. This was particularly evident in the parts of the study related to the artists. The part of the study concerned with art students did not yield strong correlations between the doing phase of their practice and the art room space. The creative process has been seen as being influenced by spaces, but these could be outdoor spaces, other countries and so on. Therefore, this implication focuses on the how the artistic experience is a product of many factors and one of them is space and people's engagement with it.

In addition, it seems that art students in the 11-to-15-years age group are mostly exposed to working in their art room and at their homes, and this seems to carry most of the inspiration for the students. It seems, that they feel inspired both in the art room and their homes. Unlike the students, the artists draw much inspiration from outside the studio, and this makes the thinking phase a practice that could be carried out anywhere.

The studio in itself is a place where the person engaging in artistic practice learns through his or her process. In the process of preparation for his or her work, and in the process of actually doing the work, the person experiences new situations that could contribute to learning. During practice, the person may learn through the process of doing and different practices inform future work (Barrett, 2007). During the initial process of developing the concept and sorting out ideas, the artist may experience a degree of learning from books, magazines, other texts, blogs and other different modes

of getting information. The studio itself affords possibilities of learning, both through practice and through the thinking and research process (Barrett, 2007). This notion of learning, which is somehow affected by the space they are in and by what is experienced in this space (Dewey, 1934), takes a different form if artists work with peers, for example. Learning through conversations with other peers is another important form of learning, which might affect the work that is produced. Feedback could be used for motivation to persist forward. This contributes to a cross fertilisation of ideas between groups.

Another form of learning that takes place happens in connection with materials used. This is a specific type of knowing – that of tacit knowledge – which results from the process of handling materials during practice (Bolt, 2007; Carter, 2004; Heidegger, 1996). In my view, this is also a type of ongoing learning that takes place in the process of making art, and which often occurs in the studio.

This study has attempted to address the gap relating to studies that link the physical space (Massey, 2005, 1994; Cresswell, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991; Tuan, 1974) and the creative process (Robinson, 2011; Sternberg, 1999; Wallas, 1926), with particular reference to art making and practice (Sjöholm, 2013; Jacob & Grabner, 2010; Davidts & Paice, 2009; Buren, 1983). The major contribution of this study is the insights provided on the relationship between the elements within the art production triad, that is, between space, the creative process, and the artistic practice of artists and art students. This produced situated knowledge that emerged from practice itself. This has implications for both research and practice. Another important contribution would be the insights produced in terms of the studio as a 3-dimensional journal. This highlights the relationship between the creative process and spatial practice, and how the way through which people experience spaces, with all the physical materials within them, affects the way they work. This also leads to another contribution that relates to the idea of encountering. This is a process in which artists are exposed to potential inspiration, both outside and inside the studio. This forms part of the creative process and could take place in different spaces and could have implications for both practice and education, since it focuses on various influences that could affect the creative process.

This work also contributes to literature on spaces in an educational setting by introducing insights particularly related to the use of space in art education. The idea

of the art room as a hybrid space between normal school classrooms and their homes emerged alongside the importance of the art room as a reference point for art students.

Building on existing literature, this research has located the need for policy makers, school leaders and educators to recognise and better understand the potential of art rooms and art spaces. This could also have implications for policy makers in terms of working with the potential of spaces. Art students might face limitations if they are only exposed to the perimeter restrictions of their art room. Ideally, as part of their practice they would have the opportunity to work with the notion of encountering and their art room spaces would be designed to have areas for personal reflection and group work, while having the possibility to have their own preferred material and resources. Moreover, if the students were to be given the time to reflect on their art room and the way they use space as part of their practice, this could empower them and give them numerous insights on what actually works for them. For example, this could enable them to notice patterns of inspiration, which could be emulated at will during their practice. In addition, the insights from the study with the artists could also provide facilities from which art students could also benefit. One of these facilities would be having the materials in their art rooms prepared in stations that afford particular activities while having things conveniently planned to support their practice.

The study has strived to identify the advantages that people engaging in art practices would gain in the process of understanding their in-situ experiences of art making. This study has helped to recognise how the relationship between experience, practice and knowledge provides a mode of knowledge production. The findings have highlighted that the art production triad is assumed to comprise of an interplay of different elements performing simultaneously, such as materials and tacit knowledge. This has shed light on aspects within the domain of arts practice, and also art education with reference to the spaces used by the stakeholders involved.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Name of Researcher: *Christine Porter Lofaro*

PhD Research Title: *The Impact of Studio Space on Creativity and its Implications for Artistic Production*

Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any queries. I agree to take part in the research project discussed in the information sheet.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without the need to give any reason

3. I understand that real names will not be used in this research. I give permission to the member of staff supervising this study to have access to my responses without disclosing my name or my identity

4. I give permission to the researcher to use recording equipment and cameras during the data collection process.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

(or legal representative)

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant

Appendix B: Information Sheet (artists)

Information Sheet

Dear

As part of the requirements for my PhD degree I will take part in a research project to collect and analyse data. My project aims to understand better the relationship between the physical studio spaces and creativity of artists and Art students. You have been chosen to take part in this research since you are a practising artist. The research will involve myself, Christine, and throughout this project my tutor, Dr. Kate Pahl (University of Sheffield) will supervise my work.

I am an Art teacher and a practising artist myself and I am interested in different factors that may affect the way Art students and artists work. Throughout this project I might ask you some questions about the way you work as an artist and what factors might affect you during your artistic production. This might mean finding time to come and observe the way you work. I might also ask you some questions while you work and also record this. You may ask questions and talk about your work. I might also conduct an interview to further discuss your reflections about the the space you work in and the art work you produce.

In this research all real names will be changed, and your name will also be changed. No other information which could identify who you are will be used unless I ask for your permission on a separate occasion. The information that I will collect from you will only be used for the writing of my thesis and may be used in reports or articles about this project. The recordings and photographs of your activities will only be used for the data collection and analysis of this project. I shall ask your permission to use them elsewhere, such as in lectures.

I would also like to remind you that you can withdraw from this research project at any time you wish without having to give any reason.

If you need to ask me any further questions do not hesitate to contact me on +356 79092231.

I thank you for your time to read this.

Best regards,

Christine Porter Lofaro

PhD Research Student, University of Sheffield

Appendix C: Information Sheet (school admin)

> ## Information Sheet

Dear

As part of the requirements for my PhD degree I will take part in a research project to collect and analyse data. My project aims to understand better the relationship between the physical studio spaces and creativity of artists and Art students. Your school have been chosen to take part in this research since you offer Art option lessons to students at secondary level. The research will involve myself, Christine, and throughout this project my tutor, Dr. Kate Pahl (University of Sheffield) will supervise my work.

I am an Art teacher and a practising artist and I am interested in different factors that may affect the way Art students and artists work. Throughout this project I might ask the students some questions about the way they work as Art students and what factors might affect them during their Art lesson. This might mean going in for the Art lesson and observe the way the students work. I might also ask the students some questions while they work and also record some events in the classroom. The students will be allowed to ask questions and talk about their work. I might also conduct an interview to further discuss their reflections about the Art lesson and the art work they produce.

In this research all real names will be changed. No other information which could identify who the participants are will be used unless I ask for their permission on a separate occasion. The information that I will collect from them will only be used for the writing of my thesis and may be used in reports or articles about this project. The school's name will also be changed.

The participants can withdraw from this research project at any time they wish without having to give any reason.

Should you need to ask me any further questions do not hesitate to contact me on +356 79092231.

I thank you for your time to read this.

Best regards,

Christine Porter Lofaro

PhD Research Student, University of Sheffield

Appendix D: Information Sheet (students)

Information Sheet

Dear students and guardians,

As part of the requirements for my PhD degree I will take part in a research project to collect and analyse data. My project aims to understand better the relationship between the physical studio spaces and creativity of artists and Art students. You have been chosen to take part in this research since you form part of a group of students studying Art, as an extra-curricular subject, at secondary level. The research will involve myself, Christine, and throughout this project my tutor, Dr. Kate Pahl (University of Sheffield) will supervise my work.

I am an Art teacher and a practising artist and I am interested in different factors that may affect the way Art students and artists work. Throughout this project I might ask you some questions about the way you work as an Art student and what factors might affect you during your Art lesson. This might mean coming in for your Art lesson and observe the way your work. I might also ask you some questions while you work and also record some events in the classroom. You may ask questions and talk about your work. I might also conduct an interview to further discuss your reflections about the Art lesson and the art work you produce.

In this research all real names will be changed, and your name will also be changed. No other information which could identify who you are will be used unless I ask for your permission on a separate occasion. The information that I will collect from you will only be used for the writing of my thesis and may be used in reports or articles about this project. The school's name will also be changed. The recordings and photographs of your activities will only be used for the data collection and analysis of this project. I shall ask your permission to use them elsewhere, such as in lectures.

I would also like to remind you that you can withdraw from this research project at any time you wish without having to give any reason.

If you need to ask me any further questions do not hesitate to contact me on +356 79092231.

I thank you for your time to read this.

Best regards,

Christine Porter Lofaro

PhD Research Student, University of Sheffield

Appendix E: Ethics approval

The University Of Sheffield.

The School Of Education .

Christine Lofaro

Head of School
Professor   Cathy Nutbrown

Department of Educational Studies
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

03 January 2013

Telephone: +44 (0114) 222 8081
Fax: +44 (0114) 222 8105
Email: MPhil -PhD@sheff   ield.ac.uk

Dear Christine ,

Ethical Review Application: "The Impact of Studio Space on Creativity and its Implications for Artistic
Production   "

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project.   I am writing to confirm that your
application has now been approved.

You can now proceed with your research but we reco   mmend you refer to the reviewers' additional comments
(please see attached).

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final
submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Felicity Gilligan
PG Officer

Appendix F: Sample from an interview with an artist (Jack)

C: It's a brilliant idea!

JACK: Because if I say I need to do something here… I cannot because of this… So this, I can shift it without having to create huge inconveniences. So, the only detail which I have added to… Because I knew that the place had to be flexible, that is why. So, even if I am working here, but I need this table this way, in the most practical of ways I can shift, so nothing is sort of fixed. That is perhaps important but other than that. This was done, again, 30 years ago. If I had to do it today it would be different.

C: What would you change?

JACK: Larger openings – much larger openings. I would go for as much as possible huge openings, to have more light. And I would also make it wider, but I was not allowed more than this then. I also had another space, which was up here, which I used to use initially when I needed more working space but then it was a bit inconvenient to go up and down, up and down, and I didn't use it anymore. And at the moment – not at the moment it has been there for many years – I have a printing table…. But there is nothing – just a printing table – because instead of shifting every time here working with a printing was not convenient, so at least there is another space for that. But I've stopped printing for many years, now. I hope to go back to it… It is there. It is possible.

C: I will take some pictures of the space…

JACK: Yes, go ahead. Shall I remove my stuff?

C: No, no, you can leave everything as it is…

[walking around the gallery]

JACK: Ideally, if I had to have a choice, in the sense that if I had the luxury, for me this would be a beautiful working space because the light is all the time – constantly – good. I have, here, another space with a terrace, which would allow me as well to have another outside connection. For me it is important because I could move in and out if I need to do certain work. So, this is an ideal set up for painting but then at the end what do I do when the work is ready? I can't see it in a clutter – just against the wall like this. Initially, that is what I was doing and then I was becoming frustrated because it is important to separate these spaces – where you display and where you work, which cannot be in one place. For me, that was decided long ago at my stay abroad. And having visited galleries and saw new space and saw new places… And, no, it is important to have a space where to see the work when it is ready, and the first thing I started working on is… It was not a simple thing to do because obviously I had limited means, but I was determined to do that which was very convenient, and although I am not necessarily painting in here but now I come to sit here. And it is also a place of reflection, a space where you think more clearly. I cannot do this, say, in my workshop below, which is more of a workshop. I don't even have a chair there – purposely I didn't want to so that I can go, do what I need to do and leave –whilst here this is also important because, all that we have said, a lot of this thinking as we said takes place… Is beneficial for you to do that – more like a temple, sort of, where you contemplate, where you think, where you manage to create a certain order… Because also that is important, eh? That is an important discipline – you cannot simply just do things. Some people (I hear them speak I'm amused, you know) for them it's just 'doing something' – it is like filling a space. It is not: it is about constantly creating order because […]

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Appendix G: Sample from a transcribed conversation with a student (Keith)

C: So let me start with one of you. Anyone can start for me. So, will you start with yours? So, now let's go through the plan of the art room together. Did you do this at home?

KEITH: Yes, yes sure. Basically, I left the art room as it is but here I included a still-life table. I changed the position of the table and here I included the door. What I did a bit different is that I included tables for group work, and added some easels here. And here I changed the direction of the table. Over here, I added some cupboards and shelves.

C: OK. So, all around here you would include storage?

KEITH: Exactly. Then, over here, I included large windows and a sink. Over here, I included some shelves for the teacher as well.

C: So, if I am understanding you correctly you had this room in your mind and you tried to find ways how you would improve it.

KEITH: Yes, exactly.

C: And over here you changed to layout of the desks to look inwards?

KEITH: Yes, so that we can all look in the same direction during the lesson.

C: Well done Keith! This is really good work!

So, with regard to the colours of the room, the wall, curtains, and so on, would you leave them as they are at present, or would you change something?

KEITH: No, with regard to tables, I would have them white so that, when students are painting, there aren't a lot of colours. With regard to the wall I think it is fine as it is. Even the curtains – it is good to have colourful curtains – so I would leave them as they are.

C: You have really nice colourful curtains here!

KEITH: Yes, and they change the colour of the room. Well, the rest I would leave it as it is, as there are no problems. Even the whiteboard area is white, you wouldn't want to have, let say, red.

C: So, you wouldn't change much then? It is more the layout of the objects that you would change. And these tables here are a very good idea for group work.

KEITH: Yes, I think we would need them.

C: You have some tables at the back over there. Do you usually use them for group work?

KEITH: Sometimes they do a still-life over there. In fact there are a lot of objects.

C: So you set up on that side and you stay on this side to work?